

★★★★★ **Carlisle Indians 23, Ohio State 0 (1904 game)**, November 4, 2008

By [Barbara J. Olexer](#) (Milwaukie, OR) - [See all my reviews](#)

REAL NAME™

Doctors, Lawyers, Indian Chiefs by Tom Benjey is a wonderful addition to the literature of several cultural genres: sports, football, education, Indian history, and biography. Benjey has exhaustively researched the Carlisle Indian School football program and written a remarkable book filled with statistics, anecdotes, and biographies of coaches and players.

Glenn S. "Pop" Warner coached at Carlisle early in his career and worked with Jim Thorpe, Lone Star Dietz, Al Exendine, and many other Indian star athletes. Warner found that the usual method of getting the most out of football players by swearing at them did not work well with Indian players. They found such tactics belittling and humiliating and saw no sense in voluntarily submitting themselves to abuse. Warner had to modify his methods and show his players respect in order to field a team. Once past that hurdle, coach and players worked hard and won impressively. Carlisle beat such opponents as Ohio State, Army, Pennsylvania State, Harvard and many other first class teams.

Acknowledging that credit for the invention of the forward pass remains an unresolved issue, Benjey notes that in 1902 Hawley Pierce, who played for Carlisle and later played professionally, showed Bosey Reiter, a player-coach, how to throw an underhand spiral pass. Reiter couldn't get much distance with it so he adapted it to an overhand spiral pass. Reiter later claimed that the first use of the technique in a game came in 1906 when a Wesleyan player he coached used it against Yale.

In 1906 Warner was no longer coaching at Carlisle but he spent a week there teaching the new coach and the team his new single wing-back formation. Thus, the Indians were the first to use it in a game.

Benjey details each player's part in football but does not neglect the post-Carlisle years. Some of them became successful coaches, farmers, doctors, dentists, lawyers, and businessmen. Some succumbed to alcohol and died too young. Most remembered their years playing football at Carlisle with fondness and pride.

The book is filled with photos of the players, both in football uniforms and dressed for weddings, war, and work. Even if you have no interest in football, this is a fascinating look at history.

Barbara J. Olexer, author of

[The Enslavement of the American Indian in Colonial Times](#)