60 FEET 6 INCHES AND OTHER DISTANCES FROM HOME: A CREATIVE BIOGRAPHY ABOUT MOSE YELLOWHORSE, BASEBALL, CARTOONS, AND THE PAWNEE

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One: Shape Shifting Paradigms

Parents often give their children toys that require them to fit round pegs into round holes, square pegs into square holes, triangular pegs into triangular holes, etc. The purpose of such an exercise is two-fold: one, it helps kids develop motor skills; and two, it forces them to recognize that certain things go in certain places, which is a simple way of expressing Cartesian notions of duality and taxonomy. At first, it's round pegs in round holes; then it's clean socks in this drawer and clean t-shirts in that. Pretty soon, children learn that certain objects belong in specific places. They get scolded when they put their dirty teddy bears in the dishwasher, when they shit in the tub instead of the toilet, when they eat vapo-rub instead of peas. And these lessons continue as kids progress through school; the only difference is that tangible objects become ideas. For instance, they are taught that certain letters must be combined to make this or that word, that certain numbers multiplied together equal a specific amount. As kids matriculate from elementary, to middle, to high school and encounter challenges to write essays and such, they learn that sentences are built this way and paragraphs another way. In a similar fashion, they are taught to think of the novel, poem, or play as genre-specific, that certain tendencies make a piece either fictional or poetic in nature.

When people read books, they read either a novel, a collection of poems, a play, or a work of non-fiction. And when readers cross the boundary of a book cover, they develop certain expectations that the text will fulfill this or that requirement of a . . . novel, essay, play, or poem. Some, when they encounter a book that defies exact (Western) classifications, like Leslie Marmon Silko's *Storyteller*, N. Scott Momaday's *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, Michael Ondaatje's *Coming Through Slaughter*, or Gordon Henry, Jr.'s *The Light People*, are, at best, momentarily thrown off, or, at worst, dismissive of the text. They read it as uncon-

ventional, as crossing boundaries, mixing genres, and otherwise making a mess of well-established taxonomies. They might move intrepidly from one page to another, not knowing what to expect and fearing what began as a novel will progress into a work of poetry, perhaps a one-act play, maybe even court transcripts. And when a piece of writing eludes "convention," the established order is thrown off, if only for a moment. This was the case, for example, with the publication of books by Truman Capote, John McPhee, and John Barth in the 1960s. But, as these texts slowly gained acceptance as legitimate literary works, it became apparent that new ways of creating and putting together books can (and do) continue to evolve. The work of these writers, along with the writers and texts mentioned above, demonstrates that (in this postmodern aesthetic moment) genre classification has become less rigid and more elastic. Round pegs can fit into square holes if the holes are broad enough.

In my dissertation, *60 Feet, 6 Inches and Other Distances from Home*, I bring together poems, critical essays, pieces of creative non-fiction, and oral narratives (from Pawnee tribal elders) in order to examine the life of Mose YellowHorse. A Skidi Pawnee who played professional baseball for nearly a decade--including two years (in 1921 and 1922) with the major league's Pittsburgh Pirates--YellowHorse was (and is) said to be "the first fullblood Indian to play in the major leagues," at least according to many Pawnee elders, sports writers, and his headstone. Along with these "types" of expression, I also use newspaper stories, tribal documents, cartoons, letters, photographs, and other pieces of archival documentation to examine and to tell YellowHorse's story. Photographs and such are not neatly placed in one glossy-coated mid-section of the text, as is the case with many biographies. Materials like, say, box scores, which I include in a poem, help add depth, and certainly texture, to a given piece. In this way, I allow research sources, primary and secondary materials, to play an active part in the telling of Mose YellowHorse's life. Because of this, and because I intermingle works of poetry with critical essays, creative non-fiction, and oral narrative, I

have come to refer to the text as a creative biography. That is to say, the study of Mose YellowHorse's life that has evolved into *60 Feet, 6 Inches and Other Distances from Home* does not adhere to the usual paradigms of biographical writing. It is a creative biography not just because I have included poems, pieces of creative non-fiction, and oral narratives in the text. Rather it is a creative biography because I have attempted to join impulses of creative expression (via poetry and creative non-fiction) with techniques of investigation and research. And though newspaper articles, letters, cartoons, archival documentation and the like are often the impetus behind a poem or story, in many pieces I offset such information as opposed to folding it completely into the text–as is customary in the typical biography. This way, the information stands on its own, is allowed its own space so as to accentuate the collaborative nature of the text. I say the text is collaborative in nature because, as with any biography, numerous people have shared with me their insights about Mose YellowHorse's life. Pawnee tribal elders, other tribal members, non-Indian residents in Pawnee, sports writers in California and Pittsburgh, historians and archivists at the Oklahoma Historical Society, and many others have in varying degrees contributed stories and other kinds of information to the work. Just as the landscape photographs in Silko's *Storyteller* tell stories (along with her many poems and short stories), I believe that items such as pictures of certain Pawnee tribal documents or YellowHorse's World War I records offer unique enough commentaries on YellowHorse's life without calling for any commentary. It is too often the case that biographers try to piece together a comprehensive and chronologically exhaustive study when, especially in a case like YellowHorse's, completing such a task is impossible. In constructing a text about YellowHorse, who is an admittedly "obscure" ball player as far as nationally recognized ball players go, I have felt a certain obligation to allow representations of tribal documents and such to stand as integral and active in the telling of his life.

One reason I move away from "traditional" (Euroamerican) forms of biography is because of the simple fact that YellowHorse is a Skidi Pawnee. The ways that people

come to tell stories about one another and life in a tribal community vary from the ways this is usually accomplished in Euroamerican communities. What happens during a traditional Pawnee storytelling session, for example, is that one storyteller will begin a narrative, establishing what the story is about and who is involved, and as the narrative progresses, other listeners add their own perspectives on the matter. Gene Weltfish, in her text, *The Lost Universe: Pawnee Life and Culture*, implies as much in chapter 46, "A Time for Storytelling and for Leisure," when she shows how stories are given over from one teller to the next. She states that:

> It was now understood that he [Eagle Chief, a well-respected elder] would tell a story of [an] attack on the village and that he would be followed by a story on the same theme by his brave, War Cry, after which the old men would begin. (354)

Though Weltfish hints that the stories during the session might be mutually exclusive of one another, more autonomous in nature, they are indeed all inter-related. This is made clear when Eagle Chief stops at one point in his story and says "Give it [the story] to War Cry" (355). It becomes even more clear when, after speaking for some time, War Cry stops and, as Weltfish notes, "At this point, the story was taken over by Shot Arm . . . for its next episode" (357). In this way, telling stories is obviously a shared community activity. In the 1995 anthology *Native Heritage*, Helen Swan Ward, a Makah Indian born in Washington, discusses a similar storytelling structure, one which occurs in her tribe as well. She states that "they'd all lay down and then they'd say 'Now you tell a story!' And they'd take their turns going clear around the room counter-clockwise--each one of them telling the same story, but yet it came out a little different" (145). Just as with the Pawnee, the Makah are encouraged to add their own perspectives to a specific story, which allows tellers to develop their own voices and to create a personal nuance and style, while at the same time building community bonds.

With regard to some of the Mose YellowHorse stories depicted in *60 Feet 6 Inches*

and Other Distances from Home, I bring together as many diverse perspectives as I can, so as to build a creative biography modeled in some ways after traditional Pawnee storytelling sessions. The various perspectives of Pawnee elders, newspaper writers, cartoonists, baseball administrators, named and unnamed photographers, Mose YellowHorse's perspective (to a small degree), and my own, all play off of and around one another in order to create a kaleidoscopic view of certain events in YellowHorse's life. Whether through "conflicting" stories about YellowHorse beaning Ty Cobb or various accounts about YellowHorse permanently injuring his throwing arm, I try to bring as many views to (some of) the stories as I can. By doing so, I hope to maximize the textures and tensions in each piece; I want to allow as many people as possible to have their say during this extended Mose YellowHorse storytelling session. I believe bringing numerous voices into the fold allows readers a deeper understanding of YellowHorse. For as much as I discovered about YellowHorse, through oral stories and other forms of documentation, many aspects of YellowHorse's life remain a mystery to me--and to many people, whether Pawnee or non-Pawnee. I don't know, for instance, if YellowHorse actually married a woman named Beatrice Epple, though a couple of older Pawnee women strongly suggest that he did. I don't know if Yellow-Horse attended the funerals of his mother (in 1916) and father (in 1917) and what specific impact their deaths had on him and his baseball career. It goes without saying, then, that there's no way for this representation of YellowHorse's life to approach anything resembling an exhaustive study. For this simple fact alone, I cannot adhere to certain conventions of Western biography.

Two: Beginnings and Other Justifications

In the summer of 1992, I spent a good deal of time in Pawnee, Oklahoma, looking for information about Mose YellowHorse. I wanted anything and everything–pictures, oral stories about his baseball career, his parents, his growing up and dying in Pawnee. My appetite (obsession?) for YellowHorse-related material was unrelenting. Since the fall of

1990, when I wandered upon YellowHorse's entry in the *Baseball Encyclopedia*, I had been intrigued by his obviously Indian name and how he came to play for the Pittsburgh Pirates. Because I was living in New York at the time and spending most of my time working, I didn't pursue my intrigue with much fervor. Only when I moved to Wichita, Kansas to begin graduate studies in 1991 did I realize that I was just a two-hour drive from the Pawnee tribal grounds. On my first visit to Pawnee in March of 1992 I came upon YellowHorse's headstone in the North Indian Cemetery and was stunned to read: "FIRST FULLBLOOD INDIAN IN / MAJOR LEAGUES / PITTSBURGH PIRATES 1921-22." I immediately thought of players like Jim Thorpe (even though I knew he wasn't full-blooded) and Charles "Chief" Bender, who I knew was in the Hall of Fame. I thought, too, that if YellowHorse was what his headstone proclaimed him to be, then hoards of information might be available. When I returned to Wichita and started searching, however, I found short (one paragraph) entries in a few baseball-related texts, but nothing substantial–no lengthy articles, certainly no full-length autobiographies, and nothing that mentioned his being the first full-blooded Indian in the majors.

After receiving permission from the Pawnee Business Council to conduct research on tribal grounds, I spent as much time as possible listening to and learning from many tribal elders who shared with me stories about both YellowHorse and the Pawnee culture. At the time my understanding of Native America extended only slightly beyond 1950s Hollywood depictions, and I tended to classify all Indians and their tribes into some kind of romantic paradigm: beads and feathers and buffalo; "Lo, the poor Indian." I imagined myself sympathetic and sensitive enough, even with a large dose of "white guilt," to relate to whomever I talked. At the same time I was foolish enough to feel apologetic: "On behalf of Christopher Columbus and all whites I am sorry for the atrocities my people committed against all Native Americans," I wanted to tell them. My surprise was great when I saw people smoking store-bought cigarettes, wearing Detroit Piston t-shirts, and listening to Creedence Clearwater Revival. As I quickly realized that Pawnees led contemporary, late-twentieth

century lives--even watched cable television--I began relating to individuals and putting to rest my stereotypic notions. From one day to the next, while I listened to people talk about YellowHorse's life, I recognized in their stories a certain tendency to describe not only specific events like, "He struck out Lou Gehrig," but also to give commentary on the kind of person he was. Everyone seemed to supplement their stories with a kind of personality profile. For example, Pawnee elder Norman Rice talked about YellowHorse serving as the Arena Director for the annual Pawnee Homecoming Celebration, and when Rice finished his story, he added that YellowHorse also loved the company of children. "He was always real good with kids," Rice said. And other elders told me things like "he made friends anywhere he went," and "he was always humble about his accomplishments." By elaborating on YellowHorse's personality in this way, it was as if the elders were insisting that I understand more about YellowHorse than just the events of his life. In hindsight, these personality snippets have allowed me to represent specific situations in YellowHorse's life with a deeper understanding about the reasons why he reacted in this or that way regarding a certain event.

My time in Pawnee, though brief, has had a profound impact on my life. I consider it one of the most enlightening, spiritual, and joyful experiences of my life. By graciously sharing their time, stories, and food with me, many Pawnee elders and non-elders allowed me (with my cultural ignorance) to visit their tribal grounds, ask questions, and listen to stories, and all they wanted in return was, as Norman Rice told me, for "the Pawnee tribe to look good." After I finished my field study, I knew I would not have a problem fulfilling that request. To say that the Pawnee elders were kind is an embarrassing understatement. I received gifts, invitations to return to Pawnee, and wishes of success from numerous people. I was, in some ways, stunned by the generous outpouring of kindness, only because some people in the community were so quick to accept my presence and my reasons for being in Pawnee. As anyone in such a storytelling environment knows, the narratives people share even after years or decades remain fixed and instantaneous in the mind.

When I first arrived in Pawnee, I had with me a hand-held tape recorder, miles of cassette tape, and plenty of batteries, paper, and pens. I figured to record most of my conversations, since it would be the easiest way for me to have *all* of the information. But when I noticed a few elders were shifty-eyed when I turned the recorder on, I quickly turned to writing the stories down. I ended up with numerous hand-written pages of notes during the day, which I would then type at night. It was the best way I knew to compensate for not having tapes. The notes and stories remained fresh in my memory, and I had no problem recalling what someone had told me. Both the hand-written and typed notes, many of which inform the text, are documents I consider extremely personal. I look at them (admittedly with some hyperbole) as spiritual texts, as records of my interactions with some people who are no longer here. Because of this and out of a respect for the elders, the notes do inform the text, but they are not included in an appendix as such. As I've had years to reflect on the meaning of my experience, I have come to consider my study in Pawnee a pivotal moment in my development, not as a scholar or writer, but as a compassionate and concerned person. Because I have no problem recalling the stories given to me, I have, in some cases, been able to re-tell a story as it was told me. My notes, of course, do not always reflect all the nuances of a particular storyteller and the narrative he or she shared, but my memory knows these stories, all of them, simply because the experience continues to inform me; it remains an active spiritual moment in me, and because of this I have no problem recounting this or that narrative. In fact I could go so far as to assert that recalling the oral stories from memory preserves certain ideas and attitudes.

While I would love to claim that all of the poems, stories, and essays collected here come directly from the elders' stories, and are strictly told from their perspective, I cannot make such assertions. Doing so would be lying and would ultimately create an inaccurate representation of the tribe, the elders, of YellowHorse, and myself. Since I employ a variety of sources from which to tell YellowHorse's stories, I recognize four different levels of narrative derivation (or point of origin) at work. The first starting

point derives from those elders' stories which function as complete narratives, without any of my tinkering. These include stories told by Phil Gover, Norman Rice, and John Jake (to name a few), and their narratives--whether lengthy or brief-are sometimes autonomous pieces and sometimes part of a larger work. Regardless of length or placement, these stories stand on their own. I designate such pieces by including, at some point, "as told by," usually before the narrative.

The second level of narrative derivation comes by way of the Pawnee elders also, and these works spring from short statements of fact like "he struck out Lou Gehrig," which the elder never developed into a fully-detailed story. Most of these statements occurred when an elder would go on this or that tangent. In the pieces that were inspired by such moments, I include "--after _____" before the piece so as to designate who initially gave me the information. With works that arrive from these statements, I have added my own wonderings from the mix.

Still, some of the pieces come from newspaper stories, the third level of narrative derivation. In such cases, I give credit either to the author or the paper in which the story appeared. As with the second level, I often imagine these narratives into fully-developed pieces. Most times I expand upon a certain situation or quotation in order to pinpoint the humorous or political nature of a specific moment.

At the fourth level of narrative derivation, I bring my own imaginings into play. Since I have been considering and thinking about YellowHorse's life for a number of years, it's only natural that I have written many pieces about the various aspects of his living. At every point in the process of my uncovering information about Yellow-Horse, and as my enthusiasm for his deeds has increased, I have constantly re-imagined old poems, essays, and specific YellowHorse stories, which has resulted in entirely new pieces. My attending the Ph.D. program at Oklahoma State University and working with writers, scholars, and students in the Department of English has afforded me certain opportunities which have allowed me to mature as a writer. Only after putting

aside my first efforts at articulating YellowHorse's stories and after cultivating for several years my understanding about Native literatures and cultures was I ready to begin the task of writing about YellowHorse again. In short, I had to grow into the task of writing *60 Feet Six Inches and Other Distances from Home.*

My point in detailing these four levels of narrative derivation is to make clear to the reader how certain pieces came to be and the process I went through in developing those pieces. I hope, by bringing together diverse views about YellowHorse's life, that a celebration in oral narratives, poems, essays, photographs, and cartoons might unfold in a respectful manner.

Three: Unpacking Influences, Structures, and Motivations

To consider those writers whose work has influenced this piece, and additionally how I decided to put the text together as I have, would be much easier if it were a standard (single-genre) collection of poems, stories, or essays. My task in such a case would be to justify my decision-making process in regard to both local issues such as lineation, language, and imagery and larger concerns such as overall structure, audience, and purpose. Given that the text is a cross-genre examination of various moments in an Indian baseball player's life, I feel I ought to discuss my reasons for choosing this or that genre for a given piece and for splitting the text into two sections ("Some Numbers" and "Some Stories"). Before considering these points, however, I want to address one of my primary goals in *60 Feet 6 Inches*, which has been to blend the impulses of imagination and research.

When I first started working on this project so long ago I envisioned a book that might be a kind of reader--a collection of essays, poems, and short stories--that focused on YellowHorse's life. In the process of completing (an unpolished 280-page) first draft, I attempted to please scholars in the fields of baseball and Native American studies by writing several lengthy research articles. I wanted to impress poets and fiction writers with my insightful meditations on YellowHorse. Most of all, I sought

to gain approval from Pawnee tribal elders who patiently shared with me their YellowHorse stories. Because I was attempting to satisfy numerous people (numerous audiences) in various disciplines, my work quite predictably suffered--serving so many gods as I was. Not surprisingly, the draft lacked focus or direction. Though several university presses expressed interest in the book, no publication materialized. My only success with this initial effort occurred when two poems were published in two separate sports-related journals. After setting the book aside for nearly three years, I decided to begin working on it again after delivering a well-received presentation to the English Graduate Student Association in the spring of 1998. My wife, Natalie Peck, and several other people, most notably Eric Anderson and Stuart Hoahwah, suggested that I consider YellowHorse as the focus of my dissertation. Wary at first, I finally decided it would be a good idea for a number of reasons for me to engage my energies in considering YellowHorse's life again. I realized, with a secondary area in Native American languages and literatures, that I could combine some of my research interests (Native America and baseball) with my creative efforts. I understood, also, that by bringing together my areas of interest after three years of maturing as a writer and scholar I had given myself the opportunity to re-imagine YellowHorse's life. After taking two Native American literature classes, as well as a Native American linguistics class, and engaging in on-going conversations with Native American students in the Department of English, I felt I was better prepared to present my vision and understanding of YellowHorse. By choosing to focus on YellowHorse as my dissertation topic, I figured I could develop a piece that would be markedly different from many creative dissertations; I figured I could differentiate myself from numerous young Ph.D. graduates who had written single-genre collections; I hoped I could "separate myself from the pack" by allowing poems to work alongside essays, alongside newspaper inserts, alongside cartoons. Beyond such superficial "market strategies," I wanted to employ these different genres for the simple reason that I wished to extend the types of expression I could use to discuss various events in YellowHorse life. I wanted to create such a para-

digm that I could get away with using the critical essay, as well as poetry, as well as creative non-fiction, any time I wished. With such an opportunity, I believed I could better capture the ambiance of a traditional Pawnee storytelling session. By mixing imagination and scholarship and by bringing various resources into the fold, my hope has been to push the boundaries of a "typical" collection of writings beyond certain seemingly fixed paradigms, while at the same adhering to certain features of a traditional storytelling session.

Since so many people from both the Pawnee and Euroamerican cultures have talked and written about YellowHorse, and have also depicted him in cartoons, comic strips, and photographs, I wanted to include these sources because they add a perspective to YellowHorse's life that could not be captured in a non-illustrated single-genre collection. This is not to imply that I couldn't achieve the same atmosphere in a collection that was, say, entirely poetry or fiction. Rather, it is a strategy that allows me to include certain kinds of documentation that I believe open up YellowHorse's life in ways that might otherwise be unavailable. For example, by including pictures of YellowHorse's World War I service records, I give the reader an opportunity to examine government documents used specifically to identify Indians who fought in the war. As a result, the reader will come to his or her own conclusions about issues involving interactions between Indians and Euroamericans. In order to allow certain intense issues, usually of a political nature, to ring with full resonance, I avoid a personal tendency toward articulating my own feelings on the matter of Euroamericans' treatment of Indians, which range from disgust to sadness. Because my goal is to celebrate YellowHorse's life, I believe I would only draw attention to myself if I always stated my views on this or that issue. Those people who know the tumultuous history of interactions between Indians and Euroamericans will find my beliefs obvious enough in the decisions I make about including certain quotations, illustrations, and newspaper stories.

Those who have, in some way or another, influenced the shape of this text include

several American Indian writers and a few Euroamerican poets. The two most immediate influences on my text have been Leslie Marmon Silko's *Storyteller* and Michael Ondaatje's *Coming Through Slaughter*. Silko's text, which deals with both the relevance and fluidity of the oral tradition in her Laguna culture and uses poems, stories, and photographs as the primary means of expression, was published in 1981. Ondaatje's book about New Orleans cornet player Buddy Bolden was published in 1976. And while Silko has given me some ideas about assembling a mixed-genre text, Ondaatje has taught me about approaching a *relatively* obscure character (that is to say, someone who is not as well known as a Babe Ruth or Ty Cobb) with a kind of delight of discovery that drives the text from one piece to another. Ondaatje's book, however, is written primarily in prose (with poems scattered throughout) and is structured more like a work of fiction--that is, with more conventional chapters. Silko's *Storyteller*, on the other hand, progresses from one piece to another, more like a collection, and her text begins with and moves toward a unified vision of family, story, land, and community. The specific ways that each text informs *60 Feet 6 Inches* become more apparent after closely examining certain characteristics of Silko's and Ondaatje's work in relation to what I've done.

Silko, in her work in *Storyteller*, employs various genres, which allows her to create a text that is a celebration of oral tradition and its function within Laguna Pueblo culture, specifically, and within larger Native America, generally. By doing this, Silko has shown me (as a Euroamerican working with an Indian subject) how to incorporate oral narrative into a longer text. Where she often incorporates such narratives into her poems and stories, I include the Pawnee elders' narratives in essays and as epigraphs at the beginning of a piece. I also allow one narrative to stand on its own, as a separate piece, since I perceive it as a complete and extended story. Other shorter narratives, though often complete, I usually include as part of a larger piece. My one example of isolating a story as a single piece occurs with Phil Gover's account of

YellowHorse playing catch with one of Pawnee's town leaders. This work, which I've titled "A Curveball Story," examines several aspects of YellowHorse's personality, namely his love of children and of baseball and his desire to exact revenge upon a man YellowHorse believes has slighted him. Though the plot is simple enough, Gover often shifts verb tenses, moving back and forth between past and present tense, which might be upsetting to certain readers. This tendency to move between tenses is, however, a common occurrence, at least among some Pawnee elders. Exactly why some elders tell stories in such a way might be explained by the fact that temporal paradigms--ideas of past, present, and future--are more fluid in the Pawnee culture than in Euroamerican culture. More often than not temporal looping occurs, so that time-past mixes with time-present and time-future. I integrate this notion of temporal looping in *60 Feet 6 Inches* a number of ways--by including a non-linear chronology, using dated newspaper stories alongside contemporary oral narratives to examine a specific moment in YellowHorse's life, and by placing photographs of YellowHorse in baseball uniform at the beginning and end of the text--which works as both a looping forward and looping backward. Using the structure of Silko's *Storyteller* as a springboard, I try to demonstrate that looping can connect one significant event to another. While her work brings several genres, I try to extend the notion of a cross-genre piece even further by also including newspaper articles, obituaries, tribal documents, and letters. These types of documentation, along with the poems, pieces of creative non-fiction, critical essays, and oral narratives, enable me to create a kind of YellowHorse mosaic, which aims toward a celebratory understanding of YellowHorse's baseball career and his life. The oral narratives given by the Pawnee elders, however, add dimensions of intimacy and urgency to YellowHorse's story that cannot be attained through any other kind of material. As Elaine A. Jahner suggests, Silko's "writing is an extended, imagistically realized commentary on how listening and storytelling can be life-giving processes. They are the essential dynamics of a way

of knowing" (501). I would assert that the Pawnee tribal elders' stories have allowed me to observe first-hand an oral tradition at work, a tradition through which I felt Yellow-Horse come to life. These stories offer readers an opportunity to understand how in June of 1992 a few elders considered the significance of YellowHorse's life both to them personally and the tribe as a whole.

Just as Silko uses photographs of all kinds, including landscape photos, snapshots of relatives, and portraits, I also include numerous photographs, which are, not surprisingly, mostly of YellowHorse, though I do include shots of street signs, baseball fields, and murals. My hope is that all these photographs will, as Jahner says of the photos in *Storyteller*, "function less as illustrations than as incentives to another kind of contemplation" (506). I'd like to think of the photos, cartoons, and portraits as opportunities for the reader to meditate on the various implications of a particular image--whether a headstone, a snapshot of YellowHorse's baseball glove in the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, or a tribal document. In fact, I employ some illustrations as narrative devices through which parts of YellowHorse's story can unfold. One example of such a move occurs when I include pictures of YellowHorse's World War I service records. Though I do not explicitly discuss YellowHorse's stint in the Army, it is nevertheless a significant moment in his life. In an attempt to allow the inherent humor of the situation to surprise the reader the text of his records stands on its own, without commentary. This is the case with a number of illustrations, including a cartoon of YellowHorse that was published in 1950 in the *Arkansas Gazette*, and also with a cartoon published in 1920 in *The Sporting News*. While some photos work as narrative moments, which is to say that they serve as chronological links from one event to another, I also use some illustrations as supplements to the text. One example of this occurs in the piece "The Way Mose YellowHorse Learned How to . . .," after which I place a photo of Thomas YellowHorse's house on the Pawnee Tribal grounds. The photo, taken in 1923, serves as a distant reminder of the Dawes Allotment Act of

1887. It is because of this legislation that Thomas YellowHorse had to build a house and work as a farmer in northeastern Oklahoma. He was among a small group of first generation Pawnee who did not have the opportunity to grow up and live within the tribe's traditional cultural and social paradigms. If the reader understands this, the photo works against the bucolic tone of the poem in an ironic manner, and the two pieces stand in tension beside one another. The boyhood that Mose YellowHorse lived, at least in certain moments, moves in contrast against his father's boyhood. This is an instance in which the photograph supplements the text and allows the reader to recognize narrative looping. As harsh as Mose YellowHorse's childhood must have been, his father's and mother's childhoods were that much more severe given the fact that they were kids (Thomas five and Clara twelve) when they participated in the tribe's forced removal in 1875. If the reader understands this context, then the poem and photo work against one another to create tension, though this tension is implied. Still other illustrations serve as conventional tables, which is to say they are offset and present information in a visually pleasing manner. In this way, the photographs, cartoons, and tables are specifically placed in the text for a variety of reasons, all of which echo back to Jahner's statement about Silko's photographs serving as opportunities for the reader to stop and pause on this or that image.

In regards to the influence of Michael Ondaatje's *Coming Through Slaughter* on *60 Feet 6 Inches*, I would first consider the Library of Congress's classification of Ondaatje's text as a work of fiction. That this book dealing with the life of jazz cornet player Buddy Bolden is a piece of fiction is obvious enough when Ondaatje writes in the acknowledgments:

> While I have used real names and characters and historical situations I have also used more personal pieces of friends and fathers. There have been some date changes, some characters brought together, and some have been expanded or polished to suit the truth of fiction.

Despite this proclamation, Ondaatje uses numerous resources available to him in order to gain as comprehensive an understanding of Bolden as possible. That he's bringing together strategies of investigative research and fiction becomes clear when looking at his list of credits and acknowledgments, which include, among others: monologues (courtesy of Macmillan Publishing Company), pictures of dolphins' sonographs with an explanatory note (reprinted with Scribner's permission), numerous interviews with people who knew Bolden (used with permission of the William Ransom Hogan Jazz Archive at Tulane University Library), sections of a work titled "A Brief History of East Louisiana State Hospital" (with permission from Lionel Gremillion), and a photograph of Bolden's band (with permission from the Ramsey Archive). In this way, Ondaatje's strategy of filtering primary and secondary sources through an imaginative lens serves as model for my work. I assume that the combination of his desire to gain an exhaustive understanding of Bolden's life and his fascination with that life drove him to gather as much information as possible. I'm sure he went to New Orleans, spoke with those who knew Bolden, spent time researching archives in various libraries, and at different points along the way became excited when he found pieces of information that clarified Bolden's life. Though Ondaatje chooses to dovetail research and imaginative writing by developing a text he calls fiction, his text has allowed me to recognize the possibilities (and risks) of writing on such a fine line. Whereas he disguises the line, I have made my own meditative moments fairly clear. For instance, my poems, which are all based on fact, use specific moments as springboards into meditations. When considering the life of an intriguing, though relatively unknown (and already deceased) person, it is not usually possible to find out every detail of every event in that person's life. One solution to dealing with this situation is to establish an atmosphere or paradigm which will allow for speculation to mix with the factual. Sometimes blending the meditative and historical (or oral) in *60 Feet 6 Inches* gives me an opportunity to imagine YellowHorse's life by considering how certain events might

have unfolded. It's like using the colors of my choice to fill in the fixed lines of a given picture.

Another important aspect of Ondaatje's *Coming Through Slaughter* that influences my text is the way in which he handles his sense of fascination with the character he's writing about. By devoting the time and energy it takes to write an extended study about an individual, Ondaatje has taught me how to keep my enthusiasm in check. At various points during my working on this project I have been too enamored with YellowHorse, too eager to represent his life in a positive light. Granted, in this version of the text I have included a few pieces that are unflattering to YellowHorse. One narrative that I developed involves his (supposed) beating of his (supposed) wife, Beatrice Epple. This story, told to me by two women who did not give their names, was not confirmed by any other elder--though I asked numerous elders about the narrative. The point is, I am after a celebration of YellowHorse's life, and any event that touches on his difficulties only makes such a celebration that much more powerful. Ondaatje's example of even-toned reporting has served me well as I have considered certain unfortunate moments in YellowHorse's life, such as his drinking problem. I am trying neither to glorify nor underplay this aspect of YellowHorse's life. His drinking problem, it seems to me, was as much a part of his life as throwing rocks at animals, especially since he drank for over twenty years. Of course, it's much easier to discuss a destructive personality trait when a person finally overcomes his own self-destructive behavior. Had YellowHorse died of an alcohol-related problem, discussing such a problem would change the tenor of the book. As it was, since he was able to quit drinking, the issue serves as a way to discuss his a problem. By studying Ondaatje's approach regarding his handling of similar situations in Bolden's life, I have learned to represent certain issues in YellowHorse's life with a matter-of-fact tone. That's not to say I've glorified or ignored any aspect of YellowHorse's behavior; rather it is to say I've chosen to represent him in a particular way. Certainly another author might handle the material differently. The point is, Ondaatje arrived at (numer-

ous) different crossroads in his completing *Coming Through Slaughter* and made certain decisions. In studying those decisions, I've learned a great deal about representing similar situations in YellowHorse's life. In short, Ondaatje (as well as a few other people) allowed me to recognize that I ought to write a text about my understanding of YellowHorse's life, regardless of my ethnicity, and meet the challenges of completing such a project.

One issue I have a more difficult time with concerns my choices of creating either a poem, creative non-fiction piece, or an essay from specific events in YellowHorse's life. How I decided to write a poem instead of an essay about 1947 (and Jackie Robinson's breaking the color barrier) is not easy for me to answer. The best suggestion I can offer is that I felt one genre allowed me to accomplish and create the kind of atmosphere I wanted for a given piece. Because my first impulse is to write poetry, I had to contemplate exactly which genre was going to help me best make my point. I realized from the outset that I was not going to write an exclusively poetic collection, but I knew that I wanted to set to poetry many events in YellowHorse's life. It seemed to me, for instance, that in considering Chester Gould's development of the "Yellowpony" character I had to weigh my creative options. Though I thought the specifics of the narrative (both the development of such a character and "Yellowpony's" involvement in *Tracy*) would be well-suited for poetry, I knew also that I wanted to consider how and possibly why Gould depicted "Yellowpony" as he did. This, plus the fact that I wanted to analyze the Indian characters as far as how they were depicted and their role in the *Tracy* narrative, guided my decision to consider the appearance of "Yellowpony" through the genre of expository writing. So, my decision-making process concerning choice of genre for a given narrative depends partly upon what and how I want to communicate various bits of information.

The specific breakdown of the text's twenty-one pieces by genre goes as follows: essay/prose (7), poetry (6), oral narrative (3), a mix of genres in the same piece (3), and

creative non-fiction (2). Two of the seven prose pieces, "A Dancing Red Spine" and "Cartoons and Other Fantasies" are critical essays--the first a character profile about YellowHorse and the second an analytical essay about the role of "Yellowpony" and his family in *Dick Tracy*. The other five prose pieces are also research-based works. All the pieces, even the poems, are based on research conducted over the course of several years. Such a practice is in keeping with what poet Lorna Dee Cervantes calls docu-poetry. In a recent piece on Cervantes's poetry, National Public Radio commentator Kathy Brown said of the poet's work that it is "tied up with history," and that her poetry "interweaves historical fact and poetry," which, as a result, "expands the notion of what both poetry and history can be."[1] In a similar fashion, I am attempting to interweave history and poetry in order to accentuate the elasticity of each discipline and (at the same time) to show the reader how history and poetry intersect at various points in YellowHorse's life. Though I would not go so far as to attach the label "docu-poetry" to my work, the idea evoked by Cervantes' notion clarifies my purposes. One example of such a moment occurs in the piece "How to Read a Population Table" when I state:

> Maybe it's enough
> to know that the
> amounts of annuity
> checks are eleven
> bucks per month
> for every enrolled
> member as the 21st
> century opens its
> eyes . . . (48)

Though the history here is more embedded, I believe it resonates in a phrase like "the \ amounts of annuity \ checks are eleven \ bucks per month." Such a statement brings larger historical narratives to bear, and if a reader has knowledge of this narrative, then he or she will catch the hilarity and absurdity of eleven-dollar annuity checks. In

fact, I was recently in Pawnee when these checks were being distributed and saw a number of people rolling their eyes and smirking about the whole affair. The whole point of all this is, of course, to allow readers to recognize that poetry can (and does) take on any and every moment of living and learning. Such poets as Sherman Alexie, Albert Goldbarth, Joy Harjo, and Walt Whitman each meditate on the impact certain events (or people) in history have had on their lives, and each poet incorporates historical moments into her or his work. My hope is that the poems in *60 Feet 6 Inches* will offer readers opportunities to meditate upon certain historical moments in YellowHorse's life.

The difference between the poems and the prose is that in the poetry I allow myself more room to imagine how a narrative might have unfolded. Take, for instance, the poem "A Bean for the Peach: Counting Coup," in which I say "the red hand-sewn \ seams of a baseball spin like fancy \ dancing" (79). When writing poetry I often set out to accomplish two goals: the first is to create a piece driven by imagery as much as narrative, and the second is to establish through the poem (its language, line breaks, metaphor, and tone) a specific environment. I have long believed that every poem creates its own atmosphere, by which I mean that the experience of writing a poem is similar to building a new and different environment, like, say, a room in a house. When we create such a room, we have to think about various items–the height of the walls, the furniture, the textures of the corners–and make choices about how the room feels when someone enters. The atmosphere I'm after in *60 Feet 6 Inches* is celebratory, and to accomplish this I felt I had to mix media, include cartoons, photographs, newspaper stories, oral narratives, poems, and essays, or else face the risk of losing the reader's attention. In short, I want the text to be pleasing to the eye and to the voice. I also want readers to come away from the text feeling that they have been taken on my personal journey into someone's life. After all, someone else doing exactly what I have done would come away with a different experience, and so a different text, about YellowHorse. What I am doing is serving as an escort through various moments (rooms, if you will) of YellowHorse's life, and I have tried to assemble an environment, to create an atmosphere, that's most pleasing to me.

Four: Assorted Conclusions and Other Kitchen Sinks

Over the course of the last nine months, since I began working on this project again, I have often turned back to my earlier YellowHorse efforts–the poems, stories, and essays--that I wrote between 1992 and 1994. Of that work, which consists of some 340 pages, I have used a total of three lines of poetry. So, to say I have re-imagined my understanding of YellowHorse's story is certainly an accurate assessment. I think my completing a 161-page draft in nine months speaks volumes about the confidence I've gained in my own work (my own writing impulses) over the last four years since beginning my studies at Oklahoma State University. This dissertation has allowed me to continue to nurture my relationships with a number of Pawnees, which in turn, has deepened my appreciation for YellowHorse's accomplishments. As I told Pawnee Business Council President Bob Chapman in 1992, I look forward to keeping my promise of giving the tribe a certain percentage of whatever I make from the completion of this project. Whether that includes a copy of a journal that publishes a YellowHorse piece or an amount of money--whether $5.00 or $5,000.00–I look forward to giving back to the Pawnee. Of course, whatever ends up going to the tribe will never be enough. As I stated earlier, this whole experience has been a spiritual journey for me, and my desire to reciprocate in kind cannot be realized. I can't pay back the elders, both those who have since died and those who continue on in Pawnee, with a spiritual awakening.

Though my primary purpose in *60 Feet 6 Inches* is to inform readers about certain moments of Mose YellowHorse's living, I have tried to do so with something new in mind. As far as I can tell, not too many biographers have attempted to tell their subject's story in the kind of way that I have. To try and situate my text in a larger context, then, becomes a challenge. I know, for instance, that C.S. Giscombe (in his 1998 text *Giscome Road*), Goldbarth, Henry Jr., Silko, and Ondaatje all mix genres in various works. And I have to imagine too that many other works (whether biography or otherwise) that I haven't read, or considered mixed-genre, do indeed exist. Obviously William Blake's work comes to mind, as does White Bull's *Lakota Warrior.* Examples of biographical studies that take such risks seem less frequent, however. And I would be acting deceitful if I didn't disclose my excitement at having developed a structure which incorporates certain tendencies of

traditional Pawnee storytelling sessions. As a result, I believe I have done something a bit different in *60 Feet 6 Inches*.

While I hope my text and the journey I took to get it to this point can serve as an example for other young Euroamerican scholars and writers who enter Indian Country to conduct research, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge two scholars who served as examples for me. The works of Keith Basso in *Wisdom Sits in Places* and Kent Nerburn in *Neither Wolf nor Dog* both offer counsel for young scholars who go to Indian communities to interact with people. Both Basso and Nerburn in their anthropological works detail their personal struggles as Euroamericans trying to come to terms with the historical narrative shared between whites and Indians. What I learned from them is that (just as in any other community) a person cannot put on airs and hope to communicate openly and honestly. My experience taught me that by being humble and attentive (as most strangers in a new setting are) young researchers can begin to gain access to that which they desire; by accepting who (and what) they are, young Euroamerican scholars can begin to communicate with Indian people. In short, it is appropriate for a young researcher to consider him- or herself a student when first interacting with Indians. Even when I return to Pawnee (some seven years after my initial field study), I still recognize that I've got a lot to learn about Pawnee culture and history. Just because I know some facts and stories about Mose YellowHorse does not allow me the right to prance around. As such, it is only right for me to remain a student–that is, sometimes quiet and attentive. What all this really translates to is a simple show of respect. No one likes it when a know-it-all enters someone's home and tries to take control of everything, professes to know more about that home than the people who live there. My purpose in pointing this out is to help young people who wish to conduct a field study in an Indian community. I would hope that anyone who ventures out on such a journey would have as meaningful an experience as I have had.

Though my joy with this experience deepened with each progressing phase of my journey into discovery–with my coming across YellowHorse's headstone at first, to learning about his baseball career and life through both newspaper articles and Pawnee oral narratives, to interacting with the Pawnee tribe, to re-imagining the work I began seven

years ago–I consider the most rewarding aspect of this process the opportunity I've had to get to know Mose YellowHorse through the elders' oral narratives. YellowHorse remains a revered figure in Pawnee, as he should be. As Mariah Gover recently told me, "Mose is someone the kids can look at and see themselves. He looks like they do, and so they need to know about him. He is a role model." In this way, his stories, both the positive and negative ones, can teach younger Pawnee kids that they too can compete at the highest level of any profession and succeed. Certainly thirty years ago, even fifty years ago, various YellowHorse stories were told to Pawnee children who grew up admiring his accomplishments. Of course, YellowHorse has taught me a thing or two as well; namely, that I could enter into an unfamiliar environment, as he did in the early 1920s, and find friends enough to help me achieve my goals. Along the way, I have also learned from writers like Silko, Ondaatje, and others the importance of taking risks concerning the given boundaries of a genre, as well as how characters and cultures can be depicted. I have admired the works of numerous Native and non-Native authors who allowed me to conceptualize the possibilities of creating a text that, while using a borrowed structure (a traditional Pawnee storytelling session), can remain absolutely contemporary. The insights offered by my many teachers, those in Pawnee and those at Oklahoma State and Wichita State, have allowed me to recognize the significance of this project–that I have a responsibility to develop a text that seeks to give back to the Pawnee community from which YellowHorse emerged. My hope is that my rendition of YellowHorse can reach into a number of communities and show readers what an amazing life he realized, what an accomplishment it was for him even to step onto a major league diamond.

Notes

[1] This interview aired on NPR's *All Things Considered* on January 18, 1999.

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Author's Note

A number of the pieces in the text repeat YellowHorse-related information. For example, certain quotations or phrases are re-stated; they reappear several times throughout the text. In most instances, this is done because I conceived the pieces in *60 Feet 6 Inches* as individual works; that is to say, my goal, during one phase of my writing the text, has been to create pieces that could be submitted for publication. Given this goal, I had to create (and recreate) contexts for various pieces. This is not, however, meant to be a justification for careless editing. While I have made every attempt to identify such obvious moments of repetition and to alter them by using different phrasing, I believe that some repetition is necessary for me to adhere to the structure of a traditional Pawnee storytelling session.

Some Numbers

Mose YellowHorse, a Skidi Pawnee, played organized baseball for the first time while a student at Chilocco Indian School, when he was sixteen. His last year at the school, in 1917, he pitched to a 17-0 record. When he finished school in the Spring of 1917, Yellow-Horse signed a contract to play for the Des Moines Boosters of the Western League. Three years later, one of YellowHorse's teammates at Chilocco, Bill Wano, recommended that the Arkansas Travelers sign YellowHorse, and in 1920 he pitched to a 21-7 record—good enough to help lead the team to their first Southern League Championship. In 1921 and 1922, he played for the Pittsburgh Pirates, winning 8 and losing 4 in those two years.

Introductions and First Meetings

One autumn day in 1990 I found myself bored at work, just another dull shift at my post with a financial printing company in Manhattan. I wanted some relief from both my duties and the recession. I walked through the company's spacious customer service office, going from one person's desk to another and talking to those people who looked as bored as me. While yakking with a sports-minded rep, I noticed a copy of a *Baseball Encyclopedia* on his desk and asked him if I might browse through it. He nodded, and I thanked him, picked it up, and headed to my office. Though I was curious about this or that player's year-by-year statistics, I was most relieved to have found a pleasant solution to the three hours left on my shift.

Back at my desk I flipped from one player's entry to another. Ernie Banks, Ron Santo, Fergie Jenkins, back to Babe Ruth, then Jim Thorpe–I moved through the names as quickly as I could think of them and my fingers would allow. And I was glad to be working the third shift, away from bothersome high-salaried busybodies who might not look kindly on the "undisciplined tactics" I employed to earn an hour's pay. Then, after an hour or so, on my way to Cy Young's entry, I noticed the name Chief Yellowhorse. And I stopped. For two obvious reasons, I instantly assumed he was Native American. I then saw that he was born and died in Pawnee, Oklahoma, which strengthened my assumptions even more. I saw too that his full name was Moses J. Yellowhorse. He was born on January 28 (a day after my own birthdate). He stood 5' 10" and weighed 180 pounds. Then I looked at his career totals:

Year	Team	W	L	PCT	ERA	G	GS	CG	IP	H	BB	SO
1921	PIT N	5	3	.625	2.98	10	4	1	48.1	45	13	19
1922		3	1	.750	4.52	28	5	2	77.2	92	20	24
2 yrs.		8	4	.667	3.93	38	9	3	126	137	33	43

Immediately I became engaged in fantasy. I sat in my sixteenth-story office and imagined

what Moses Yellowhorse must've looked like–a man with a thick build and powerful body, solid through and through, with legs as strong as oak tree trunks. I wondered what his childhood was like in Pawnee. I wondered what great players he played with, or against. I became curious about his eight wins and four losses–which teams he beat, which pitchers he dueled against, which great hitters he might've faced. In short, I was intrigued by Yellowhorse because: 1) he was Indian, 2) he played baseball, and 3) he did so at a tumultuous time in the game's (and country's) history. And my imaginings continued on. Not five minutes after I saw his entry I began writing. Though I knew none of the details of his life, I started a piece in which I argued for his induction into the Baseball Hall of Fame, another piece about his playing in Pittsburgh, and still another about his living in Pawnee after his baseball days in Pittsburgh were over..

Unfortunately, at twenty-five and with a full-time job, I did not have the time or understanding to go about conducting a major research project–especially about an Indian ball player who lived and died half way across the country. When I finished my shift at seven, I returned the book to the customer service rep I borrowed it from. I then went out to breakfast with another employee who also wrote stories and such. After telling him about Yellowhorse, he urged me to start the project right away. I took him up on the challenge by writing the pieces I started at the office. These three pieces became the extent of my work on any kind of Yellowhorse project while in New York. In less than a year I moved from *The City* and enrolled in a Master of Fine Arts program in creative writing at Wichita State University. This move proved to be one of the most important decisions in my life, and after several weeks in Wichita I realized I was only a two-hour drive from Pawnee. At the time, I was going through a divorce (she insisted on moving back to New York), and I didn't have the time to visit Pawnee. Besides, I needed to acclimate myself to Wichita and to studying in a graduate program. Once I became comfortable in my new surroundings, I started thinking about taking a road trip to Pawnee. Finally, on a March afternoon, one unseasonably warm Sunday, I gathered up my notebook and camera and headed south.

In the time between my first encounter with Yellowhorse's entry in the *Baseball Encyclopedia* in 1990 and my first visit to Pawnee in 1992, I fantasized about the project frequently. It was like a recurring waking dream. I imagined traveling to Pawnee and discovering all sorts of amazing Yellowhorse-related tidbits. Though I understood that the scope of Yellowhorse's life might allow for a book-length piece, maybe a biography (based on Western paradigms–I had little understanding of anything Native American), I was not yet thinking of how I would write or compile an extended study about YellowHorse. Truth is, I was equally fascinated about Yellowhorse the Pawnee and Yellowhorse the ballplayer. While growing up in Indiana I tried year after year to play baseball, but could not manage to put aside my fear of a hard spherical object traveling at me--either off an opponent's bat, or flying from a pitcher's hand. So, while I feared playing baseball, I enjoyed watching it, studying it, learning about the game's nuances. By an unfortunate curse of birthright, I grew up a Chicago Cubs fan (and remain one to this day) and watched the Cubs on WGN every afternoon. These broadcasts, thanks in no small part to Jack Brickhouse, nurtured in me a love for a game that I could not and would not play. From the time I was in elementary school, I found good ball players intriguing--whether they played on a little league team or for a major league team. When I came across Yellowhorse's entry, it fired in me a curiosity that had come to me naturally since I was a kid. The reason I stopped at and became intrigued by his entry can be explained entirely by his name. "Yellowhorse," and "Chief Yellowhorse" at that, seemed so obviously Indian to me. Ever since I was forced to read about Indiana history in fourth grade, I wanted to learn more about the Indians against whom the whites fought. I sympathized with and admired the numerous tribes who were dislocated from their lands, life-styles, and cultures. I recognized that various Indian groups were able to survive Euroamerican attempts to destroy them, and to me that seemed good. In my *Dick and Jane* understanding of American History, it seemed to me that great wrongs were repeatedly committed against Indians. This view was especially encouraged by my teacher, who wanted us to understand that all the land in America

belonged at one time to the Indians. But as a result of wars and broken promises, the Indians were forced off their lands or lied to about their agreements with U.S. government. She said too that lots of Indians couldn't fight off diseases the Europeans brought with them; since their bodies weren't familiar with smallpox and the like, they had no way of battling such viruses, and many Indians died from infection. Taken together, then, my curiosity about both baseball and Indians started at a young age and at about the same time. Though my knowledge of each subject has increased in the past two decades, I would not suggest that I am a scholar of either baseball or Native American cultures–especially in 1990, just after completing my undergraduate studies. When I sat in my Manhattan office flipping through the *Baseball Encyclopedia* and saw "Chief Yellowhorse's" entry, my different, and seemingly mutually exclusive, interests in baseball and Indians intersected. This intersection was, of course, a serendipitous moment–one of those instances when something so unexpected and so perfect occurred that it astounded me. I reacted in many ways as a fourth grader might, with wonder and delight: my thoughts instantly engaged in inquiry and a desire for answers about Yellowhorse's life.

In March of 1992 when I finally made the drive from Wichita to Pawnee, the process of moving from a familiar to an unfamiliar space intrigued me, as I knew I was entering the old Indian Territory. I drove with an intense alertness, and my mind was full of questions as well as imaginings about possible answers. I had already embraced an enthusiasm for Yellowhorse that extended beyond curiosity. And once I headed south for Pawnee on that March day I began a journey that would change my life in those ways that powerful journeys (and meaningful relationships) are supposed to–that is, my understanding of both the world and myself underwent a transformation.

Memorizing Oklahoma: a Chant (in 1992) that Includes the Word *First*

These are my first steps into the cemetery,
And I'm concentrating on the names chiseled
Into hundreds of granite headstones. None

Of the ghosts of my relatives has called me
Here. But I'm captivated by names like
Echo Hawk and Lone Chief. I'm wide-eyed

By the row of twenty pines that separates
The Indian dead from the white. And I will
Pause at some of the graves to consider

The mounted photos of men and women in
Traditional Pawnee dress: the dead always
Know when we're looking. They can feel

The weight of our bodies above them.
And with my first steps into Oklahoma, I'm
Beginning to wonder if I'll ever find a man

Named YellowHorse. I'm starting to wonder
If I should retreat to my Toyota, to the road,
Then two hours north to Kansas, where it's

Easy to forget. I could say *It was just a Sunday Drive.* I could tell myself *It was just another Cemetery.* But this is one moment when I

Begin to hear the soliloquy of a fast ball
Dividing the voices of a March wind. This
Is one time when the momentum of my

Curiosity will not rest. And soon enough
I'll sit in front of a stone marked *MOSE YELLOWHORSE* and repeat the lines

Of his epitaph for years to come: First Full-
Blood Indian in \ Major Leagues \ Pittsburgh
Pirates 1921-22. Soon enough palominos

Will begin to charge into my thoughts. I'll
Give myself the task of memorizing the red
Seams of a baseball. And I'll begin to dream

At all hours of the day in YellowHorse
technicolor.

A Non-Linear Chronology of a Pawnee Baseball Player's Life, and Other Manifestations of Cross-Cultural Convergences

1921 On April 15, in Cincinnati: a baseball (just released from Mose YellowHorse's right hand) is a dancing red spine dividing the atmosphere in two. And it's his first pitch as a major leaguer. And all the boys yell "That's the way to fire it in there 'Chief!'"

YellowHorse smiles at the sound of "Strike one."

1873 In August, a hunting party of some 1,000 Sioux meet a smaller Pawnee hunting party in southern Nebraska near the Republican River, and a fight ensues. Close to two hundred Pawnee lose their lives. The attackers burn the Pawnee bodies (including women and children) in a ravine. (But you didn't see that in *Dances with Wolves*.)

1901 With the Pawnee Bill Wild West Show, YellowHorse (at three) plays a "savage Indian boy" during a performance called *The Indians Attack*, in which a *blood-thirsty* band of *crazed Indians* mercilessly pillages a "peaceful" wagon train. While the white actresses hike up their dresses as they scurry for cover under the wagons, the men say words like "Gol' darn."

1926 Mose YellowHorse tosses his last professional pitch (with Omaha of the Western League) on May 1.

Strangely enough, a "Yellowhorse" Morris shows up pitching in the Negro Leagues. Morris enjoys his best season in 1927 with the Detroit Stars in posting a mark of 14-8.

1875 Thomas YellowHorse, who will become Mose's father, is five years old, and he is being made to walk from Nebraska to Indian Territory (in Oklahoma). He will walk some four hundred miles in late summer across Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma. The Plains have a tendency to shimmer in August and September.

1898 Mose YellowHorse is born on January 28. *Nowa*, his parents say to him. And Clara YellowHorse, his mother, gives him a Christian name after an Israeli revolutionary.

1916 Four days after YellowHorse's 18th birthday his mother, Clara Rickets Yellow-Horse, dies. Her father's name was E-coos-stah-tus. Her mother was known as Stah-coo-de-wah. Clara was 52.

1921 It's April 21, the Pirates' home opener, and YellowHorse becomes the first rookie in team history (dating back to 1882) to win a home opener. He pitches 3 & 2/3 innings and gives up one run as the Pirates come from behind to win 8-7. In the team locker room after the game, all the boys slap him on the back. They will insist (later that night) that he celebrate by throwing back (his first) shots of whiskey.

1945 One night, for whatever reason, YellowHorse quits drinking. He will later say "I've been very proud that I quit. Today I'm one of the happiest men in the world. I go here and there without fear and the people I meet and get to know have grown close to me." He drinks lots of soda after 1945.

1917 . . . is a busy year for the YellowHorses:

Mose attends Chilocco Indian School and in the spring pitches to a 17-0 record.

Meanwhile, Thomas sells his allotment lands to (Mr.?) H.E. Miller.

And then, in the summer, Mose starts pitching for the Ponca City Oilers, a semi-pro team.

What's more, Thomas marries Bertha GoodFox (who is four years older than Mose) on August 28, and on December 22 she gives birth to a son, Lloyd YellowHorse, half-brother to Mose.

There are records, too, that show how Mose participated in the first World War. They say "Called on the first day of the armistice and not assigned." And on another page titled *Remarks No. 2.*, it says that YellowHorse "Was only in the service three days." He would later serve as the Arena Director for the Pawnee Indian Homecoming, which is "held annually in honor of all warriors and veterans of the Pawnee Tribe."

1935 On March 28, in the *Dick Tracy* comic strip, an Indian character named "Chief Yellowpony" first appears. YellowHorse & Chester Gould grew up in Pawnee together, but "Yellowpony" wears braids and speaks broken English. He says things like "Yellowpony no see you in many moons."

1922 YellowHorse is traded (by Pittsburgh) to Sacramento of the Pacific Coast League (along with three other players and $7,500.00) for Earl Kunz.
Kunz's major league career totals: 1-2 with a 5.52 earned-run average in 21 games.

1918 Thomas YellowHorse dies.

When YellowHorse is with the Pirates, however, he makes numerous references to his father, some of which remain: "Yellow[H]orse predicted that if the Pirates won the pennant [in 1921] his dad would come to . . . town and pitch a tent in centerfield."

Thomas YellowHorse is 48.

1958 He wore #50 as a Pittsburgh Pirate. And one of his major-league gloves will be inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. The caption in the display case will read: "Glove worn by Moses 'Chief' Yellowhorse, Pittsburgh Pirates, 1921-22, Pitcher." He had a fielding average of .920.

1924 In May. In Salt Lake City. On three warm-up pitches, YellowHorse enters a game in the ninth inning with his team leading 18-15, but with the bases loaded. He would later say: "I went in and I threw just nine pitches, striking out in order John Peters, Tony Lazzeri, and Duffy Lewis."

Though YellowHorse would reflect on it by saying it was "the finest job of pitching I ever did," it also badly injured his arm—to the point that he never again pitched his fast ball, the one "as good as Walter Johnson's."

1922 In Detroit, during an exhibition game (on September 26) versus the Tigers, Yellow-Horse beans Ty Cobb. Some believe that *this* is *his finest* job of pitching. One account of the incident states that YellowHorse got Cobb in the leg, other accounts have it that he hit Cobb either in the throat, the head, or right between the eyes.

1971 YellowHorse is inducted into the Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame.

1920 For the Arkansas Travelers, YellowHorse will pitch to a 21-7 record, which helps the team it its first Southern League Championship. They will play Fort Worth (of the Texas League) in the first Dixie World Series, but will lose four games to two—YellowHorse winning both games for the Travelers.

1947 YellowHorse works as a groundskeeper for the Ponca City, Oklahoma baseball team, a Class D minor-league affiliate with the Brooklyn Dodgers.

Meanwhile:

Andy High, a scout for the Brooklyn Dodgers who played against YellowHorse in 1922, says of the pitcher (in a July 16 story for *The Sporting News*), "I'll never forget what it meant to face that Indian with a bat in your hand."

And earlier in the spring:

Jackie Robinson breaks the "color barrier" with the Brooklyn Dodgers.

1964 A month after YellowHorse dies (on April 10), his headstone is placed. It says:

(an engraving of a baseball glove)

MOSE YELLOWHORSE

1898 —— 1964

(an engraving of a ball and bat)

FIRST FULL-BLOOD INDIAN IN

MAJOR LEAGUES

PITTSBURGH PIRATES 1921-22

It is the doing of Anna Mulder, a good friend. She says that she was "lucky enough to come into some money that spring."

1921 On June 16, YellowHorse wins a seventeen-inning game against the Brooklyn Dodgers. The writer reporting on the game for the *New York Times* calls Yellow Horse:

"The latest idol of the Smoky City fans."

1994 After numerous attempts (more than ten), the Pawnee Nation finally convince the committee of the American Indian Athletic Hall of Fame that YellowHorse belongs. He would have been ninety-six.

Cartoon of Mose YellowHorse published in the *Arkansas Gazette*

A Dancing Red Spine, and Other Convergences:
Mose YellowHorse, a Pawnee's (Baseball) Life

Mose YellowHorse (Skidi Pawnee) pitched in thirty-eight major league baseball games—winning eight and losing four, with an earned run average of 3.93—for the Pittsburgh Pirates in 1921 and 1922, which hardly qualifies as a distinguished career. In fact, most of his appearances came as a relief pitcher at a time when relievers played much lesser roles than today. Usually washed-up starters at the ends of their careers, relievers were more like part-time pitchers, part-time coaches, and part-time pranksters, who kept their team's clubhouses lively. That YellowHorse pitched mostly out of the bull pen at the beginning of his career is a bit unusual, but as Pittsburgh manager George Gibson noted at the time, the team wanted to bring him along slowly.[1] Of the thirty-eight games in which YellowHorse pitched, he started nine and completed three of those. And despite the modesty of his major-league career totals, YellowHorse initially showed great promise: at Chilocco Indian School (in Oklahoma, near the Kansas border) he pitched to a 17-0 record in 1917; in 1920, with the Arkansas Travelers of the Southern League, he won 21 and lost 7, while helping lead the team to its first Southern League championship. YellowHorse's manager with the Travelers, Kid Elberfeld, went so far as to assert that YellowHorse's fast ball was as quick as Walter Johnson's (in the neighborhood of ninety-five miles-an-hour).[2] Since Elberfeld played in the American League and batted against Johnson numerous times, he had the experience to make such claims. And Elberfeld was not alone in his assertions; Pittsburgh catcher Wally Schmidt said of YellowHorse that he had "more stuff than any twirler he had ever handled."[3] In other words, YellowHorse's pitching abilities exceeded those of many other pitchers on the Pirate staff, including Babe Adams, Wilbur Cooper, and Johnny Morrison—all superb pitchers in their day, all twenty-game winners at least one season or another. With a quick fast ball, "a sweet curve too,"[4] and "an excep-

tional knowledge of baseball strategy,"[5] YellowHorse, it seems, should have accomplished much more during his major league career.

That his name is not as familiar as other Native American baseball players, like Charles Bender (Anishinaabe), a Hall-of-Fame pitcher for the Philadelphia Athletics, John Meyers (Mission), even Louis Sockalexis (Penobscot), or Jim Thorpe (Sac and Fox), might be considered a disappointment. Yet the accolades given YellowHorse, especially since his death in 1964, make an impressive list: in 1935, a character based on YellowHorse appeared in the *Dick Tracy* comic strip, as "Chief Yellowpony;" in 1958, one of his major league gloves was donated (by his former manager in Pittsburgh, Bill McKechnie) to the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, where it remains on display; he was inducted posthumously, in 1971, into the Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame; in 1994, he was inducted into the American Indian Athletic Hall of Fame; in Pawnee, where he was born and died, the tribe has recently dedicated a ball field to his memory; in 1974, they also named a street after him.

In some ways, such a list is not so surprising. Numerous major-league players with brief careers often become local celebrities, especially when they return to the towns in which they grew up. And because they typically achieve a certain degree of amateur success within their hometowns and states, then professional success (at least at the minor-league level), such players are often inducted into local halls of fame, like the Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame. While most players in a similar situation (with regard to their relative obscurity) are usually fortunate to receive even *one* display of public affirmation, YellowHorse received several. That various cross-cultural institutions would acknowledge YellowHorse's achievements suggests that the significance of his accomplishments touches a range of people—Pawnee tribal members, other Indians, as well as non-Indians. Though valuable records (such as box scores and old newspaper accounts) concerning YellowHorse's baseball career can be found in the Research Center at the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, and in the archives of both *The Sporting News* and the Pittsburgh

Pirates, the Pawnee Tribal elders who best knew him offer documentation through their stories and oral narratives and personal accounts that allow a fuller description of YellowHorse's character to emerge. Where newspaper accounts offer a kind of skeletal structure of YellowHorse's career and (only slightly) about his life after baseball, the stories told by the tribal elders (in June of 1992, and other times since then) serve as connective tissue, as the muscles and tendons that provide definition to YellowHorse's character.

Since YellowHorse did not have any children and did not leave any journals or other writings, the only way to know him is through the numbers and stories: numbers in box scores, and stories from the memories of Pawnee men and women who lived around him. And YellowHorse's life is worth examining because of the details, the specific narratives, that merge between and through the many numbers and stories. These details become entwined to create a life full of unusual cross-cultural intersections, convergences that involve Euroamerican and Native American politics and history (specifically, the Dawes Allotment Act of 1887 and Prohibition, and generally, the imperialistic goals of Manifest Destiny), as well as American popular culture (Wild West shows, baseball, and *Dick Tracy*), and cultural preservation (through Pawnee oral stories and tribally-generated printed matter). The Mose YellowHorse who emerges out of such complicated entanglements is not easily reduced to American Indian (Pawnee) baseball player—that is just one of many starting points. In fact, YellowHorse is: an orphan, a child stage performer, a World War I veteran, a hunter, a problem drinker, an arena director, a groundskeeper, an Oklahoma state employee, a former Pittsburgh Pirate, Arkansas Traveler, and Sacramento Solon, a prankster, and (as Pawnee oral stories have it) "the first fullblood Indian in the major leagues." The numerous stories told by tribal elders touch on these matters (and many others) with an urgency that is both serious and humorous. Their stories depict a Yellow-Horse character who is both mythic-like and tragic, both a "down to earth" guy and a good storyteller.

To understand fully the significance of YellowHorse's accomplishments (from a Pawnee, or non-Pawnee point of view), it is necessary to understand the specific context of the historical moment during which he played his major league career. The 1920s, as they can be considered some seven or eight decades later, are generally identified (with a large dose of nostalgia) as a time of political and social extremes—the "Roaring 20s" as it came to be known. At the beginning of the decade, with the end of World War I, the onset of Prohibition, the economy deep into delusional grandiosity, and with the rise of the Jazz Age—all its frivolity and cheer—most Euroamericans felt good about the country's state of affairs. In 1921, when YellowHorse began his career with the Pirates, Babe Ruth hit 59 home runs (and 16 triples), Sacco and Vanzetti were found guilty of murder, Graham McNamee broadcast the first radio play-by-play of a baseball game (at the Polo Grounds in New York), playwright Karel Capek coined the term "robot" in his play *RUR*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* caught the attention of young readers who imagined themselves as willing participants in his early novels, and speakeasies began to undermine the totalitarian goals of the 18th Amendment. Given the unstable tenor of this period, Euroamerica tends to remember the early 1920s as a time of decadence and prosperity—flappers, the Charleston, the rise of Hollywood as one of the country's primary social shapers, the sleek lines of Art Deco (with a mind toward idolization of technology and machinery)—as a self-congratulatory time when the country's psyche was over-inflated. And for Mose YellowHorse, the Euroamerican atmosphere of the early 1920s into which he entered was at once both volatile and a bit unusual.

The Pawnee Tribe, as it was situated both socially and politically in the early 1900s and through the late teens, did not share in Euroamerica's prosperity, or false prosperity. In a span of fifty-four years from 1846 to 1900, the tribe's total population decreased by 95%, from an estimated 12,500 to 650. The explanations are familiar, yet still disturbing: disease (cholera and smallpox the most common) and displacement (from both their land, in Nebraska, and their culture) account for most of the tribe's population decline. The

Pawnee were, as Jefferson and Franklin had imagined a hundred years earlier with the eastern Indian tribes, a vanishing race. In "A Narrative of the Late Massacres," Franklin observes that "Indians, [who] settled in the Neighborhood of White People [his capitalization], do not increase, but decrease continually" (724). Unfortunately, it is no surprise to find similar biases in the articles written by (white) sports writers of the 1920s—some one and one-quarter centuries later. One headline about YellowHorse (from 1921) reads, "LO, THE INDIAN REAPPEARS."[6] Such a statement assumes, of course, that Indians did in fact disappear, and not only from baseball, but from the North American continent. The unidentified writer (or editor), by writing such a headline, suggests that it is surprising to find an Indian not only playing baseball, but even living. YellowHorse, however, was not immaculately conceived. His parents, Thomas and Clara, were five and twelve when the tribe's forced removal from Nebraska to Oklahoma was completed in 1875. According to Pawnee tribal enrollment documents, Thomas's father, Ke-wah-koo-lah-lah-be-koo-chu, died before allotment, sometime before 1887, and his mother is (un-)identified as "Unknown." As for Clara, her "Individual History Card," the form used by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (B.I.A.) agents to identify genealogy and allotment numbers, no longer exists, gone for whatever reason. And how they met, their courtship, and their married-life all remain a bit of a mystery. That they survived both the tribe's removal from Nebraska and the first five years in Indian Territory is somewhat surprising, since, as George Hyde notes, over 800 Pawnee died within those first years of displacement (365). As described by Hyde, "Poverty, sickness, [and] deaths in every family . . . had thoroughly demoralized the tribe" (341), so that their living conditions were horrendous and individual states-of-mind depressed. That "nearly all the deaths were due to the weakening effects of lack of food, clothing, and proper shelter," (344) is a common refrain when contextualizing the destruction of American Indian cultures by Euroamerican colonizers. The Pawnee, like so many other tribes when removed from their homes and land, had little influence when appealing to the U.S. Government for help, especially when the government's attitude

(through its policies) displayed both deliberate indifference and calculated hostility. The government had no interest in helping people it hoped would disappear. (Examples of U.S. policy regarding the so-called "Indian Problem" are many, and well-documented by numerous scholars.[7])

By the time, then, that YellowHorse was born and reached his teens, the situation in Pawnee remained bleak. He attended the agency boarding school on Pawnee tribal grounds, and whether or not he went through similar tribulations as those discussed by numerous Native authors[8] is not known–though it is probable that the agency's teachers (who were employed by the government) treated Indian kids in Pawnee the same as other teachers in other tribal communities–that is–with the stern stick of acculturation. In all likelihood YellowHorse's experience was probably not as difficult as it was for kids in other schools across the country. As Douglas Parks notes in his "Introduction" to George Dorsey's *The Pawnee Mythology*, "by 1890 most of the Skiris [or Skidis]... were living in houses on their own farms," as was the case with the YellowHorses. Most Skidis were "dressing like contemporary whites, and speaking English in daily life. Some children were attending the local Pawnee Industrial Boarding School, at which they received a minimal education" (xiii). George Hyde, writing some forty years earlier in *The Pawnee Indians*, says "The Skidis were *progressive* [my italics]; [which meant that] two-thirds of them spoke English, dressed like whites, furnished their houses like whites, had buggies, mowing machines, and reapers" (346). In Hyde's view, progressivism equals assimilation and is seen in positive terms (not in terms of displacement) as the "advancement" of a "savage people" to "civilized" or Euroamerican "ways." To be progressive, that is reform-minded, means, for the Skidi Pawnees, the putting aside of some (but not all) of their cultural traditions. What's really at stake, of course, is survival. Mariah Gover, a Skidi Pawnee/ Tohona O'odham, remembers that her great-grandfather, who was born about the same time as YellowHorse, valued education a great deal, "as a way for the Skidis to get ahead."[9] Just because the Skidi band believed (and still believe) in the Euroamerican education

system as a means to survive first and then prosper later does not mean that they totally dismissed their cultural traditions. Many Skidis continue today to embrace their songs, dances, games, dress, and other rituals. Though Mose YellowHorse was not one to dance, or to sing, he certainly enjoyed watching others participate in keeping such traditions alive, as he served as Arena Director during the annual Pawnee Homecoming for years. And by the time YellowHorse advanced to the major leagues in 1921, he had been off Pawnee grounds enough, and had presumably grown up in an environment that valued Euroamerican education, so that the white culture into which he entered was not totally foreign—perhaps just a bit strange, but still untrustworthy. Though he had survived what must have been a trying childhood (seeing many people die), many tribal elders often tell stories of this time in YellowHorse's life that portray a pastoral, even bucolic, existence: a boy on his father's farm doing chores, yet with the time to go hunting (near Black Bear Creek, also on his father's farm), and developing a strong arm by throwing rocks at small animals, such as rabbits, squirrels, snakes, crows, etc.

The historical context, then, of YellowHorse's experiences, up to 1921, is certainly complex. The white culture into which he entered was full of (economic) confidence, even euphoric about the recent conclusion of a war, and about rebelling against Prohibition. The Skidi Pawnee culture from which he emerged, while devastated because of displacement and disease, sought survival through education—a system through which YellowHorse endured and finally succeeded, as he concluded his final year at Chilocco Indian School with a diploma and an undefeated 17 and 0 record during the baseball season. With baseball stops in Des Moines and Little Rock before Pittsburgh, YellowHorse, so it seems, might have been prepared for the rigors of big-league life, of traveling for three months during a six-month season, of living out of a suitcase, of keeping to strict curfews, and of "keeping in shape." As both the elders' stories and newspaper accounts show, that would not be the case.

The situation in which YellowHorse found himself, as a Pawnee and as a baseball

player in a large, industrial, Eastern city, cannot be neatly broken down into convenient binaries: of Indian versus white culture values, of reservation versus metropolitan living, of relative poverty versus relative prosperity. In drawing an accurate conclusion about YellowHorse's circumstances in 1921, it must be remembered that YellowHorse was: 1) a twenty-three year old, 2) an orphan, so-to-speak, whose mother and father had both passed away by the time he was twenty, 3) culturally displaced (and isolated) in Pittsburgh, since no Pawnees accompanied him, and 4) suddenly financially secure—making the base salary for a rookie ball player in Pittsburgh, which was $1500.00, well above the national income average.[10] Given these factors, it is not too difficult to imagine that he might have been susceptible to the influences of veteran players who had already adjusted to the day-to-day demands of living as a major leaguer.

For YellowHorse, the veteran player he gravitated to was Walter "Rabbit" Maranville, a short stop acquired in a trade with the Boston Braves two months before the beginning of the 1921 season. Maranville, who would be elected (posthumously) to the Hall of Fame in 1954 (he died January 5, 1954), was a starting member of the 1914 "Miracle Braves," a team that moved from last place (on July 4) to first place by the end of that season to capture the National League pennant, and then defeated the Philadelphia Athletics four games to none in the World Series. Though Maranville was as well known for his off-the-field antics as he was for his base-stealing abilities and flashy glove work at short, Pittsburgh team owner Barney Dreyfuss felt the benefits of Maranville's World Series experience outweighed the shortstop's reputation as a prankster and drinker. The fact that Maranville's acquisition coincided with both Prohibition and YellowHorse's joining the Pirates made for a combustive entanglement, one which would foster good stories (oh so many years later), but at the time allowed the two men to form a friendship based as much on mutual admiration as it was on their individual needs to feel secure in unfamiliar surroundings. They were both high-spirited ball players who fed off one another's energy. Sometimes that energy manifested itself in outrageous competitions against one another;

sometimes they would play practical jokes on other players (either on the Pirates or on opposing teams); sometimes they would drink all night the day before a game; sometimes they would get into fights. Regardless of the situation, both YellowHorse and Maranville enjoyed evoking whatever humor there might be. It is likely, given their age difference[11] and the difference in their major-league experience,[12] that Maranville was the instigator in a number of their pranks, at least initially. Maranville, the older and more seasoned veteran, perhaps saw in YellowHorse a like-minded partner in hijinks—someone young, strong, funny, and smart enough to act impulsively in tandem with him. Perhaps YellowHorse saw in Maranville a fun-loving and quick-thinking wit who seemed to take a genuine interest in the pitcher's career and success.

Regardless of why they were first drawn to one another, the two men took pleasure in spending time together, to the point that they were roommates when on the road. And even when the team was in Pittsburgh, they often had dinner together—going out after games to eat and carouse around town. Usually, they ended up at one speakeasy or another. Though Pittsburgh was no New York or Chicago, the *amount* of raucous behavior not as great, the atmosphere that precipitated such behavior did exist. John Kobler, in *Ardent Spirits*, suggests as much when he states that eight Pittsburgh-area breweries during Prohibition "produced 10,000 gallons of ale and beer a day," so that "Pittsburgh ale lovers prided themselves on the quality of the . . . brands available locally and cheerfully paid 75 cents to $1 a bottle" (235, 234). Certainly YellowHorse and Maranville did their share to consume a small percentage of that daily production. And numerous stories allude to the enjoyment they derived from drinking together and clowning around at all times of the day.

In several written stories that involve both YellowHorse and Maranville, Fred Lieb,[13] Pat Harmon,[14] who wrote for the *Cincinnati Post & Times-Star*, Mike Werries,[15] a sports writer in Pittsburgh, and Bob Lemke,[16] a writer for *Sports Collectors Digest*, each offer differing accounts of an outrageous contest between YellowHorse and Maranville in July of 1922. The four writers, as they each tell it, describe a situation in which the two players,

while on the road to play either New York or Boston,[17] decided (for whatever reason) to hold a contest to see which of one them could catch the most pigeons bare-handed from a sixteen-story ledge. As the story goes, they lured the birds with popcorn. Lieb suggests that "'Rab' and the Chief [*sic*] had eaten, then done the round of near-by 'speaks,' [and] got their fill of needled beer" (196) before pulling their stunt. This is crazy enough, in and of itself, that two grown men would be so silly (stupid?) as to put themselves in danger in this way, but to intensify matters, once they apprehended the birds, they flung them into their two closets and then fell asleep. They did so knowing full well that their *new* manager, "Deacon" Bill McKechnie[18] (who decided to room with his two rowdiest players in order to settle them down), would be arriving before the team curfew, and he would be surprised to find them already sleeping. YellowHorse and Maranville also knew that he would eventually put his clothes away in one of the closets. Of course, when McKechnie finally did open one of the closets, the trapped pigeons flew into his face, and he, in turn, reacted in horror. Exactly how he reacted and then responded to YellowHorse and Maranville is not certain, though every writer states that McKechnie no longer roomed with them following this incident. Shortly after this, the Pirates then began a sustained winning streak, one which allowed them to enter the National League's upper division and to compete for the pennant. As for who won the contest, it seems Maranville caught more pigeons than YellowHorse (8 to 5), but was good enough to share his 80 proof winnings with Mose anyway.

Another story, one which involves only YellowHorse, is given by tribal elder Earl Chapman and it centers on YellowHorse's drinking *during* Pirates' 1922 games—not when he was sitting out in the bull pen, but *while* he was participating in a game. According to Chapman, "the groundskeepers in Pittsburgh would supply Mose with shots of whiskey when he was pitching." Apparently Mose would make some kind of gesture, perhaps having to do with the pitcher's mound needing more dirt here or there (in order for him to have the right footing to complete his pitching delivery), and the groundskeepers would

come out to the mound and "put shots of whiskey all around the mound. And then he would sneak shots without anybody noticing. Nobody ever saw him do it. He never got caught."[19] Of course, whether or not this happened is in some ways irrelevant. This is not to say that someone sneaking a shot of whiskey during a game during which he is pitching is an insignificant occurrence–the implications of such an act (we now know) are horrendous and can be a manifestation of a serious drinking problem. The point is that this story, on one level, disregards such concerns. What becomes most important is the way in which YellowHorse gets away with such behavior. He performs what is a "taboo" act, especially in 1921 and 1922, and does so in front of fans, teammates, and opponents. Nobody, aside from his groundskeeping cohorts, realizes he is even doing something considered wrong, but he never gets caught. He is able to hide his actions from those who could punish him. He bucks the system, as it were, and avoids any reproach. In considering the viability of such a story, it is important to remember, as Paula Gunn Allen (Laguna Pueblo) notes, that "within the tribal world of the contemporary or traditional American Indian, many statements that stem from the 'imagination' are taken to be true" (ix). In other words, the imagination is as viable a resource of explaining and accounting for the past as is historical fact (in its Western sense). And when Earl Chapman recounts such a story, he is offering an account that is equally as trustworthy as a written story, or box score, in the *New York Times*. What happens then, in the process of considering all the elders' YellowHorse-related stories, is that Earl Chapman's narrative becomes one in a whole tapestry of tales that creates and establishes YellowHorse as mythic-like hero. He is capable of throwing back whiskey shots without anyone detecting. He can cajole the groundskeepers into doing him favors. He can, in short, act in ways that fool people.

That 1922 season was the last in Pittsburgh for YellowHorse. Two months after the Pirates' disappointing campaign ended, he was traded to Sacramento of the Pacific League.[20] Highlights from YellowHorse's two years in Pittsburgh include, among other things, his recording a victory versus Cincinnati in the Pirates' home opener (on April 21)

in 1921. At the time, he was the first rookie in Pirates' history to accomplish this. He also recorded victories against the Cubs, Philadelphia, Cincinnati (again), and Brooklyn in his first season. After his victory against Brooklyn, one (unidentified) writer reporting for *The New York Times* went so far as call YellowHorse "the latest idol of the Smoky City fans" (June 17 1921). Unfortunately for YellowHorse, his rookie season came to an end in early July when he suffered an arm injury versus St. Louis; the injury was serious enough to warrant surgery, which (in those days) meant he had no chance of returning to the pitching line up. Since Pittsburgh finished second in the National League pennant chase, YellowHorse also received an $837.00 World Series share–not a bad perk for his solid rookie year. The most notable highlight of YellowHorse's 1922 season came when he beaned Ty Cobb in a mid-season exhibition game versus the Detroit Tigers. Though the fans in Detroit were irate about the incident, YellowHorse's Pirate teammates rallied around him when a bench-clearing brawl ensued.

In 1923, he went on to post a 22-13 record with Sacramento, completed 19 games, and continued to impress people with a 3.68 earned-run average. Such numbers were certainly strong enough to interest major league teams, but no takers called. The most obvious reason for this stems in all likelihood from the reputation YellowHorse established in Pittsburgh as a rowdy player. Such players, and there were many, were considered too big a risk, and though many teams could have used YellowHorse's services, one call to the Pirates usually ended their interest. And in 1924, YellowHorse suffered a debilitating arm injury at the beginning of Sacramento's season, an injury from which he never recovered. It happened in a game against Salt Lake City during which Sacramento built a lead of 18-5 going into the bottom of the ninth. Unfortunately, the Sacramento pitchers began squandering the lead, and Sacramento manager, Charlie Pick, placed YellowHorse into the game without giving him enough time to warm up. As YellowHorse later recalled, "I went in and I threw just nine pitches, striking out in order John Peters, Tony Lazzeri, and Duffy Lewis." He said that this particular performance was "the finest job of pitching I ever did."[21]

Later, that same season, YellowHorse was traded to Fort Worth. After several ineffective appearances, however, Fort Worth sent him back to Sacramento. He then started the 1925 season with Mobile, of the Southern Association, but was returned again to Sacramento. In January of 1926, Sacramento then sold him to Omaha. His final game for Omaha came on May 1, against Tulsa, and he lasted only two and one-third innings. He gave up five runs, on six hits, and was charged with the loss. With this appearance, YellowHorse's professional baseball career ended. (Oddly enough, a man named Harold "Yellowhorse" Morris pitched to a 14-8 record for the Detroit Stars of the Negro Leagues in 1927.[22]) YellowHorse, by most accounts, then returned to Pawnee where he took on odd jobs, lived with different friends, and spent a good deal of time drinking. It seems that YellowHorse, like so many professional athletes, had a difficult time adjusting to life after baseball. The Pawnee elders with whom I spoke did not share many stories from this period of YellowHorse's life. Whether this is because there's not much to tell (about a person's drinking behavior), or because the stories aren't for sharing is not clear. It is likely, however, that many Pawnees were disappointed in what they perceived as YellowHorse's failure to achieve his athletic potential. The stories that do circulate are more grim. For instance, I listened to two women talk about YellowHorse's hitting Beatrice Epple, his supposed wife, in the throat so hard that she couldn't talk for a month. Though injured, Beatrice Epple still had enough gumption to order YellowHorse to leave, for good. The two women went on for some time in hushed tones, as they shook their heads, disturbed still over the story they had obviously heard others tell them.

From 1927 until 1945 it seems YellowHorse's routine consisted of doing odd jobs, earning enough money to drink and to eat. Time and again, an elder would shake his or her head after mentioning his drinking problem. "He drank too much," was a common refrain. Yet no one spent much time elaborating on the point. Throwing around images of an intoxicated YellowHorse would do nothing but perpetuate the stereotype of the drunken Indian. The fact is, YellowHorse knew he drank too much. When he quit drinking (cold

turkey) in 1945, he later said that "I've been very proud that I quit. Today I'm one of the happiest men in the world."[23] Even though Pawnee elders do not tell many stories from this period in YellowHorse's life, it is obvious that they too are proud of YellowHorse overcoming his drinking problem. Norman Rice said he never remembered seeing YellowHorse drink, which makes sense, considering that Rice was born in the mid 30s.[24] Anna Mulder, a long-time friend of YellowHorse, would not discuss the matter. Instead, she focused on other narratives, like the fact that he often went to her house and chopped wood, mowed the yard, or fixed this or that appliance. Other elders simply refuse to discuss this period in his life altogether. The reason for this stems in part from wanting to avoid the stereotypes and also from sustaining a certain respect for YellowHorse's memory.

The one event that took place during this period with which everyone is familiar occurred in 1935 when a character based on YellowHorse appeared in the *Dick Tracy* comic strip. The character, "Chief Yellowpony," made his appearance in the strip on March 28, 1935 and played a significant role in the narrative for several months. Since *Tracy* creator Chester Gould was born and grew up in Pawnee, it came as no surprise that Gould included a YellowHorse-based character in the strip. Gould had always included aspects of his home town in the cartoon, and very often local merchants recognized their store fronts in Gould's depictions. Unfortunately, the "Yellowpony" character who appears in the strip bears little resemblance to YellowHorse—except for the character's physical build. Gould, who grew up around Indians maintained close friendships with many tribal members, chose to represent a "Yellowpony" wearing braids and bead work and talking with a thick accent. For example, when "Yellowpony" departs from the strip he says to Tracy, "Ugh! Big bad gunmen end up helpless bunch of bones. Crime bad medicine! Always lead to same place, long dark night underground! Ugh!"[25] Of course, YellowHorse did not speak with a "Carlisle English" accent. But Gould constructs a "Yellowpony" character who looks and talks as Euroamericans (of the 1930s) expected a "real Indian" to look and talk. Aside from these obvious stereotypic characteristics, "Yellowpony" becomes a hero when he helps

Tracy capture Boris and Zora Arson, two escaped convicts. Though he is introduced as a naive character (he fell for one of Boris Arson's cons at some point in the past), he develops into an ardent crime fighter—shooting villains and helping Tracy plot the capture of various criminals. Whether or not YellowHorse found Gould's depiction favorable is uncertain. No one knows exactly how he reacted. But because so many elders speak of the matter proudly, it is likely that YellowHorse got some kind of kick out of it. After all, if YellowHorse had been disappointed with the character, he would have shared his feelings with others, including Chester Gould. Even with the spread of sixty years since the appearance of "Yellowpony," the elders probably would not share the story so enthusiastically, out of respect for YellowHorse, if he found the character objectionable.

After the appearance of the "Yellowpony" character, YellowHorse continued to drift from odd job to odd job, from one person's home to another. Then in 1945, after more than twenty years of drinking, he decided to quit. Since his return to Pawnee in 1926, YellowHorse, according to many of the stories, had refined his own brand of aimlessness to an art form. Though he was well-liked, his shenanigans wore thin with many people. Nineteen years of licking the cliched wound of "unfulfilled potential" must have made YellowHorse weary too. Unable to shake the feeling, even with excursions to Tulsa, or a powwow, or dinner at someone's house, or whereever, or whatever, YellowHorse, like so many, must have gotten--as the saying goes--sick and tired of being sick and tired. If YellowHorse was a "friend of Bill W.," attended A.A. meetings, no one has let on. The fact is, many elders, when speaking of YellowHorse's drinking, employ particularly extreme tones, depending on the period they are discussing. For example, elder Pawnees, when talking about YellowHorse's drinking within the context of his playing days, tend to speak more playfully. They make light of it and smile about his antics with, say, Rabbit Maranville–like their catching pigeons bare-handed from a New York hotel ledge, or his getting in a fight. YellowHorse was, after all, a small-town kid spending every night in a big city, either Pittsburgh or somewhere else on the road, and the temptations to drink were nothing

more than a young man's curiosity. But regardless of the tone, most elders identify drinking as the primary reason for the brevity of his promising major league career. When the conversation turns to "what could have been . . .," in regards to his baseball career, most elders usually shake their heads, signifying some slight disappointment that YellowHorse failed to become the next Bender or Walter Johnson.

Once he quit drinking, the momentum of his life seemed to change too. He found steady work, first with the Ponca City farm team, then with the Oklahoma State Highway Department. He continued, however, to move from household to household, which seemed to suit him just fine. What he discovered, most importantly, was that people from all the different regions of the country where he played fondly remembered his accomplishments. He found that they were ready, even willing, to celebrate what he had achieved during his playing days—no matter how modest his major league career totals. It surprised him to discover that even after twenty-five years fans in Pittsburgh continued to yell "bring in YellowHorse" whenever they wanted a dependable relief pitcher to enter a tight game—though many of those fans were not alive in the early twenties. It was startling also to realize that the fans and team administrators in Sacramento continued to be appreciative of his tenure with the Solons. The most surprising of all the tributes was, however, Bill McKechnie's donation of YellowHorse's baseball glove to the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. As "Mose YellowHorse Night" was celebrated in Sacramento, as the Pittsburgh Pirates invited YellowHorse to attend a World Series game, and as he traveled to Little Rock, fans at each stop displayed enough gratitude to please anyone. Bill Conlin, a retired sports editor of the *Sacramento Bee*, stated that YellowHorse surprised everyone when, on his visit in 1958, he told them that he didn't drink anymore.[26] As Conlin put it, "Sam Gordon [the team's owner] ordered enough whiskey to intoxicate an army. When YellowHorse told him that he didn't drink anymore, Sam, with a straight face, asked him what his favorite soda was and ordered two cases of it. In exchange, YellowHorse gave Sam a full traditional Indian headdress." It seems that variations of this routine also occurred in

Pittsburgh and Little Rock.

From 1945 until his death in 1964, YellowHorse not only received tributes from various ballclubs, but he also got involved with organized baseball again. As stated, he became a groundskeeper for the Ponca City ballclub (a class D Brooklyn Dodger affiliate) in 1947. And in 1950, he managed and coached "an all-Indian baseball team consisting mostly of teen-age boys, all full-blood,"[27] that he took across Oklahoma and Arkansas, playing in semi-pro or exhibition games. In addition to these activities, he also umpired and tried to establish little leagues in Pawnee and in other parts of the state. He filled his time, too, with hunting and fishing. As numerous Pawnee elders noted, YellowHorse loved to hunt and fish, and would sometimes prefer a rod and reel to a mitt and ball. In fact, as YellowHorse became more involved with baseball, he became more involved with the tribe too. He served as Arena Director for the Pawnee Homecoming celebration for years and was as much an attraction as some of the dancers and singers. Time and again elders told me that some people came just to see him. Though he might not know everyone in attendance, YellowHorse was always willing to share a story, no matter whether the person was Indian or non-Indian. The fact is that YellowHorse, more than any elder or sports writer, shared stories and details of his life with many people. He was the one who initiated, even promoted, certain aspects of his life. He became proud of what he accomplished without letting it define his whole character. YellowHorse remained thankful for his opportunities and achievements, but no longer pined over what could have been. As he matured, he took in the various tributes and did not become big-headed. As Norman Rice, a Pawnee elder, said, "Mose always remained a nice guy. Not overly proud of what he did."[28]

By the time YellowHorse died on April 10, 1964, many people in the tribe were aware of certain stories, of certain facts. In the decades since his death, these stories and facts have become part of a body of Pawnee narratives that describe YellowHorse as a celebrated figure--whether the stories are positive or negative. For instance, a number of accounts relaying how YellowHorse ruined his arm are told. Numerous stories about his

hunting abilities continue to circulate as well. In this way, tribal members commemorate YellowHorse's life with tributes that are both serious and humorous. One such tribute is YellowHorse's headstone in the North Indian Cemetery in Pawnee. Bought by Anna Mulder shortly after YellowHorse's death, it states: "Mose YellowHorse / 1898 -- 1964 / First Fullblood Indian In / Major Leagues / Pittsburgh Pirates 1921-22." When asked about the validity of this assertion, Anna Mulder quickly stated that "it was simply the truth. It wasn't Jim Thorpe, he had some Irish and French blood."[29] Other elders, when asked the same question, responded in kind, and they usually mentioned Thorpe. Sometimes they discussed other players, like Charles Bender, or Ben Tincup, or Louis Sockalexis, but they always stood firm on the point, assured of its truth.[30] They stood firm also, on the fact that YellowHorse's accomplishments, like many of those other players (aside from Thorpe), have not been given the attention they deserve. I would suggest that a cultural study concerning the experiences of Indian athletes is well past due. By considering the lives of players like Mose YellowHorse and others, Native communities can take pride in the public acknowledgment of these players' accomplishments, and Euroamerican communities can begin to appreciate the whole panorama of ethnic diversity inherent in the history of baseball—of the Jewish players as well as the Irish, the Native American players as well as the German, the Hispanic as well as the African-American. If Baseball is a metaphor for certain American ideals, such as multicultural identity, personal liberty, and uniqueness of place, then scholars in the fields of sociology, anthropology, history, and psychology need to peek over the walls of their disciplinary compartments and find ways to include American Indian athletes in various works.

The accomplishments of Mose YellowHorse reach into numerous areas of study. As would be the case with many Native American ball players, YellowHorse's life touches Native American history and culture, as well as American popular culture (specifically with regard to Wild West Shows, baseball, and comic strips). Though he left no children and no writings, the life of Mose YellowHorse continues to be discussed in Pawnee, Oklahoma. It

is probable that in Pittsburgh, Little Rock, Sacramento, and a few other places, stories of YellowHorse's baseball career continue to inform local baseball people. As Andy High, a former St. Louis player who faced YellowHorse in the National League, told *The Sporting News* in 1947 "I'll never forget what it meant to face that Indian with a bat in your hand" (Kaff 42). Such an attitude, startling as it is, was not (I'm sure) isolated. The inherent uneasiness of white batters facing YellowHorse (or other Indian pitchers) suggests larger contexts, ones which reach back (and forward as well) to moments of Indian and white relations that are charged with historical tension. Not only is such a confrontation immediate, in that the pitcher and batter try to achieve opposite goals, it becomes a powerful metaphor. The figurative richness of Mose YellowHorse throwing a baseball toward the bodies of Ty Cobb, or Andy High, or Babe Ruth is heightened when such larger contexts come into play. The fact is, a baseball thrown at ninety-miles-an-hour can be a weapon; in the same way, a thirty-five ounce bat can be a weapon. And a Pawnee man with some history on his mind might have an occasion to let a pitch or two get away. Though YellowHorse certainly focused on his goal of recording outs, he must have, from time to time, considered the mocking war whoops yelled by opposing players and fans, the stories his parents told him about relocation, and the dancing red spine of the baseball as it twirled over ninety miles-per-hour from his hand.

Notes

[1] Joe Vila, writing "Chief YellowHorse Is Indian Pitcher" for *The Sporting News* in 1921, notes that "Gibson, it is believed, will gradually ease him into a regular berth by sending him to the box as a relief sharpshooter."

[2] According to Bill Conlin, retired sports writer for the *Sacramento Bee*, "When he pitched . . . there were those who said he threw as fast as Walter Johnson whose fastball then was the greatest in baseball." The quotation is reprinted in an article in the *Pawnee Chief*, dated August 26, 1992.

[3] Reprinted in Bob Lemke's article "Pirates Pitcher Went 'Way of all Bad Injuns,'" in *The Bleacher Bum: Sports Collectors Digest* on March 3, 1994.

[4] Reprinted in Lemke, from *The Sporting News*' 1920 spring training report, in which the author states "The Indian has a sweet curve."

[5] From "Chief Yellow Horse Is Indian Pitcher," by Joe Vila.

[6] The writer of the article is unidentified, but studying the photocopied story (from the Research Department of the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum), it appears the article ran in a Pittsburgh newspaper.

[7] From Chief Joseph to Vine Deloria, Jr., from William Apess to George Copway.

[8] Authors including Simon Ortiz, Revard, Silko, Vizenor, and many more consider such issues in their work.

[9] From a conversation Mariah Gover and I had on March 3, 1998.

[10] The average income per U.S. household in 1920 was less than $900.00 per year

[11] YellowHorse was twenty-three at the time, while Maranville was twenty-nine.

[12] While 1921 marked YellowHorse's first year in the majors, it was Maranville's tenth.

[13] From Frederick J. Lieb's *The Pittsburgh Pirates*, which was published in 1948.

[14] From the *Cincinnati Post & Times-Star*, an article titled "Chief Yellowhorse and the Rabbit," appeared April 24, 1964. Harmon opens his article by stating "What this country needs is some more ballplayers like Moses Yellowhorse and his roommate, the Rabbit."

[15] Mike Werries' article "Yellowhorse: Indian with a Funny Bone," was published July 6, 1973 in *Steel City Sports*.

[16] From "Pirates Pitcher Went 'Way of all Bad Injuns,'" published in *The Bleacher Bum: Sports Collectors Digest*, March 4, 1994.

[17] Lieb reports that the incident took place in New York; Harmon states that the "contest" occurred during the team's "first night on the road;" Werries states "One report says it was in New York, another Boston;" and Lemke asserts "the team was in Boston."

[18] George Gibson resigned his duties as Pirates manager on June 30, 1922, at which time team owner Barney Dreyfuss named McKechnie the new manager.

[19] From a personal interview conducted June 18, 1992.

[20] In December, YellowHorse, along with three other players, was traded to Sacramento (of the Pacific League) for Earl Kunz, who pitched only one season for the Pirates, 1923, and earned *one* victory in his entire big league career.

[21] This quotation appeared in *The Sporting News* in 1958.

[22] According to *The Biographical Encyclopedia of Baseball*, Harold "Yellowhorse" Morris pitched in the Negro Leagues from 1924 to 1936 with the Kansas City Monarchs, Detroit Stars, Chicago American Giants, and Monroe Monarchs.

[23] This quotation appeared in *The Sporting News* in 1958.

[24] Norman Rice was born in 1936.

[25] This appears in the strip of May 22, 1935.

[26] From a personal interview on September 17, 1992.

[27] This quotation appeared in the *Arkansas Gazette* on May 17, 1950.

[28] From a personal interview conducted on June 20, 1992.

[29] From a personal interview conducted on June 19, 1992.

[30] Some scholars might suggest that I would be negligent if I failed to address this assertion. They would charge that it is my duty to clarify and research the point down to its finest detail. I would usually agree, but my purpose is to celebrate YellowHorse's life,

his contributions as a baseball player and as member of the Pawnee tribe. The character of YellowHorse, as it has evolved among the Pawnee over the years is, in part, defined by his being the "first fullblood Indian in the Major Leagues," and to discuss the blood quantums of various players would detract from my purpose. Suffice it to say that the Pawnee have stories about YellowHorse's being the "first," and that this, in and of itself, makes it so. In other words, it is true that the Pawnee tell stories about YellowHorse being the "first fullblood." As Devon A. Mihesuah points out in her "Introduction" to *Natives and Academics: Researching and Writing about American Indians*, "Many historians and anthropologists . . . argue that Indians cannot accurately recount their past using oral traditions. . . . [They believe] modern Indians' versions of their tribes' histories are 'fantasies.'" She goes on to ask "are not some written records fantasy? Are not some writings of some army officers, missionaries, explorers, and pioneers who encountered Indians exaggerated and biased?" (2). I would add to this by stating that YellowHorse's accomplishments stand as a testament of his talents, because of his attitude, physical abilities, and personality, not because he was this or that blood quantum. Conversely, because the Pawnee have developed this assertion, it is true—according to their oral tradition, a tradition that is as valid as any other research method when it comes to verifying facts.

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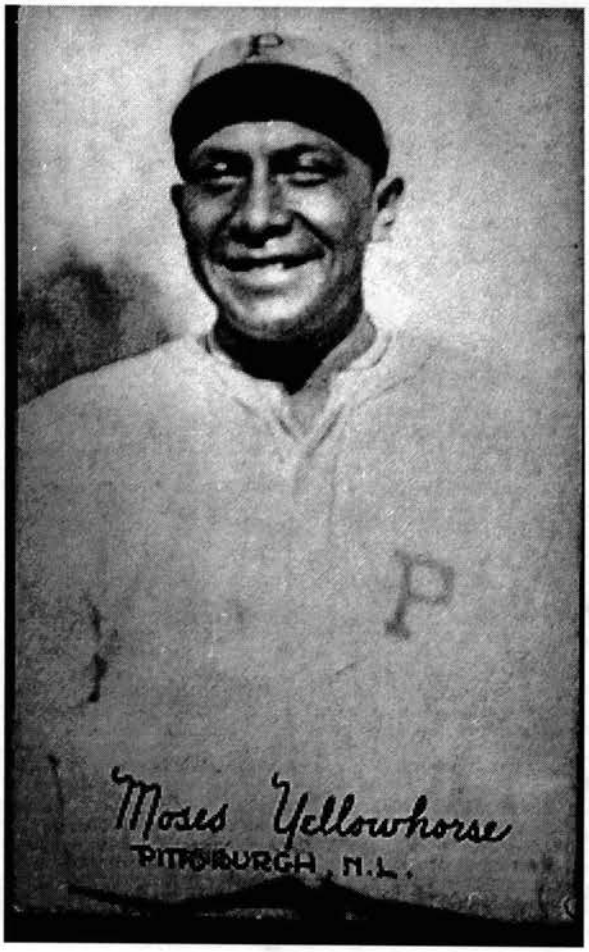


Courtesy of Bob Lemke

1922 Trading Card

This is the only major league baseball card made of YellowHorse. It was issued by the Exhibit Supply Company. Some dealers have appraised the card at over $1,700.00.

Of All Things Winter

On a January morning, you can't see the snow barely falling, or a wind
pushing it
to a cabin's door. It's enough to catch the sound of a woman's voice from
inside,
where she twists on a bed built in Tulsa, Oklahoma; where she pushes
against the body
that's trying to fight out of her.

She glistens like a January moon as her hands press cosmologies into
crisp bed sheets.
It's January 28, 1898. And the body trying to merge into its own breath,
its own voice,
will soon feel snowflakes melting on its live tongue. But first there'll be
moments of screaming.
There will be flights of imagination and prayers spoken in Pawnee.

There will be flashbacks to 1875, to moments when a young girl walked
from Nebraska
to Indian Territory. And the images will go something like: the bones
of children's fingers,
the bodies of cholera-filled Pawnee, and shallow graves undone by
the shoveling feet
of scavenging birds.

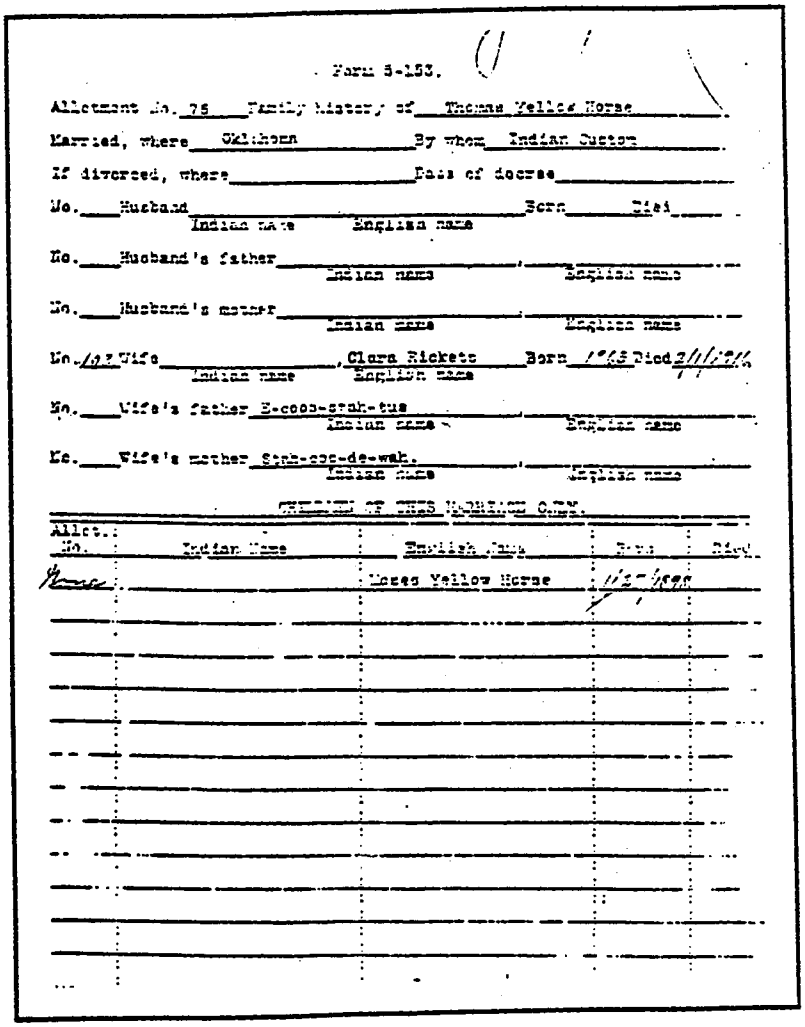
And there will be other women standing around the bed. They'll wipe
the woman's birth sweat
from her mouth and tell stories about their own children. The room will
fill with aromas
and discussions of possible names. And their hands will be busy with
wet cloths,
and one of them will crowd her palms beneath the body that shapes

itself one inch at a time into its own shoulders, hips, and feet. Steam will
wind off the legs
and twirl off his tightly fisted hands, and his mother will say "Moses,"

and the other women
will say "YellowHorse," and laugh at the moment his father enters the room
with eyes as bright
as suns.

When it's over, there's always food on the other side of a ceremony, always
stories
about how the child'll grow, the possibilities, hopes that this one boy might
somehow dazzle
the future. And there's little silence as the cabin's door rattles.

Form 5-153–Family History of Thomas YellowHorse



Form 5-153.

Allotment No. 75 Family History of Thomas Yellow Horse

Married, where Oklahoma By whom Indian Custom

If divorced, where _____ Date of decree _____

No. ___ Husband _____ (Indian name) _____ (English name) Born _____ Died _____

No. ___ Husband's father _____ (Indian name) _____ (English name)

No. ___ Husband's mother _____ (Indian name) _____ (English name)

No. 1st Wife _____ (Indian name) Clara Rickett (English name) Born 1883 Died 2/11/24

No. ___ Wife's father E-coos-srah-tus (Indian name) _____ (English name)

No. ___ Wife's mother Sish-coc-de-weh. (Indian name) _____ (English name)

Children of this Marriage Only.

Allot. No.	Indian Name	English Name	Born	Died
None		Lucas Yellow Horse	1/27/1904	

Courtesy of the Pawnee Nation

How to Read a Population Table*

"These figures on Pawnee population are the best available" (364).
–George Hyde, *The Pawnee Indians*

Year	*Pop.*	
1836	12,500	Official report.
1836	10,000	Missionary report.
1840	6,244	Missionary report. First actual count.
1846	12,500	Agent's report.
1847	8,400	Missionary estimate. Number of warriors in 1848.
1850	5,000	Agent's report: "4,000 to 5,000." 1,234 died of cholera in '49.
1860	4,000	Nebraska settlers' estimate.
1865	2,800	Number on annuity roll.
1870	3,000	George Bird Grinnell. Estimate.
1875	2,276	First census of tribe in Ind. Ter. Male, 866; female, 1,160.
1879	1,440	800 deaths in first five years in Ind. Ter.
1886	998	Births, 28; deaths, 77.
1890	804	Male, 380; female, 424; school children, 124.
1900	650	(blank)
1905	646	(blank)
1910	653	(blank)
1940	1,017	Males, 516; females, 501.

Please note: "The steady and dreadful loss in population from [1836] to 1905" (Hyde 364);

Notice too: All figures are taken by:
Tribal agents
Missionaries
Nebraska settlers
George Bird Grinnell
Census takers, but
No Pawnee;

So that: Time × (Interaction with whites) + (Removal to Indian Territory) = 94.832% population decrease by 1905;

Consider too: the YellowHorses make up .46% of the tribe's population in 1905, but by 1920, (with a population count of 731) they make up less than .0027%;

Though both of Mose YellowHorse's parents died before 1920, on December 22, 1917 (after Clara had died on February 1, 1916 and Thomas had remarried to Bertha Good Fox on August 28, 1917), Lloyd YellowHorse was born;

And suppose, also: as ethnohistorian Henry Dobyns suggests, total Indian populations (precontact) exceeded 112 million people, but by 1492 (after interaction with traders and other explorers) the population dropped to 18 million, and by 1900 it stood at some 350,000;

And remember that: the Pawnee had no need to count themselves, as they knew where each village encamped;

Then: after 1875, they had no need to count themselves, as they could see each tribal member from their new front-porch views.

Between lines
from one year
to the next
the numbers
dwindle like
late autumn sun-
light but they
don't present
any depth of
imagery none
of the ashes
from infection-
filled blankets
that were burned
along the way
between 1874
and 1875.

Maybe it's enough
to know that the
amounts of annuity
checks are eleven
bucks per month
for every enrolled
member as the 21st
century opens its
eyes and maybe
it's just enough to
know it's been that
way for decades
that the increasing
numbers of babies
mean more to aunts
& uncles than U.S.
issued checks.

"In order to obtain the clearest reading of a 'Population Table' one must possess an ability to reckon the larger narratives inherent in both population increases and decreases. . . . Often times more advanced countries which have developed industries and the like decrease in numbers for the very fact that certain variables such as an increase in stress and responsibilities serve as barriers to intimacy. On the other hand those nations now called 'Third World' often increase in population due to tight living spaces. . . . In other instances some populations decrease because of trends related to an inability to adapt to various environments. In these cases the reader must gain a comprehensive understanding of historical context as it influences both the decreasing population and possible increasing populations."

--1973 Psychology Text

* George E. Hyde. *The Pawnee Indians.* Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1974.

Wild West Shows & Other *Histories*

"At the age of three he was with Pawnee Bill's wild west circus." *
--Norman E. Brown, on YellowHorse, in 1921

There's magic in the sentimental smack
of a boy's feet pattering on smooth ground,
in the pull of his arms and hands moving
him to a full sprint. There's magic, too,
in a barker's call, "Come one! Come all!"
and how it attracts thousands eager to part
with their skinny nickels. In 1901, that's
the only way to explain it, how they
scramble for peeks into italicized versions
of an *American* past. Boys in New York,
Boston, and Philadelphia will gawk at
the wonder of an arrow's spin snapping
into a man's body, and how minutes later
he'll rise again to wave at the crowd. 1901,
and Mose YellowHorse's job title reads
something like *savage Indian boy*. He's to
"run and scream," and to "keep his bow
and arrow ready for projection." He's
told this in English and Pawnee and nods
at both. But his eyes might be stretching
to the line of camels, to the waving ears
of African elephants. There's too much
to see--the Italian sword swallower
and Lady Weaver's blond beard. During
the show's *Indian Attack*, he aims at white
actresses who hike up their dresses and
scurry for cover under authentic 1853 wagons.
Every night he hears stories and sleeps
between Pawnee men who've warned him
of old enemies: the *Sioux*, *Cheyenne*, *Osage*.
When he wakes in the mornings, he has no
idea how to measure three months. No way

of knowing when he'll return home to Black
Bear Creek. He doesn't know about money
zipping across the country to his waiting
parents, or the weight of hail stones bending
160 acres of wheat crops. He has no way
of knowing the extraordinary strength of his
fingers, that bowstrings might be a precursor
to the red seams of a baseball. When he hears
applause it might be like rattles of ancestral
music, sounds so clear in the distance they
will be hurled ninety-five miles-an-hour
into the future.

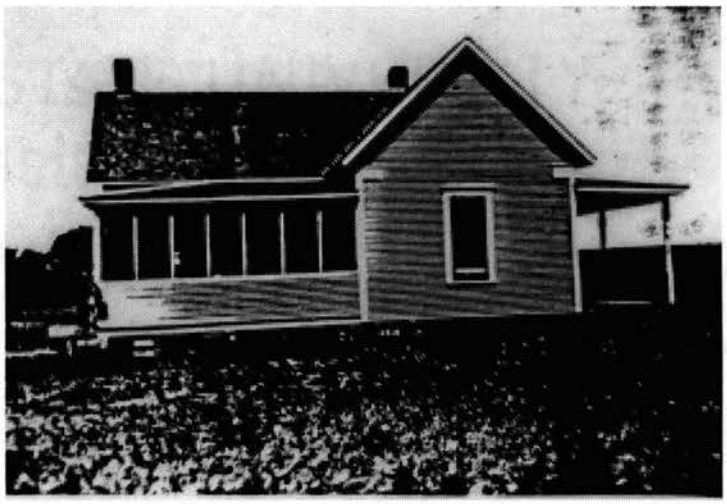
* Pawnee Bill, whose real name was Major Gordon W. Lillie, owned and coordinated his wild west show for a couple of decades and employed hundreds of Indians from all over the continent.

The Way Mose YellowHorse Learned How to Throw along Black Bear Creek in Pawnee, Oklahoma before He Discovered the Meaning of a Fast Ball or Whistling

--after Albon LeadingFox, Pawnee Elder and relative of Mose YellowHorse

Some mornings
there's a hint of myth in the air,
the way
horizons become
shapely spines,
the way
blowing maple limbs
turn their curved leaves
into faces, like
the exact profiles of crows
in flight. And farmyards
are the cartography
of childhood
in Indian Territory
in nineteen-hundred-and-six.
A boy
who is eight-years-old
will quietly cross
his dad's (allotted) land with his hands full
of round stones: he
has heard enough stories
to imagine himself into a hunter,
enough of the old
that's-the-way-it-went
to know how to track
a rabbit, squirrel, or snake.
And he
will move slowly
through the woods
with some kind of super hero
warrior image twirling around his mind.

He will
return home
with an evening meal
of two rabbits & a crow
and tell his parents just how
he did it:
that bird
was a hundred feet away
sitting on a fence post,
and his parents
will say
good,
now wash the dishes.
And he
will learn how to whistle
from listening to rocks
fly out of his hand.



Courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society

Thomas YellowHorse's house near Black Bear Creek

Something Pastoral (in 1917)

Baseball, a dancing red spine
eighty-seven miles-an-hour
divides the atmosphere in two.

This is Chilocco Indian School
on a sloping spring day, and horses
grazing out beyond the fences.

It's a kid named YellowHorse
and a fast ball 60 feet, 6 inches
and other distances from home.

His pitches mystify three batters
per inning. One at a time
they walk away from home

plate shaking their heads, because
he's on his way to a perfect 17
and 0 season. The locals around

school call him *The Pulverizing*
Pawnee, and they say there's magic
in his right arm. It's an afternoon

of the Chilocco nine versus Henry
Kendall College and the sky four
shades of blue. YellowHorse tosses

one fast ball after another, and his
teammates grow bored with strikes
one-two-and-three. They don't

know that his mind might be fixed
on the sounds of his mother's stories,
her voice echoing as he follows

through on his fourteenth strike
out of the game. Her voice says
something like *Your names come*

from two different worlds, as he
shakes off one curve ball after
another. That's how performing

goes, the mind wanders during
the deepest states of concentration.
He might begin to think about

the slapping water of Black Bear
Creek, the songs of Mocking Birds,
or the stories that seem twenty

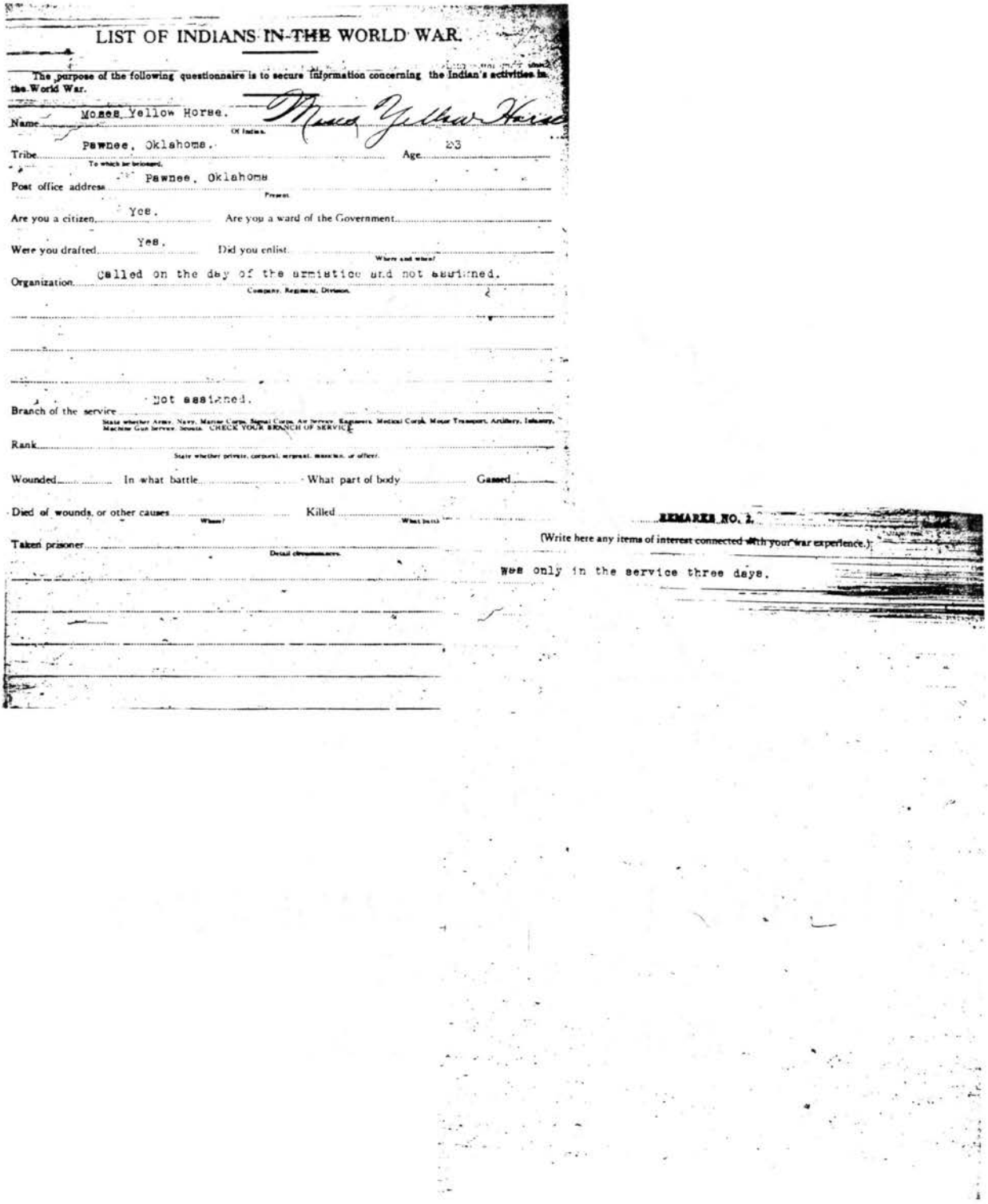
generations removed from certain
possibilities of baseball or World
War I.

Chilocco Beats Kendall

Yellow Horse, Indian Twirler
Was a Complete Puzzle

ARKANSAS CITY, April 18–Henry Kendall College of Tulsa, Okla. was shut out by 5 to 0 by the nine of the Chilocco Indians at Chilocco today. Yellow Horse's pitching featured.

The Daily Oklahoman, April 19, 1917



LIST OF INDIANS IN THE WORLD WAR.

The purpose of the following questionnaire is to secure information concerning the Indian's activities in the World War.

Name Moses Yellow Horse. (Of Indian.) Moses Yellow Horse

Tribe Pawnee, Oklahoma. (To which he belonged.) Age 23

Post office address Pawnee, Oklahoma (Present.)

Are you a citizen, Yes. Are you a ward of the Government

Were you drafted Yes. Did you enlist (Where and when?)

Organization Called on the day of the armistice and not assigned. (Company, Regiment, Division.)

Branch of the service Not assigned. (State whether Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Signal Corps, Air Service, Engineers, Medical Corps, Motor Transport, Artillery, Infantry, Machine Gun Service, Scouts. CHECK YOUR BRANCH OF SERVICE.)

Rank (State whether private, corporal, sergeant, musician, or officer.)

Wounded In what battle What part of body Gassed

Died of wounds, or other causes (Where?) Killed (When?)

Taken prisoner (Detail circumstances.)

REMARKS NO. 2.

(Write here any items of interest connected with your war experience.)

Was only in the service three days.

Courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society

YellowHorse's World War I Service Records

The Big Time Begins in Little Rock, Arkansas

Mose YellowHorse's turn at prominence began in 1920 when, at twenty-two, he helped the Arkansas Travelers win the Southern Association championship. He pitched to a 21 and 7 record and in the process gained the attention of many major league scouts. Under the guidance of his seasoned manager, Kid Elberfeld, YellowHorse improved his mid-season record of 7 and 7 and went on to earn fourteen consecutive wins as the Travelers played in the inaugural Dixie World Series against Fort Worth, the champions of the Texas League. Though Arkansas lost the series four games to two, YellowHorse earned both of the Travelers' victories, and on September 16, 1920, YellowHorse's Little Rock contract was purchased by the Pirates. But before YellowHorse was promoted to the majors, his one season in Little Rock proved in some ways to be his most satisfying as a professional. It represented for YellowHorse a moment of professional youthfulness, when both his talents and demeanor were unblemished by the rigors of the majors.

In 1920: the Travelers' roster included a total of four Indians; including YellowHorse they were: a) Joe Guyon (White Earth Anishinaabe), who gained prominence as a college football star with Carlisle (in 1911 and 1912) and later with Georgia Tech (in 1917 and 1918). He took up professional baseball until the fall of 1920, when the National Football League began its first season. In 1966 he was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame; b) Casey Smith who played pitcher and joined the team late; and c) Bill Wano who played first base and was a teammate of YellowHorse's at Chilocco. In an article titled "Redskins Whooping It up for Elberfeld," which was published in *The Sporting News* in the spring of 1920, an unidentified writer commented that "[Four] aborigines on one team is about as strong as any club ever went, but then we are right here on the [Oklahoma] border and ought to pick them up if anyone does."

YellowHorse received his contract to play with Little Rock in the mail, at his home in Pawnee. He had no knowledge of its coming. He had no knowledge of any Little Rock scout watching him pitch. Enclosed with the contract was: enough money to purchase a train ticket from Pawnee to Little Rock and a detailed map outlining directions from the Little Rock train depot to the Travelers' offices.

YellowHorse's numbers for 1920 go something like:

a) 46 games appeared in

b) 75% of games won (best in the Southern Association)

c) 115 runs allowed in 278 innings (the S.A. didn't calculate e.r.a.s)

d) 138 struck out

e) 55 walked

The Travelers' #s go something like:

f) 88 wins and 59 losses, which means YellowHorse won 24% of the team's games.

Travelers' manager Kid Elberfeld compared YellowHorse's fast ball to Walter Johnson's, which, by all accounts, means YellowHorse threw in the neighborhood of 95 miles-an-hour.

Kid Elberfeld, whose full name was Norman Arthur "The Tabasco Kid" Elberfeld, managed the Travelers in 1920 after a long major-league career, which spanned fourteen years (from 1898 to 1914). He played with six teams, including Philadelphia's National League team, the Cincinnati Reds, Detroit Tigers, New York Highlanders (Yankees), the Washington Senators, and Brooklyn Robins (Dodgers). He spent most of his career with a poor-playing New York team, and in 1908 managed the ball club for ninety-eight games; his .276 "winning" percentage still ranks among the worst of all time. He played primarily as a short stop and in 1293 games hit .271. As with another central figure in Yellow-Horse's life, Elberfeld was a spritely 5'7" at 158 pounds.

1920 cartoon of the Little Rock Travelers

Courtesy of *The Sporting News*

The Arkansas Travelers joined the Southern Association in 1901 and in 1966 joined the Texas League. In fifty-five years of play (accounting for World War stoppages and other circumstances), the Little Rock club won three Southern Association championships (in 1920, 1937, and 1960). The team's best season came in 1937 when they played to a 97-55 record. In 1920, as the Travelers won their first S.A. pennant, the team enjoyed its most successful season in twenty years of operations.

The 1920 lineup included:

1b: "Chief" Wano
2b: Distel
ss: McGinnis
3b: "Scrappy" Moore
lf: Frierson
cf: "Bing" Miller
rf: Harper
c: Tony Brottem
p: "Chief" YellowHorse
p: "Chief" Smith
of: "Chief" Guyon
of: Morrow
m: "Kid" Elberfeld

YELLOWHORSE IS SIGNED BY CORSAIRS

LITTLE ROCK, Ark., Sept. 16--Sale of Pitcher Moses Yellowhorse to the Pittsburgh Nationals was announced by the Little Rock club of the Southern Association today. Yellowhorse, a full blooded Pawnee Indian is 19 [sic] years old. He has been the pitching sensation of the Southern Association, having won 21 games and lost seven.

Courtesy of *The Sporting News*

What It Means to Wear #50 (for the Pittsburgh Pirates)

This moment begins in the dim light
Of a locker room, and Mose Yellow-
Horse struggling against his uniform

Buttons. *It's just y'r nerves* the boys
Tell him, but he knows it's butterflies
And the sparkle of Opening Day.

Soon enough he'll take in the field,
The crowd of twenty-five thousand,
See mustard dripping from the chins

Of enchanted fathers.

This will be the first time they've seen
An Indian in Pittsburgh. And some
Whoop and holler; mumble & inquire.

Some will cheer. They watch the Reds
And Pirates battle deep into the tussle;
Tip and tuck from the start.

It's April 21, and Mose YellowHorse
Doesn't know that kids are peeking
Through cracks in the outfield wall.

He can't hear them asking *Who's that*
Number 50? Instead, he got his eyes
On the curve of a catcher's mitt, his

Face covered in the shade of his cap.
And he doesn't know that the pop
Of his fast ball has an echo that reaches

Press Row.

When he enters the game in the top
Of the sixth, it's tied at six apiece.
And some numerists might've said

That means something ominous, but
YellowHorse listens to the cheers of
All the clubhouse joes, something like

Go get 'em Chief.

He jogs from the bullpen to
the mound, where the twist
And turn of his body resembles

A dance. After his first pitch, he will
Smile at the sound of *stee-rike one.*
His mates in the field yell *Atta boy.*

And the headlines on April 22 read
Indian Twirler Works Medicine on Reds.
Baseball writers say *YellowHorse is*

The latest idol of the Smoky City fans.
History says he is the first Pirate
Rookie to win a home opener.

After the game is over his teammates
Say *Have another Mosey ol' boy.* He'll
Walk home at 3 a.m. with the faces

Of twenty-five thousand on his mind,
And he doesn't care about the climb
To his apartment, or the hum of hall-

Way lights. It's eggs over-easy. One,
Two, three strikes you're out. A perfect
Career record. And "P" is for Pawnee.

Box score of YellowHorse's first win:

Pirates Trim Reds

Open Home Season by Capturing Nip-and-Tuck Contest, 8 to 7.

PITTSBURGH, April 21–Pittsburgh opened the local season today with a victory over Cincinnati by a score of 8 to 7. The game was tip and tuck from start to finish, the winning runs coming in the eighth inning. Adams started to pitch for Pittsburgh, but was hit hard and gave way to Ponder in the third, who was forced out of the box because of the visitors' heavy hitting in the sixth inning, Yellowhorse finishing the game.

The score:

PITTSBURGH	Ab	R	H	Po	A
Bigbee, lf	3	2	2	3	1
Carey, cf	3	1	0	2	0
Maranv'le,ss	4	2	3	3	5
Cutshaw, 2b	4	1	2	3	3
Whitted, rf	2	0	0	2	0
Tierney, 3b	4	0	2	2	0
Grimm, 1b	4	1	1	8	0
Schmidt, c	3	1	1	4	1
Adams, p	0	0	0	0	0
Ponder, p	2	0	0	0	1
Yellowh'se, p	1	0	0	0	1
Total.....	30	8	11	27	12

CINCINNATI	Ab	R	H	Po	A
Paskert, cf	5	1	2	3	0
Daubert, 1b	4	0	2	6	0
Bohne, 3b	5	1	1	1	2
Duncan, lf	5	3	3	4	0
Bressler, rf	4	1	4	1	0
Fonseca, 2b	5	0	0	3	1
Crane, ss	5	0	1	2	1
Wingo, c	4	0	1	4	3
Napier, p	2	1	1	0	0
Brenton, p	1	0	0	0	2
Marquard, p	0	0	0	0	1
Total.....	36	7	15	24	10

Errors--Carey, Schmidt, Fonseca

Pittsburgh	2	0	0	1	3	0	0	2	x–8
Cincinnati	0	1	3	0	0	2	1	0	0–7

Two-base hit–Duncan. Three-base hits–Duncan (2), Napier, Maranville, Cutshaw, Grimm, Tierney. Stolen bases–Bohne. Sacrifice–Daubert, Fonseca, Crane, Whitted (2). Double plays–Maranville, Cutshaw and Grimm, Cutshaw and Grimm. Left on bases Cincinnati 6, Pittsburgh 2. Base on balls–Off Brenton 2, Yellowhorse 1. Hits–Off Napier 8 in 4 1-3 Innings, Brenton 3 in 5 1-3, Marquard 0 in 1-3, Adams 7 in 2 1-3, Ponder 4 in 3, Yellowhorse 4 in 3 2-3. Struck out–By Napier 4, Adams 1. Winning pitcher–Yellowhorse. Losing pitcher–Brenton. Umpires–Quigley and O'Day. Time of game–1:57.

The New York Times, April 22, 1921

1921, and Other Numbers

YellowHorse's rookie season came to an abrupt end on July 5 when he injured his right arm in a game against St. Louis, a game that he lost. Shortly afterwards, he underwent surgery to correct the problem. In a letter dated July 12, S. W. Dreyfuss, the Pirates' Treasurer, writes to Mr. C. E. Vandervoort, the Pawnee agent:

Dear Sir:-

You have probably seen in the papers that Moses Yellow Horse underwent an operation a few days ago. At his request I am writing to advise that there is nothing seriously the matter with "The Chief". During a recent game he strained a ligament and our doctor felt that unless there was an operation to relieve the trouble Yellow Horse would be useless to our club for the balance of the season. The operation was entirely successful. The patient is already sitting up and will leave the hospital in another week.

Very truly yours,

S. W. Dreyfuss (signed)

Treasurer.

Pirate Regulars:	
1B	Grimm
2B	Cutshaw
SS	Maranville
3B	Barnhart
RF	Whitted
CF	Carey
LF	Bigbee
C	Schmidt
P	Cooper
P	Glazner
P	Hamilton
P	Adams
P	Morrison
P	Zinn
P	Carlson
P	YellowHorse

Unfortunately, for YellowHorse and the Pirates, his pitching services were lost for the balance of the season, and he would end his rookie campaign with a 5-3 record and an earned run average of 2.98. The breakdown of his wins and losses is as follows:

April 21	vs. Cincinnati	(W)	8-7	in Pittsburgh
May 30	vs. Chicago (N)	(W)	6-3	in Pittsburgh
June 7	vs. Boston (N)	(L)	10-7	in Pittsburgh

June 16	vs. Brooklyn	(W)	6-5 (in 17)	in Pittsburgh
June 20	vs. Philadelphia (N)	(W)	3-2	in Pittsburgh
June 25	vs. St. Louis (N)	(L)	7-4	in St. Louis
June 30	vs. Cincinnati	(W)	5-3	in Pittsburgh
July 5	vs. St. Louis	(L)	8-2	in Pittsburgh

Aside from the Pirates' home opener, one of the more exciting games for YellowHorse came against the Philadelphia on June 20, a contest he started and won 3 to 2. In eight innings of work, YellowHorse allowed only two runs (both in the eighth) and struck out seven men in the process. He entertained not only Pirate fans, but also Baseball Commissioner Kennesaw Mountain Landis who attended the game with team owner Barney Dreyfuss.

He was also the winning pitcher in a seventeen-inning game against Brooklyn on June 16.

As the season progressed, YellowHorse could do nothing but encourage his Pirate teammates as his arm healed. While he sat in the clubhouse from August on, YellowHorse watched the Pirates battle the New York Giants in a heated pennant race. Both teams stayed within three to five games of one another for most of the season, and by September Pittsburgh had built a four-game lead going into a series at the Polo Grounds. Too full of confidence, a few Pirate players predicted that the pennant was theirs, and they would take two of five games to wrap up the National League championship. Unfortunately for the Pirates, the Giants swept the series. The Pirates, bruised egos and all, then went on to finish the season four games behind the Giants.

Because of their strong, yet disappointing, season the Pirates, with their second-place finish, earned a $21, 939.17 share of the World Series. For his part, YellowHorse received a full share of $839.17. In a letter to Pawnee agent Vandervoort, Leslie M. O'Connor, the

Secretary-Treasurer of major league baseball, wrote on December 6, 1921:

Dear Sir:

In accordance with your letter of November 30th to Commissioner Landis, I enclose a copy of a circular letter sent to all Pittsburgh players, including Moses YellowHorse.

As I recall it, he was listed to receive two-thirds of a share in the recommendation submitted by Captain Carey. You will note that this has been increased by the Commissioner to a full share.

Very truly yours,

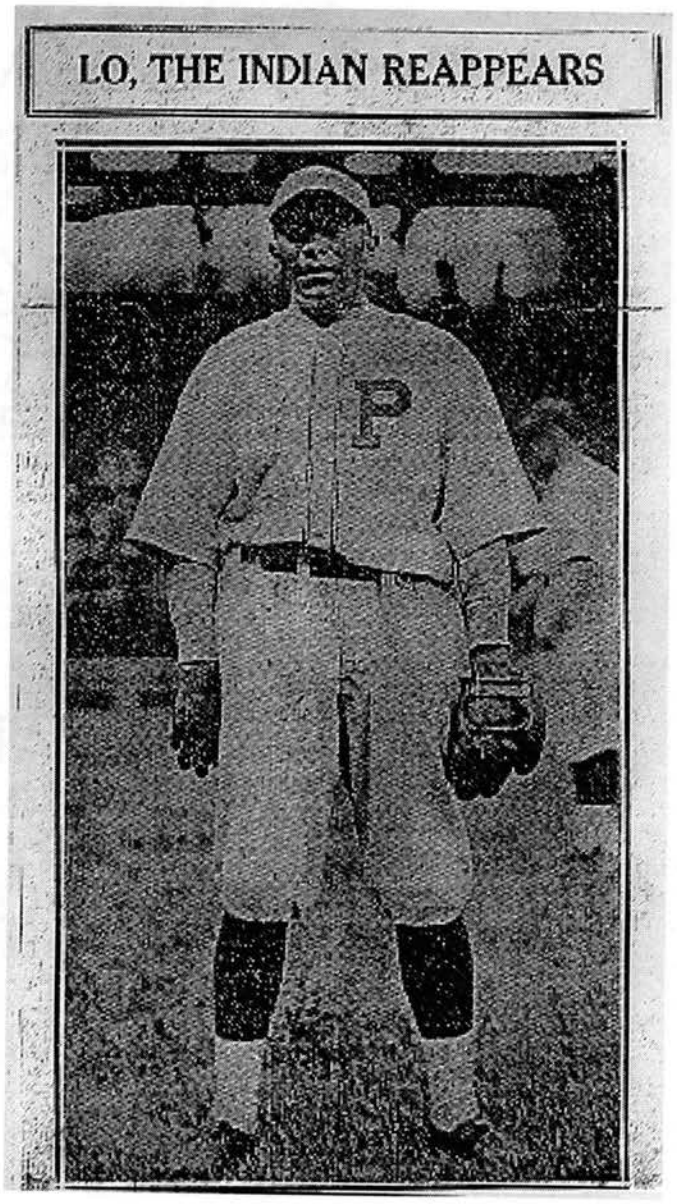
Leslie M. O'Connor (signed)

Secretary-Treasurer.

A quick glance at Captain Max Carey's original recommendation shows, however, that YellowHorse was to receive a full share (as voted by his teammates). O'Connor was, for some reason, mistaken about how much YellowHorse's Pirate teammates wanted to give him. In the end, YellowHorse received a full World Series share.

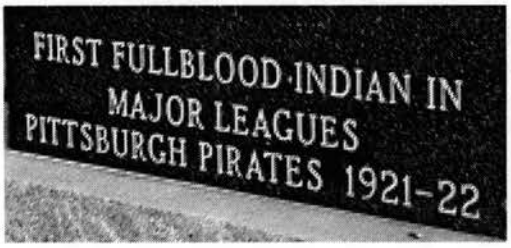
And he received a hero's welcome when he returned to Pawnee at the end of the season. So many hands to shake. Some odd jobs around town. Maybe he worked construction, put his Chilocco-learned carpentry skills to use. Maybe there were functions to attend, dates with young Pawnee women. And stories; there were so many stories to tell. The one about waking up in a tub full of warm shaving cream, and how the hotel owner in Chicago cursed in Italian when he saw the mess. Maybe YellowHorse showed off the scar on his arm; got more wounds throwing a baseball than serving in The War. Maybe he had so many ways to spend money, which is only numbers.

In *The Sporting News*' Spring Training Report of 1921



Courtesy of *The Sporting News*

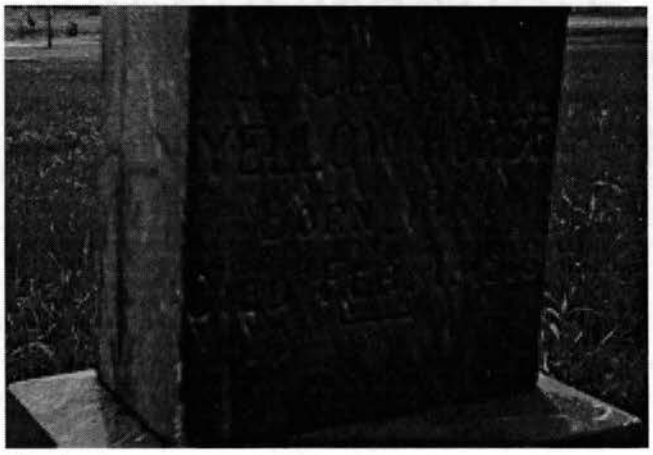
Some Stories



Taken by author

Mose YellowHorse's Headstone in the Pawnee's North Indian Cemetery

Clara (Ricketts) YellowHorse's Headstone in the North Indian Cemetery in Pawnee, Oklahoma



Taken by author

The curve ball, according to Ira Flatow, "is based upon sound laws of physics" and is much like "twisting a doorknob or snapping your fingers." Scientists at both General Motors and MIT were awarded research grants in 1982 to determine the physical dynamics (if any) of the curve ball. Stop-action photography showed that the pitch was no mere optical illusion. As Flatow notes, "the secret of the curve ball is not its velocity . . . but its spin." Very simply, a "sharp twist of the wrist puts a fast, forward spin on the ball," which in turn drags a thin layer of air around the ball. So that "top-spin causes air to flow faster along the bottom of the ball than along the top," and then "faster-flowing bottom air is stretched thin, causing greater air pressure at the top of the ball and [thereby] forcing the ball down," all of which creates the appearance of a curve.

*

Traditional Pawnee homes, round earth lodges, were, as Gene Weltfish puts it, "a microcosm of the universe and as one was at home inside, one was also at home in the outside world. For the dome of the sky was the high-arching roof of the universe and the horizon all around was the circular wall of the cosmic house."

–*The Lost Universe*

Eight to Five

"What this country needs is some more ballplayers like Moses Yellowhorse and his roommate, the Rabbit [Walter Maranville]."
–Pat Harmon, *The Cincinnati Post & Times Star*
April 24, 1964

The Pirates' 1922 season, like the year before, held promises of success. Many sports writers in their spring training reports tabbed Pittsburgh as a top team in the National League. And Pittsburgh manager George Gibson had every reason to believe the club would build on the previous year's experience and finish the season stronger than in '21. Gibson hoped a few changes in the Pirate lineup might improve the team's offense. Since the Pirates finished 1921 batting .285, fourth worst in the league, Gibson figured to remedy the problem with some stronger batters. Changes were made at second and third bases, in right field, and at catcher. Most prominent of these substitutions was Pie Traynor's taking over third base in place of Clyde Barnhart who batted .258 in 1921. Traynor hit at a .282 clip and drove in eighty-one runs–a solid rookie year for the future Hall-of-Famer--and brought much more offensive production to third base. Other switches included the insertion of Cotton Tierney for George Cutshaw at second base, Reb Russell for Possom Whitted in right field, and Johnny Gooch at catcher for Wally Schmidt. With changes to four of the eight day-to-day regulars, National League pitchers were unfamiliar with certain batters' tendencies. As a result, the 1922 Pirates led the league in hitting with a .308 average.

Unfortunately, the Pirates' pitchers didn't hold up their end of the bargain, and the hitters' bats didn't start igniting until the end of June. The Pirate twirlers as a staff, which gave up a stingy 3.17 runs in 1921, gave up 3.98 runs in '22. As a result, Pittsburgh stumbled out of the gate to a 32-33 record, which cost George Gibson his job. He re-signed in June, and Bill "Deacon" McKechnie took over the managerial duties. Team owner Barney Dreyfuss demanded that McKechnie get control of the players, as the pervading perception was that Gibson treated his players softly and let them break certain team policies without penalty. Dreyfuss specifically pointed out two players–YellowHorse and Maranville–as the primary offenders. McKechnie's solution to the problem was to room with YellowHorse and Maranville when the team was on the road.

An Interview with Babe Adams

Babe Adams (1882-1968) played nineteen years in the majors, one year with the St. Louis Nationals, in 1906, and the other eighteen with the Pittsburgh Pirates, (1907, 1909 to 1916, and 1918 to 1926). During his tenure with the Pirates, he pitched in almost five hundred games, and in 1909 and 1925 he helped the team win the World Series. In 1960, Adams returned to Pittsburgh as the team's guest to watch the Pirates compete against the Yankees in the World Series. He spoke about his days with the team, about his early days in baseball, and about some of the raucous characters with whom he played. Adams, though seventy-eight years old, recalled his experiences with clarity and humor. He spoke eloquently (with his subtle Hoosier drawl) in the hotel restaurant, where he was talking over old times with some friends. What follows is an excerpt from the *Pittsburgh Journal & News*.

Adams: What I enjoyed most about playing in Pittsburgh was, it seemed every year we were right in the pennant chase. Even my first year there, we finished in second place. Then, my second year it was, we won the pennant, and then the World Series. And the whole town was just full of jubilation about it. It seemed so easy to me, I thought we'd be playing in the thing every year.

PJN: But didn't the team struggle in the mid- and late teens to put a competitive team on the field?

Adams: Well, I guess there were some lean years, the war getting in the way and all, but the team never failed to compete. How many one-run games we lost, buckets of 'em. After the Series in 1909 we finished second or third five years in row. 'Course those years right after were my best. Won twenty-two and twenty-one games.

PJN: What else did you enjoy about playing here?

Adams: I liked getting to know ball players from all over different parts of the country. Every spring there'd be new guys from places I'd never heard of--small towns in Idaho, or Florida, even Canada. I'd meet guys from Georgia or Alabama and couldn't hardly understand 'em at first. Guys from up in New England were just as hard too. But once I got to know them, they were usually good guys. All just trying to play some

baseball and travel around the country.

PJN: Which year was the most disappointing to you? Which season upset you more than any other?

Adams: Well, 1921 was a big disappointment. Poor Gibby, I still feel sorry for him. He was the team's manager at the time, and he took it awful hard–the way we folded like a pup tent down the stretch. We had a comfortable leading late in the season, and going into a series with the Giants in New York we got swept. They just mauled us. We were deva tated. Lost the pennant by four games. 'Course it didn't help that some of our players were saying how we were going to do this and do that to beat the Giants. That just made them all hell bent on whipping us. And they did. Out hit, out pitched, out fielded us. In all ways they demolished us. Then they went on and beat the Yankees in the Series.

PJN: Who were the players that talked about beating the Giants?

Adams: Well, no one ever said who they were in the newspapers, but I heard it was Rabbit Maranville, shooting off his mouth, the way he always did. That was just his way. Supposedly, Barney Dreyfuss, he owned the club, fined Rabbit for telling reporters what we were going to do to the Giants. If you know John McGraw at all, you know he told his players what so-and-so from the Pirates said they were going to do to his team. I heard that Dreyfuss fined Rabbit his whole World Series share. That would've been over eight hundred bucks. And I don't have to tell you how much more money that was in 1921 than it is now.

PJN: What other crazy things happened back then? It seems a lot of ball players were pretty wild. Players like Babe Ruth and Rabbit Maranville, of course, behaved in a more reckless manner than today's players. Is that true?

Adams: Since I haven't spent a lot of time around today's players, I can't really say if they're crazier acting than players back then. I am sure that Rabbit Maranville was the wildest piece of baseball player I ever saw. In Pittsburgh, I think he was with the team

for four years, he teamed up with this pitcher named YellowHorse. Mose was his name. We called him 'Chief' since he was an Indian. He made the team in '21 and everyone was real surprised. We all thought he was gonna come to spring training then go back to the bushes. But he had a fast ball with more gas than Texaco. And Gibby just couldn't let the guy go. I remember this one time, I'm getting back to your question. It was in '22, and Gibby had just resigned from the team. This would've been in June. And 'Deacon' McKechnie just took over managing the team. Barney Dreyfuss told him to keep a look out for Maranville and YellowHorse. I heard that Dreyfuss called 'em both wild Indians, and he wanted to make sure they stayed in line. So 'Deacon' decided to bunk with Rabbit and the 'Chief' when the team's on the road. We all warned him to be careful. But he wouldn't listen.

(Mr. Adams pauses and breaks a slight smile. He takes a sip of coffee.)

PJN: Sounds like you've got a story.

(He nods.)

Adams: It became known as "The Pigeon Affair of 1922." And it was in New York. What happened was that the 'Chief' and Rabbit made a bet to see who could catch the most pigeons bare-handed. To make it fun, they decided to do their pigeon catching from a sixteenth-story ledge at the hotel where we were staying.

PJN: That's pretty stupid.

Adams: You just had to know 'em. Rabbit was this half-pint of explosive wildness from Springfield, Massachusetts. He probably stood about 5'5". Didn't weigh any more than a slice of bread in a paper sack. And next to Rabbit, the 'Chief' looked like he might've been half-brother to a sycamore tree. He came up from Oklahoma, from one of those tribes. From near Tulsa, I remember him saying. He wasn't that tall; really about my size. But he had an arm. And the two of them together made lots of excitement, always kept Barney Dreyfuss worrying.

PJN: What exactly did they bet?

Adams: Well, you know those two; they were always looking to cure a calm night. And Rabbit said to YellowHorse, "I'm sure I can beat you at this game we played as kids back in Springfield." He went on and told 'Chief' about it, how they'd try to catch birds bare-handed, and the bet was on. They went and got a bag of popcorn, I think it was, and started laying kernels out on the ledge. 'Chief' was out there, still in his suit, and good thing it wasn't a windy night. He was out there trying to charm the birds, and pretty soon he caught himself a handful. Then Rabbit went out there and I guess he started dancing around, acting like some ballerina. And when his time was up he had eight birds.

PJN: So Maranville won the contest then, and what prize did he get?

Adams: Well, Rabbit was kind enough to share his 80-proof winnings with the 'Chief.'

PJN: What did McKechnie do when he found out?

Adams: Thing is, he wouldn't 've had any idea. He was out having dinner with John McGraw. He didn't know what they were up to. When he got back to the hotel room around ten o'clock, he was surprised and happy to find both of 'em sleeping. He figured he caught a break since he didn't have to go looking for them, like usual. Then he opened his closet door to hang up his coat. Started reaching for a hanger. But he got a face full of pigeons. They were flying right for his head, and he ducked. Rabbit told me that the 'Deacon' hit the floor so loud it must've startled God.

PJN: Then what did McKechnie do?

Adams: We all heard that stirring down the hall, and we shot up to see what all the commotion was. On my way to the room I saw 'The Deacon' walking away real quick. I went in the room and saw pigeons flying all around. Rabbit and 'The Chief' were on their beds just rolling and laughing. I mean they're in their pajamas. And Max Carey was in there too. He was smiling and trying to grab the pigeons and let them out the window. He was saying 'we need to get these birds outta here.' At one point, I think someone said 'anyone gotta gun,' and that kept us stirring for another

twenty minutes. Their room was full until midnight. nd we got a real kick out of their prank. After that, 'The Deacon' was one of the boys. 'Course he didn't room with them ever again. And it took him awhile, but he finally learned to laugh about it.

PJN: What did he do to Maranville and YellowHorse then?

Adams: Oh, he fined them. And Barney Dreyfuss called them both into his office when we returned to Pittsburgh. But the team was so excited about what happened that we got on such a good winning streak we actually competed for the pennant. If those two rascals had spent their time thinking about baseball, instead of half the time, then we could've played in another World Series or two.

Pirates 1922 lineup:

1B	Grimm
2B	Tierney*
SS	Maranville
3B	Traynor*
RF	Russell*
CF	Carey
LF	Bigbee
C	Gooch*
P	Cooper
P	Morrison
P	Glazner
P	Adams
P	Hamilton
P	Carlson
P	YellowHorse

* = new player

A Bean for the (Georgia) Peach:
The Detroit Incident

A report in the September 27 (1922) *New York Times* put it this way:

TY COBB IS INJURED

Tigers' Manager Hit by Pitched Ball in Exhibition With Pirates

DETROIT, Sept. 26–Ty Cobb was hit by a pitched ball thrown by Yellowhorse and was carried from the field in the fifth inning of today's exhibition game with the Pittsburgh Nationals, which Detroit won, 5 to 4. Cobb was batting for Cole, the ball striking him on the leg. Cole and Ehmke held the Pirates to four hits, all of which were for extra bases.

Seventy years later in June of 1992 Pawnee elder Norman Rice spoke to me about this incident. He invited me into his small bungalow in Pawnee, and we talked about YellowHorse's career with the Pirates. Rice, a wiry man whose face and body were toughened by years spent working, spoke his stories with a soft elegance. Though some of his words could be difficult to understand (as he was without some of his teeth), he was as kind, gentle, and willing to share his stories with me as anyone in Pawnee. When speaking of YellowHorse's experience in Detroit, he said:

> Ty Cobb was crowding the plate anyway, he always did. And Mose wasn't going to let him get away with it. Cobb was up there yelling all kinds of Indian prejudice, real mean slurs at Mose, just making him mad anyway. So he shakes off four pitches until the catcher gives him the fast ball sign, and Mose nods his head. I mean everyone in Detroit was whooping and all that silliness. So he winds up and fires the ball as hard as he could, and he knocked Cobb right in the head, right

between the eyes. Mose knocked him cold. And a fight nearly broke out at home plate. All the Tigers' players came rushing off the bench. The Pirate players started running toward Mose. But no punches were thrown. They just carried Ty Cobb off the field. And all three of the Pirates' outfielders just stood together in center and laughed. Said they wished they could see it again.

And still another account in *The Bleacher Bum* puts it this way:

> On Sept. 26, Yellowhorse was called upon to pitch against the Detroit Tigers in an exhibition game at Detroit. In a 5-4 loss he plunked Ty Cobb so severely that the Georgia Peach had to be carried off the field.

Courtesy of Bob Lemke

Of these three accounts, the most engaging and descriptive is Norman Rice's, who heard the story from YellowHorse in all likelihood. If Rice didn't hear YellowHorse tell the story, he probably got it from someone who did. And where the two newspaper accounts offer factual and bare-bone information, Norman Rice's story contains an intriguing sub-plot that addresses tensions between Indians and Euroamericans (in the 1920s). In a reversal of the all-too-familiar narrative, it is YellowHorse "the full-blooded Pawnee" who holds the weapon (a ninety-five mile-an-hour fast ball) and inflicts harm. For YellowHorse to level one of the most hated (white) ball players in baseball history lends an ironic twist to the story. The empowered Indian dares to make his feelings public and retaliates against Cobb (and his teammates and the Detroit fans) when he disobeys the Pirates' catcher and chooses to throw a fast ball at the ridiculing batter. The fact that YellowHorse's teammates support his actions, as Norman Rice's narrative shows, clearly suggests their loyalty to him as a teammate--at the very least. They rally to his defense in a hostile environment and protect him from revenge-minded Detroit players and fans. In the same way that the 1947 Brooklyn Dodger players (finally) supported Jackie Robinson, the same kind of team-first spirit takes hold in the 1922 Pittsburgh clubhouse. A Hall-of-Fame player like Rabbit Maranville, though no imposing physical specimen, certainly stuck his nose into the fray. In fact, it's not too difficult to imagine Maranville leading the defensive charge. It's not too difficult to imagine him standing protectively in front of the much bigger YellowHorse. And it's not too difficult to imagine lots of people laughing after the fact.

---

* As I was fascinated by Mr. Rice's narrative, I did not record it while he was telling it. I put the story down later.

*

Moments of Pawnee, Oklahoma
can drift by at ninety-five miles-

an-hour, even in late September,
even when the red hand-sewn

seams of a baseball spin like fancy
dancing.

*

Moments of Narrows, Georgia can
stand as firm as trees in an orchard,

even when an Indian hurricane comes
along in late September. And a sturdy

Louisville Slugger can stare down
any fast ball west of the mighty

Mississip.

*

And moments of Detroit, Michigan
can jeer as loud, say, as a cavalry

stampede, even in 1922, even
when it's Tiger Stadium and a game

that means nothing in the standings.

*

Sooner rather than later,
the bean (ball) flying from Mose

YellowHorse's hand will catch up
with Ty Cobb's peach.

And all the smart ass in the world
won't protect Cobb's face from

Pawnee intentions.

*

And someone's dad once said:
"You mess with the bull, you

get the horn."

*

When YellowHorse heard
the whoops and hollers

of Cobb & all of Detroit,
when YellowHorse reared back

on his right leg, the moment
of contact is still echoing

through the atmosphere,
still spiraling into space

with laughter following close
behind.

Picking Moments

He hears a pair of crows outside
His hotel window. A slight sample
Of truth. Fragmented voices, half

Recalled. Down on street corners
Men ignore Prohibition, and truth
Navigates a teetering gateway. He

Is alone in his room listening for
Solutions. If he's quiet enough, he
Remembers. He can begin to untie

Stories caught in his memory. Out
Beyond the disconnection of 1922,
Baseball is perfect again.

For now, Mose YellowHorse is 24,
And that might mean he's waking
Up at eleven every morning beside

A hangover. It might mean boys
Are seeking his autograph. Maybe
He's participating in nightly rituals

Of moonshine & hootchy-kootchy.
The way it is in each town–slipping
Sideways into speakeasies two men,

Two women at a time. A password
Whispered to a pair of shifty eyes.
A girl who says her grandma is half

Indian. Back in Pawnee, moths are
Beating themselves against screens.
A white bead concealed from one

Hand to another.* Young men slide
The world through their fingers. On
The verge of song, a Pawnee woman

Exposes her words to a prayer about
Seeds twisting like dancers to the sun.
Maybe a father can mumble a death-

Bed speech that begins *To-mor-row.*
And sooner or later the need to walk
Saves every life from its destruction.

* The white bead is an allusion to the Pawnee hand game, a contest played by young men, during which they hide a white bead in the hands of a member of their team, or war party, while a member from an opposing team tries to determine in which hand the bead is hidden. As Gene Weltfish notes in *The Lost Universe*, "War songs were sung and in the motioning of the hands of the line in which the bead was hidden, the bead might be transferred by sleight of hand during the guessing" (398) Other Pawnee games also make use of a white bead, which sometimes serves as a symbol of the earth.

Manager Bill McKechnie of the Pirates added to the club's payroll a right-handed flinger, by the name of E. D. Kuntz, who was last year a member of the tail-end Sacramento Club. In addition to $7.500 in cash the Pirates threw in two pitchers, one infielder, and one outfielder, only one of whom was an active member of the Pirates forces last season. The pitchers were Moses Yellowhorse, Indian hurler, who has held down the "bull-pen" assignment for two seasons, and Bill Hughes, former Brooklyn sandlot player, who was with the Rochester Club last Summer. The infielder was Claude Rohwer, brother of the old White Sox star, who was on the rolls of the Charleston, S.C. team, and the outfielder, Harry Brown, who chased flies for the Flint, Mich., team in the Michigan State League in 1922.

Kuntz comes to the Pirate highly recommended. He is a right hander and 23 years old. In spite of the fact that he was on a tail-end team last Summer he turned in fourteen victories out of thirty-two starts.

The New York Times, December 14, 1922

Photo courtesy of Mark Macrae

Baseball Card of YellowHorse with Sacramento

How Many Ways an Arm Dies

Versions about the way YellowHorse permanently injured his arm, which ended his professional baseball career, are numerous and are told by both Pawnee elders and baseball oldtimers

Account #1

Pawnee Elder *Phil Gover* told me this YellowHorse story during my first week in Pawnee. One early afternoon in the dining hall he spoke about YellowHorse's baseball days in California. He told me, too, that at 86, he was proud to be Pawnee and proud to be a veteran of World War II. Without sharing the specific details with me, Mr. Gover said it was during the War in Germany where he lost his left arm. And I could tell that Mr. Gover, at one time, possessed a powerful build. Though his words were sometimes difficult for me to understand, I learned to compensate by leaning forward much of the time; I now know he was employing what's called the "Gover mumble." It was apparent to me that Mr. Gover, even at eighty-six, even as a respected elder, kept his sense of humor handy. He spoke gently, always aiming to teach, and always welcomed me at his table.

> Mose was on his way to California, after he was traded to Sacramento. And he was sleeping on a train. He fell asleep on his right side and slept that way all night. After awhile his arm started to fall asleep. When he woke up, the arm kept on sleeping. He never quite got the sleep out of his arm. It stayed there for years, the sleep did. Even later on, when he was older, he still rubbed the arm. He'd rub and rub it for hours. Funny thing is, it didn't allow him not to pitch. He could still throw a great curve ball when he was fifty. One thing it did was make him do more with his left hand. It got to the point that he could throw, fish, even write with his left hand. 'Course, some people always said he could throw with his left as good as his right. He even tried it in a game once. Out in California, his team was getting beat real bad, and he threw his mitt down and started throwing left-handed. He reared back and fired a strike at the catcher. And he kept on doing it. Got all the

batters out that way, the rest of the game. I guess it helped his right arm when he did that. When he came back, sometime in the mid-20s, he did it all the time in games. It became his way of showing off. But still after every game, he'd rub his right arm.

Account #2

Bill Conlin, a longtime sports writer for the *Sacramento Bee*, spoke to me over the phone in September of 1992 about YellowHorse's post-Pittsburgh days. It was Conlin who, in 1958, suggested that the Sacramento ballclub fly YellowHorse out to California to honor him with a "Yellowhorse Night." He told me that as a little boy he saw YellowHorse pitch for Sacramento and remembered his father telling him that YellowHorse had the best fast ball he'd ever seen–that is, before he injured his arm.

It happened when Mose was pitching with the Fort Worth team in the Texas League. He liked to stay in Dallas. The action was there. So he stayed in a hotel and got rides out to the Forth Worth park. One night he's whooping it up in his room. He's all drunk and out of control. I think his room was on the third or fourth floor. Anyway he was flirting with some girls out on the street or something, and he fell out of the window. That's right, he fell out of a window drunk. It was a story he loved to tell. He came back here in 1958. The owner of the Sacramento ball team, Sam Gordon, flew him out here and a banquet was given in his honor. Mose presented Gordon with a headdress and told all kinds of stories. He told us how he fell out the window in Dallas. He was trying to get some girls to come up to his room. Him and some other guys were up there yelling at them from the room. He leaned out the window and made a waving motion to them. When he did, he lost his balance. He fell into some wires. Telephone wires or electric wires, something like that. He bounced off the wires and slammed into the concrete. Well, he laid there for a second and didn't move. The guys he was with screamed

out the window and rushed out of the room when they didn't see him move. Mose was still lying on the ground when they got downstairs. By that time, a small crowd had gathered around to see what was going on. They rolled him over and saw his arm, his pitching arm all bloody. They got him up to the room and after a few minutes revived him. At the time he wasn't able to move his arm. "I'm crippled. I'm crippled," he screamed at his cronies. They fed him some more whiskey 'til he passed out and left him alone in his room. He told us that story in 1958. He said he couldn't ever pitch after that. I guess he was pulling our legs 'cause his arm wasn't curled up or anything. At the game in his honor, he threw a fast ball that could've baffled the youngsters on the Sacramento team.

Account #3

Albion LeadingFox, also Pawnee elder was, in 1992, the only known relative of YellowHorse still living. LeadingFox, like a number of Pawnee older men I spoke with, did not talk loudly, which seemed a bit odd to me since most other people I knew who were hard of hearing, as Mr. LeadingFox was, compensated for their "loss" by talking overly loud. Unlike Mr. Gover, who was always ready with a story, Mr. LeadingFox did not share many stories with me. Rather, he spoke in short declarative sentences and did not offer an abundance of details. After talking with Mr. LeadingFox, I realized that all the men who shared with me their stories wore baseball caps--though none of them was of the Pittsburgh Pirate variety. Mr. LeadingFox told me about YellowHorse's injury in the most succinct terms; he said:

It was the drinking. It deadened his arm.

Account #4

Mose YellowHorse, as quoted in *The Bleacher Bum* by Bob Lemke:

"In the first month of the 1924 season, Yellowhorse suffered a serious injury to his pitching arm. Sacramento was carrying an 18-5 lead into the bottom of the ninth inning at Salt Lake City when the home team began to rally. With cozy fences and the high altitude, the lead was by no means safe and the Solons manager Charlie Pick began going through his bullpen.

"When the Bees had scored 10 runs, Pick told Yellowhorse, 'Warm up fast, if the next batter gets a hit, in you're going.' With only three warm-up pitches, Yellowhorse was called to the mound with the bases loaded, the tying run on first base. [YellowHorse] reminisced later, 'I went in and I threw just nine pitches, striking out in order John Peters, Tony Lazzeri, and Duffy Lewis,' and nailing down the victory.

"'That was the finest job of pitching I ever did,' Yellowhorse said, 'But I couldn't raise my arm the next day. Jack Downey was the trainer but he couldn't stop the pain.'

"Yellowhorse apparently resorted to heavy applications of 80-proof pain relief. By mid-June, *The Sporting News* reported, 'Chief Moses Yellowhorse has gone the way of all bad Injuns. The Chief would not keep in condition, and was no longer of use to the team, so he was sold to Fort Worth, Texas. The Chief is his own worst enemy. He has the ability to be a big league pitcher, but lacks the inclination to keep in shape to pitch.'"

So it seems, in all probability, that YellowHorse:

a) blew his arm out in a game versus Salt Lake in 1924 (by his own admission), or

b) drank his arm to death (by one account), or

c) slept his arm to death (by one account), or

d) fell his arm to death (by one account), or,

though not accounted for in any of the tellings, that he

e) half-recovered from the operation he had in July of 1921.

Whatever the case, and it's probable that a) is the most likely (since it is YellowHorse's own story), there is no doubt that these various narratives from both Pawnee and non-Pawnee cultures have developed as alternatives to YellowHorse's account because there are numerous other stories about YellowHorse's outlandish behavior as a professional ball player. Any story that details stress to YellowHorse's right arm finally offers as good an explanation as any other in accounting for the demise of his pitching abilities and professional baseball career. Whether it's falling from a hotel window, not taking enough time to warm up, falling asleep on the arm, or drinking too much, each narrative implies that something unfortunate (even silly, or stupid) happened to cause YellowHorse's pitching ability to wane. In each story, aside from Philip Gover's, YellowHorse had an opportunity (at some point) to avoid tragedy. The thinking might run along the lines of something like:

He could have, after all, quit drinking and not fallen out of a hotel window;

He could have quit flirting with Texas girls walking the streets of Dallas;

He could have told Charlie Pick that he wasn't warmed up and taken more time to loosen up his arm;

He could have quit drinking;

He could have quit drinking.

And that's the ease of hindsight. It's too easy to forget: YellowHorse was an orphan at twenty (in 1918); on most of the teams with which he played (with the exception of Little Rock) he was the only Indian; he could've felt pressure from those around him and from

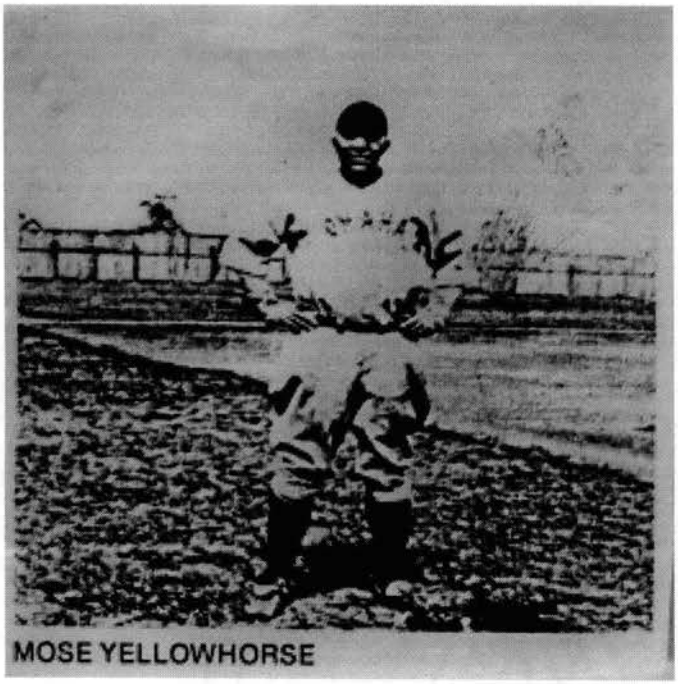
those in Pawnee to be another 'Chief' Bender.

Regardless of which account best explains the reasons for the deterioration of YellowHorse's pitching abilities, he threw his last pitch as a professional on May 1, 1926. With Omaha of the Western League, his final pitching line (versus Tulsa) went something like:

2 & 1/3 innings pitched; gave up 6 hits and 5 runs; and lost 9-8.

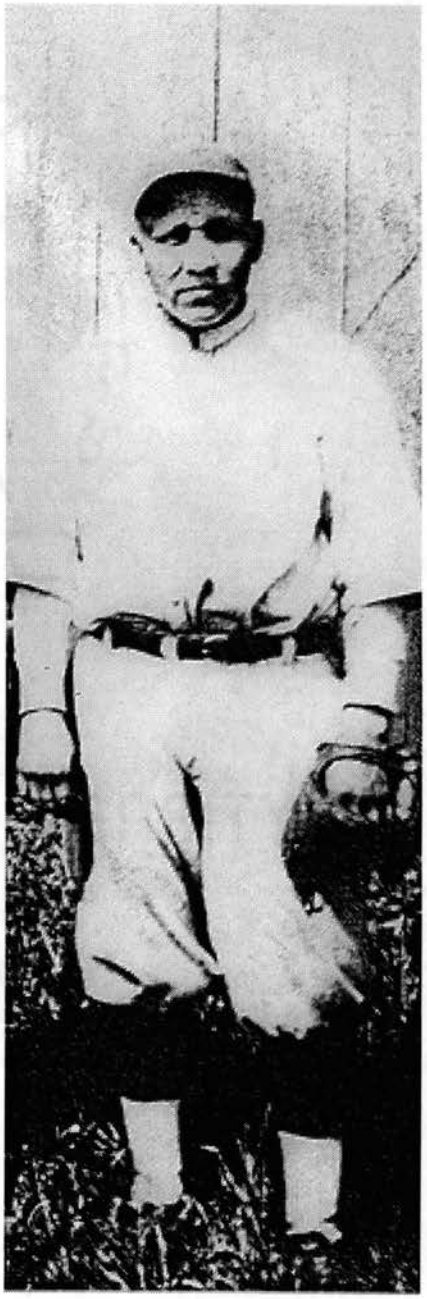
And the totals of his entire pitching career went something like:

Year	Team	League	W	L	Save	Pct.	ERA	Games	GS	GC	IP	H	SO	BB
1917	Ponca C.	NA												
1918	Des Mos.	WL	NA								4	4		2
1919	(Semi-pro ball in Oklahoma)													
1920	L.R.	SA	21	7	—	.750	3.80	46	–	–	278	255	138	55
1921	Pitts.	NL	5	3	1	.625	2.98	10	4	1	48.1	45	19	13
1922	Pitts.	NL	3	1	0	.750	4.52	28	5	2	77.2	92	24	20
1923	Sacr.	PCL	22	13	—	.629	3.68	57	–	19	311	351	99	79
1924	Sacr.	PCL	1	4	—	.200	6.07	10	–	–	46	–	10	14
1924	Ft.Wth.	TL	NA											
1925	Mobile	SA	2	0	—	1.00	—	4	–	–	9.2	14	2	4
1925	Sacr.	PCL	NA	(did not pitch)										
1926	Omha.	WL	NA											



Courtesy of the Pawnee Nation

Last known pictures of YellowHorse as a professional baseball player, with the Omaha Royals, 1926



Courtesy of the Pawnee Nation

Cartoons and Other Fantasies

"You know he was in the Dick Tracy *Comic strip."*

--Anna Mulder, Pawnee Elder

On March 27, 1935 in newspapers across the country a new character was introduced in the widely-popular *Dick Tracy* comic strip. Named "Chief Yellowpony," the character was based on Mose YellowHorse, who was two years older than Pawnee-born *Tracy* creator Chester Gould. The March 27th strip, titled "Indian Call," involved the villains Boris and Zora Arson. It looked like this:

In the next-day's strip "Chief Yellowpony" first appeared:

And for the next two months "Yellowpony" was an everyday character in the strip. The explanation for the character's appearance is quite simple, as Darrell Gambill,[1] President of the Pawnee Chamber of Commerce points out, "Chester Gould put Pawnee-related material in his cartoon all the time. Store fronts and people, all kinds of stuff." For Gould, who was born (in 1900) in Pawnee, it was a way (I assume) of commemorating both the town in which he grew up and the people there. Since YellowHorse and Gould were so close in age, it is probable that they knew one another, might even have been friends. Certainly Gould knew of YellowHorse's success as a professional baseball player. In 1921, when YellowHorse was pitching for the Pirates in Pittsburgh, Gould left Okla-

homa A. & M. College (now Oklahoma State University) and headed for Chicago. While YellowHorse found (temporary) prosperity playing ball, Gould struggled to make ends meet. He did manage to graduate from Northwestern in 1923, and in 1924, when YellowHorse's arm finally went out on him, Gould gained full-time employment as a cartoonist for the syndicated strip *Fillum Fables*. By the time Gould developed *Dick Tracy* in 1931 (it first appeared on October 12) and later included "Yellowpony" in the strip, Mose YellowHorse was enduring the most troubled period of his life.

After closing out his professional baseball career in 1926 with the Omaha Royals, YellowHorse returned to the Pawnee tribal grounds in Oklahoma where, by most accounts, he took on numerous odd jobs and practiced his drinking habit with astounding proficiency. In fact, the period between 1926 and 1945 is the one period in YellowHorse's life about which the Pawnee elders shared only a couple of stories with me. As best I can tell, YellowHorse's day-to-day routine, from 1926 and 1945 when he quit drinking altogether, consisted of his performing jobs both on the tribal grounds and in town and of spending a good deal of time drinking. He worked in order to earn enough money to drink. And he drank probably because he was both bored and disappointed. Putting into practice the carpentry skills he learned at Chilocco was certainly not as rewarding (or stimulating) as twirling fast balls at major league batters. As a result, he endured a self-inflicted twenty-year binge in an attempt to make the transition from a professional baseball pitcher to an individual with the same everyday concerns and needs as the other people in his tribe. In the process, he had to come to terms with facts like:

1) (in 1926, he was twenty-eight and) both his parents had already died, and
2) Earl Kunz (the man for which Pittsburgh traded YellowHorse) had a shorter career than Mose, and
3) Rabbit Maranville was not going to stop in for a visit, and
4) All the money was long gone, and

5) His dad had sold his allotment land to H. E. Miller (in 1917), and

6) Everyone thought he did not perform to his potential,

which is a lot of disappointment for a twenty-eight year-old to deal with. And unfortunately, he dealt with it in the same way many former professional athletes do, which is to flounder in a chemical haze brought on by self-pity.

The likelihood that YellowHorse remained drunk and unproductive for twenty years, however, is slim. Few people can sustain an alcohol buzz for such a span and live, even the most hearty of drinkers. And though YellowHorse most certainly consumed lots of alcohol and gained a reputation as a problem drinker, he could not have consistently performed odd jobs and continued to stay on with folks if he was constantly drunk. If his binge had lasted, say, three to five years, maybe he could have rotated from one friend's home to another before he pissed everyone off. That does not seem to be the case. Anna Mulder conveyed to me that YellowHorse regularly stayed with her (both during this period and after, when he quit drinking) and cheerfully helped out with things around her house, like fixing items and keeping up the house's maintenance.

So, while YellowHorse's primary routine included odd jobs and drinking, he certainly had secondary routines, which might have consisted of attending tribal functions, working stretches at a time without drinking, hanging out here and there and visiting with people, and going on excursions to Tulsa, Oklahoma City, and other places in the vicinity.

Though many people were disappointed that YellowHorse did not turn out to be the next "Chief" Bender and held a grudge as a result, he did manage to have a few close friends, including Ben Gover (a half-brother). Apparently, Gover and YellowHorse became drinking buddies, as it were, and often sought out trouble, getting into fights, ripping around town, and seeking out anyone who would cross them. And it's easy to imagine that YellowHorse from the late 20s through the late 1930s (when he was still young) would not have had any physical problems keeping a steady drinking pace.

Given this, it is quite possible that YellowHorse was indifferent about the appearance

of the "Yellowpony" character in *Dick Tracy*. No one seems to know what his reaction was, if he might have been pleased or angered, if he spoke with Gould beforehand, if he received any money, nobody knows. The one obvious and after-the-fact point that everyone has knowledge of is the character's appearance in the strip. The possibility of YellowHorse reacting positively to the character's appearance is just as likely as his reacting negatively. To see the appearance of a character based on himself must have been exciting on one level. On another level, the only resemblance of the character to YellowHorse is a thick physical build.

The April 1 strip, entitled "Nice People," shows Gould's typical depiction of "Yellowpony," "Cottonflower," his wife, and "Sunset," his daughter, throughout the narrative:

From this, and the first two strips in which the character speaks, it is obvious that "Yellowpony," takes on more stereotypic characteristics, more closely resembling *popular* depictions of Indians in the 1930s, rather than personal characteristics easily associated with YellowHorse. Where the cartoon character dresses in a traditional shirt and talks in the English of a Hollywood Indian, YellowHorse (according to Pawnees and non-Pawnees) never wore traditional clothes (at least not that anyone ever saw), and he did not speak in such a manner as "Yellowpony." In fact, numerous sources, including YellowHorse's own words, do not reflect his speaking in any such vernacular. An (in)direct quotation from YellowHorse (via Bob Lemke's 1994 article in *The Bleacher Bum*) from "a local [Sacramento] newspaper" demonstrates YellowHorse's speaking style:

> I used to hit it up pretty good, but 13 years ago I decided I'd give up drinking. I came to that decision on my own. And I did it with willpower. (62)

No where in this quotation does YellowHorse talk like "Yellowpony," who constantly uses expressions like "Ugh!," "many moons," and among others "'um," for him. (In another side note, YellowHorse never had a wife named "Cottonflower," and he never had any kids, especially any named "Sunset.") The fact that "Yellowpony" is *made to* speak in such a fashion by Gould comes somewhat as a surprise. As a long-time resident of Pawnee (from 1900 to 1921), Gould heard plenty of Pawnees speak (fairly) standard English. Since the tribe (generally) believed that a Euroamerican education could benefit both Pawnee children and the tribe, many Pawnee kids went to boarding schools (even on the Pawnee tribal grounds), and they were encouraged to learn standard English.

Given our present perspective, some seven decades later, it seems easy to point an accusatory finger at Gould. He did have an opportunity, because of his personal experiences, to create fully-developed Indian characters who, at the very least, could have dressed and talked in ways similar to many contemporary Pawnees. But Gould did not. That he did not take advantage of the situation as such is disappointing, especially given the initial scope and purpose of the *Dick Tracy* strip. Gould stated (years later) that he wanted Tracy to be "a strong representative of law and order who would take an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," and he went on to explain that his motivation for creating the character came as a reaction against wide-spread "revelations [in the 1920s and 30s] of fixed juries, crooked judges, bribery of public officials and cops who looked the other way" (*Something about the Author* 113).[2] Considering this stance and its somewhat revolutionary tenor, it is possible that the strip could have introduced and sustained Indian characters who wore contemporary clothes and spoke (fairly) standard English. His using stereotypic traits, instead of specific ones, proves that Gould, while "gung-ho" about speaking out against crime and a criminal justice system that often "looked the other way" when dealing with the "crime syndicate," did not have the same resolve when it came to others areas of social concern.

The *Tracy* narrative in which "Yellowpony," his wife Cottonflower, and daughter Sunset play central roles begins on March 27 and runs through May 22, some sixty daily episodes. Through the course of the story, "Yellowpony" is first introduced as a gullible character--formerly taken in by Boris Arson's con games. The March 31 (Sunday) episode makes this clear:

Over the course of the narrative, however, "Yellowpony" comes to recognize Boris Arson's

sinister nature. At first he is prompted by a phone call by Arson to drive himself and his family to the city (presumably Chicago) to have his daughter to marry Arson. This begins, as it always does in the *Dick Tracy* strip, a series of harrowing and intense events involving (in this narrative) Tracy, Pat Patton (his sidekick), "Yellowpony," Cottonflower, Sunset, Boris and Zora Arson, and "Cutie" Diamond, another criminal with whom Arson and his sister hide out.

The overall plot progresses, after Arson's call to "Yellowpony," as a series of chance encounters, scheme uncoverings, the pursuit of criminals, and finally the capture of those criminals. By the time that "Yellowpony" reaches the apartment (on April 4) in which Boris and Zora Arson are hiding, he has met Tracy (as the March 31 strip shows) and twice crashed his car (once on March 31 and again on April 3). After "Yellowpony" and his family arrive at the Arsons' apartment, they are all enthusiastically welcomed by the escaped criminal:

As this strip shows, Sunset is referred to (by Arson) as a "squaw," to which she laughs, and "Yellowpony" responds by assuring Arson that Sunset will be dutifully submissive. "Yellowpony's" motive for getting Sunset to marry Arson seems driven mostly by money (again, as the March 31 strip shows). It seems he's eager, as well, for Sunset to marry someone of Euroamerican ancestry too. Take the March 29 strip:

Here, "Yellowpony" refers to his own wife as "my squaw," just as Arson does. Just as with "Yellowpony's" use of English, Gould depicts other aspects of Indian life through a lens that employs popular Euroamerican assumptions–to the point that even "Yellowpony" uses derogatory terms. It seems too that "Yellowpony" and other Pawnees (even in 1935) live in a nineteenth-century plains Indian village, as the tightly arranged tipis attest. This depiction is, however, anachronistic on two counts. First, the Pawnees have consistently lived in earth lodges, not tipis. Second, after the Pawnees were removed to Oklahoma, most families lived in farm houses similar to the ones that many nineteenth-century *settlers* built. Though it's possible that Gould did not know about the earth lodges, it is impossible that he did not know about Pawnees living in farm houses. By the time he was born, a majority of Pawnees had built and lived in houses just like his own.

After Arson welcomes "Yellowpony" and his family, the narrative for the next nine episodes takes place in Arson's apartment. Ever focused on the trip's purpose, "Yellowpony" insists (over and over) that the wedding take place immediately. Both Arson and Zora become uncomfortable with this, as Arson hoped he could manipulate "Yellowpony" to drive them down to Oklahoma before carrying out the ceremony. During the April 6 installment, Arson attempts to appease "Yellowpony's" wishes by telling him "Now listen, Yellowpony–on second thought, don't you think it would be better for us all to go back to Oklahoma, and for Sunset to marry me down in your country in the customs of your people?" "Yellowpony" is not swayed, though, and he responds by saying "Yellowpony brought daughter, Sunset, clear from Oklahoma to marry you! Now by the great spirit–call parson! Wedding got to be right now!" Arson hatches another scheme, however, and tells Zora to disguise herself as a parson and to perform the wedding. When she returns as Parson Jackson, "Yellowpony" instantly recognizes the parson's true identity. And in the April 9 episode "Yellowpony" takes action:

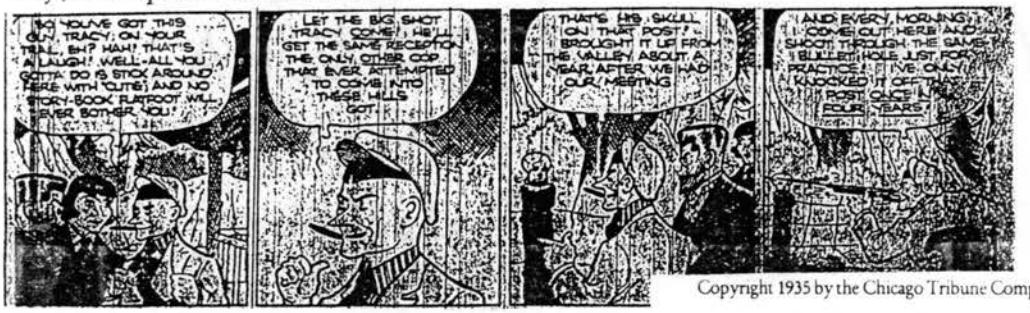
This instantly prompts a confrontation between Arson and "Yellowpony," and over the next five episodes the two tangle until:

And in the next episode on the following day (April 13):

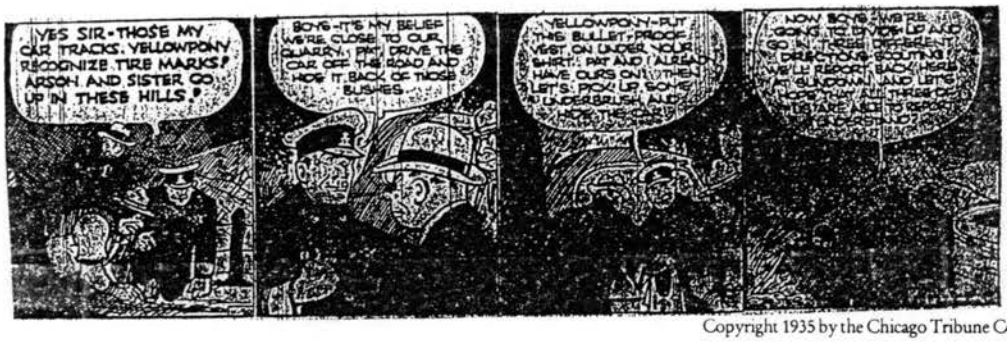
From this point on, through the conclusion of the narrative, "Yellowpony" focuses on apprehending Arson and making sure that Cottonflower and Sunset are safe. Unfortunately, after he yells (at Tracy) from his car window for help, Arson strikes him on the head and "Yellowpony" falls from the car. Once Tracy and Pat Patton find "Yellowpony" and listen to the details of his story, the chase is on:

"Yellowpony," Tracy, and Patton, through a series of clues left on the road by Cottonflower (pieces of red fabric torn from her blanket), follow Arson and Zora down to the hills of the Ozarks. On the way, however, Boris and Zora try to get rid of Cottonflower and Sunset by hiding them in some lockers at an empty railroad station. After "Yellowpony," Tracy, and Patton find the two "Pawnee" women and get them safely aboard a train to Oklahoma, they begin their pursuit in earnest.

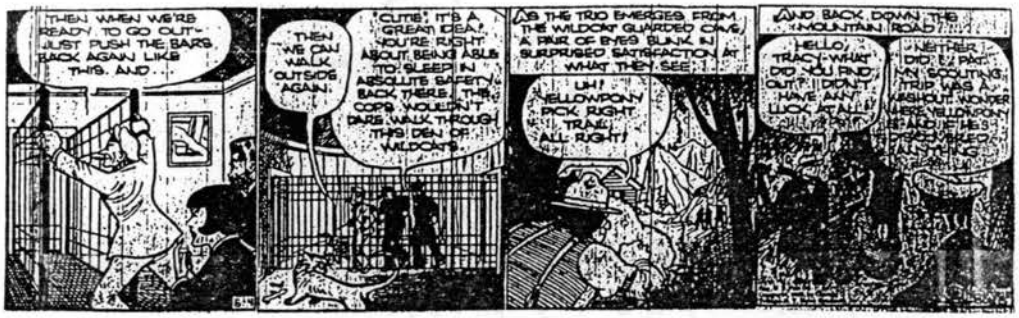
Through a series of clues, they are able to follow Boris and Zora to "Cutie" Diamond's mountain hideout. Diamond, the "King Bandit of the Southwest," welcomes the two crooks, and in the April 28 episode shows off some of his "trophies," which include a sheriff's badge he got in Hallet, Oklahoma, a bank teller's eye-shade that he took in a stick up near Little Rock, a police officer's cap that he snatched in a small town near Arkansas City, and a police officer's skull.



And "Yellowpony's" abilities directly lead Tracy and Patton to the Arsons and "Cutie" Diamond's hideout, as the April 30 and May 4 episodes show:



And on May 4:



Once "Yellowpony" discovers the hideout and tells Tracy, it's only a matter of time before the crisis comes to a head. It begins with Tracy devising a plan to smoke the three criminals from the hideout. He fastens a pipe onto the car's exhaust, drills a hole through the cave wall, and then runs the carbon monoxide gas into the hideout. As Arson, Zora and "Cutie" are trapped, they decide to shoot their way out, and when they do, both Zora and "Cutie" are killed by gun fire. Boris, who retreated back into the cave with the initial burst of fire, is then shot and wounded by Tracy. In "Yellowpony's" final frame on May 22, he s says his good-byes to Tracy and Pat Patton:

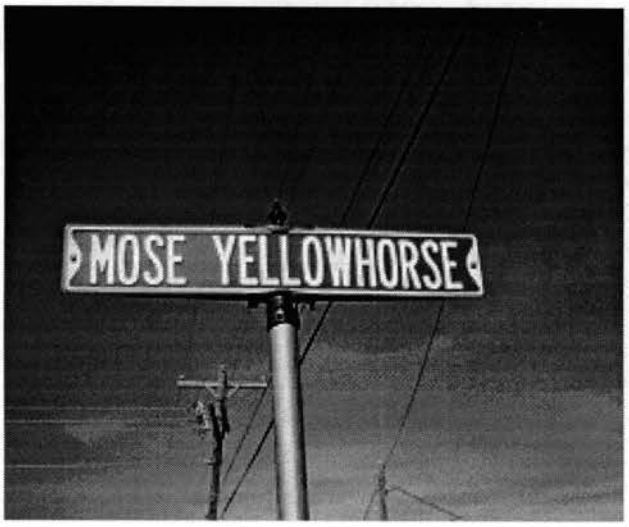
As the strip closes, "Yellowpony," offers his thoughts on the situation with stereotypical sage advice in an episode titled "Observations of an Indian." The observations he

comes to are those shared by all the heroes involved in the *Dick Tracy* strip. "Yellowpony," as Gould spins it, adds his Pawnee flair to the mix and restates the punch line of every conclusion in the *Tracy* serial narratives.

Dick Tracy mural in Pawnee, Oklahoma

Taken by author

YellowHorse has a street and a ball field named after him (in Pawnee):



Taken by author

Taken by author

So, two of Pawnee's "most famous sons" have been memorialized in separate ways. And though Gould meant (I'm sure) to memorialize YellowHorse in his own way, "Yellowpony's" depiction comes across (over sixty years later) as a stereotypic representation of a kind of Indian that whites (in the 1930s [dare I say 1990s, or turn of the millennium]) expected to see. A fully-developed Indian character with a grasp of fluent English and a contemporary wardrobe would have certainly presented a difficult challenge for Gould--in some ways a similar kind of challenge he faced when he first started the Tracy strip. And, because of the strip's broad syndication, such a character would have added cultural and social depth to the strip--something Gould was concerned about at various times. This is not to look past the fact that "Yellowpony" becomes a major player in the narrative, so that he develops into a hero and helps in the apprehension of Boris Arson. But given the fact that Gould grew up in Pawnee and that he knew Indians, he ought to have known better than to represent in a fallacious manner that which he knew about. The truth of the matter is that, even if we grant Gould his right to create the strip as he chooses, even if we don't apply a 1990s ethos to his 1930s behavior, he still observed Pawnees behaving as his contemporaries, and not as nineteenth-century Plains Indians.

As for YellowHorse, he was (in 1935) ten years away from permanently quitting his drink habit. Exactly what event or epiphany caused YellowHorse to quit is not known, or at least not discussed. My hunch is that he either: a) simply got tired of drinking ("sick and tired of being sick and tired," as the saying goes); or b) experienced some painful and unsettling ramifications as a result of his drinking. Either way, he finally quit for good in 1945 (at the age of forty-seven) and was happier because of it. As he later told a Sacramento newspaper (in 1958): "Thirteen years ago I decided I'd give up drinking. I came to that decision on my own. And I did it with will power." He goes on to say "I've been very proud that I quit. Today I'm one of the happiest men in the world. I go here and there without fear and the people I meet and get to know have grown close to me," (Lemke 62).

Notes

[1] From a personal interview on March 30, 1996.

[2] I recognize that Gould often developed characters, including Tracy, that were wildly over-blown, caricatures most of the time, so that, detectives, sympathetic characters, and gangsters all take on stereotypic traits; they're all rather flat. I would argue, however, that they all live in a contemporary world, while "Yellowpony" and his family seem caught in the nineteenth century.

Suggested Readings

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Throat

He hit her so hard in the throat that she couldn't talk for a month.
–Two Pawnee women

It's one story that few people talked, or talk, about. In fact when I tried to find confirmation from other elders of YellowHorse's hitting Beatrice Epple (his supposed wife), my questions were most often met with looks of puzzlement. Nobody seemed to know that YellowHorse was even married. Given this, none of the elders would validate or deny the story.

So the narrative just kind of stands by itself and suggests a side of YellowHorse that is unseemly: I am left assuming that YellowHorse the drinker becomes YellowHorse the wife beater. Here's the way it could've happened: he's out drinking all night and comes home at six or seven in the morning; she meets him at the door with questions and a strong dose of anger; this, in turn, prompts YellowHorse's own anger; he reacts by hitting her in the throat; though seriously hurt by the blow, Beatrice Epple has enough gumption to tell him to get the hell out.

Exactly when this occurred I am not certain since the two women who told me did not give me a date. And their identity is uncertain also. As soon as they told me the story they got up and left the dining hall. In my repeated attempts to find them I was unsuccessful; it was as though they disappeared. One of the women did tell me that Beatrice Epple was her great aunt.

The one assumption I feel fairly comfortable making about this story is that it occurred during the twenty-year span of YellowHorse's heaviest drinking, between 1926 and 1945.

Throat, or the Demise of a Former Major Leaguer

It begins to unravel, first with a man stumbling
Through a front door at eight in the morning

And the stench of whiskey that extrudes from
Every pore. His skin damp from a three-week

Binge. Then there's the woman who meets his
First step into the house with a solemn glare.

Her words hurled at his ears like a high and tight
Fast ball. And she says she's had it up to here,

Her right arm raised above her head. The sun
Casts the shadow of her body across the length

Of the living room, across the mantle, pictures
Of relatives. That's when the man's hand curls

Itself into a fist; that's when he raises it, throws
It across the room. At some point in mid-flight

It reaches the woman's throat. And the impact
Sounds like a baseball just before shattering

A window. That's when we should avert our eyes;
Look away from the arc of a blue vase breaking

Against a wall. Maybe we've seen too much
Already. Maybe the man's stunned expression, his

Standing over her in disbelief, is enough. It might
Be the woman's body twisting on the floor and her

Hands wrapped around her throat are enough.
When she rises to her feet, the man takes two

Steps back. He stares down the barrel of her
Index finger and cannot dodge the words climbing

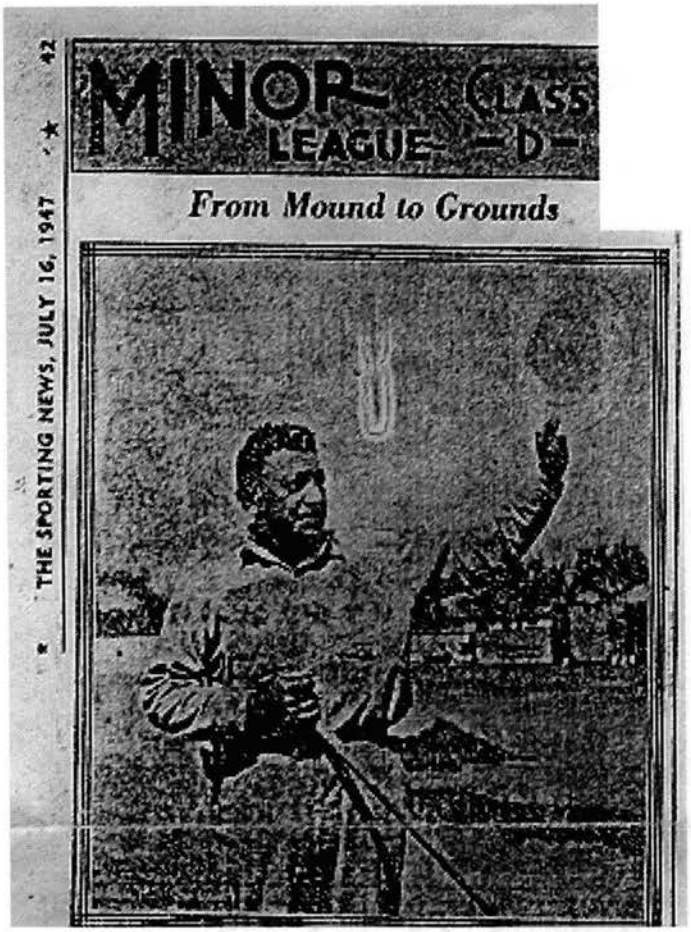
From her mouth:
Out!
Out!

And when he leaves, and when she slams the door
After him, when a month has passed and she can

Speak without pain, all hints of his presence will be
Gone, not a stitch of baseball in the house.

Now when women (whether younger or older) speak of YellowHorse, they remember him as kind and gentle, as warm-hearted in his middle and old age. They say he never scared them in any way. He was jovial and pleasant, even respectful.

And maybe one reason the story about Beatrice Epple does not get frequently told is out of a respect for YellowHorse's memory. YellowHorse was a dynamic and whole person with faults and all. He drank too much and once treated Beatrice Epple in a harmful way. This does not make him an evil person; it makes him human.



Courtesy of *The Sporting News*

The caption reads: "MOSES YELLOWHORSE, Still Pitching' on Diamond"

The Chief . . . came up to Ponca City this spring when he heard Brooklyn was establishing a Class D farm [team] here. Yellow Horse wanted a job as coach or umpire, assignments he had filled with semi-pro clubs since leaving Organized Ball in 1926. There were no such openings, Mose was told, but how about working as a groundskeeper in Ponca City's Conoco Park?

The 49-year-old Pawnee accepted with reluctance, disappointed he would not be able to show the youngsters how he whiffed 'em in the National League with his fast righthanded delivery.

--Al Kaff, *The Sporting News*

Ironies Named 1947

"[Mose] Yellow Horse Hitches to Post \ of Ponca City Groundskeeper"
–Al Kaff, *The Sporting News*, July 16, 1947

One

It's an hour before game time on April 15,
And a man with a rake is smoothing

Infield dirt. And somewhere in the stands
A father will point him out, and a story

Will follow. The one about a Pawnee Indian
Striking out three future Hall of Famers

With nine undisguised fastballs, or maybe
The one about his beaning Ty Cobb right

Between the eyes. And the son will say
"Babe Ruth, Really?" And the father will

Nod, then say other names like Gehrig
And Lazzeri. He'll tell his son, "Ol' Mose

Threw as hard as Walter 'Big Train' Johnson,"
And the boy will know that means

Ninety-Five Miles-an-hour.

Two

In thirty minutes the Ponca City diamond
Is littered with spit-shined baseballs in flight,

And somewhere in Brooklyn, 26,000 fans
Watch Jackie Robinson break the *color* barrier

With an 0-for premiere. And headlines in
Pittsburgh will be composed with Justice

In mind: *Triumph Of Whole Race Seen*
In Jackie's Debut. And parents will name

Their newborns after him. And the citizens
Of Cairo, Georgia are not surprised that

Little Jack Robinson's running like a damn
Gazelle around the bases. And half the fans

Jammed into Ebbets Field have a tear
For the moment. And someone's yelling

"Yonkel, Yonkel!" which is Yiddish
For Jackie.

Three

Boys in Ponca City, Oklahoma will start
To fall asleep beside their radios, and they'll

Believe they saw a whale of a game
At Conoco Park, that the Oilers turned

Double plays just as slick as Reese to
Stanky to Robinson. And some announcer's

Voice will lull them into unconsciousness
With hyperbolic renditions of flying saucers

And alien landings. And Mose YellowHorse
Will return home four hours after the game

Is finished and settle his eyes onto an evening
Paper. There is talk of recently discovered

Biblical texts in Khirbet Qumran. In sports
The Pirates and Dodgers won. In weather

The hi-temp reached 56. Out on the porch
The wind's carrying smells of rain; the swing's

Creaking like an old tree branch.

> Early this season, [YellowHorse] found himself shaking hands with Brooklyn Scout Andy High who played against the Indian in the Southern Association and the National League.
>
> "If he hadn't been pointed out, I wouldn't have recognized the Chief," the one-time St. Louis infielder said later, "but I'll never forget what it meant to face that Indian with a bat in your hand."

Al Kaff, *The Sporting News*, July 16, 1947

A (partial) list of Indians who played major league baseball before 1947:

Name	Tribe	M.L. Team	Years
Louis Sockalexis	Penobscot	Cleveland (Spiders)*	1897-99
Charles Bender	Chippewa	Phil. (A), Phil. (N), Chic. (A)	1903-17, 1925
Ben Tincup	Cherokee	Phil. (N), Chic. (N)	1914-18, 1928
Jim Thorpe	Sac and Fox	N.Y. (N), Cinc. (N), Bost. (N)	1913-1919
John Meyers	Mission	N.Y. (N), Bklyn. (N), Bost. (N)	1909-1917
Bob "Indian Bob" Johnson	Cherokee	Phil. (A), Wash. (A), Bost. (A)	1933-45
Roy Cleveland Johnson	Cherokee	Det. (A), Bost. (A), N.Y. (A), Bost. (N)	1929-38

* In 1915 the Cleveland organization later changed its nickname to "Indians" in tribute to Sockalexis. What has come to be the team mascot, however, bears no resemblance to Sockalexis.

Baseball Gloves and Reconciliations

"His glove's in the Baseball Hall of Fame"
–Norman Rice, Pawnee Elder

In 1958 Bob McKechnie, YellowHorse's former manager with the Pirates, donated one of YellowHorse's gloves to the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. That such an occurrence came to pass seems curious given the (probable) volatility of their relationship when they parted company in 1922 (after the pigeon affair). There is no account (that I have yet to come across) to explain the exact process of McKechnie's donating the glove to the Museum–no records in Cooperstown, no oral narratives.

In 1962 McKechnie was voted into the Hall of Fame.

The caption in the display case reads:
"Glove [worn by?] Moses 'Chief' Yellowhorse, Pittsburgh Pirates, pitcher, [1921-22?]"

This is a story that begins with a letter
or phone call. Which is to say, it begins
before anyone's written or said a word.
Which is to say, it begins with someone's
desire to quiet a moment of remorse.
That's the way it usually is with healing,
unexpected thoughts about person *x* or *y*
implode within the body to the point of
agitation, until it's a need. And it could
be that three decades was long enough
for two men to hold "go to hell" against
the other. Maybe there was a reunion
in Florida. Maybe a conversation took
place, something that translated to "I'm
sorry." And somewhere along the way
a handshake was shared, some degree
of a smile crossed each man's older face.
And now there's a ball glove nestled in

Mose YellowHorse's Ball Glove

Courtesy of Peter Clark, The Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum

a display case for forty years, a kind
of artifact in Cooperstown, New York.
And maybe it's no surprise that not
one Pawnee has ever seen it resting
in state, that no Pawnee children ever
slipped their left hands into the glove's
round palm or spit into its webbing.
It's no surprise that fathers in Pittsburgh
can tell their kids how everyone used
to yell "Bring in YellowHorse," & how
"Deacon" McKechnie led the Pirates
to the World Series in 1925. It's no
surprise that people learn to laugh at
the retellings of certain stories over
cups of coffee, like, say, the one about
eight angry pigeons flying for a man's
face in the middle of the night. How
they learn to laugh at old pain.

Hunting, for YellowHorse

"Mose was a fine hunter."
–Nora Pratt, Pawnee Elder

As Mose YellowHorse settled into late middle-age, he continued to hunt and fish religiously, same as when he was a kid. Many Pawnee elders shared stories with me about the enjoyment he gained from going out either to the woods or to a lake. In fact, when most of the elders addressed this aspect of his life, a smile often crossed them at some point in their stories. They seemed to take pride in the fact that, even as he got older, he remained physically fit and was able to spend extended amounts of time (sometimes two or three days) out in the woods. Even non-Pawnees like D. Jo Ferguson, the long-time owner and publisher of *The Pawnee Chief*, the town's newspaper, stated that YellowHorse, into his sixties, had the physique of a thirty-five year-old.[1] And though most of the elders' accounts reinforce the fact that he liked to hunt and fish, a couple of stories, it seems to me, move beyond a kind of short statement of fact and into a realm of myth making. Take this story told by Pawnee elder John Jake:

> When Mose used to go hunting,
> he took two clubs
> and his dog
> into the woods, while
> other men took guns.
> It didn't matter,
> Mose 'd still come out
> of the woods
> with more rabbits
> than anyone.[2]

Such a story, which seemed to me at first like it embraced just as much imagination as fact, was told in the presence of another elder, Norman Rice, who (with a straight face)

nodded, as if to confirm its validity. When I asked other elders if YellowHorse hunted in such a way, they all responded with affirmative answers of some kind like, "he sure did," or "oh, yeah, he hunted with a club."[3]

Shortly after hearing Jake's story, I imagined YellowHorse emerging from a woods, dropping his club, and (though exhausted) dragging along the bodies of squirrels, rabbits, snakes, even armadillos. I conjured in my mind the image of a sixty-something Yellow-Horse returning from his hunt with enough booty to feed the whole Pawnee tribe for a week. That's the way I wanted to see it, YellowHorse, the hunter, doing his part to keep government surplus food off the table. I believed that, upon his return, a feast ensued. Numerous tribal members gathered to enjoy what YellowHorse brought them. They thanked him, gave him smiles and slaps on the back. Songs emerged from the satisfied mouths of mothers and fathers. The radio played a baseball game, maybe the Pirates defeating the Yankees six to four in the first game of the 1960 World Series. And children strained to listen to YellowHorse tell stories about Ruth, Gehrig, and Cobb; they turned to their parents and said "He mowed 'em *all* down?" I wanted to believe that the telling of stories went on well into the night, that the moment commemorated all YellowHorse had done–helping support his parents from the get go (first by performing in Pawnee Bill's Wild West Show, then by bringing home food), leading the baseball teams at Chilocco Indian School and Little Rock to championship seasons, pitching for a couple of strong Pittsburgh teams in the early 1920s, becoming "the first fullblood Indian in the major leagues." All these things, and more, remembered by YellowHorse and other Pawnee elders. That's how it would have been. Lots of lip smacking and belly rubbing. Then, there'd be more of the same the next day (and night) and the next day too, for a whole week, a feast for all who wanted. That's how I imagine YellowHorse's return from hunting with clubs.

Of course, YellowHorse did share many of the rabbits and squirrels he'd bagged with friends like Nora Pratt's family, Anna Mulder's husband and kids, with Earl Chapman's family. Whether or not a party commenced at any time that YellowHorse returned from a

hunt is anyone's guess. What's certain is the enjoyment he took from outdoor recreational sports. Earl Chapman shared that:

> Mose enjoyed fishing too.
> He liked to fish at Fork Kitchen Pond.
> We used to go out together
> and spend hours.
>
> A week before he died
> we went out there together
> and he caught a five pound bass.[4]

After telling this story, Mr. Chapman, who was confined to a wheelchair after suffering a stroke, started to tear up. He seemed to look past me and quickly, barely, shook his head.

Courtesy of the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum

The caption says: "This picture was one of his favorites and was taken while he was fishing . . ."

These are remarkable feats, it seems to me, for a man in his sixties to venture into a wood and emerge with more rabbits (via his club) than those who hunted with guns, and to pull in a five-pound bass, no simple task for a fit man in his thirties, a couple months after turning sixty-six verges on amazing. Such stories of great physical strength are not uncommon for the Pawnees. Joseph Oxendine reports in *American Indian Sports Heritage* that: "In 1876 Big Hawk Chief, a Pawnee Indian, ran the world's first recorded sub-four-minute mile at the Sidney barracks in Nebraska. Though this race was timed by two army officers with stop watches and the track was later meticulously measured with a steel tape, it remains unofficial" (163). In *The Pawnee Indians*, George Hyde tells a story dating back to 1875:

> The people were so hungry and so eager to hunt that the chiefs kept young warriors stationed at Fort Reno, 100 miles west of the Pawnee agency, to report promptly if herds of buffalo appeared in that district, the only one in which the Pawnees were permitted to hunt. On one occasion two Pawnee buffalo scouts at Fort Reno, White Eagle (David Gillingham) and Dog Chief (Simon Adams) went on foot, running most of the way, from the post to the Pawnee agency, 96 miles, between early morning and evening on the same day, to report the presence of buffalo. (334)

These two stories, along with those told about YellowHorse, demonstrate not only admirable physical strength, but great endurance also. (That Hawk Chief's sub-four-minute mile was not recognized as an "official" record merely points to the fact that Euroamericans would not (could not) allow an Indian to hold such a treasured mark. Only when Britain's Roger Bannister ran a 3 minute, 59.4 second mile on May 6, *1954* did Europeans and Euroamericans recognize the feat as actually accomplished.) It could be, as Angela Cavender Wilson notes in her essay "Grandmother to Granddaughter: Generations of Oral History in a Dakota Family," that such stories serve as "declarations of amazing resiliency and tenacity of a people" (35). In the case of YellowHorse, the narratives told of him can be thought of as declarations of one individual's resiliency, which in turn reflects the resiliency and tenacity of the whole Pawnee tribe. With concern to the narrative of YellowHorse's life, it's easy to identify specific examples of his fortitude. Consider that he:

made the team at Chilocco his first year there, despite having never played organized ball, and then achieved an outstanding 17-0 record in 1917; with Little Rock in 1920 he contracted the flu in the middle of the season, and then (after regaining his health) didn't lose a game the rest of the year; in 1921 while trying out with Pittsburgh he earned a spot on the pitching staff, though everyone was surprised that the Pirates even invited him to their spring training camp. All these experiences demonstrate that YellowHorse was a determined man who consistently overcame long odds (whatever the given situation) to surpass the expectations of those around him.

As for the story told by John Jake, it seems a well-entrenched part of the Pawnee oral literature that centers on just one of the many fantastic experiences in YellowHorse's life. Like many stories regarding outstanding individual physical feats that seem to stretch the boundaries of probability, and because of which some people might be apt to dismiss the story as a kind of tall tale, it must be remembered that Native American oral histories are, as many scholars like Devon Mihesuah and Paula Gunn Allen argue, a valid (and vibrant) means of understanding a particular tribal culture. As such, stories like Jake's which might seem far-fetched to white scholars ought to be taken as viable historical documents. To YellowHorse's credit, it's quite a compliment for so many elders to remember so many specific stories after more than a generation since his death.

Notes

[1] From a letter Ferguson wrote on May 2, 1964 to Lee Allen, then curator at the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.

[2] Jake shared this story with me on June 17, 1992.

[3] Both Earl Chapman and Phil Gover confirmed that YellowHorse hunted with a club.

[4] Earl Chapman told this story to me on June 18, 1992.

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A Curveball Story

–As told by Phil Gover, Pawnee Elder, on June 16, 1992

"I remember this one about Mose."

"It must've been in the late 50s or early 60s, so Mose was getting older. But he was still in great shape. This one day he's in town throwing a ball around with some kids. And they're having fun. You know, Mose remembering how it was, and the kids dreaming how it could be. Then one of the older guys in town, one of the 'town's leaders,' saw him playing catch with these kids. And this guy comes over and crouches behind the kid who's catching Mose. He watches Mose throw a couple pitches, and he says to Mose 'I bet you still can't throw a curve.'

"Mose says 'Okay, you catch me and see if I can't throw a curve.'

"The guy took the kid's mitt and said to Mose 'Go ahead. Fire away.'

"Mose made the first one real easy, just a fast ball. He took a little off of it, but the guy still took off the glove and rubbed and shook his left hand 'til he could feel it again. Mose gives the guy another soft pitch, then tells him 'Here's my curve.' And he rages back and fires it, throws the guy his best curve. The guy raises the mitt, expecting like it's coming straight at his mitt. He thinks it's a wild pitch or something. Then all of a sudden, the ball breaks real sharp; it breaks two feet and hits the guy right in the throat. He falls over, grabbing his throat and trying to breathe, laying there just rolling on the ground. And all the kids, and Mose, are standing over him and smiling. No one says a word. They just smile. And Mose told the guy, 'I haven't thrown a curve in years.'

"It was the same guy who didn't want Mose to head up the new little league in Pawnee."

Obits and Other Fibs

On April 10, 1964 Mose YellowHorse died of an apparent heart attack, a heart ailment of some kind. Apparently he was alone. Apparently he was alone in the hospital. But in January, on his sixty-sixth birthday, a tribal feast was held in his honor. It was well-attended.

Courtesy of Anna Mulder

The last known picture of YellowHorse. On the back it says "April 1964."

Anna Mulder said of YellowHorse, on June 19, 1992:

"He used to walk all over the place,
and people could hear him coming.
They knew he was coming by his whistle.
He could whistle the prettiest songs."

Shortly after he died, numerous obituaries appeared in newspapers across Oklahoma and across the country. Including, among others:

Chief Yellowhorse, 66 Ex-Major Leaguer, Is Dead

PAWNEE – Chief Mose Yellowhorse has pitched his last inning.

He died Friday at the Pawnee hospital of a heart ailment.

Chief Yellowhorse was said to be the first full-blood American Indian to play baseball in the major leagues.

Mose had lived in Stillwater at 125 S. Perkins Road while working for the State Highway Department. He retired from the department recently and returned to Pawnee.

In January, he celebrated his 66th birthday with a feast and dance for his Pawnee tribesmen. A special song was written in his honor and he was named "Fox Warrior" at the celebration.

He had been ill with a heart condition for some time and recently had been in the hospital for treatment. He was released from the hospital last week, but suffered another heart attack and was readmitted Friday.

Mose is survived only by a half-brother, Ben Gover, of Pawnee.

Funeral services were conducted at the Poteet Funeral Home and burial was in the North Indian Cemetery.

Excerpts from the *Stillwater News Press*

Obituary

Moses Yellow Horse

Moses (Chief) Yellow Horse, one of the few full-blooded Indians who reached the majors, died of an apparent heart attack at his home [sic] in Pawnee, Okla., April 10. He was 64. [sic]

Courtesy of *The Sporting News*

YELLOWHORSE, FIRST FULL INDIAN IN MAJORS, DIES

PAWNEE, OKLA., (AP).–Moses Yellowhorse, who built his throwing arm hurling rocks at small animals and claimed to be the first full-blooded Indian to have played major league baseball, is dead.

Unattributed, Courtesy Baseball Hall of Fame

Old-Time Pitcher YellowHorse Dies

Pawnee -- Mose Yellowhorse, 64, [sic] who broke into the major leagues as a 21-year-old rookie in 1921, died Friday night of an apparent heart attack.

Unattributed, Courtesy Baseball Hall of Fame

MOSE YELLOWHORSE

Only Fullblood American Indian ever to play Major League Baseball was Mose YellowHorse. A proud Pawnee, Mose called Pawnee his home and was regularly employed by the State Highway Department for many years after his retirement from baseball. He passed away on April 10, 1964.

Unattributed, Courtesy Baseball Hall of Fame

Moses Yellow Horse, famed Indian athlete of other days, is dead

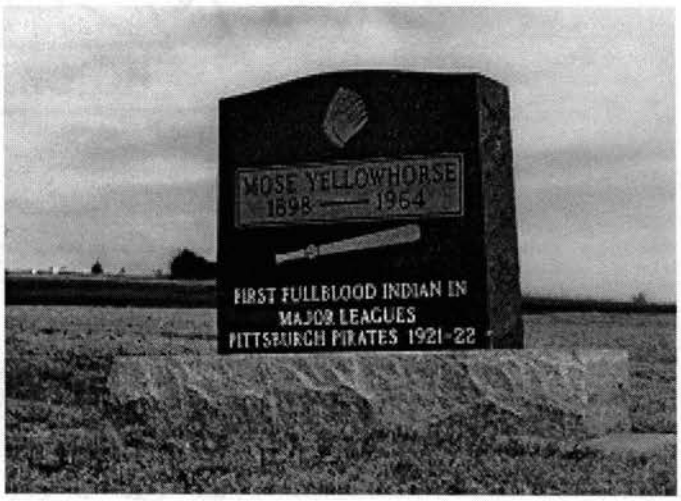
Pawnee's most famous athlete, Moses Yellow Horse, passed away Friday, April 10, and funeral services were held on Monday with burial in the North Indian Cemetery. The tribe's mourning feast was held on Tuesday.

Chief Yellow Horse, a name revered in baseball circles from Pawnee to Little Rock to Sacramento and to Pittsburgh, was the first full blood Indian to enter the major leagues. He pitched for the Pirates in 1921-22, but an arm injury retired him after that.

His name was even eulogized by another of Pawnee's famous sons, Chester Gould in his nation-wide comic strip, Dick Tracy, in which he used the name Chief Yellow Pony.

Excerpt from *The Pawnee Chief*, April 16, 1964

And the one perpetual obituary is his headstone in North Indian Cemetery in Pawnee:



Taken by author

Mose YellowHorse's Headstone in the Pawnee's North Indian Cemetery

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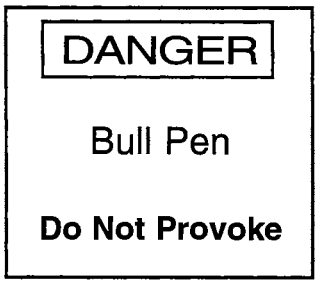
Anna Mulder was the one responsible for the headstone. She said she decided on the epitaph because "that's what he was, the first full-blood," and because of this "Mose had to be commemorated some way, and the stone was the best way to do it."

Truth Is

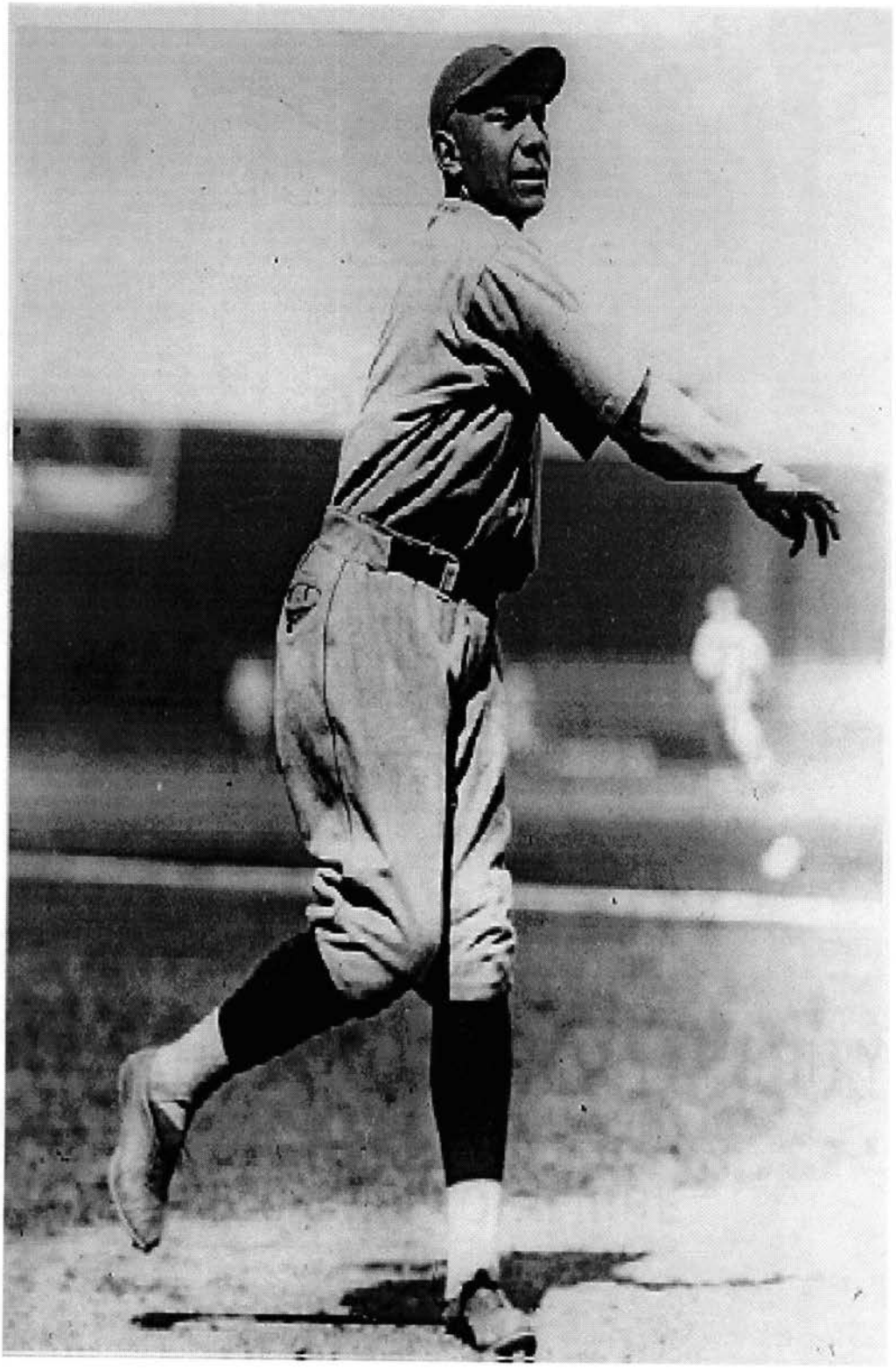
A Pawnee died.
But I don't know
how many people sent
telegrams to Pawnee
when his obit appeared.
I don't know who
took his dog, or
the dog's name.
I don't know if
his deathbed thoughts
included Spring Training.
I don't know if
his right arm raised itself
toward Pittsburgh.
I don't know if
the other raised
toward Nebraska.
I'll never know how
his voice wrapped itself
around a story.
But I'd like to think
he took pleasure in
reading box scores
and listening to
War Dance songs.
I'd like to think
he was a hand game
master. I'd like
to imagine a moment
of silence was observed
in Pittsburgh, Sacramento,
and Little Rock.
I don't know how
many cigarettes he smoked
a day, or what kind.
I don't know if he died
in love or anger.
I don't know
which spirits guided him
away; if the voices
of his mother and father
greeted him. I don't
know if he ever owned
a palomino or named her
Fast ball.
Truth is, I don't know
if he ever wanted kids,
or if there might be un-
accounted relatives
in Germany.
I don't know how many
major league baseballs
he kept in his house.
But I'd like to imagine
he kept a few souvenirs
stashed in a closet.
I'd like to consider
his 23 year-old body
walking to Forbes Field
every summer day.
I'd like a cup of coffee
and a piece of strawberry pie.
I'd like to imagine
the moment of his curve
ball breaking over the plate.
The memory of a pitch
speeding across
Pawnee.

Posthumous Fastballs, Threats, and Chants

A while back, after visiting some folks in Pawnee, I was returning to Stillwater (some thirty miles away) to pick up my wife from work. As I drove along, I admired the "Oklahoma foothills of the Ozarks," as Chester Gould referred to them in his *Dick Tracy* strip in March of 1935, and took in the texture of the land that YellowHorse looked at every day of his later life. I scanned the green hills and looked at houses built a hundred feet off the road. I began to think about the accolades YellowHorse received after he died, his inductions into both the Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame (in 1971) and the American Indian Athletic Hall of Fame (in 1994). It made me sad for a second to consider how happy YellowHorse would have been to have realized these affirmations during his lifetime. And he would have been (humbly) pleased to see a ball field named his honor built on the tribal grounds, right next to the roundhouse. While these thoughts helped me pass the time, I continued to look at assorted sights, like the Pawnee Pipe Company, on my way out of town. As I came upon a ranch entrance, I saw a sign that made me think about YellowHorse's role as a relief pitcher with the Pirates. It said:



And I smiled again. I thought I heard for an instant the fans in Pittsburgh, the many thousands, chanting one of their long-time favorites: "Bring in YellowHorse! Bring in YellowHorse!"



Courtesy of Geroge Brace

Afterword

An Open Letter: to the Baseball Hall of Fame Veterans' Committee

Dear Members of the Committee:

I am writing to nominate Mose YellowHorse for induction into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

I am writing because hardly anyone knows that the annual passage of Spring Training derives from an old-time Pawnee ritual.

I make this plea because Mose YellowHorse's Indian name was Fox Warrior, and because he had a better winning percentage than Cy Young.

I submit to you the facts and ask you to consider them for yourselves. He had fewer losses than Tom Seaver and is the only Indian in history to bean Ty Cobb, which must be worth a hundred votes.

I write because there are kids in Pawnee, Oklahoma who live on Mose Yellow-Horse Drive, and also because he posted a better earned run average in 1921 than Grover Cleveland Alexander.

But, as you know, Baseball does not live on statistics alone.

So I ask that you consider that YellowHorse is the only major league player to appear in *Dick Tracy*, which is certainly in the Comic Strip Hall of Fame.

Consider also that he pitched at Chilocco Indian School, where he posted a perfect record in 1917 of 17-0. I write because the school is now a drug rehabilitation center.

Know too that YellowHorse won more games in his rookie season than Dizzy Dean, and Dean was elected to the Hall partly because of unrealized potential.

I ask you, then, if you induct only those players with the most impressive numbers ?

I wonder if those who showed a love for the game during the span of a lifetime belong? Because in 1947 YellowHorse was a groundskeeper for a Brooklyn Dodger affiliate in Ponca City, Oklahoma, and you all know about broken color barriers in 1947.

And YellowHorse in 1950 coached an all-Indian baseball team that whipped half the minor league organizations in the Southern Association.

But you might not know that in 1958 his glove was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. And if the glove belongs, then certainly the body of the left hand that fielded with the glove belongs in the Hall of Fame too.

I am writing because after nearly a decade of studying YellowHorse I can say with complete certainty that few major leaguers (aside from the likes of Mickey Mantle and Ted Williams) are as celebrated in their home towns as YellowHorse. You won't see it in gaudy signs along the highway, but you will hear it in the stories told by those who knew him.

Members of the Veterans' Committee I ask that you consider YellowHorse's induction because he caught pigeons bare-handed with Hall of Famer Rabbit Maranville from a sixteenth-story hotel room in New York.

I submit this proposal to you because twenty-five years after he played in Pittsburgh the fans still yelled "Bring in YellowHorse!" when they wanted a dependable reliever on the mound. And that's cultural impact; worth at least two hundred votes.

I write because former St. Louis Cardinal infielder Andy High said of YellowHorse: "I'll never forget what it meant to face that Indian with a bat in your hand." And there's a whole volume of race relations inherent in his words.

Finally, I ask that YellowHorse be inducted into the Hall of Fame because there's a ball field on the Pawnee tribal grounds dedicated to his memory, and it's going to save some lives over the next ten years.

I humbly thank you, members of the Veterans' Committee, for your attention in this matter. I shall look forward to the possibilities of seeing a bronze bust of Mose YellowHorse in Cooperstown.

VITA

Marshall Todd Fuller

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Dissertation: 60 FEET 6 INCHES AND OTHER DISTANCES FROM HOME: A CREATIVE BIOGRAPHY ABOUT MOSE YELLOWHORSE, BASEBALL, CARTOONS, AND THE PAWNEE

Major Field: English

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Tacoma, Washington, On January 27, 1965, the son of Dave and Cherye Fuller.

Education: Graduated from Crawfordsville High School, Crawfordsville, Indiana in May 1983; received Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature and Creative Writing from Indiana University, Indianapolis, Indiana in May 1990; received Master of Fine Arts degree in poetry from Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas in May 1994. Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree with a major in English at Oklahoma State University in May, 1999.

Experience: Began a serious study of creative writing and literature as an undergraduate; decided in 1991 to pursue a professional career as a writer, critic, editor, and teacher; from 1991 to 1994, I worked as a teaching assistant at Wichita State University; from 1995 to 1997, I worked as a teaching associate at Oklahoma State University; since 1997, I have served as an associate editor for the Cimarron Review at Oklahoma State University.

Professional Memberships: Modern Language Association, Associated Writing Programs, Popular Cultural Association, Phi Kappa Phi.