



DAKOTA DATEBOOK

When Satchel Paige Struck Out 20 Beulah Miners

BY DR. STEVE HOFFBECK
June 8 -- It is a well-known fact that the great Black pitcher Satchel Paige played for the Bismarck semi-professional baseball team in 1933 and 1935. What might not be known is that Paige's highest strike-out total for a single game in those two seasons was 20, in a nine-inning game against the Beulah Miners ball club on Aug. 18, 1933. Bismarck won 8-0, and Paige gave up just three hits -- two singles and a double -- and did not allow a single base-on-balls.

Satchel contributed to the victory by getting two hits in four plate appearances, hitting a single and a "long triple to deep right field." Who among the Beulah batters could know that the lanky right-handed pitcher they faced that day would become a member of the Baseball Hall of Fame?

Paige joined Neil Churchill's Bismarck team because the Great Depression had put the Negro Leagues into disarray, and Paige was as happy to get a regular paycheck in those hard times as Churchill was to bring this talented pitcher to North Dakota. Paige pitched for any team that would pay him a high salary, and, as he later said about his long career, "I don't believe there's any place I didn't play baseball."

Well, that day in Bismarck, Paige's fastball was like lightning, for in his prime, he threw "what was probably the fastest ball ever to leave the hand of man." Hack Wilson, the great National League slugger, once said that Paige's fastball "starts out like a baseball, but when it gets to the plate it looks like a marble." Paige responded by saying, "You must be talking about my slowball; my fastball looks like a fish egg."

In 1935, Paige led the Bismarck team to the National Semi-Pro championship in Wichita, Kans.

Paige's birthdate was a mystery, but he was believed to be about 76 when he died on this date in 1982 in Kansas City, Mo. His greatest honor was to become enshrined in the Hall of Fame in 1971 as the first Black player inducted whose career was largely in the Negro Leagues. As he said at the time, "I am the proudest man on Earth right today."

North Dakotans can be proud that Paige was a part of North Dakota's baseball history. And three of those Beulah hitters, known today only in the box score of the game as "Weber, Frank Stewart and C. Wessels," could be justly proud that each of them managed to get a hit off the future Hall-of-Famer in that 1933 ball game.

Lee A. Christoferson
BY LUCID THOMAS
June 9 -- Neurosurgery is a

medical specialty that focuses on surgical treatments for neurological disorders. The first recorded neurosurgical procedure was trepanning, which involved drilling a hole in the top of the skull to drain evil spirits. This crude procedure was the only form of neurosurgery until the 19th century, when scientists began to experiment with removing a portion of the skull to operate on the brain directly. However, these first procedures were very dangerous and had a survival rate of only 10%. Then came Harvey Cushing, the father of modern neurosurgery. Cushing developed techniques that increased the survival rate to over 90%.

On this date in 1921, around the time that Cushing created the new procedures, Lee A. Christoferson was born in Bemidji, Minn. He would grow up to become one of North Dakota's best neurosurgeons. Christoferson graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1945. He joined the US Army and was assigned to the Neurosurgical Service at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, DC. He served for two years before resuming his studies.

In 1951 he received a Master of Science in neurosurgery. At that time, he moved to Fargo with his wife and helped pioneer the practice of neurosurgery between Minneapolis and Seattle. He began recruiting physicians who studied neuroscience and formed Neurologic Associates. He also envisioned and helped found the Neuropsychiatric Institute in south Fargo, which has worked to provide resources for neurosurgery in North Dakota. In addition to being a physician, he was also a professor at the University of North Dakota and was an integral part of the fight to establish a medical program there.

He practiced neurosurgery for 35 years in Fargo, and during that time served as a member of many neurological groups and received numerous awards, including the ND State Medical Association Award for Outstanding Medical and Community Service.

Dr. Lee Christoferson passed away in Fargo on March 19, 2000 at the age of 78.

Fatal Car Bombing in 1939

BY MERRY HELM
June 10 -- This date in 1939 was not a typical day in Fargo-Moorhead. The crown prince and princess of Norway were winding up a three-day visit to the area when, early that morning, they heard an explosion from the east side of the river.

It was 6 a.m., and 28-year-old J. Milton Lee was on his way to work at his father's Moorhead business, the Northwest Bakery. A graduate of Fargo's Agricultural College, Lee had just

returned from bakery school in Chicago. He would not make it to work that day, nor any other.

Papers reported, "So terrific was the blast that . . . the hood was blown through the roof of the garage, the radiator and fenders were torn loose, and part of the motor was blown into the body of the car." Investigators later determined sticks of dynamite were rigged to the car's ignition.

Milton's father, John Lee, told authorities that members of the local bakers union had been trying to get him to join. Recently, he had told an anonymous caller he'd been treated unfairly and wasn't interested in joining. The caller replied, "Then I'm serving notice on you right now that we'll get you."

Roland Tougas, the president of the local bakers union, was arrested without charge. He admitted he had notified John Lee that his bakery was going to be added to the list of unfair bakeries, but he denied any knowledge of the car bombing plot.

Meanwhile, investigators found, in the wreckage, a tattered piece of filing card on which was written, "Just a warning Lee. Keep to your own sales or else." Milton's young fiancée confirmed that Milton had been worried, but he hadn't confided his reasons.

Two days after the fatal blast, Clay County attorney James Garrity announced, "From our investigation thus far, I am firmly convinced that no labor union as an organization is involved."

Garrity suspected the bombing was instead the work of an individual member, or former member, of the union, and he released Tougas.

Early in 1941, authorities charged Louis Anderson, a Fargo truck driver, with first-degree murder. The arrest was based on an accusation by his friend and roommate, James Wood. Several weeks later, Wood changed his story, saying Anderson was innocent. Soon after, Wood switched his story again, saying he was with Anderson when he rigged the car bomb in 1939.

On April 17, 1941, a grand jury determined there wasn't enough evidence to put either man on trial for Milton Lee's murder. The case remains unsolved.

48th in '58

BY SARAH WALKER
June 11 -- In June 1919, Congress received enough votes to pass the 19th Amendment, and with it, the right for women to vote. This amendment was ratified in 1920, and that year the League of Women Voters was born.

This strictly nonpartisan group has sought over the years to improve systems of government and public policies through education and advocacy. It is a grassroots organization, working at national, state and local levels, and today the league is alive in all 50 of the United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Hong Kong.

However, the league was slow to blossom in North Dakota. Even though women had become prominent in government affairs and positions of authority, it wasn't until this date in 1958 that the women of North Dakota met in Mandan and opened the first League of Women Voters state convention with the motto, "The 48th in '58," a reference to being the last in the union to form a statewide chapter -- 48th since Alaska and Hawaii had yet

to achieve statehood.

Governor John E. Davis welcomed the delegates and visitors. Mrs. Leslie Rogne, organizational chairman for the league, presented the first slate of officers for state board. The women conducted other business throughout that day, and the next, adopting bylaws, approving a budget and selecting a program for their first year.

They also put a notice in the *Bismarck Tribune* to announce a meeting to form a new local Bismarck chapter to go along with chapters already existing in Minot, Williston, Grand Forks, Fargo and Mandan.

Though our state's history may be rife with evidence of the progressive movement, it took just a little bit longer for North Dakota to join the rest of the United States in adding this group, which touts itself as "the original grassroots citizen network, directed by the consensus of its members nationwide."

Egg Production

BY SARAH WALKER
June 12 -- In times of shortage during war, it seems that everyone bonds together. However, in 1942 on this date, the readers of the *Knox Advocate* newspaper found that they weren't the only ones working overtime to send supplies to the troops and preserve resources for the war.

Close to the Oscar Stromme farm in Devils Lake, a tom turkey "put his heart into the nationwide all-out production campaign" when he adopted a nest of abandoned duck eggs! Unable to leave the eggs to their destruction, the turkey faithfully sat on them during their incubation. He only left the nest in the morning to feed a little, strut around a bit and stretch his legs. Otherwise he sat on the nest, silently keeping his vigil. However, if anyone came close enough to appear threatening, he then barked out quite a gobble, protecting the eggs lying so warmly beneath him!

This tom turkey was not the only savior of little ducklings. A year before, Oscar Nelson of Cooperstown was plowing his fields when he discovered a nest of ducklings in the process of hatching. He moved the nest to safety, but when the mother duck didn't return, he had no choice but to take the ducklings under his own wing, so to speak. He put them in with his barnyard fowls where they grew to adulthood. Eventually they flew the nest -- or the coop. However, ducks later returned, "more mature, less tame . . . but still claiming squatter's rights on the Nelson brooder house," where they again enjoyed the poultry feed with the chickens.

And finally, this report from Devils Lake: "a seven-year-old white giant hen owned by the Matt Bloomquist family is answering the call for increased egg production by doubling her output." The story went on to report that the hen laid one double-yolk, oversized egg every day. Four of the eggs weighed almost 14 ounces. Great for the war effort!

The way these feathery friends flocked together provided North Dakota with one way to look at the world . . . sunny-side up!

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

Apply for scholarships by June 19

The Edward Nestegard Trust was established after the death of Edward Nestegard of Leeds. The trust provides scholarships to graduates of Leeds High School who are attending NDSU as freshmen or sophomores in an agricultural area of study. Scholarship applications are available at the Leeds school or by contacting the trustee: First United Bank, Attn: Trust Department, PO Box 160, Devils Lake, ND 58301-0160; telephone 701-662-5547 or 1-800-726-0124. The application deadline is June 19.

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Be wary of scams before using crypto ATMs

Financial literacy resource released

The ND Department of Financial Institutions has released a new financial literacy resource on crypto ATMs, now available on its website, to help residents understand how these machines work, what protections state law provides, how to avoid scams and how to verify licensed operators.

Read or download the crypto ATM FAQ (frequently asked questions) and additional financial literacy resources at www.nd.gov/dfi/crypto-atms.

The resource offers clear and simple answers to common questions about crypto ATMs, also called virtual currency kiosks. These machines allow users to convert cash into digital currency such as Bitcoin, Ethereum and Tether. They are often located in grocery stores, gas stations and shopping centers, and may appear similar to traditional bank ATMs or may even be a service offered within a traditional ATM.

The department developed the FAQ to address growing public interest in cryptocurrency and rising concerns about fraud. While many crypto ATMs are operated by legitimate, licensed businesses, scammers are increasingly using them as part of fraud schemes. The resource is intended to inform consumers and promote safe use, not discourage lawful activity.

"Crypto ATMs can be a convenient financial tool when used properly," said Commissioner Lise Kruse. "Our goal is to ensure North Dakotans understand how they work, know their rights under state law, and recognize warning signs of scams before they lose money."

State law requires crypto ATM operators in North Dakota to be licensed as money transmitters and to meet specific anti-fraud standards.

These include monitoring transactions for suspicious activity and maintaining dedicated compliance and customer protection staff. The FAQ explains these protections and guides consumers on how to confirm whether a company is authorized to operate in the state through the Nationwide Multistate Licensing System Consumer Access.

The department has become aware of an increasing number of crypto-related fraud cases in recent years, with losses impacting North Dakota residents. Scammers often create a sense of urgency and instruct victims to deposit cash into a crypto ATM or send digital currency to resolve a fraudulent issue.

For example, frauds have involved scammers impersonating law enforcement who then inform victims that they have a warrant for missed jury duty, or scammers posing as friends or relatives in urgent need of money. Once funds are sent, they can be difficult to recover. Older adults, veterans and young adults appear to be frequent targets of these scams. The department encourages all residents to pause and verify any request involving cryptocurrency, especially when it involves unfamiliar individuals or urgent demands.

The FAQ highlights key warning signs. No legitimate business or government agency will ask someone to deposit cash or purchase cryptocurrency at a crypto ATM to fix a problem or protect funds. Consumers should avoid sending money to people they do not know, scanning unknown QR codes or sharing personal financial information.

The department also urges residents to verify callers by using official contact information and to contact customer support if they have concerns about a transaction. Licensed crypto ATM operators in North Dakota are required to provide live customer service during extended hours.

Residents who believe they have been targeted or victimized by a scam should contact local law enforcement and may report the incident to the ND Attorney General's Office Consumer Protection Division. Complaints can also be filed online directly with the department.

Club to meet

The Esmond Golden Age Club meets the second Tuesday of each month at 2 p.m. at the Esmond Fire Hall. The next meeting is July 14.

Donate to Legion scholarship

The Gunnerud-Dietrich American Legion Post 86 and its Auxiliary of Minnewaukan established a scholarship at LRSC in 2012. Interest is awarded annually to LRSC students.

Donations can be made in the form of gifts or memorials. The Legion will send the money to LRSC and send letters of thanks to the donors. Donations can be sent to American Legion Post 86, PO Box 173, Minnewaukan, ND 58351.

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS BENSON COUNTY NORTH DAKOTA May 19, 2026

The Benson County commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, May 19, 2026 at 8 a.m. in the commissioner room of the Benson County Courthouse, Minnewaukan, ND. Commissioners present: Dick Horner, Doris M. Griffin, Ron Stadium and Tammy Kuk. David Davidson was absent. The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Griffin. Other people present: Kelly Glover, Benson County Farmers Press; James P. Wang, Benson County state's attorney; Laura Wanzek, Benson County sheriff; Scott Todahl, DEM and highway superintendent; and Joy Orvedal, highway department clerk.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. A motion was made by Kuk, seconded by Stadium, to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of May 5, 2026. All members voted yes. The motion carried.

Scott Todahl, DEM and highway superintendent, met with the board to give a report for the highway department. Todahl indicated the county line bridge located two miles south of Highway #2 will remain closed.

The board discussed the proposed road maintenance agreement between Ramsey County and Benson County. A motion was made by Horner, seconded by Kuk, to approve the contract and have the chair sign. All members voted yes. The motion carried.

Todahl reported on the dollars received from the sale of the BCT vehicle and the forfeited four-wheeler that was sold. He also updated the board on the road load limits in place. Todahl stated a pre-construction meeting will be held at 10:30 today for the Brown Road project. He also informed the board that changes will be made in the future to the EMPG he applies for.

A motion was made by Stadium, seconded by Kuk, to appoint Laura Winslow as Benson County Transportation director for a period commencing Feb. 3, 2026 to June 1, 2027. All members voted yes. The

motion carried. Randy Thompson, tax director, met with the board regarding an inundated property application on parcel #07-0000-01530-000. A motion was made by Stadium, seconded by Horner, to approve the application. All members voted yes. The motion carried.

Sheriff Wanzek met with the board to give her sheriff's report. Wanzek stated she hired a new deputy in her department. She discussed an upcoming billing with Motorola Solutions and informed the board she will be doing annual payments. She stated Motorola has outstanding bills from 2023 which need to be paid and Motorola indicated it was an issue on their part. She stated her department is working to enforce road load limits. Wanzek discussed the proposed BC sheriff contract with Leeds city. A motion was made by Kuk, seconded by Horner, to approve the contract. All members voted yes. The motion carried. She indicated the city police amounts may need to be increased in the future as they have been the same for a long time.

The Benson County financial report for April 2026 was presented to the board.

The board reviewed an agreement for contract of employment with James Nystrom. A motion was made by Horner, seconded by Stadium, to approve the contract. All members voted yes. The motion carried.

A motion was made by Horner, seconded by Kuk, to amend the motion made on May 5, 2026 to move the bid opening for the Lake Ibsen Flex Fund project from June 2, 2026 at 8 a.m. to June 16, 2026 at 8 a.m. All members voted yes. The motion carried.

Nobody was present for the public comment period. The board reviewed and discussed the monthly county bills. A motion was made by Stadium, seconded by Horner, to pay the bills needing to be paid prior to the end of the month. All members voted yes. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion to adjourn was made at 8:28 a.m.

Bonnie Erickson
Benson County Auditor

Doris Griffin
Vice Chair

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