New story to hit silver screen: Top-scoring Native American girls' basketball team wins at 1904 World's Fai

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Minnie Burton was a sensation at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair: the top shooter for a girl's basketball team from an Indian School in Fort Shaw, Montana. Beating all other high school girls and boys teams, they rounded up legions of adoring fans across the nation as they won the first world championship title for basketball. Shoot Minnie Shoot, a novel by Happy Jack Feder, has been optioned and is in development for feature film production by the Seattle office of creative and production company, Touch. The film "Shoot Minnie Shoot" is based on the true story of Basketball's First World Champions and follows the improbable journey of Minnie and this sensational Native American girls team of 1904. It is the story of one girl's vision and her struggle to bring pride back to her people.

"It's a terrific story that is both improbable and true," says author and screenplay writer Feder. "The amazing accomplishments of these brave, beautiful and ferocious girls are an inspiration to girls and young women of all races."

At a time when most Indian Schools used cruel and degrading practices, Fort Shaw's headmaster, Mr. Campbell, created an environment of respect and compassion. Enthusiastic for the new game of basketball, he taught the girls to play Men's Rules -- and they took it from there. Whenever Minnie got the ball, the crowd would chant, "Shoot, Minnie, Shoot."

The girls did to racism what they did to their opponents on the court; they trampled all over it. It didn't slow them down for a second. They were widely accepted and adored by the white community, both in Montana and at the World's Fair. They proudly displayed their Native American heritage while excelling in their studies of western culture. They played fiercely on the court, but were the epitome of lady hood when reciting poetry or playing classical music.

"Minnie" follows our namesake from the confines of her reservation to life at an Indian School, learning to play basketball, and going on to be crowned one of the First World Champions of Basketball at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis. "Minnie will be an exciting and inspirational film. We are immensely proud to be a part of it," said Barry Caillier, Producer at Touch.

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