Today in History - May 28

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Today's Stories: **Ohio Woman's Rights Convention** | **Jim Thorpe**

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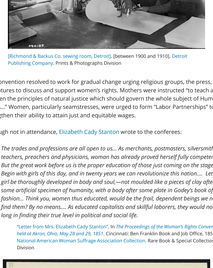
Ohio Woman's Rights Convention

On **May 28** and 29, 1851, the Ohio Woman's Rights Convention met in Akron. Mrs. Frances D. Gage, convention president, began the proceedings with a stirring call to arms:

> *Are not the natural wants and emotions of humanity common too, and shared equally by both sexes? Does man hunger and thirst, suffer cold and heat more than woman? Does he love and hate, hope and fear, joy and sorrow more than woman? Does his heart thrill with a deeper pleasure in doing good? Can his soul writhe in more bitter agony under the consciousness of evil or wrong? Is the sunshine more glorious, the air more quiet, the sounds of harmony more soothing, the perfume of flowers more exquisite, or forms of beauty more soul-satisfying to his senses than to hers. To all these interrogatories every one will answer, No!*
>
> "Opening Address." In The Proceedings of the Woman's Rights Convention, held at Akron, Ohio, May 28 and 29, 1851. Cincinnati: Ben Franklin Book and Job Office, 1851. p 4 National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection. Rare Book & Special Collections Division

"A May Session of 'Ye Woman's Rights Convention... Illus. in: Harper's weekly, v. 3, no. 128 (1859 June 11) p. 372. Prints & Photographs Division

The convention's Report on Labor noted the following statistics: the average seamstress earned between $.75 and $1.50 per week for 15-18 hours of daily labor; domestics earned an average of about $6 per month; and a female teacher in Ohio was paid on the average of $21.49 per year, about half that of her male counterpart.

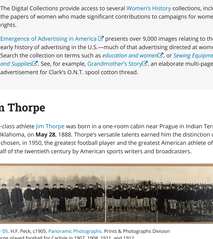


[Richmond & Backus Co. sewing room, Detroit] [between 1900 and 1910]. Detroit Publishing Company. Prints & Photographs Division

The convention resolved to work for gradual change urging religious groups, the press, and legislatures to discuss and support women's rights. Mothers were instructed "to teach all children the principles of natural justice which should govern the whole subject of Human Rights..." Women, particularly seamstresses, were urged to form "Labor Partnerships" to strengthen their ability to attain just and equitable wages.

Although not in attendance, Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote to the conferees:

> *The trades and professions are all open to us... As merchants, postmasters, silversmiths, teachers, preachers and physicians, woman has already proved herself fully competent... But the great work before us is the proper education of those just coming on the stage. Begin with girls of this day, and in twenty years we can revolutionize this nation.... Let the girl be thoroughly developed in body and soul,—not moulded like a pieces of clay after some artificial specimen of humanity, with a body after some plate in Godey's book of fashion... Think you, women thus educated, would be the frail, dependent beings we now find them? By no means.... As educated capitalists and skillful laborers, they would not be long in finding their true level in political and social life.*
>
> "Letter from Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton". In The Proceedings of the Woman's Rights Convention, held at Akron, Ohio, May 28 and 29, 1851. Cincinnati: Ben Franklin Book and Job Office, 1851. National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection. Rare Book & Special Collections Division



The Life and Age of Woman, Stages of Woman's Life From the Cradle to the Grave. New York: James Baillie, c1848. Popular Graphic Arts. Prints & Photographs Division

Learn More

- Read the full text of the convention proceedings, which includes resolutions on education, labor, and common law, as well as letters from Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Amelia Jenks Bloomer. The National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection consists of 167 books, pamphlets and other artifacts documenting the suffrage campaign. They are a subset of the Library's larger collection, donated in November 1938, by Carrie Chapman Catt, longtime president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association.The collection includes works from the libraries of other members and officers of the organization including: Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, Alice Stone Blackwell, Julia Ward Howe, Elizabeth Smith Miller, Mary A. Livermore. Search the collection on these names or browse the Contributors listing.
- For an overview of the women's suffrage movement, see the timeline, One Hundred Years Toward Suffrage, referenced from the Related Resources section of Women's Suffrage: Pictures of Suffragists and Their Activities.
- See also Women of Protest: Photographs from the Records of the National Woman's Party, Scrapbooks of Elizabeth Smith Miller and Anne Fitzhugh Miller part of the National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection, as well as the American Women Series of guides that provide a gateway for Library of Congress researchers working in the field of American women's history.
- The Digital Collections provide access to several Women's History collections, including the papers of women who made significant contributions to campaigns for women's rights.
- Emergence of Advertising in America presents over 9,000 images relating to the early history of advertising in the U.S.—much of that advertising directed at women. Search the collection on terms such as *education and women*, or *Sewing Equipment and Supplies*. See, for example, Grandmother's Story, an elaborate multi-paged advertisement for Clark's O.N.T. spool cotton thread.

Jim Thorpe

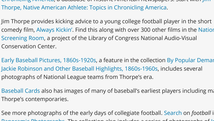
World-class athlete Jim Thorpe was born in a one-room cabin near Prague in Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, on **May 28**, 1888. Thorpe's versatile talents earned him the distinction of being chosen, in 1950, the greatest football player and the greatest American athlete of the first half of the twentieth century by American sports writers and broadcasters.

Carlisle '05. H.F. Peck, c1905. Panoramic Photographs. Prints & Photographs Division
Jim Thorpe played football for Carlisle in 1907, 1908, 1911, and 1912.

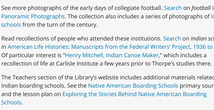
Thorpe excelled at every sport he played. The great-great-grandson of an Indian warrior and athlete, Chief Black Hawk, Thorpe's heritage was Irish and five-eighths Indian (Sauk, Fox, and Pottowatomie). He attended Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kansas, and the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania.

Thorpe took leave of the school in 1909 to play baseball in Rocky Mount and Fayetteville, North Carolina — a fact which later cost him two Olympic gold medals. Back at Carlisle in 1911, Thorpe played football, baseball, basketball, and trained for the 1912 Olympics in track. Thorpe won the gold medal in both the decathlon and pentathlon events at the Stockholm Olympics, but was stripped of his medals when a reporter revealed he had played semi-professional baseball. It was not until after his death that Thorpe's amateur status was restored, and his name reentered in the Olympic record book.

Back at Carlisle, Thorpe repeated his 1911 accomplishment, being voted a first-string All-American halfback. During his last college season, Thorpe scored 198 points — including 22 of 27 winning points against Army, a team which included Dwight D. Eisenhower.



John T. Meyers/C. Mathewson. New York Giants... American Tobacco Company, sponsor, 1912. Baseball Cards. Prints & Photographs Division



Lawrence Doyle/Fred Merkle. New York Giants... American Tobacco Company, sponsor 1912. Baseball Cards. Prints & Photographs Division

Once out of school, Thorpe was signed by John McGraw to play with the National League Champion New York Giants, which included Rube Marquard, Buck Herzog, Fred Snodgrass, Christy Mathewson, "Chief" Meyers, Larry Doyle, and Fred Merkel. From 1913 to 1929, Thorpe played professionally, for many years switching according to the season from baseball to football.

Thorpe was the first president of the new American Professional Football Association, later the NFL. His name and skill on the field gave credibility to the sport, which he played professionally until he was forty-one years old. For two of those years, he coached and played for the Oorang Indians, an all-Native-American franchise out of La Rue, Ohio.

As his professional sports career drew to a close, the Depression proved a particularly difficult time for Thorpe. He held a variety of jobs but was too poor to buy a ticket to the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles; when he was invited to sit in the presidential box, a crowd of 105,000 stood to cheer him.

General view of Los Angeles Olympic Stadium on the Opening Day of the Games of the 9th Olympiad... Organizing Committee of the Games of the 9th Olympiad, July 30, 1932. Panoramic Photographs. Prints & Photographs Division

Learn More

- Read newspaper coverage about Jim Thorpe's athletic achievements through Chronicling America, a database of historic American newspapers. Start with Jim Thorpe, Native American Athlete: Topics in Chronicling America.
- Jim Thorpe provides kicking advice to a young college football player in the short comedy film, Always Kickin'. Find this along with over 300 other films in the National Screening Room, a project of the Library of Congress National Audio-Visual Conservation Center.
- Early Baseball Pictures, 1860s-1920s, a feature in the collection By Popular Demand: Jackie Robinson and Other Baseball Highlights, 1860s-1960s, includes several photographs of National League teams from Thorpe's era.
- Baseball Cards also has images of many of baseball's earliest players including many of Thorpe's contemporaries.
- See more photographs of the early days of collegiate football. Search on *football* in Panoramic Photographs. The collection also includes a series of photographs of Indian schools from the turn of the century.
- Read recollections of people who attended these institutions. Search on *Indian school* in American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936 to 1940. Of particular interest is "Henry Mitchell, Indian Canoe Maker," which includes a recollection of life at Carlisle Institute a few years prior to Thorpe's studies there.
- The Teachers section of the Library's website includes additional materials related to Indian boarding schools. See the Native American Boarding Schools primary source set and the lesson plan on Exploring the Stories Behind Native American Boarding Schools.
- Search Today in History on terms such as *sport, athlete, football*, or *baseball* to learn more about other greats in the sports world including Althea Gibson, J. Frank Duryea, Alonzo Stagg, and Jackie Robinson.

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