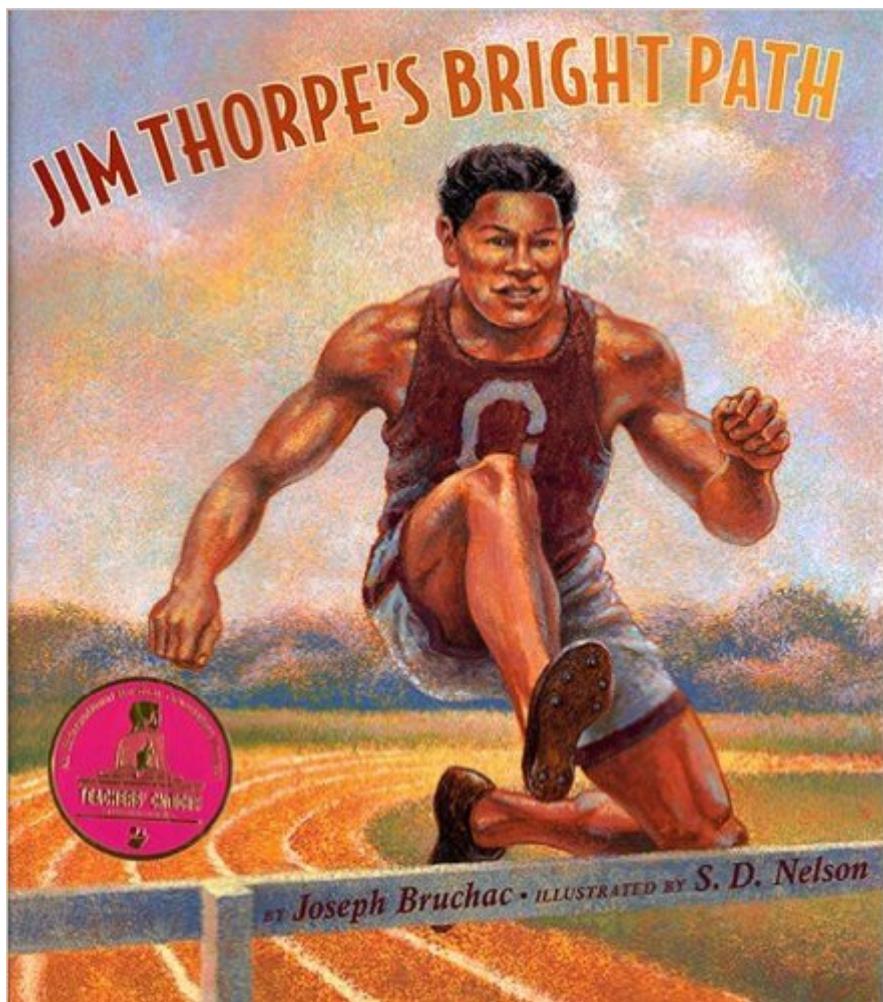


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# Jim Thorpe's Bright Path



## **Synopsis**

A biography of the legendary Native American Jim Thorpe (1888 1953), voted the Greatest Football Player and Greatest Athlete of the Half-Century by two AP polls, focusing on his early childhood and how school and sports shaped his future."

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 870 (What's this?)

Paperback: 40 pages

Publisher: Lee & Low Books (August 1, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1600603408

ISBN-13: 978-1600603402

Product Dimensions: 8.9 x 0.2 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ (5 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #499,056 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #19 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Sports & Outdoors > Track & Field #282 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Sports & Recreation #678 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Multicultural

Age Range: 6 - 11 years

Grade Level: 1 - 6

## **Customer Reviews**

The title of "Jim Thorpe's Bright Path" has a specific meaning because when he was born in 1887 in the Indian Territory that would become the state of Oklahoma, his mother gave him another name: "Wa-tho-huck," which means "Bright Path." This illustrated childrens book by Joseph Bruchac, with illustrations by S.D. Nelson, tells the story of the young Jim Thorpe as not only an inspiration but also as a testament to what Thorpe and others of his generation had to go through. Bruchac's inspiration for this book for young readers came from a pair of people and a pair of songs. Swift Eagle, an Apache/Pueblo elder who worked with Thorpe in Hollywood taught the author a song Thorpe had given him back in 1935. Jack Gladstone, a Blackfeet folk singer, wrote a song entitled "Bright Path" about Thorpe. There are two key parts to the path being told here. When Jim and his twin brother Charlie turned six they were supposed to go to the Agency Boarding School. But their father, who had become one of the few Sac and Fox men who could read and write English, and who had seen uneducated Indians cheated out of everything by dishonest men, insisted that his

sons needed white man's knowledge to survive. So the first key part of the path was Jim getting more of an education than was available on the reservation, even though he had to work a lot harder at learning to read, write and do arithmetic than he did in playing sports where he excelled at everything that he did. The second part was ending up at Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, where Thorpe ran track for Pop Warner and wanted to play on the football team. It is interesting that Bruchac chooses to end the story of Jim Thorpe with making the football team at Carlisle. This is before he becomes an All-American or goes to the 1912 Summer Olympic Games in Stockholm, Sweden where he won both the Pentathlon and the Decathlon and was infamously declared by King Gustav to be the greatest athlete in the world. But clearly the point Bruchac wants to make is that when Jim Thorpe ran a football he was not just carrying a football but also the hopes and dreams of both his family and his people. There is also poignancy to his efforts because of all of the personal tragedies his family endured as he made his way along his Bright Path. However, the most important part is that the story ends at a point when young readers can still identify with a character who did not really go to school and before he became such a great and famous athlete. It is in the Author's Note in the back of the book that young students will learn all about Thorpe's greatest athletic accomplishments as well as the effort to get back the Olympic medals that he was stripped of because he had played minor league baseball before the games (young readers today will find the idea of amateurism to be rather interesting given the world of sports today). There is also a timeline of Important Dates in Jim Thorpe's Life and Legacy that goes from his birth in 1887 to being memorialized on a Wheaties box in 2001. That is where it is pointed out that in 1950 Thorpe was voted America's Greatest All-Around Male Athlete of the first half century by the Associated Press for a period that included the likes of Babe Ruth, Bobby Jones, and Jesse Owens. It is interesting to think of children wanting to be like Jim and be a famous athlete when they grew up.

This is a very interesting, inspirational true-to-life story with wonderful, colorful illustrations. Other reviewers have told the story but it's always motivational and exciting to hear that a young man can go so far in sports, like in an assortment of track, football and baseball. My boy really enjoyed it, so much so that we read it together and we talked about all the accomplishments from one sportsman. Great story - I recommend it to all youngsters. Jim Thorpe was definitely on the Bright Path.

As a girl I didn't know if I would like this book on football but I read it anyway and ended up really liking it. This book is the story of football player Jim Thorpe's life. The story takes the reader through everything that Jim Thorpe did up to when he played football, including going to boarding school

and losing his brother. From Jim Thorpe's Bright Path I learned so many things about him. I learned that Jim ran track, went to the Olympics and even played baseball. He was not just a football player he could play almost every sport there was and play it well. The information is presented in an interesting way so the reader does not get bored and the illustrations go perfectly along with the book. At the end there is another information page and a timeline of Jim Thorpe's life.

This was a beautifully illustrated book and my son loved to read it. However it did leave a lot of information out about Jim Thorpe. It would have been nice if it either continued on or had a sequel. My son Kāsse is a very active boy and was excited to read about someone who was so sucessful in the same sports that he is playing. It is was nice for him to look at the positive aspects of Jim Thorpe's life and use that as a role model.

My son got this book three years ago when he was five, and he enjoyed having it read to him and then reading it himself. He still reads it now that he's almost eight. What's fascinating to him is that it is about a young man, much like himself, who loves and is good at lots of sports. That Jim Thorpe was a real person also makes it more entrancing than fiction. As a parent, I like the book for the different topics it brings up and allows us to discuss in addition to the sports--American Indian history, different kinds of families and living situations, hard work and persistence to achieve goals. Highly recommended.

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