

MEMOIRS OF A PIONEER TEACHER

By Harriet Patrick Gilstrap

FOREWORD

These memoirs are contributed to The Chronicles by Harriet Patrick Gilstrap who at the age of ninety years speaks in a special note of her pleasure in recalling her life in Oklahoma territorial days. She is the daughter of the late Samuel Lee Patrick who was appointed U. S. Indian Agent by President Benjamin Harrison in 1889, to serve at the old Sac and Fox Agency in what is now Lincoln County. She was a teacher in the Indian schools for a number of years, and made the run on horseback for a homestead claim when the Sac and Fox country was opened to white settlement in 1891. Mrs. Gilstrap has written her Memoirs at the request of her friends in Delta Kappa Gamma, National Society of Women Teachers, in which members of a committee (among them Mrs. Lavinia P. Dennis who specially sponsored the writing) have promoted the history of pioneer teachers in this country. Appreciation and thanks are expressed by Mrs. Gilstrap for the help in taking dictation and typing the first draft of her manuscript given by Mrs. Alma Wallace who served many years in the office of her husband, the late Major Harry Gilstrap of Oklahoma City.

—The Editor

THE MEMOIRS

I was born February 1, 1870, on a farm near Centropolis in Franklin County, Kansas. We moved to Ottawa when I was three years old. When we moved to town, my brother and I were left with a neighbor over night. When he and I were taken to our new home, the weather was cold and we were covered with buffalo robes during the drive. I do not remember much about the house except that it was on the west side of town. One time I ran away to visit a little girl. I graduated from high school in 1888, and attended Ottawa Baptist University for a year. In April, 1888, the Oklahoma country was opened for settlement, and Father and Mother moved down here in June. I was sent to Illinois to stay with my three maiden aunts, Father's sisters.

In September, my parents came for me, and we came to Oklahoma City. We stopped at a hotel where the board walls of the bed-room had such large cracks that we had to put out the lights before we could prepare for bed. It took three or four days in Oklahoma City to buy supplies for the Agency which was located east about seventy-five miles on the Sac and Fox Indian Reservation. My brother who had been working in a bank in Ottawa, Kansas, came in one night very proudly wearing cowboy boots and carrying a gun. I jumped up in surprise and more than half in fear, screaming, "You are not my brother! You are not my brother!"

We left Oklahoma City about four o'clock one afternoon and drove east on the way to the Agency, Mr. and Mrs. Graff and Birdie, their fourteen year old daughter, accompanying us: At "Choctaw City," we stayed with a man and his wife who were building a house yet unfinished with a part of the floor laid in only two rooms. The next day we drove all day in the rain and reached Wellston. The men slept on the counters in the store owned by Mr. De Weese, and the women stayed in the house, sleeping three in a bed. The baby cried all night for custard pie and milk. The next day we reached the Agency late in the afternoon.¹ For three months, I saw no other white girl except Birdie Graff.

I soon went to work in the post office located in the store owned by Chief Keokuk of the Sac and Fox tribe. I handed out and dispatched the mail as it arrived from Sapulpa one day and returned the next, weather permitting. One day a bunch of bandits, known as the Dalton Brothers, came in from the Turkey Track Ranch. They were nice and polite, and I enjoyed matching pennies with them.

After a time, I went to teach in the Shawnee School that had been in operation for many years as a government boarding school.² There was one building, the school room, dining room,

¹ The site of the old Sac and Fox Agency is about five miles south of Stroud, Oklahoma. The Agency comprised 1,500,000 acres in four reservations, on which five tribes were located: Sac and Fox, Iowa, Kickapoo, Shawnee and Potawatomi (Report signed by Samuel L. Patrick in Oklahoma, Sept. 9, 1890).

Samuel Lee Patrick was born in Massachusetts, August 10, 1833. He died at the age of ninety in Washington, D. C., and was buried at Chandler, Oklahoma. When he was four years old, he went with his parents to Ogle County, Illinois. He attended school at Mt. Morris, Illinois and at Beloit Seminary at Beloit, Wisconsin. He sailed from New York for San Francisco in 1852, and remained in California four years, gold mining. He enlisted in the 34th Illinois Infantry at the outbreak of the Civil War, and advanced to the rank of captain and was discharged in 1864 because of gun shot wounds. He fought in the Battle of Lookout Mountain and other noted battles. He was shot in the throat at the Battle of Shiloh, and lay all night in the water, his boots filled with water and blood. He was very ill, his weight fell to ninety pounds, and an abscess formed on his back before he was sent home. After the war, he went into the merchantile business in Illinois, and married Mary Farron at Elgin, in 1867. The young couple moved within a year to a farm in Kansas, and then later settled at Ottawa where he afterward served twelve years as Clerk of the District Court, before he was appointed as the Sac and Fox Agent in the Indian Territory. At different times, he had lived on the old Sac and Fox Reservation in Illinois and, also, on the Sac and Fox Reservation in Kansas. Some of the battles in the war against Chief Black Hawk of the Sac and Fox in the 1830's were fought on land that was included on his brother's farm in Illinois.

² The site of the Shawnee Boarding School (first buildings erected 1876) is now the location of the Shawnee Agency and Indian Sanitorium on State Highway 18, south of the North Canadian River between Shawnee and Tecumseh, Pottawatomie County. Mention of early days at the old Shawnee School is made by Thomas Wildcat Alford in *Civilization* as told to Florence Drake (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1936), p. 131.

kitchen, living room and guest bedroom downstairs. There was a sewing room and bedrooms on the second floor. Books were furnished by the Government. Some of the pupils were anxious to learn, others were very indifferent.

My stay at the Shawnee School was made horrible by my constant fight with bedbugs. They had really taken over! They were in curtains, door facings, everywhere. Every morning I got up and threw my mattress out of the window onto the roof. The matron was quite indifferent about the pests, and said that nothing could be done about them. I finally got rid of them in my room by papering the walls and painting the wood work. But it was all at the price of constant vigilance. Another trouble was the drinking water. I had always drunk a lot of water but here the water was hauled in barrels, and the very sight of it sickened me. I was the only teacher for all the grades, with a salary of \$50.00 a month, paid quarterly, a very good salary in those days. I taught at the Shawnee School in 1890, and 1891, returning to the Agency a wiser young woman—much wiser.

Father erected new buildings at the Agency, including a girls' dormitory and a laundry for the Sac and Fox Boarding School. The original building was of brick and housed both boys and girls. A builder employed in the States came and erected the new building with three school rooms on the first floor and a large recreation room on the second floor where we had our entertainments. Young people would come down from Chandler, and then after a big dinner at the Agency would dance in the recreation room.

Jim Thorpe went to school to me, an incorrigible youngster.³

He had a twin brother whose name was Charley, a sweet gentle little boy. After I went back to teach at the Sac and Fox Agency, there was an epidemic of typhoid fever. The superintendent was very ill. Many of the pupils were ill, too, and I took care of them, giving them medicine every hour but by the time that I had made the rounds, it was time to begin again. Charlie Thorpe had also contracted pneumonia. I took care of him at night with the other children. Mr. and Mrs. Thorpe came one night to relieve me, and I tried to get a little rest. At 5:00 a.m., word came that Charley was worse. I went to him and took him in my arms, put his little feet in mustard water, and sent for the doctor. But the poor little fellow just lay back and died. That was in 1897.

³ Jim Thorpe became famous in history as the World's greatest athlete, winner of the Olympic Games in Sweden in 1912. For a brief sketch of Jim Thorpe see *Appendix* at the end of this article.

One boy who came to the Shawnee School was Ernest Spybuck.⁴ He refused to learn but would sit all day long and draw or paint. Some years ago, I visited him in Shawnee and he gave me a painting of two horses, a white man standing by one and an Indian sitting in the saddle on the other. I thought the painting so good that I have presented it to the Historical Society as another mute testimony to the innate ability that resides in man regardless of race and education.

The children were all well dressed at the schools where I taught. The girls wore navy blouses in winter and cotton dresses in summer. The boys wore uniforms. The girls worked in the sewing rooms where all of their clothes were made. Some children attended school for only half a day, and worked on the farm or in the sewing room or in the laundry, the other half.

I rode horseback in those days. There were roads to Shawnee and Sapulpa but no other roads. Father bought us a riding horse in Oklahoma City, and we called him "Wallace." There were five Indian tribes under the jurisdiction of this Agency—Sac and Fox, Shawnee, Potawatomi, Iowa and Kickapoo. We saw many of the Indian men naked except for a breechclout. Father gave the Indians English names; first came the names of the presidents, then the vice-presidents, then prominent people of the day. I rode out from the Agency to the Indian dances. The Indian men rode horseback, and the women rode behind the men. They generally all wore feathers, not beautiful plumes, but eagle feathers. Later after the opening of the country to white settlement, the young people in the community had dances of their own, mostly square dances with fiddlers. This was all strange to me for I had gone to dancing school in the North and knew the polkas and waltzes.

Father and Mother went to Oklahoma City about every two weeks, and always stayed at the "Grand Hotel" located where the Oklahoma Club is now. Payments to the Indians were made at the Agency twice a year. A company or troop of Cavalry would come to Oklahoma City from Fort Reno to serve as a guard in bringing the money over to the Agency. One time on the way home, Father and Mother stopped at Choctaw City for the night, and for safe keeping, Father hid a packet of several thousand dollars in the mattress. Ten miles on the way to the Agency in the morning, Father suddenly thought to ask Mother if she had the money. She had forgotten it, too, so it was an anxious ride back to Mrs. Shotwell's where they had spent the night. She, luckily, had found it soon after their departure and

⁴ Earnest Spybuck was recognized later in the field of art, one of the first American Indians known for his beautiful paintings of Indian life. For a brief sketch of Earnest Spybuck see *Appendix* at the end of this article.

had hidden it in a flour barrel. Needless to say, Mrs. Shotwell was well rewarded for her care.

There was always a great deal of company at the Sac and Fox Agency. Folks came down from Ottawa, Kansas, to hunt in this part of the Territory where there was plenty of wild turkey, deer and quail. Mother always had a lot of entertaining to do, and had difficulty in training Indian girls as help, especially in table service. I remember one time when Vice President Morton⁵ was our guest, Mother had gone to great pains to instruct a new girl. You can imagine Mother's embarrassment when the girl removed the plates and volunteered the information, "You will have to keep your forks." There were always many special agents and officials to be entertained though there was a good hotel near.

Housekeeping was not easy in those days. There was no ice but we had a very good well-room in the kitchen where the food would stay cool for hours. We had butter shipped down from Ottawa in kegs, also pickles and many other items packed in bags. I wonder now how Mother managed all these things. There was a laborer who took care of the horses and did other chores, and, of course, "boarded" with us. All that he wanted to eat was "side meat" and potatoes.

The summer of 1891, I spent at the Agency making blue print maps of the places allotted the Indians at the opening of the reservation lands in September. There were surveyors and a great many people about all of the time. Every Indian had an allotment of 160 acres of his own choosing. The land on the reservation left over—or surplus—after allotting the Indians was opened to white settlement.

By proclamation of President Harrison, the land was to be opened by a run for claims on September 22, 1891.⁶ I had transferred from the Shawnee Boarding School to teach at the Agency. I knew where I wanted my claim to be, and so dismissed the children from school on the day of the Opening to make the run. My father held my horse and would not let me start until all of the people trying to stake claims were on the move. I knew there was a young man at the Agency who had chosen to try for the same claim that I had. He had hired a fast horse at Guthrie but my horse was a running horse, too. I had never been on this land but I knew where I wanted to set my stake. I out-distanced everyone for when I came to the place there was no one else in sight, and my horse was very hot. I drove my stake, and then took care of the horse, rubbing him down with a cloth. A few

⁵ This was Vice President Levi P. Morton of New York, who served with President Benjamin Harrison, 1889-1893.

⁶ After the Indian allotments were made, there remained over 750,000 acres of land on 4 reservations—Sac and Fox, Iowa, Potawatomi-Shawnee—that were opened to white settlement by the Run of September 22, 1891.

minutes later, the young man who had been trying for the place came up and said, "You beat me. I got lost in the woods."

My father's laborer built a house for me but not of logs which I do not like. Then I had the place fenced with barbed wire. My mother gave me a set of silver which she had when she was married, and someone stole it. I went out to the house on my claim in the daytime but I always had someone with me for I was afraid to stay alone. However, one Saturday I sat alone hemstitching a sheet when I saw a man coming with a gun over his shoulder. I got a knife and locked the door for there was no one to call for help. The man looked in the window, and I could hear him walking around the house but he did not try to get in.

My brother, Lee Patrick, took a claim south of me. Cossett Stratton, niece of the well known writer Gene Stratton Porter, took a claim south of his. Lee and Cossette were later married. Roy Hoffman, later very prominent in Oklahoma, and a lawyer from Guthrie took a claim south of me.

I first tried to raise cattle on my claim but they died with the measles. My next venture was to raise pigs but they died with the cholera. To get final possession of my claim, I had to live on the land six months. I was the only one near me who finally proved up as all the others around me sold out for \$500 or less. Finally I sold my claim for it was costing too much money to keep it. I sold the land to D. C. Lewis, and now have lost all track of it. I sold the land for \$3,000.00, and I gained a lot of experience, too.

In 1893, Cosette, Lee and I went to Chicago to the World's Fair. Roy Hoffman joined us on a five-day trip on Lake Michigan.

At a teachers' institute, the President of Haskell Institute, a very fine Indian school at Lawrence, Kansas, asked me to go there to teach. My father did not like to have me that far away from home but he agreed that I might take twenty-three of the most promising children from the Sac and Fox Agency and enroll them in Haskell. Father went with us to Guthrie, and we camped on the way. We took the train from Guthrie, to Arkansas City where we stopped for dinner at the Harvey House. Father telegraphed ahead to Haskell that we were coming so there would be someone to meet us at the depot. Neither Father nor I knew that two of the boys had some liquor. When we were leaving the Harvey House, Mr. Sidicum took the bottles from the boys and put them on the train and they caused us no trouble.

We arrived at Lawrence about 5:00 a.m., and there was no one to meet us as Father's telegram had not been delivered. I telephoned out to the Institute and someone came to meet us

immediately. It had been a hard trip and an especially hard night with the children sleeping in the chair cars. One little girl about eight years of age tried to undress all night long in her sleep. She was the youngest of the group of the twenty-three from the Agency, and I am sure was very homesick. Poor little girl! There were about six teachers and children from other Indian agencies at Haskell. Of the twenty-three from our Agency, there were only two or three who stayed until they finished the courses in the school.

A terrible attack of sciatica caused me to give up teaching at Haskell. I was on crutches for three months. Mother came and spent a month with me but I finally had to give up and go home. Father and Mother were in Ottawa, Kansas, at the time. When I recovered from the illness, I was anxious to go back to work, and was assigned the principalship at Quapaw Agency, in north-eastern Indian Territory. After teaching at Quapaw, I went back to the Sac and Fox Agency where my brother was now Agent.⁷ Here I met Mr. Gilstrap, a newspaper man from Chandler. He had come down from Chandler to straighten out the records of the Agency, which were in a very bad shape. It took him several months and he was to receive 20% of what had been saved but he did not receive a cent. However, he saved the previous agent from a lot of trouble. I had always said that I would marry a professional man, and he would be a doctor, a lawyer or a newspaper man. I had met Mr. Gilstrap before this but did not fall in love with him until he came to the Agency.⁸ I just "fell" for him and he for me! I thought that I was an old maid and would not think of being anything else. He had never married either.

At this time, my brother, Lee, was at the Agency when an epidemic of small pox broke out. The school was closed and my brother told me that he wanted me to take his little girl of three years to Illinois immediately. As I boarded the train at Chandler, Mr. Gilstrap said, "When are you coming back?" "When you come for me," I replied. That was Christmas 1898.

We were married in Illinois on the next Sunday after Easter, 1899, in the home of my aunt, Mrs. Ed Patrick, with seventeen guests present. My mother and father had been there for sometime settling an estate. My wedding clothes were made in

⁷ Samuel Lee Patrick served as Indian Agent at the Sac and Fox Agency until 1895 when he was succeeded in the position by Edward L. Thomas. Agent Thomas was succeeded by Lee Patrick at the Sac and Fox Agency in 1897.

Thomas Wildcat Alford, *op. cit.*, p. 159, says: "Early in 1893, I again entered the Indian service as a teacher of farming to the Kickapoos under Samuel L. Patrick, U.S. Indian Agent, who was the father of Lee Patrick whom I have mentioned before. Both of these men were of high moral character and gave their very best efforts to the welfare of those under their charge."

Elgin, Illinois, my mother's old home.⁸ My wedding dress was a suit with a train, made of many colored cloth and trimmed with black braid. The skirt had a "dust" ruffle. I also wore a corset and many "ruffles." There was a white shirt waist trimmed with many beads. My hat was like one that I had seen at Marshall Fields in Chicago, marked \$15.00. That was far too expensive, so it delighted me to find its duplicate in Elgin for \$7.50. It was a small, rimmed hat trimmed with violets. With some roses added for beauty, it was very becoming. My shoes were of black cloth with high tops embroidered. My stockings were silk. A brown, polka dot dress with changeable silk underskirt was part of my trousseau.⁹

We lived at Chandler where Mr. Gilstrap was postmaster for twelve years.¹⁰ He was always a member of the National Guard, so when World War I began, he had to go. Lee, our oldest son—only seventeen—, went with him, and carried a ninety pound pack on his back though he weighed only 107 pounds. The two were separated in France. Lee was given the Distinguished Service Cross for gallantry in action, having captured thirteen Germans as prisoners. He went through a valley where the enemy threw poison gas but he did not dare put on his gas mask because he had to keep his eyes on the prisoners. He was terribly burned, and after hospitalization in Paris, he was sent home as a casualty, leaving a hospital at Bordeaux on January 4 and reaching home March 25. I was frantic for there was no trace of him either through the Red Cross or the Salvation Army. The delay had been caused by a spinal meningitis case on the boat, and a quarantine had followed. Lee was sent to

⁸"My mother, Mary Farron was born in Algonquin, Illinois in 1848. Her girlhood home was in Elgin, and she was married there in December, 1867, to Samuel Lee Patrick, my father. He had first met my mother when she was about fifteen. The story goes that he saw her first as he was standing at the door of his first store, and she came running down the street wearing pantalets which was the style at the time. He is reported to have said, "That's the girl for me!" "

⁹"Among those who taught at the Shawnee School during those early years when the hardships were grievous was Miss Harriet, daughter of Major Samuel Patrick, who was for many years agent at the Sauk and Fox Agency. She had lived at the Indian Agency most of her life and understood Indian character She was married to Major Gilstrap, a man who is known nationally for his work of rehabilitation among veterans of World War I."—Alford, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

¹⁰Harry Gilstrap was born in Bloomington, Illinois, and moved to Kansas when he was four years old. His family lived on a farm for a time, and later lived in Arkansas City where he graduated from high school. He attended A. & M. College at Manhattan, Kansas, and after his graduation came to Chandler, Oklahoma Territory, where he started a newspaper in 1892. He always liked newspaper work, and was noted for his editorials.

San Antonio in 1919 where he was discharged.¹¹ Major Gilstrap was at Fort Deavens. I met him at Fort Worth, and we came home together.

Major Gilstrap had lived in Chandler for twenty-two years but now sold his newspaper there, and went to Washington, D.C., as secretary to Congressman Manuel Herrick from Perry, Oklahoma. We lived in Washington about four years, and then Mr. Gilstrap was placed in charge of the Veterans' Administration and came back to Oklahoma. As our second son was graduating from the University and the youngest was in prep school, I did not come back to Oklahoma until later in the year, and it was grand to get back to the state though I had enjoyed Washington. We did not find a place that suited us for sometime but finally found this new house in a new neighborhood. I said, "This is my home for the rest of my life."

Major Gilstrap was a member of the Christian Church,¹² and I was a Presbyterian though I attended several different churches as a young woman. I went to a Catholic Church for a year where I sang in the choir and took music lessons from one of the sisters. While teaching at Haskell Institute, I attended the Episcopal Church in Lawrence, Kansas. Different preachers visited Haskell, and we had a Sunday school. I taught a class of forty boys, all Indians—no denominations. They were pretty religious. I saw they *were* sometimes, many of them. I have never had a class more attentive than that class of boys. We used a quarterly and had extra helps. As time has gone on, my church has meant more to me with the passing years. The dear people of the First Christian Church have honored me with many distinctions and positions in the life of the church. One position that I value highly is having been made "Deaconess for Life."

My home is still the one picked out in Oklahoma City long ago. My sons are married, and have families of their own. I

¹¹ Major Harry and Harriet (Patrick) had three sons: Lee Gilstrap, the eldest son, regained his health, and served in World War II, in which he received the commission of lieutenant colonel. He is now an instructor at Oklahoma State University at Stillwater. Two of his three children are living: a son, Hayes, and a daughter, Mrs. Mary Lee Gilstrap Spinks whose infant son, David, is the first great-grandchild of Harriet Patrick Gilstrap (*Lincoln County News*, Pioneer Edition, September 10, 1959).

The second son, Harry, served in World War II with the Air Force in England, Africa, Sicily and Italy. He received the commission of major, and is now business editor of *The Daily News* at Amarillo, Texas. He has a son, Harry Gilstrap (III).

The third son, Sam, suffering an asthmatic condition was not in the armed forces during World War II but served with the War Intelligence in San Francisco. He has served in Cairo, Frankfort, Manila, Mexico, Teheran, San Jaun (Porto Rico), and is now Deputy Chief of Missions and Counselor of Embassy at Seoul, Korea. He has a son, Patrick, enrolled in the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, and an adopted son, Ronnie.

¹² In an automobile accident in 1935, Major Harry Gilstrap met tragic death, and his wife, Harriet (Patrick) Gilstrap was critically injured.

have seen Oklahoma literally grow from "tepees to towers," and take her place as the 46th State in our proud Union. I feel it a privilege to have lived in this time and in this state, and to have been able to contribute a small part in the creation of the great, modern Oklahoma.

APPENDIX

EARNEST SPYBUCK, SHAWNEE

Harriet Patrick Gilstrap's mention in her Memoirs that her Indian pupil, Earnest Spybuck, would do nothing but draw and paint pictures in school is interesting in recounting the story of his life. He was about eight years old when Mrs. Gilstrap was his teacher at the Shawnee Boarding School in 1889-90. His old Indian friends who knew him as a boy on the Potawatomi-Shawnee Reservation have said that he later attended Sacred Heart Mission.

Spybuck became known as one of the first native American Indian artists in this country. His paintings would probably be classified as primitive art since it is not the flat, three dimensional work of the more recent native Indian artists. The painting reproduced in colors with the caption, "Oklahoma Cowboy and Indian," on the front cover of this number of *The Chronicles*, recently presented by Mrs. Gilstrap to the Oklahoma Historical Society is a fine addition to its collections. The Society has two other original Spybuck paintings, one showing cowboys and horses at a cattle round-up; the other, Indian dancers in native costume at a camp scene with horses and riders in the midst. Today, an original Spybuck painting is counted a treasure by collectors of Indian art.

Three of Spybuck's most beautiful paintings done in December, 1912, are reproduced in colors illustrating a monograph on the native culture of the Lenape, or Delaware Indians, published by the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation in New York, 1921. These three paintings are wonderful illustrations of this work on *Religion and Ceremonies of the Lenape* by M. R. Harrington, the well known ethnologist, whose monograph here is one among a series of "Indian Notes" edited by F. W. Hodge and published in small book form by the Heye Foundation. These three scenes on the Delaware ceremonials in Oklahoma are fine in detail painted by the hand of the real Indian artist. The figures of men and women shown in the groups round about actually seem alive and ready to step forth from the picture. Both in the scene of the "Big House" ceremonial and in that of the tipi of the Peyote rite, the flames of the fire at the

center of the floor dance as the thin gray smoke rises to the outside where it is night with stars shining in the sky.¹³

Earnest Spybuck, a full blood Shawnee, was born in 1828 on the Potawatomie-Shawnee Reservation now included in Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma. His Indian name was Mah-the-la, given him by his parents, John Spybuck and his wife, Peah-che-peah-so. Earnest Spybuck died at his home on his Indian allotment in the wooded area about sixteen miles west of the City of Shawnee, in 1949.¹⁴ He was buried in the family burial ground in the vicinity of his home.

JIM THORPE

SAC AND FOX—POTAWATOMI

Mrs. Gilstrap's Memoirs also mention one of her pupils at the Sac and Fox Boarding School in about 1896. This was none other than Jim Thorpe who became famous in history as the World's greatest athlete. In the summer of 1912, he was acclaimed champion in the Olympic Games entered by athletes from all over the World, held at Stockholm, Sweden.

Jim Thorpe's full name was James Francis Thorpe, his mother having given him the Indian name *Wa-tho-huck* meaning "Bright Path." He was the twin brother of Charles Thorpe, born May 28, 1888, on the Sac and Fox Reservation near the village of Belmont located about ten miles northeast of the present City of Shawnee, Oklahoma. The twin brothers attended the Sac and Fox Boarding School, twenty-three miles from their home, and were eight years old when Charley died of pneumonia at the School. Jim afterward attended Haskell Institute at Lawrence, Kansas, and later the neighborhood school near his home for three years. He finally entered Carlisle Indian School, Pennsylvania in 1904, at the age of fifteen. By this time, he never saw a wild horse that he could not catch, saddle and ride, for he loved horses and was an expert in throwing a rope. He was also a good wrestler, runner and hunter having learned much from his father, Hiram Thorpe (Sac and Fox and part Irish), the

¹³ These three scenes are part of a series of some thirty-five paintings by Spybuck on Delaware and Shawnee life, in the museum of the American Indian, New York City.

¹⁴ Some of these notes on Spybuck and a picture of him were kindly sent the Editor by Mrs. O. D. Lewis of Shawnee, Oklahoma.

champion swimmer, wrestler, jumper, and great hunter among the Indians on the Reservation in his time.¹⁵

Jim was a little over 5 feet tall and weighed about 115 pounds when he went to Carlisle. In his prime several years later, he stood 6 feet and 1 inch and weighed 188 pounds. He became noted on Carlisle's field of sports. The Carlisle football team reached the top in the season in 1907 and again in 1908, with Jim Thorpe as its star player. Coach Glenn ("Pop") Warner at the Indian School once said, "The greatest team I ever had was that Carlisle team in 1907." He further remarked about Thorpe: "Football was just a good time for Jim. I never saw him snarl. Most of the time, he just laughed, talked to the boys on the other team, enjoyed himself." Jim went in for track in the spring of 1909, and became a winner in some big track meets as a sprinter and in high jumping, pole-vaulting, hurdling, hammer throwing. He was excellent in swimming, and liked to play baseball, tennis and lacrosse. He was an all-round athlete.

As a part of the Carlisle school program for the Indian boys and girls, Jim lived and worked on farms owned by Dutch farmers in Pennsylvania, several months every year, first in a kitchen (from which he soon asked to be transferred) at \$5.00 a month, then out-of-doors at \$8.00 a month. Soon after he had entered Carlisle his father died, and Jim felt the loss deeply. He always held his father and mother, who had died some years before, and his twin brother, Charlie, in loving memory. There was no longer a home for Jim back in Oklahoma. In the summer of 1909, two of the Indian boys who played baseball asked him to go with them to Rocky Mount, North Carolina. Many college boys played ball in summer on the semi-professional leagues that dotted the country at that time, and most of the boys changed their names while playing on such teams during the summer months. Jim hung around Rocky Mount and finally landed a job on the Rocky Mount team for \$15.00 a week. He loved to play baseball and at least could pay his board and would not have to go to a farm back in Pennsylvania. But he did not change his name. He stayed *Jim Thorpe* on the records of the Rocky Mount team.

The big year came in 1912 when athletes from all over the country were trying for a position on the American team to go to the Olympic Games in Sweden that summer. Tryouts were held in the spring at the New York Giants' Polo grounds in New York City. Jim in the tryouts from Carlisle came out first in

¹⁵ This biographical sketch is written by the Editor from notes taken from research in the field and other sources including a file of newspaper clippings on Jim Thorpe in the Editorial Department; files of *The Carlisle Arrow* published at Carlisle, Pennsylvania in 1912; and *The Jim Thorpe Story* by Gene Schoor and Henry Gilfond (Julian Messner, Inc., New York, 1951).

high jump and that won him a place on the Olympic team from the United States. Coach Warner took him and Louis Tewanima, a full blood Hopi Indian runner to Stockholm. The Scandinavian athletes stood at the top in the World at the time, and Jim Thorpe's reputation in athletics had spread abroad. There was talk about having a World champion at the big Games but such a player would have to be an all-round competitor, an all-round athlete. Finally, the European track men and coaches with the United States in agreement revived the ancient Pentathlon, a five event competition, and the Decathlon, a ten event competition on the field at Stockholm this summer.

Thousands of sport enthusiasts saw Tewanima from Carlisle win second in the 10,000 meter race. Then Thorpe was seen winning the Pentathlon composed of a 200-meter dash, running broad jump, throwing the discus, throwing the javelin and 1,500 meter run. He came out first in these events except in throwing the javelin, in which he was third.

Crowds were filled with excitement watching the Decathlon, all the events in one afternoon. This was a series of ten contests: 100-meter dash, running broad jump, 110-meter hurdle race, putting the 16-pound shot, 400-meter dash, running high jump, throwing the javelin, throwing the discus, pole vault, 1,500 meter run. Scoring in the Pentathlon was by allowing 1,000 points for each performance equal to the Olympic record for that event, the number of points that a contestant would win being determined by how near he came to the Olympic record. Out of the possible 10,000 points, Jim Thorpe scored 8,413.95 points, and his nearest competitor scored 7,742.49 points.

The great American Indian athlete, James Thorpe, had won the highest honors at the Olympiad. He was presented a bronze bust of the King of Sweden by his Majesty himself, for winning the Pentathlon. The replica of a Viking ship was presented him by the Czar of Russia for winning the Decathlon. When these handsome trophies besides medals and diplomas were handed him by the King of Sweden, the King said: "You, sir, are the greatest athlete in the World."

The press all over America and elsewhere recounted the story of Jim Thorpe at the Olympic Games. *The Christian Advocate* gave a fine yet conservative account saying that all boys covet to be perfect physically and that it would be interesting to read the story of Jim's training. One paragraph in this account sums up the thought here:

Smooth, even development, without knots or bumps, has marked the Sac and Fox Indian's progress all along. Most remarkable of all, possibly, is the simple fact that he clearly demonstrated to the world by his marvelous performances at Stockholm that he is the greatest athlete in the world by only revealing a bare third of the possibilities that lie in his youthful, alert body.

That fall the Carlisle football team played almost to perfection, and came out a leader in the college football season. Jim Thorpe for a second time won a place on the All-American team, having scored 25 touchdowns and 198 points in the single season for his Indian school. This was a great time in his life, his last year as a student at Carlisle.

In January, 1913, clouds appeared. A sports writer in a New England paper wrote a two or three line note that Jim Thorpe had played professional baseball on the Rocky Mount team in the Eastern Carolina league in 1909. The note shook the sports world. Jim was asked for an explanation for if he had played professional ball, it would debar him from his recent honors in the Olympic Games. He was stoically quiet saying that he could not figure out the situation, and that he certainly would hate to have to hand back his trophies won in the Olympiad. He said he thought that everyone knew that he had played baseball on the Rocky Mount team. He loved to play baseball and had not played for the money there was in it. Authorities of the Olympic Games, especially the Europeans, ruled and closed down on Jim, his trophies were taken away from him and sent back to Europe. This was a blow that marred his standing in the World. However, his marvelous achievement as an athlete at the Olympic Games in Sweden in 1912 will remain on the books of history to the end of time.

After leaving Carlisle in 1913, Jim began a fine record in Major League Baseball, playing nearly seven years at different times with the New York Giants, the Cincinnati Reds and the Boston Braves. He later played professional football, and was the first President of the American Professional Football Association. In World War II, he served in the U.S. Merchant Marine. In his late life, he played some parts in the movies at Hollywood, and in 1950 Warner Brothers began production on the story of Jim Thorpe's life. The Associated Press took a poll among leading sports writers and broadcasters throughout this country to name the greatest in sport, and out of 339 ballots, Jim Thorpe received 252 votes. In a count of points, he had 875 to Babe Ruth's 579. His biographers, Gene Schoor and Henry Gilford, writing on this poll, state in *The Jim Thorpe Story*:

Jim's total was almost as great as the combined score of the next three men in the poll. Except for Babe Ruth's, his total points almost equalled the combined points of every other man named by the sports writers and broadcasters. Jim Thorpe's magnificence as a sport figure is almost unbelievable.

There has never been an athlete on the American scene, or the world scene, to equal the versatility, the prowess, the vigor, the fighting spirit, the sheer ability of Jim Thorpe.

The great athlete, Jim Thorpe, died of a heart attack at the age of sixty-four, in Lomita, a suburb of Los Angeles, California,

on Saturday, March 28, 1953. His remains were interred at Mauk Chunk, Pennsylvania, near which is the site of the long ago abandoned Carlisle Indian School, and the name of the town changed to "Thorpe," in his honor.

This year (1960) the National Hall of Fame for Famous American Indians dedicates in his honor, a beautiful bronze bust of Jim Thorpe, on the Indian Hall of Fame grounds at Anadarko, Oklahoma.

—M.H.W.