

# LORGNETTE

Quarterly Review of Children's and Young Adults' Books

## Author

Sorell, Traci

## Illustrator

Illustrated by Arigon Starr

## Reviewer

Atkinson, Melissa D

## Pages

Unpaged

## Price

\$18.99

## ISBN

978-0-593-40647-2

## Publisher & Date

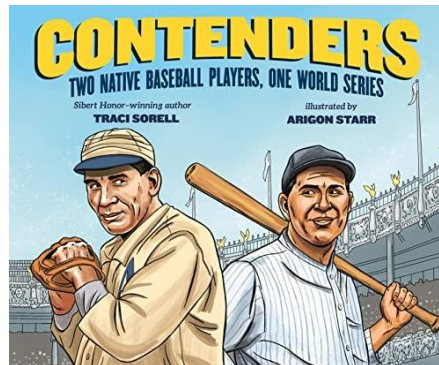
Kokila, 2023

## Classification

Nonfiction (796.357 or biography)

## Grade Level

1-4

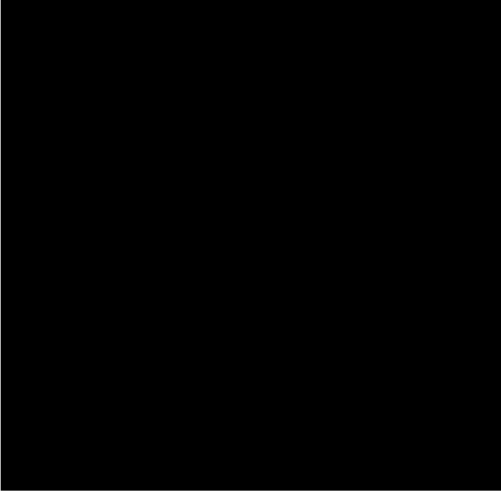


## Book Review: CONTENDERS: TWO NATIVE BASEBALL PLAYERS, ONE WORLD SERIES

In the 1911 World Series, Native baseball players John and Charles faced each other on different teams. Despite jeers, racial attacks, and derogatory comments, John and Charles played as true professionals who loved the game. Charles Albert Bender (Al to his family) was part of a large Ojibwe group of children who rode by train from Minnesota to get to a boarding school in Pennsylvania. John Tortes Meyers (Jack to his family and friends) was raised by his mother on the Cahuilla tribe reservation in California. John learned about his culture and language and participated in baseball games on the reservation with his brothers. After playing on a team at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, Charles quickly found a place on a professional baseball team, the Philadelphia Athletics, while John went to several minor league teams before signing with the New York Giants. The Philadelphia Athletics won the 1911 World Series, but Charles and John remained friends throughout their career, which led them to a combined nine World Series appearances.

The importance of the story of Charles and John is well thought-out and caringly detailed in this book by author Sorell and illustrator Starr. The illustrations, hand-drawn with digital elements, are sometimes lifelike in the depiction of Charles and John, their life before baseball, and baseball activities. Bringing to light the experiences of Natives in baseball or any sport can help Native children see themselves in those playing their favorite sport. While this book and its message are important, one detail that could have been mentioned is how Native names, imagery, and chants have been





changed for some national teams such as the Washington Commanders (previously the Washington Redskins) and the Cleveland Guardians (previously the Cleveland Indians) as well as some local school names, sports arenas, and other venues in cities across the U.S. Even though changes still need to be made, some progress has been made and should be recognized. This book includes an author's note section from Sorell (an enrolled citizen of the Cherokee Nation), time line, and sources sections. The illustrator, Starr, is an enrolled member of the Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma. This book is recommended for libraries that might need more Native representation in their collections.

