

# The Negro Leagues Courier

The newsletter of SABR's Negro Leagues Committee

We Are The Ship, All Else Are The Sea

October 2002

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Editor: Sammy J. Miller

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\*\* Denotes items available for SASE from Committee Co-Chairman  
Dick Clark - Please affix enough postage (usually 1 stamp/4 pages)

## A Moment For Reflection

As was mentioned in the last issue of *The Courier*, the August 2002 issue was the 100<sup>th</sup> issue of the Negro Leagues Committee newsletter. I wanted to do something special to mark the anniversary and considered doing a countdown of sorts going from 100 issues to so many of something else and so forth all the way down to 2 editors and 1 subject (the Negro Leagues) but decided against such a course of action when I realized just how depressingly high the number of deaths we have reported in these pages would have been. I know that anytime one works in a field that deals with events that happened at least fifty years ago the Grim Reaper becomes an all too familiar companion but at the same time it is always better to celebrate the life rather than mourn the death. Therefore that is the approach I have decided to take here.

What this newsletter is about, in addition to keeping you up to date on the latest news regarding the Negro Leagues, is keeping everyone up to date on what is happening with all the friends we have made in this field over the years. With that in mind, let's all take a moment to think back on our own favorite memories from our time in the field as a way of celebrating this milestone in our publication. Once that is done, just for old times sake, the next time any of you are sitting down to partake of a glass of your favorite libation, and if you do not have one may I suggest a pint of Guinness, raise a toast to celebrate the lives of absent friends.

Finally, as a gift to you, I have decided to reprint the very first newsletter, which was originally sent out November 16, 1985 along with a questionnaire which I won't bother with. You will find the reprint on the very last page. In closing I would like to note that in the very first newsletter, Dick Clark wrote "this is the first of what I hope will be several newsletters while I am the chairman of the Negro Leagues Committee of SABR." Congratulations, Dick. Looks like you got your wish.

## Contributors

They say a man cannot achieve greatness without the help of others. In this case, those others are: Todd Bolton, Dick Clark, Tom Garrett, Leslie Heaphy, Signe Knutson, Charles Kuralt, Larry Lester, Jerry Malloy, Gary Maurer, Bob Mitchell, Bob Peterson, Bob Potts, Wayne Stivers, Gregg Truitt, and Lyle Wilson

## Member and Reader Updates

**ATTENTION!!!!** We have some new e-mail addresses for two of the NLC's officers. Larry Lester's new e-mail address is: [NoirTech@gbronline.com](mailto:NoirTech@gbronline.com)

Sammy Miller's new e-mail address is: [memphisredsox@juno.com](mailto:memphisredsox@juno.com)

I can't say for sure why Larry changed his address but averaging ten pieces of spam a day in my mailbox just started getting on my nerves. I may have passed 30 many years ago but I have not yet

gotten to the point that the fact that you can get Viagra online without a prescription interests me. (I can forward one of those to you if you like, Dick.)

We also have Lou Hunsinger's new e-mail. It is: [wptgrays@suscom.net](mailto:wptgrays@suscom.net)

Tom Garrett has officially retired and is working with Arcadia Publishing on a book about Norfolk and Portsmouth baseball.

### Research Requests

Barry Bazzell ([bazzell@attbi.com](mailto:bazzell@attbi.com)) is searching for information regarding the Amarillo Colts, a Negro League baseball team. Ernie Banks, who was born in 1931, barnstormed with them prior to playing with the more famous Kansas City Monarchs. He is interested in documenting the years the team was active, along with any interesting information about the team and its players

### Obituaries

It saddens us to have to pass along the following:

Former Memphis Red Sox pitcher and first baseman Isiah Harris passed away on September 18 in Memphis from complications of diabetes. He was 76. Obit \*\*1pg.

Tommy Sampson, whose career spanned 1938-1949 and was spent with the Chicago American Giants, the Birmingham Black Barons, and the New York Cubans died on January 24, 2002 at the age of 89.

We would also like to acknowledge the passing of Hall of Famer Ted Williams who was one of the first to call for the induction of Negro League players into the Hall of Fame. "Ted Williams Swatted Baseball Racism" \*\*1pg.

### Burial Sites Update

The latest version of the NLC's Burial Sites list is available. It lists the gravesites of over 235 players, executives, etc. The list is only available to those committee members who have met the requirement of submitting one new burial site a year. \*\*5pgs.

### Negro League Related Articles

The must have article this time around is by the NLC's Lou Hunsinger, Jr. It details the story of the 1955 Cannon Street YMCA Little League Team of Charleston, South Carolina who were denied a chance to play in the Little League World Series because of the fact the Cannon Street team was made up of African American boys. A great story from the *Williamsport Sun Gazette*. \*\*1pg.

Also by Lou is "Ever Wonder Who Mentored Hank Aaron?" about Armando Vasquez". It is from the same paper and also available for 1pg.

Two pieces from [baseballguru.com](http://baseballguru.com) by John Holway are available. "The Death of Smokey Joe" \*\*2pgs and "New Light on Bullet Joe Rogan" \*\*2pg.

"The Forgotten World Of Cuban Baseball" by our own Eric Enders appeared in the 2002 All Star Game program. A great story which would have been the must have article if it weren't for the fact that I am an old softy and really love those touchy pieces like Lou's. \*\*4pgs.

*Sports Illustrated* recently ran an article on Double Duty Radcliffe entitled "Man of A Century" \*\*5pgs.

We also have a number of articles concerning Radcliffe's one-hundredth birthday. All are available for \*\*4pgs.

"Women In The Negro Leagues" from *The Kansas City Star* \*\*4pgs.

"If Bonds Passes Threesome, Legend of Josh Gibson Awaits" from *USA Today* \*1pg.

"National lawmakers honor players of Negro League" EVERETT (Wa) *HERALD* 9/19/02 \*\*1pg.

Also to go along with this piece is a media announcement concerning the event \*\*1pg and a listing of all the times Congress has honored Negro leaguers. \*\*2pgs.

"Replaying a National Debt" *WASHINGTON POST*, 9/19/02 \*\*2pp

"Negro League players honored by Congress" AP \*\*1pg 9/19/02  
 "Lawmakers Honor Negro Leaguers" *The Salt Lake City Tribune* \*\*2pp 9/19/02  
 "Square May Honor 1<sup>st</sup> Black Ballplayer" from the *Toledo Blade* of 9/4/02 \*\*1pg.  
 "Negro Leagues Scored Early Wins For Rochester Baseball" from the 8/02/02 *Democrat and Chronicle*. \*\*1pg.  
 "She Was No Joke For Indy Clowns" on Mamie Johnson from the web version of *The Indianapolis Star* \*\*3pgs.  
 "Loving The Legends: Baseball Fans Honor Heroes At Negro Leagues Reunion" from the 8/31/02 issue of *The Washington Post*. \*\*3pgs.  
 "Ex-Player Sees The Sunny Side" about Joe B. Scott from the 7/21/02 issue of the *Syracuse Post Standard* \*\*1pg.

### Recent Events

The following report comes courtesy of our roving reporter Dick Clark.

On August 18th we celebrated the birthday of Jerry Malloy and his twin sister Jackie by attending a game in Geneva, IL. Kane County defeated Dayton and we all had a fine day at the ballpark. Jackie's husband Stan, son David, daughter Teresa and husband Manuel and their kids. Tom and Helen Hill, Stuart Tanaka, Signe Knutson, Charles Branham, and myself were all in attendance. We were able to pass along to Jackie a poster from the Jerry Malloy Conference in Memphis. It is still a bittersweet experience but we are all grateful to celebrate Jerry's life and a ballgame is the perfect place to do so. We'll be back next year for another.

A replica of Turkey Stearnes' Hall of Fame plaque now serves as a headstone for the previously unmarked grave of the Detroit Stars legend. It was dedicated on August 12 and marks the first time that permission has been granted by the Hall of Fame to replicate a plaque. To quote a wire services article "Relatives of Stearnes didn't realize a gravestone was never placed until a baseball historian researching the famed player's background found the only designation was the cemetery's "number 20". A cute story but totally inaccurate. The true story is that Negro League historian Dick Clark discovered that the grave was unmarked several years ago while researching a book on the Negro Leagues in Detroit. He did indeed contact the Stearnes family, who thought there was a marker. What the newspaper story does not cover is the fact that the unmarked grave was reported to the world in "Black Baseball In Detroit" by Mr. Clark, Larry Lester, and Sammy Miller back in 2000. That, to quote Paul Harvey, "is the rest of the story." Two articles are available for \*\*1pg.

Gary Maurer reports that the recent Negro league players reunion in Paducah, Kentucky was a success. Those in attendance included Gordon Hopkins, Jim Zapp, Sherwood Brewer, Mamie Johnson, and many others. \*\* 2pp of pictures from THE PADUCAH SUN 8/10/2002

Gregg Truitt passed on the information that despite the temperature hitting 95 with high humidity the 7<sup>th</sup> Judy Johnson Night in Wilmington, Delaware was very successful. This year the annual card honored Jackie Robinson. Gregg still has some and if anyone is interested they should contact him at [gregg.truitt@astrazeneca.com](mailto:gregg.truitt@astrazeneca.com) "Former Negro League players Enjoy Visit to Del. Hall of Fame" from *The (Wilmington) News Journal* \*\*1pg.

Due to circumstances beyond our control, we were not able to get a reporter to the annual Pop Lloyd celebration in Atlantic City. Reports are however, that everyone in attendance had a fine time.

### We Make The Call

Bill McNeil's latest book is the most comprehensive study of winter baseball in California, ever published. THE CALIFORNIA WINTER LEAGUE: America's First Integrated Professional Baseball League, is McNeil's fourth book published by McFarland Company Publishing (Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640) ([www.mcfarlandpub.com](http://www.mcfarlandpub.com)).

240 pages give an excellent overview of the League and seasonal recaps with many statistics. There are also over 60 pages of appendices that cover a wide range from League Champions, Batter-Pitcher match-ups and a Who's Who of the League (1906-1947). 77 photos sprinkled throughout (some first-timers) add immensely to this work. I gained a great deal of knowledge and completely enjoyed this latest work of Bill McNeil.

Call McFarland at 1-800-253-2187 to order.

Our Call: A homerun

### **The Marketplace**

DETROIT TIGERS: LISTS AND MORE by Mark Pattison and David Raglin has a chapter about the Negro Leagues in Detroit.

A catalog showing the latest baseball offerings from McFarland Publishers, including THE NEGRO LEAGUES, 1869-1960 by the NLC's Leslie Heaphy (Send me a copy to review! Dick always gets the new books!) is available. \*\*8pgs.

### **On The Web**

Everyone needs to check out [www.negroleaguestore.com](http://www.negroleaguestore.com), a one-stop shop for any fan. A chat room, a newsletter, etc.

*Sammy J. Miller*

1080 Hull Avenue  
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198  
November 16, 1985

Dear fellow committee member,

This is the first of what I hope will be several newsletters while I am chairman of the Negro Leagues Committee of SABR. With this one I would like to review the purpose and possible endeavors of our committee, share some thoughts I've had regarding our work as a committee, and solicit feedback from each of you. I hope you find the newsletter to be a useful communication tool.

As you know the ultimate goal of the Negro Leagues Committee is to recognize the contribution of the Negro to baseball from baseball's inception to the breaking of the color line, including the Negro Leagues. In keeping with this, members of the committee have participated in our number one project, that of compiling statistics (from box scores) for the Negro Leagues from 1920 to 1950. More volunteers are needed for microfilm work on this project. The following subcommittees have been set up: (You may contact the designated individual for more information)

Statistics Project Coordinator: John Holway  
Final Statistics Compiler: Dick Clark

1920 - 1929 Decade Coordinator: John Holway  
1930 - 1939 Decade Coordinator: Dick Clark  
1940 - 1949 Decade Coordinator: Jim Riley

Attempting to get more Blacks into the Hall of Fame, memorializing former Negro League ballparks, establishing biographical information on former Black players, and establishing a cassette tape and/or printed library of interviews with Negro Leaguers are all projects which I think need to be undertaken in an organized way. There is much work to be done.

As chairman of the committee I would like to help by coordinating our research and bringing together SABR members working on similar projects. I recognize that many members are doing a fine job of individual research and/or producing Negro League information. There are, however, many projects that can be worked on by teams of committee members who, together, would be able to produce material in a more timely fashion.

The response to my SABR BULLETIN announcement about contacting former Black League players was good. I received many requests for the list of players, mostly from noncommittee members. There are hundreds of SABR members interested in the Negro Leagues. It occurs to me many might be willing to help research and work on projects the committee deems important.

It must be mentioned that Negro League Committee members are expected to help out in some way with the committee's work. Most of you already are. I've tried to outline some of the projects which others of you might want to participate in. I'm sure there must be others. Please respond to the questionnaire provided with this letter, letting me know of your interest or lack of such.

Let me explain that this newsletter is only being sent out to the 36 people whose names appear on the list I obtained from Phil Lowry. Let me know if you know of anyone who should be added to our committee. I would like to send a committee member address list out soon.

In order to do an effective job I need the information contained on the questionnaire from every member by December 15, 1985 please. Thank you for your cooperation.