

Modern Vice Presidency • Journalist Lorena Hickok • Political Equality Club

MINNESOTA HISTORY

The Quarterly of the
Minnesota Historical Society

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Articles

88 **The Making of the Modern Vice Presidency:
A Personal Reflection** *by Richard Moe*

Walter Mondale's chief of staff remembers how his boss and Jimmy Carter transformed the vice presidency, a "constitutional afterthought" long mired in "obscurity, derision, and irrelevance," into an integral part of government.

100 **"Auntie Gopher": Lorena Hickok Tackles
College Football** *by David Kaszuba*

A woman sportswriter? Shunning the society pages, a no-nonsense reporter blazes new paths during three memorable Gopher seasons.

113 **The Political Equality Club of Minneapolis**
by Kristin Mapel Bloomberg and Erin Parrish

With patience, grit, and humor, the hard-working women of Minnesota's longest-lived equal rights organization advocate woman suffrage—and a broad spectrum of reforms.

Departments

86 **Minnesota's Greatest Generation**

Soldier, husband, and father Augustine Martinez recalls the trauma of being called up, as told to Thomas Saylor.

87 **LandMarks**

Larry Millett revisits a zippy little gas station built in an era of in-your-face design.

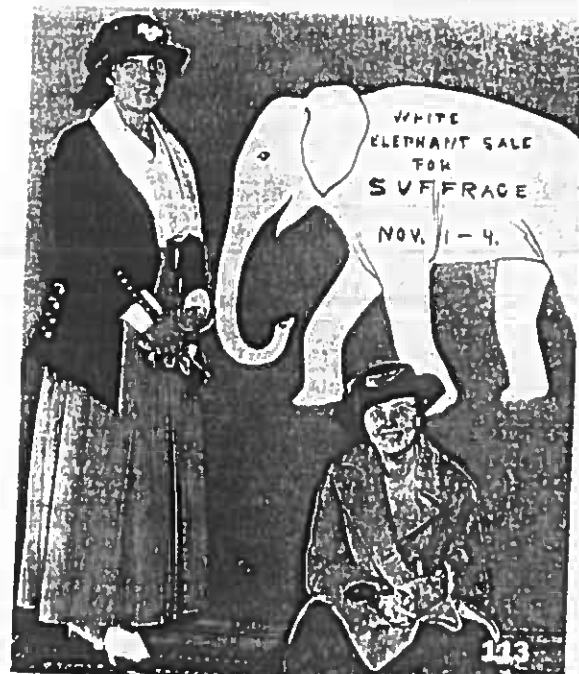
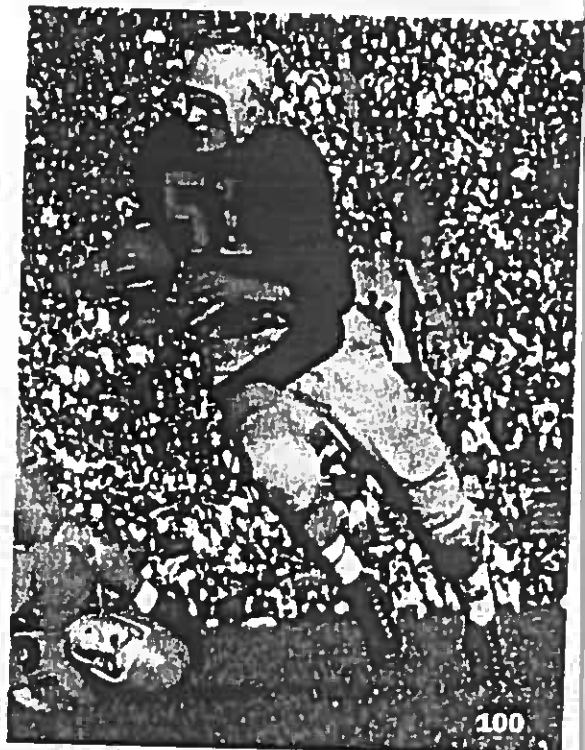
123 **Book Reviews**

Northern Pacific Railroad • African Americans in Red Wing • Girls High School Basketball • Stories by Minnesota Women in Sports

126 **News & Notes**

128 **EyeWitness**

Sarah Johnson presents pitcher Charles Bender, one of only three native-born Minnesotans in the National Baseball Hall of Fame.



Charles Albert Bender



FACING THE CAMERA squarely in his Philadelphia Athletics uniform is pitcher Charles Albert Bender, one of only three native-born Minnesotans in the National Baseball Hall of Fame.* Native American players were often the target of ridicule in the early 1900s, and Bender was known as “Chief,” a derogatory nickname he shared with other Indian ballplayers of the time.

Bender was born in 1884 on White Earth Reservation near Brainerd, the son of an Ojibwe mother and German father. Standing six-foot-two and an all-around athlete, he was recruited for the Athletics after graduating Pennsylvania’s Carlisle Indian school and attending Dickinson College. A right-hander, he pitched for the A’s from 1903 to 1914 and was a key contributor to the team’s World Series championships in 1910, 1911, and 1913. One of the most celebrated pitchers of his era—in 1910 he threw a no-hitter, went 23 for 5 with an earned-run average of 1.58, and batted .269 with 16 runs batted in—he is also credited with developing the nickel curve, a predecessor to the modern-day slider. Though pitching has changed since his day, Bender’s credo still rings true: “Without control, you are like a ship without a rudder, no matter how much velocity you have.”

Unlike many ballplayers of his era who were hard-living ruffians, Bender was, as one roommate said, “one of the kindest and finest men who ever lived.” Even opponents described him as “classy.” Handling racial slights with grace, he disproved popular notions of inferiority, perhaps easing the way for other players.

Bender was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1954 but died before the August ceremony. Athletic’s manager Connie Mack, winner of more games than any other in baseball history, once said, “If I had all the men



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I’ve ever handled and they were in their prime and there was one game I wanted to win above all others, Albert would be my man.”

—SARAH JOHNSON

Sarah Johnson is a writer and graduate student at the University of St. Thomas whose love of history is only equaled by her love of baseball.

Quote sources: Tom Swift, “Do You Recognize This Face?” *Game-day*, July 2003, p. 1; Warren Goldstein, “Chief Bender,” in *Encyclopedia of North American Indians*, ed. Frederick E. Hoxie (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1996); Bender biography, www.baseballhalloffame.org.

For more on America’s national pastime, visit *Baseball as America*, a National Baseball Hall of Fame traveling exhibit at the Minnesota History Center November 24, 2006, through March 4, 2007.

*The other two are Dave Winfield and Paul Molitor.