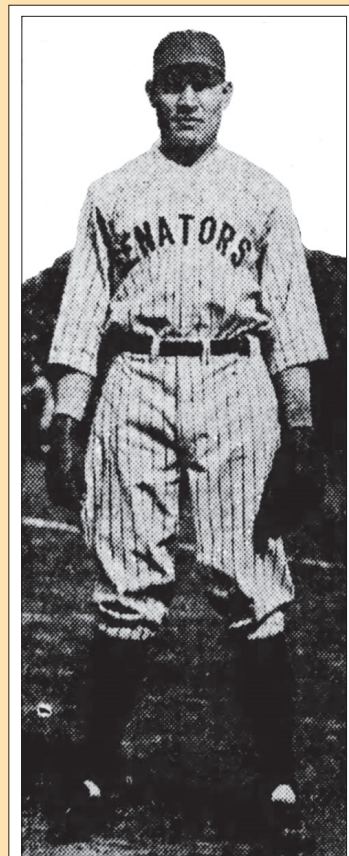


John Levi, "Lord of the Prairie"

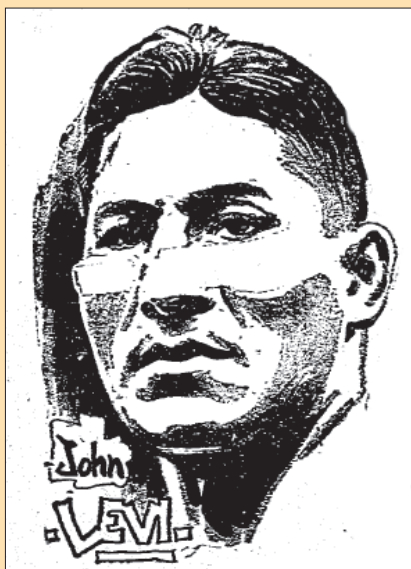
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Like so many minor league players from the 1920's, the name of John Levi has faded with the passage of time. However, for a couple of years, one could not pick up a sports page without reading about this amazing athlete's exploits in football, track and field, basketball and baseball.

Recognized as one of the best all-around athletes of his era (no less than Jim Thorpe said that Levi was the greatest athlete he ever saw), Levi, an Arapaho Native American, is born on June 14, 1898, in Bridgeport, Oklahoma. Levi first gains national attention in 1923 at Haskell Institute (now Indian Nations University) in Lawrence, Kansas, when he is named to the Athletic World All-America football team. In 1924, his last year at Haskell, he earns a spot on the prestigious Walter Camp All-America team as a fullback.



John Levi
1925 Harrisburg Senators



Primarily because of its powerhouse football teams, Haskell gains fame as the "New Carlisle of the West." Not to be outdone, its baseball alumni include at least four major leaguers including Thorpe, Art Daney, Ike Kahdot, Ben Tincup and numerous minor leaguers.

Levi has Olympic aspirations in the decathlon in 1924, but following a football game against the Quantico Marines in November 1923, at Yankee Stadium, the New York Yankees sign him to a contract even though they had never seen him play a game of baseball.

Despite numerous and ongoing media reports decrying his lack of hitting ability, Levi never hits below .280 in any one of his four minor league seasons and finishes his brief career with a .319 batting average and a slugging percentage of .513.

The Vanishing American.

Sir—One notes the passing of another great football star who tried to make the grade in professional baseball. Two years ago John Levi, of the Haskell Indians, was called another Thorpe. The Yankees signed him and sent him to Harrisburg in the York Penn League. Now Harrisburg has released him and the Yankees have waived their claim. Like Thorpe, he could not hit. K. L. G.

Editor's Note: I find it odd that Levi's numbers simply don't match the analysis of the day and while there are no overt slurs in some of the articles, one must wonder if a subtle bias played a part in the disproportionate conclusions.

Levi is a fair fielder, a demon on the base-paths but can't hit a curveball to save his wigwam.

Assigned by the Yankees to the Harrisburg Senators of the New York-Penn (B) League, Levi finishes his rookie season third among league leaders in hitting (.346), first in doubles (30) and second in home runs (10).

John Levi Year by Year:

Year	Team	League Level	AB	R	HT	2B	3B	HR	SB	AVG
1924	Haskell Institute	College	-	-	-	-	-	12	-	---
1925	Harrisburg Senators	New York-Penn	B 370	- 128	30	5	10	-	.346	
1926	Harrisburg Senators	New York-Penn	B 235	- 67	17	5	6	-	.285	
1926	Wilkes-Barre Barons	New York-Penn	B 4	- 0	0	0	0	-	.000	
1929	Topeka Jayhawks	Western	A 457	- 145	36	5	13	-	.317	
1930	St. Joseph Saints	Western	A 52	- 17	2	0	5	-	.327	
1931	Pocahontas (Va.)	Tri-County	SPro -	- -	-	-	-	-	---	
1932	Pocahontas (Va.)	Tri-County	SPro -	- -	-	-	-	-	---	
Minor League Totals			4 Years	1118	- 357	85	15	34	-	.319

But things don't go as smoothly that second year for Levi.

Hampered by injuries, Levi is hitting around .280 when Senators' manager Rankin Johnson benches him for repeated errors in the field and mental

John Levi [2 of 6]:

lapses on the base paths. Johnson eventually releases a struggling Levi from the team roster on July 8. The following day, Levi's contract is sold to the Wilkes-Barre Barons. Barons' manager Earl Potteiger grants his newly-acquired outfielder what was supposed to be a couple of days off to visit his wife in Chicago. Potteiger's "couple of days" turns into a couple of weeks and he doesn't report to his new club until July 22. Levi is on the Barons' bench for that night's game against Harrisburg, which is eventually rained out in the third inning.

Levi's tenure with Wilkes-Barre is short-lived when two days and four hitless at bats later he is released with the team stating "as he was not in condition to play."

Reportedly homesick, Levi returns to Kansas and Haskell Institute, where he assists head football coach John Thomas for the next eight years before being named head coach in 1934.



BABE RUTH, LEFT, AND JOHN LEVI

Following a two-year hiatus, Levi returns to the diamond in 1929 with the Topeka Jayhawks of the Western (A) League. The 31-year-old enjoys another solid season, hitting .317 with 35 doubles, five triples and 13 home runs in 117 games.

Levi's final season in professional baseball is an abbreviated one with the St. Joseph Saints of the Western League in 1930. After staging a brief holdout, Levi plays in only 13 games and hits .327 with five home runs, including a pair of two-homer games against Pueblo (May 6) and Des Moines (May 12).

John Levi Forfeits Cool Thousand to Play Another Game

Former Star of the C. B. C. Football
Team Turned Down Tempting
Offer to Play Final Game
Game With Haskell

John Levi, star of the Chillicothe Business College football eleven in 1920, turned down a cool thousand dollars to play the final game of his career with the Haskell Indian football team. A Muskogee, Okla., dispatch says:

It will cost John Levi, star fullback of the Haskell Indians, \$1,000 to play against the Oklahoma Baptist University team here Saturday, it was revealed yesterday by Frank McDonald, business manager of the Indian team.

After the Indians closed their regular season on Thanksgiving day with a victory over St. Xavier at Cincinnati, the manager of a professional team at Cincinnati offered the big Indian star \$1,000 to play with his team there the following Sunday. At the same time the Indians had before them the proposal to play a post-season game in Oklahoma, where most of them live.

Despite his impressive statistics, Levi's diamond career comes to an end when the parent St. Louis Cardinals conduct a general "housecleaning" of their minor league system and he is one of three players released by the Saints on May 20.

On January 22, 1946, Levi is killed in a stabbing incident in Denver, Colorado. Levi is posthumously inducted into the American Indian Athletic Hall of Fame in 1972, the Oklahoma Athletic Hall of Fame in 1973 and the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame in 1975.

LEVI CHRONOLOGY

November 17, 1923

A "veritable incarnation" of Jim Thorpe, Levi plays spectacular defense with several interceptions and throws a second quarter 55-yard touchdown pass to his brother George as Haskell ties the Quantico Marines 14-14 in a game played in Yankee Stadium.

January 23, 1924

Levi announces that he has decided to pursue a career in professional baseball and will not return to Haskell Institute the following year.

TANKS GET CHARGING BUFFALO

New York, Dec. 31.—John Levi, called "Charging Buffalo," fullback of the Haskell Indian eleven, has signed a baseball contract with the New York Yankees.

He is a right handed outfielder who was sought by the Yankees a year ago, but elected to try for the Olympic track team, his ambitions being shattered when he broke an ankle.

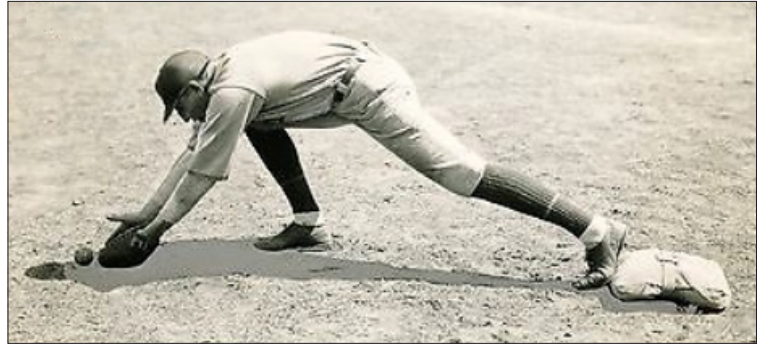
John Levi [3 of 6]:

December 3, 1924

Levi turns down an offer of \$1,000 (\$14,392 in today's currency) by a professional football team in Cincinnati in order to play his final game with Haskell Institute.

December 31, 1924

Levi signs with the New York Yankees ... Levi led the Haskell football teams in scoring in each of the past three years, including two seasons where he led the nation in scoring, tallying 104 points in 1923 and 162 in 1924.



John Levi
1924 Haskell Institute (est.)

March 18, 1925

Despite being the first player on the field in the morning and the last to leave in afternoon, New York Yankees' manager Miller Huggins isn't paying much attention to Levi during the team's spring training and it appears that he will open the season in the minors.

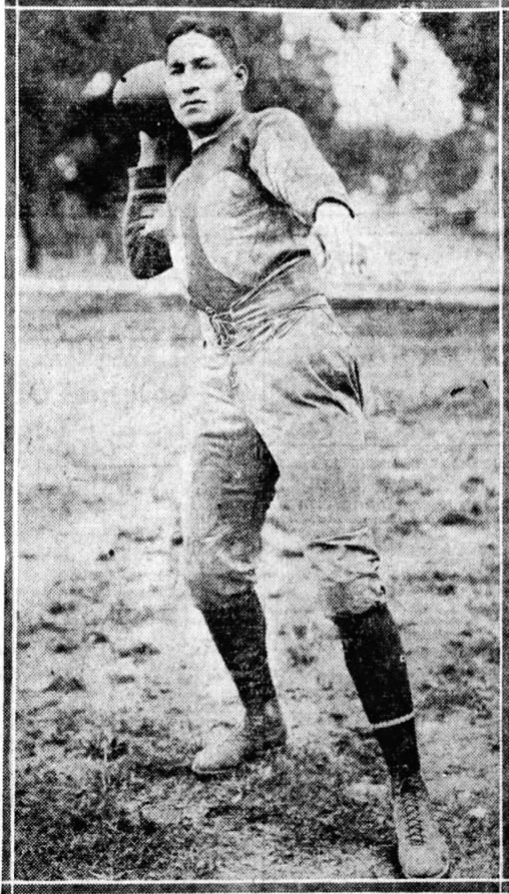
April 14, 1925

Levi and Nick Cullop are assigned to the minors for further "seasoning."

May 5, 1925

In his Harrisburg debut, Levi, batting fifth and starting in left field, collects two of the Senators' five hits, including a fifth-inning double. However, York's 37-year-old southpaw Lefty George is in command and the White Roses open the New York-Penn League season with a 7-0 complete game win.

Haskell Indians' Leader Is Triple Threat Player



May 15, 1925

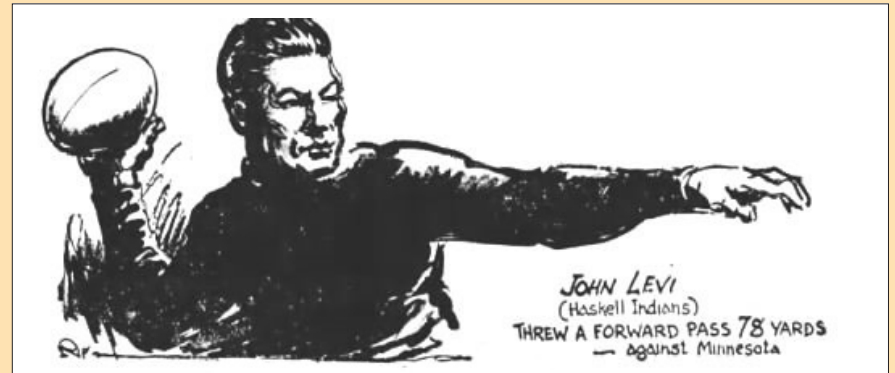
Levi is hitting .425 with nine doubles and two home runs and has hit safely in the first 10 games of the season when he injures a ligament above his right ankle during a 10-8 win over visiting Wilkes-Barre and is expected to miss up to two weeks.

June 8, 1925

Levi returns to the Senator lineup for the first time in three weeks and is 3-for-4 with a home run in a 5-1 win over visiting Binghamton.

September 3, 1925

The National Football League's Pottsville Maroons announce that Levi has signed a contract and will start practicing after the baseball season ends on September 10.



John Levi [4 of 6]:

September 11, 1925

Levi finishes his rookie season third in the New York-Penn (A) League in hitting with a .346 average ... 25-year-old teammate Joseph Munson, who will end the season with the Chicago Cubs, leads the league in home runs (33) and hitting (.400).

September 11, 1925

Having never signed a contract, Levi does not attend the Pottsville Maroons' practice.

September 24, 1925

Levi joins Haskell Institute as an assistant football coach and will accompany the team on its upcoming 24,000 mile trip that it is making to play of 12 the 13 games on its football schedule.

October 9, 1925

The Kansas City Cowboys of the NFL announce that Levi has signed a contract.



Left to Right Are John Thomas, Head Coach; John Levi, Assistant, and Egbert Ward, Assistant.

October 25, 1925

Billed to play with Kansas City against the Rock Island Independents, Levi is a no-show ... Cowboys' player/coach Leroy Andrew, whom the newspapers describe as "sincere in advertising Levi," is hopeful that he will appear in an upcoming game with Duluth ... the Cowboys will finish 13th in a 20-team NFL with a 2-5-1 record.

December 27, 1925

Rankin Johnson, manager of the Harrisburg Senators, tells the media that he anticipates Levi returning to the team next year.

May 20, 1926

After finishing third in the league in hitting a year ago with a .346 average, Levi is hitting a paltry .250 and is benched after experiencing some troubles in the outfield and on the basepath.

Football Star Bailed on Wet Charge.
VILLANOVA, Pa., Aug. 18 (P).—Earl Potteiger, former Ursinus College football star and later a professional football player and manager, was arrested here today as the alleged convoy of a truckload of beer and released in \$5,000 bail to await trial. This is the third time this year Potteiger has been arrested on a liquor charge. George S. Bleim, driver of the truck, was also held in \$5,000 bail.

May 21, 1926

Mired in second-to-last place with a 7-11 record, Harrisburg acquires pitcher Eggie Egbert and outfielder Lee Strait ... Egbert will appear in only four games for the Senators while Strait replaces Levi in left field and hits .303 in 71 games.

July 8, 1926

Levi is hitting .285 (67-235) with 17 doubles, five triples and six home runs when he and outfielder Pat Doherty (.270, 8-6-2) are released and pitcher Lerton Pinto is signed ... Levi is sold to Wilkes-Barre, but Doherty is quickly reinstated to the team's roster.



LeRoy Andrew
1929 New York Giants

John Levi [5 of 6]:

July 12, 1926

Wilkes-Barre manager Earl Potteiger grants Levi a couple of days off to visit his wife in Chicago.

Three years later, on August 18, 1929, Potteiger is arrested in Villanova, Pennsylvania, while driving a truckload of illegal beer during the prohibition era ... he is released on \$5,000 bail ... it is the third time he has been arrested on a liquor charge.

July 22, 1926

Levi reports to Wilkes-Barre and is on the bench for that night's game with Harrisburg.

July 24, 1926

Two days later, Levi is released by the Barons with the team citing "that he was not in condition to play."

August 3, 1926

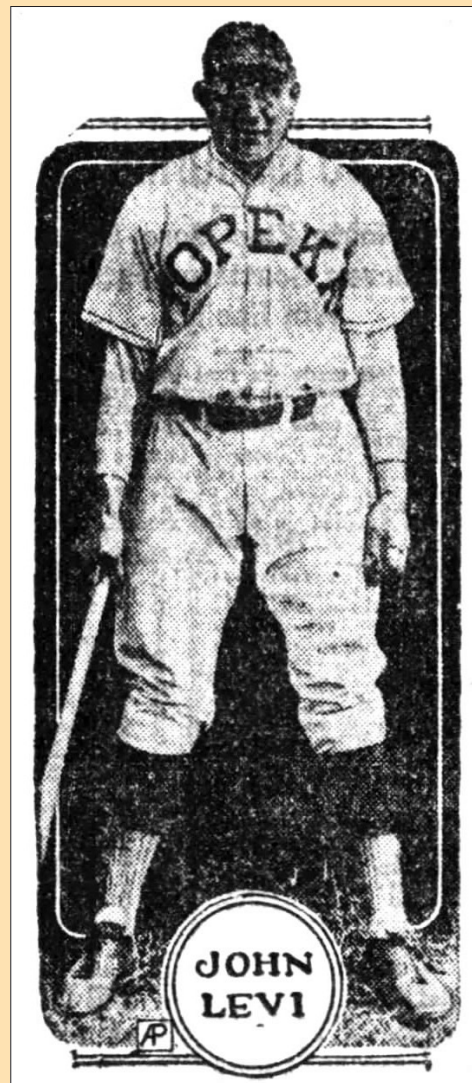
The Harrisburg Telegraph reports that it is "almost certain" Levi will sign with Akron Pros of the National Professional League.

September 15, 1926

The Morning Call of Allentown, Pennsylvania, reports that Levi has signed with the Brooklyn Horsemen of the American Football League ... coached by Ed McNeeley, Brooklyn features Notre Dame's Harry Stuhldreher and Elmer Layden of "Four Horsemen" fame ... the Horsemen, plagued by lagging attendance and bad play, fold after a 1-3 start and merge with the Brooklyn Lions of the NFL.

September 17, 1926

The Akron Beacon Journal reports that Levi "has not been seen or heard from."



September 27, 1926

The Santa Ana Register reports that Levi has been signed to captain the Los Angeles Angels of the Pacific Coast Professional Football League.

November 2, 1926

Levi and 21-year-old Helen Duffina are married in Kansas City, Missouri, where Levi has "extensive" oil interests.

November 4, 1926

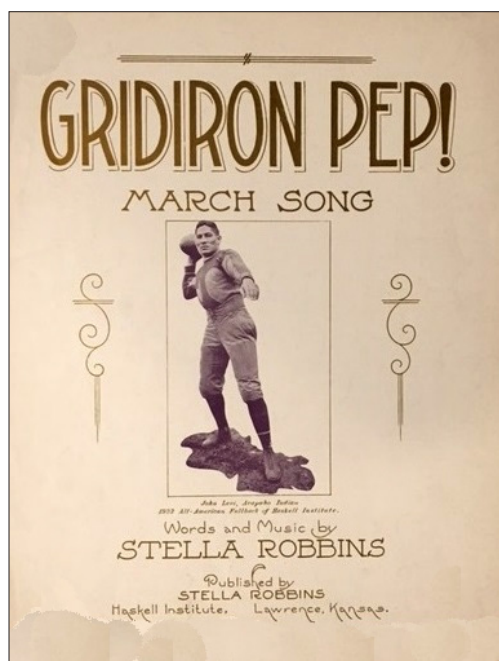
The Santa Ana Register reports that the Los Angeles Angels of the Pacific Coast Professional Football League and captained by Levi, will open its season hosting San Francisco.

November 7, 1926

The Marion (Ohio) Star reports that Levi will play for the World Famous Indians of LaRue when they take on the Chicago Bulls of the American Football League in the upcoming weekend.

November 19, 1926

The Oakland Tribune reports that Levi will play for the Los Angeles Angels in their game tomorrow against the Oakland Oaks ... the Angels are 0-2 after suffering setbacks to the Hollywood Generals (17-7) and to the San Francisco Tigers (43-0) ... the Los Angeles franchise will fold after a 0-4 start.



Published in 1929, the cover of this football themed sheet music booklet features Haskell Institute legend John Levi.

John Levi [6 of 6]:

January 27, 1927

Levi is the head coach of the Chiloco Indian College basketball team.

June 14, 1929

The Topeka Jayhawks are 22-31 and 3 1/2 games out of last place of the Western (A) League when they announce the signing of Levi, who is coming back after a two-year hiatus from the game.

April 1, 1930

St. Joseph Saints business manager Oliver French announces that Levi is a holdout.

April 10, 1930

St. Joseph Saints business manager French announces that Levi has signed a contract for the amount originally offered.

May 6, 1930

Levi hits two home runs as last-place St. Joseph beats first-place Pueblo 12-5.

May 20, 1930

Levi's baseball career comes to an end when the parent St. Louis Cardinals conduct a general housecleaning of their minor league system and he is one of three players released by the Saints.

July 13, 1931

Playing second base, Levin is 2-for-3 with two RBIs as Pocahontas (Va.) trims first-place Berwind-Coalwood 3-1 in a Tri-County League game ... with the win, Levi's team moves to 3-4 on the year while Berwind-Coalwood drops to 5-3.

John Levi, Former Haskell Grid Star, Stabbed to Death

DENVER, Jan. 23 (UP)—Mrs. Fannie Stabler, 37, was held today in connection with the fatal stabbing of John Thomas Levi, one-time Indian All-American football star and former New York football professional, Detective Capt. James E. Childers said.

Childers quoted Mrs. Stabler as saying she stabbed Levi after a quarrel in her Denver hotel room. The woman, Childers said, admitted that she grabbed a six-inch knife and struck Levi, who died an hour later in Denver General Hospital.

Levi was an All-American football player in the 1920's during a spectacular career with the Haskell Institute team.

Levi, 49 and an Indian, had been head coach at the institute in the 1930's and once was credited with throwing an 87-yard pass while playing for the Haskell team.

Levi was the star of the Haskell team when the Indians played the B. C. eleven in Boston in the early 20's.

St. Joseph Releases Three Ball Players

ST. JOSEPH, Mo., May 20.—(AP)—Three players were released unconditionally today by the St. Joseph club of the Western league. They were Harry Ferguson, infielder with Topeka last year, Willis Glasgow, infielder, football star at the University of Iowa last year, and John Levi, outfielder and former football player at Haskell and now an assistant coach at the Indian school.

July 2, 1936

Levi leaves Haskell to assist the physical education program at Charles H. Burke junior-senior high school in Fort Wingate, New Mexico.

January 22, 1946

Levi is stabbed to death by a 37-year-old Fannie Stabler following a quarrel in a hotel room in Denver, Colorado ... Levi was working for a Denver packing house at the time of his death.

Woman Given 1-5 Years In Fatal Stabbing

DENVER — (AP) — Mrs. Fannie Brown Stabler, 38-year-old mother of three children, was sentenced Saturday to serve from one to five years in the state prison for the fatal stabbing last Jan. 23 of John Levi, 49, a nationally known athlete in the 1920s.

Mrs. Stabler, an Indian, was convicted of involuntary manslaughter.

Levi was employed at a packing plant at the time of his death, but in the '20s he was nationally prominent as a Haskell Institute football player, and later represented American in the Olympic decathlon.