

**ANTOINE GINGRAS (1821-1877)****Fur Trader Honored Annually in Northeastern North Dakota**

Every year Walhalla celebrates "Gingras Day!" It is held in celebration of Antoine Gingras, an area entrepreneur who died in 1877. When Dakota Territory was created in 1861, Gingras was considered the richest man in the territory. He made most of his fortune by transporting animal hides, mostly buffalo, from what is now northeast North Dakota to St. Paul, a distance of 600 miles. He also had stores in Pembina, St. Joseph (now Walhalla), and Fort Garry (now Winnipeg), as well as a trading post near the Souris River. Gingras served in the Minnesota Territorial legislature in 1852 and 1853, participated in the 1869 rebellion led by Louis Riel against Canada, and had a county in Dakota Territory named after him.

**JOSEPH WHISTLER (1822-1898)****Military Commander in Charge of Five Forts in What is Now North Dakota**

A man who was commander of several military posts in what is now North Dakota helped save the lives of countless starving Indians in the winter of 1867-68 and had a profound influence in the territories of Dakota and Montana from 1867 to 1888. Joseph Whistler was also the nephew of a woman whose portrait has been admired by millions of people for the past 135 years. His cousin, James Whistler, painted *An Arrangement in Grey and Black*, which is considered a masterpiece. The portrait is better known as *Whistler's Mother*.

**DONALD STEVENSON (1833-1908)****Wagon Train Leader and North Dakota Legislator**

One of the greatest wagon train leaders in the history of the U.S. later became a North Dakota legislator. For twenty years, Donald Stevenson hauled people and supplies from St. Cloud, Minnesota to west-central Dakota Territory. His primary contractor was the U.S. Army. He later established his own company, which hauled supplies, people and gold between Bismarck and the Black Hills.

**FELIX VINATIERI (1834-1891)****First Music Composer in What is Now North Dakota**

Colonel Custer's bandmaster at Fort Abraham Lincoln later became one of America's most celebrated composers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Felix Vinatieri was an extraordinary violin and coronet musician who composed memorable marches, waltzes, polkas, and other types of music. He also composed two of America's earliest comic operas. In 1876, Felix left Fort Lincoln with Custer as they proceeded to look for Sitting Bull. However, for reasons that are not totally clear, he remained behind on the steamboat *Far West* when Custer engaged the Indians at the Battle of the Little Big Horn, a decision that may have had an impact on the outcome of two NFL Super Bowls over 120 years later.

**GILBERT PIERCE (1839-1901)****Governor & U.S. Senator for Whom a North Dakota County is Named**

The person in the United States considered "the leading scholar" on Charles Dickens was elected to the U.S. Senate from North Dakota. Gilbert A. Pierce was an officer during the Civil War, Indiana state legislator, secretary of the U.S. Senate, novelist, playwright, newspaper editor, governor of Dakota Territory, and UND presidential designee prior to being elected to the U.S. Senate in 1889. After serving in the Senate, Pierce became managing editor and 50% owner of

the *Minneapolis Tribune* and was appointed minister to Portugal. He is also the person for whom Pierce County is named.

### RICHARD SYKES (1839-1923)

#### **Founder of Five North Dakota Towns Who Brought the Sport of Rugby to the U.S.**

One small town in North Dakota is associated with two people who were stars in two different sports. All sports fans are aware of Travis Hafner, born in Sykeston, who has had a tremendous impact on major league baseball. Fewer people know that Richard Sykes, Sykeston's founder, is called "The Father of Rugby." Sykes was the captain of the football (rugby) team at Rugby school in England and helped popularize the new game throughout England. When he first came to America in 1880 he is attributed more than anyone else with helping promote the game in this country. Rugby became so popular in the U.S. that this country won the gold medal, in 1920 and 1924; both times it was an Olympic event. Sykes is widely credited with introducing rugby in the U.S., but the game had been played here prior to 1880. One claim that does carry more merit is that he introduced the game of golf in what is now North Dakota when he built the first golf course.

### CHARLES BUTTZ (1839-1913)

#### **U.S. Congressman from South Carolina Made North Dakota Impact**

A former South Carolina Congressman later moved to northern Dakota Territory where he became a man of great political influence. Charles W. Buttz used his political clout to have Lisbon named the political seat of Ransom County and also persuaded the Northern Pacific Railroad to detour its branch line six miles off its intended route to go through Lisbon. Buttz was also accused by two U.S. Senators of trying to buy their votes on an 1894 tariff bill. His reputation untarnished, Buttz served three terms in the North Dakota Legislature. He and Rolland Redlin are the only two people to serve in the North Dakota Legislature after being members of the U.S. Congress.

### JOSIAH CHANCE (1839 - 1885)

#### **President Lincoln Bodyguard Established Camp Hancock**

In the 1870s, Lieutenant Josiah Chance and his sister Florence were two of the more colorful people in the Bismarck area. Lieutenant Chance had been one of President Lincoln's personal bodyguards and was later sent to Dakota Territory to establish Camp Hancock. He was one of the few in the area to cash in on the Louisiana Lottery while it was in operation in the 1880s. Florence Chance was very close to her older brother, and her free-spirited ways stood out in the new frontier city of Bismarck. Florence later married Stanley Huntley, editor of the *Bismarck Tribune* and, after his death, became a noted newspaper writer and author.

### PETER SEIMS (1842-1917)

#### **From Bonanza Farm Sodbuster to America's Largest Contractor**

The best known of the Red River Valley bonanza farm "sod busters" and manager of the Bismarck to Deadwood stage line later became a partner in reportedly "the largest contracting firm in America." Through his work in constructing road beds for the Great Northern, Northern Pacific and Canadian Pacific Railroads, Peter Seims made tens of millions of dollars for his company.

**GEORGE MORISON (1842-1903)****Chief Engineer of North Dakota's First Million Dollar Project**

The chief engineer who designed and supervised construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad Bridge, over the Missouri River at Bismarck, later helped convince President Theodore Roosevelt to link the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans by digging a canal through Panama. George S. Morison was a Harvard educated lawyer working for a prestigious New York law firm when he decided to take up engineering. Although receiving no formal education in this field, at the time of his death in 1903, the *Dictionary of American Biography* stated, "He was regarded as the leading bridge engineer in America, perhaps in the world."

**JOHN HAGGART (1846-1905)****Father of West Fargo**

The first resident in what is now West Fargo was Fargo's first sheriff, first fire marshal, and also sponsored the first bill passed by the North Dakota legislature. John Haggart accomplished many things and was known for prodigious strength and a warm, caring heart.

**FRANK PALMER (1847-1921)****Pony Express Rider and North Dakota Legislator**

One of the youngest soldiers to take part in the Civil War, later became a pony express rider in Dakota Territory, filed the first land claim in Ramsey County, and served in the North Dakota state senate. The long and varied career of Frank Palmer, in what is now North Dakota, best illustrates the true pioneer spirit of the people who settled this state.

**JOHN McLEAN (1849-1916)****Bismarck's First Elected Mayor**

McLean County was named after the first elected mayor of Bismarck. John McLean was a successful early businessman in this new city and was faced with the challenge of major downtown land disputes during the early years of his administration.

**EATON BROTHERS****Howard (1851-1922), Willis (1853-1929), Alden (1859-1937), Charles (1861-1946)****Established Country's First Dude Ranch**

The first "dude ranch" was organized in what is now North Dakota. It began with the Eaton Brothers who operated a ranch near Medora.

**BILLY BUDGE (1852-1938)****The Rockefeller of the University of North Dakota**

One man, with very little education, but with determination and important political and economic connections saved the University of North Dakota. Because of the success William "Billy" Budge had in the mid-1890s in raising money to keep the University solvent, historian Louis Geiger in *University of the Northern Plains* labeled Budge, "The Rockefeller of the University of North Dakota."

**F. JAY HAYNES (1853-1921)****First Official Photographer of Yellowstone Park**

The first official photographer of Yellowstone National Park owned and operated a photography studio in Fargo, North Dakota at the same time. F. Jay Haynes was a pioneer photographer in what is now North Dakota. The pictures he took of the luscious wheat fields of the Red River Valley, the Native Americans in their colorful attire, and the massive trains stirred excitement when they were published in a number of eastern journals. There is no doubt that Haynes played a major role in causing many people to decide to settle in northern Dakota Territory.

**CHARLES DAZEY (1855-1938)****Bonanza Farmer & Noted Playwright**

A North Dakota bonanza farmer also became a prolific author of plays, poems, and short stories. Charles T. Dazey had a bonanza farm in Barnes County and donated the land to establish the town of Dazey. He then turned out scores of plays, short stories, and movie scripts.

**HEBER CREEL (1855-1932)****The Father of the City Devils Lake**

The founder of one of the larger cities in North Dakota wrote a dictionary for the Cheyenne language, had a World War II liberty ship named in his honor and was also implicated in the killing of two young land speculators. H. M. Creel was a West Point graduate who spent most of his adult life in central North Dakota.

**JOHN COWAN (1858-1917)****North Dakota's Most Popular State Executive of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

The most popular North Dakota state executive officer of the 19<sup>th</sup> century became the first person in the state to face impeachment charges. Attorney General John F. Cowan was the only state executive to be elected to three terms in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and, while serving as district court judge, he became the first North Dakotan to receive impeachment charges. However, in a 1911 senate hearing, he was cleared of the charges.

**SAMUEL HOLLAND (1859-1937)****The Henry Ford of North Dakota**

When Henry Ford first started manufacturing automobiles in 1903, there was a man in North Dakota who was also producing self-propelled vehicles. At least five years earlier, Samuel Holland, a Park River blacksmith, had manufactured a high-wheel vehicle with a steam engine. For the next ten years, Holland built several types of vehicles with two, three and four wheels, most of which had gasoline engines.

**WILLIAM MURPHY (1859-1918)****Grand Forks Newspaperman Transformed Minneapolis Tribune into a Major Newspaper**

The man who first envisioned that journalism should become an academic profession in the Midwest had earlier been a newspaper editor-publisher in Grand Forks. From 1882 to 1889, William J. Murphy published *The Grand Forks Plainsdealer*, one of the two major newspapers

in the city. Murphy was also the person most responsible for turning *The Minneapolis Tribune* into a world-class newspaper.

### **FRED NASH (1860-1926)**

#### **From Peach Salesman to International Food Wholesaler Giant**

The second largest publicly traded food wholesaler in the nation began in Grand Forks in 1889 with one product – peaches. This happened purely by accident when a boxcar of peaches arrived in Grand Forks without a buyer. Seeing a great opportunity, the three Nash brothers - Fred, Edgar and Willis - borrowed money from a local bank, took possession of the peaches and went on the road selling to stores in Grand Forks and the surrounding community. The Nash Brothers, later Nash Finch, had prior experience in selling produce when this opportunity availed itself in 1889. They had operated small tobacco, confectionery and fruit stores in Devils Lake, Park River and Grand Forks.

### **JORGINE ROEN (1867-1937)**

#### **Patron Saint of Oak Grove**

A 20-year old immigrant Norwegian woman, barely able to speak English, arrived in Fargo in 1887 and eventually owned 3 stores in downtown Fargo, 5 homes in Fargo, and farm land in Richland, Kidder, and Pembina counties. She did all of this despite the fact that she gave away much of her earnings to charities and spent the last 22 years of her life volunteering nearly all of her time to school and church activities. Jorgine Roen donated thousands of dollars towards a parochial school, scholarships, missionary work, her church, and many other needy causes. It has been written that, “Without her efforts and generosity, Oak Grove Lutheran High School would not have survived those difficult early years.”

### **JAMES FOLEY (1874-1939)**

#### **North Dakota's First Nationally Celebrated Poet**

For 25 years, public school children throughout North Dakota celebrated “Foley Day” every February 4 in honor of James W. Foley. Who was this man, the only person from the state to have a special day of recognition named in his honor? He was the first person from North Dakota to frequently draw national recognition for his writing.

### **USHER BURDICK (1879-1960)**

#### **Political Giant in North Dakota for Over 50 Years**

One man from North Dakota was a college football hero, a school teacher, a lawyer, an author, and also operated several banks, helped found a town, and changed the political landscape of the state. As a youth, Usher Burdick was considered a bully; however, once he got on the right track, he became a powerful force in North Dakota.

### **HARRY McLEAN (1883-1961)**

#### **Canada's James J. Hill**

According to *Time* magazine, the son of Bismarck's first elected mayor received 27,000 marriage proposals. The last time I checked, this is nearly double the Guinness official world record of 14,357 received by media icon Riz Khan. If *Time* can verify its claim, I believe Harry F. McLean's name should be entered into the record book. Some of the factors that may have drawn the attention of the ladies were his enormous wealth, lavish generosity, and deep concern

for the people around him. Whenever any of his workers were killed or seriously injured on one of his projects, he would have a cairn erected at the worksite with their name transcribed on it. Eight of his cairns were erected in Canada, and another one was built in Washburn, North Dakota, the county seat of McLean County, named after Harry's father, John McLean.

### **MINNIE CRAIG (1883-1966)**

#### **America's First Female Speaker of a State Legislature**

North Dakota was the first state in the nation to have a woman in a legislative leadership position. Minnie Craig, of Esmond, was elected by her colleagues to serve as speaker of the North Dakota House in January 1933. This was not a token position - the speaker is the presiding officer of the state house of representatives. Also, 1933 was not an ordinary year in the state. North Dakota was severely suffering from the Depression after years of drought and grasshoppers, and the state treasury had no money. Farmers were losing their land all over the state because of mortgage foreclosures, and many banks had closed. More than a third of the population lived on relief.

### **BORIS KARLOFF (1887-1969)**

#### **Portrayer of Frankenstein's Monster Lived in Minot for a Year**

Frankenstein's monster was seen, in person, by many people in Minot, North Dakota for over a year. Yet, citizens of Minot and the surrounding community were not afraid of him – rather, they were entertained by him. This is because he was Boris Karloff, an aspiring actor who would later become famous for creating, on screen, the characters of Frankenstein's monster, the Mummy, Fu Manchu, James Lee Wong, and countless other ghouls, monsters, and mad scientists.

### **PAUL FJELDE (1892-1984)**

#### **North Dakota Sculptor's Work Became Rallying Symbol for Norway during World War II**

One of the most open and active forms of defiance of Nazi Germany's occupation during World War II revolved around a sculpted work by a person from North Dakota. On July 4, 1940, thousands of Norwegians gathered around the Lincoln Memorial Bust in Oslo's Frogner Park. This act was in direct defiance of the Nazis, who forbade all public demonstrations in Norway. The bust of Abraham Lincoln was sculpted by Paul Fjelde, who grew up on a farm near Wilton, North Dakota.

### **DAVE ELMAN (1900-1967)**

#### **Radio Star from North Dakota Helped FBI Nab Nazi Spy Ring**

"The man of 100,000 hobbies" was born in North Dakota. That was the sobriquet used to describe Dave Elman. He not only had many hobbies, but was able to turn a number of those interests into profitable ventures. Elman was a noted lyricist, radio host, comedian, writer, instructor, and hypnotist. He also helped the FBI nab Nazi spies during World War II.

**TOMMY TUCKER (1903-1989)**  
**Popular Band Leader Born in North Dakota**

Two people who were born in North Dakota received widespread national recognition for leading big bands during the popular dance era of the 1930s, 40s, and 50s. Most people from the state readily identify Lawrence Welk, but bandleader Tommy Tucker also had a large following.

**JOHN STEEVES (1904-1998)**  
**North Dakota Born Ambassador Brought Stability to Afghanistan**

An American Ambassador to Afghanistan, who kept that country from coming under Soviet domination during the critical Cold War years, was born in North Dakota. John Steeves was a school teacher who later went into diplomatic service, rising to the rank of U.S. Ambassador.

**LEO KILLION (1908-2000)**  
**Hit Song of World War II Composed by Man Born in North Dakota**

A hit song containing Swedish double-talk lyrics recorded by many big name American singers and bands was composed by a noted labor lawyer born in Towner, North Dakota. *The Hut Sut Song*, written and scored by Leo V. Killion in 1941, was a huge hit and has been recorded by Bing Crosby, Dinah Shore, Mel Torme, Nat King Cole, Connee Boswell, the Andrews Sisters, the Platters, the King Sisters, and popular bands fronted by Freddie Martin, Kay Kyser, Horace Heidt, Sammy Kaye, and Spike Jones. It has been featured in the movies *San Antonio Rose*, *From Here to Eternity*, *A Christmas Story*, *Pollock* and the cartoon *Horton Hatches the Egg*.

**DONALD TOWNSEND (1908-2000)**  
**Grandfather of the Fast Food Business Born in North Dakota**

“The grandfather of the fast food business” was born and raised in North Dakota. This quoted statement appeared in the April 2, 2000 *New York Times* obituary of Donald Townsend. In 1954, Donald, his brother Neal and Alan Kay opened Tad’s Steakhouse, a fast food eatery in San Francisco which was turned into a restaurant chain.

**LINC COMMON (1909-1981)**  
**Inventor of Tang Instant Orange Drink from North Dakota**

The inventor of the instant orange drink “Tang” was born and raised in North Dakota. Linc Common invented the powdered formula for the drink in the late 1950s, but it took the space program of the 1960s to make Tang a common household beverage.

**JOSEPH ENRIGHT (1910-2000)**  
**North Dakota Born Submarine Commander Sunk World’s Largest Enemy Vessel**

The largest enemy vessel ever sunk was destroyed by a submarine that was under the command of a man born in North Dakota. A U.S. Naval Historical Center writer called this incident “the largest single victory of the submarine war.” The *Shinano* was a World War II Japanese superbattleship that was converted to an aircraft carrier after Japan lost four carriers at the Battle of Midway in June 1942. It displaced 62,000 tons, making it the largest aircraft carrier built at the time. When Captain Joseph Enright, skipper of the U.S. submarine Archerfish, first spotted the vessel on November 28, 1944, he initially thought it was an oil tanker.

**VIRGINIA BRUCE (1910-1982)**  
**Hollywood Movie Star Born in North Dakota**

One of the most popular movie stars of the 1930s was raised in Fargo. Virginia Bruce was not only a Hollywood glamour actress of the 30s, but also the wife of one of the biggest heartthrobs of the silver screen, John Gilbert.

**RAY BELL (1911-2000)**  
**Smokey the Bear Rescuer**

The man responsible for saving the life of Smokey the Bear had earlier lived on a farm one mile southwest of Bergen, North Dakota in McHenry County. Ray Bell not only saved the life of the small bear cub who was injured during a forest fire in 1950, but he and his family also raised the cub in their home until the bear was big enough to be placed in the National Zoo in Washington, D.C., where it became the zoo's biggest attraction.

**HAROLD JOHNSON (1912-1983)**  
**Army Chief Critical of Handling of Vietnam War**

The Chief of Staff of the United States Army, from 1964 to 1968, during the time of great escalation of the war in Vietnam, was from North Dakota. General Harold K. Johnson survived the Bataan Death March and 41 months as a Japanese prisoner of war, won the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions during the Korean Conflict, and became the second youngest person to serve as Chief of Staff. Early in 1965, General Johnson became furious with the way President Lyndon Johnson and the Pentagon were conducting the war. He seriously considered resigning and going public to try and bring about changes in the war policy. However, he didn't follow through with it and, shortly before he died in 1983, he said, "I count that as the greatest moral failure of my life." In 2006, military generals who called for the resignation of Donald Rumsfeld cited General Johnson as their reason for doing so.

**COYA KNUTSON (1912-1996)**  
**First Woman to Serve in Congress from Minnesota or the Dakotas**

A woman from North Dakota was elected to the U.S. Congress in 1954. Cornelia Gjesdal was born on a farm near Edmore in Ramsey County on August 22, 1912. She was given the nickname "Coya" at age two, since that is how she pronounced her first name. In 1954, she successfully ran for the U.S. House from District 9 in Minnesota. Coya Knutson became the first woman from Minnesota, or any of the surrounding states, to be elected to Congress.

**CLINT HILL (1932- )**  
**Protector of Jacqueline Kennedy When Her Husband Was Assassinated**

According to the book *Between You and Me*, Mike Wallace wrote about an interview he did on *60 Minutes* that moved him the most deeply. The interview was with a man born and raised in North Dakota. Clint Hill was the secret service agent assigned to protect First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy. On November 22, 1963 in Dallas, he was riding on the fender of the car directly behind President Kennedy's limo when the President was shot. In seconds, he leaped over the back of the limo ahead of him, shielding Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy from further incident. However, he was too late. The third, and final, shot had mortally wounded President Kennedy and, for the next 12 years, Hill blamed himself for not getting there sooner to take that third shot.

**BRUCE PETERSON (1933-2006)**  
**Inspiration for *The Six Million Dollar Man***

Steve Austin, the bionic character on the television show *The Six Million Dollar Man*, was largely based on a person born in North Dakota. Bruce Peterson was an experienced NASA research pilot who was testing the Northrop M2-F2 wingless “lifting body” aircraft on May 10, 1967 when it crashed at Edward Air Force Base in California. Peterson miraculously survived, but he was badly injured and required numerous surgeries to repair his body. Dr. Martin Caidin, an author who specialized in science and science-fiction books, was at the site of the crash and was inspired to write the 1972 best-selling novel “Cyborg,” which served as the basis for the March 7, 1973 television pilot *The Six Million Dollar Man*. The pilot was made into a television series, and the crash at the beginning of each episode was actual footage taken by a camera inside Peterson’s cockpit.

**JAMES McPHERSON (1936- )**  
**Pulitzer Prize Winner from North Dakota**

The 1989 Pulitzer Prize winning author in history was born in Valley City, North Dakota. James McPherson is the only winner of the Pulitzer to have been born in this state. Maxwell Anderson, the Pulitzer Prize winner in drama in 1933, grew up in Jamestown but was born in Pennsylvania. McPherson taught history at Princeton University from 1962 to 2004, and he wrote a number of award-winning books. His roots in education and writing run deep in North Dakota and the Red River Valley.

**CLIFF CUSHMAN (1938-?1965)**  
**Olympic Star Killed in Vietnam**

A North Dakota native who won a silver medal at the 1960 Olympics in the 400-meter hurdles was killed in Vietnam in 1966. Cliff Cushman was an outstanding athlete from Grand Forks who established state records that have stood for nearly 50 years and was an inspiration to many youngsters in the area with a letter he wrote to North Dakota newspapers in 1964.

**KENT HIGGINS (1939-1996)**  
**Creator of the Century Calendar**

North Dakota's first public defender also created the Perpetual or Century Calendar. Kent Higgins was a man of many talents who saw the world as beautiful and people as basically good. He wanted to do all he could to help the unfortunate and make the world a better place.