

The Negro Leagues Courier
The Newsletter of SABR's Negro Leagues Committee
"We are the Ship; All else are the Sea"

April 2001

Editor: Sammy J. Miller

Send all correspondence, both Committee and newsletter related to: Committee Co-Chairman Dick Clark, 1080 Hull, Ypsilanti, MI 48198-6472 Home (734) 487-5273; Fax (734) 487-0807; e-mail: TSTEARNES@aol.com ** Denotes available for SASE from Committee Co-Chairman Dick Clark. Please affix enough postage (usually 1 stamp/4 pages).

Hilton Smith Gets The Call

On Tuesday, March 6, 2001, the National Baseball Hall of Fame announced that the Veterans Committee chose Hilton Lee Smith for induction. While not the odds on favorite, Smith was one of the three most dominating pitchers in black baseball in the 1940's, along with Leon Day and Verdell Mathis. Smith was a truly deserving candidate and an excellent choice.

Smith, whose career spanned from 1932-1948, played 13 seasons with the Kansas City Monarchs as a pitcher, outfielder, and first baseman. During his time with the Monarchs, Smith led the league in wins a record five times (1938-1942) including a 10-0 record in league games in 1941. In addition to his mound prowess, Smith was a talented hitter who regularly hit over .300 and managed .436 in 1946.

A seven time All Star between the years 1937-1942 and a member of seven pennant-winning teams, Smith played an important role in the integration of the major leagues. He convinced the Kansas City Monarchs to sign Jackie Robinson to a contract.

According to reports, the Smith family, including Smith's widow Louise, is overjoyed with the news of his induction, as is the staff of The Courier.

Web version of "Former Monarchs Pitcher Hilton Smith Elected To Baseball Hall of Fame" by Steve Rock from The Kansas City Star. **3pgs.

Web version of "Hilton Smith Never Should Have Had To Wait So Long" by Joe Posnanski from The Kansas City Star. **3pgs.

"Maz, Hilton Smith Voted Into Hall" from the 3/7/01 issue of The Record (Hackensack, NJ). **2pgs.

"Maz's Plaque Is A Tribute To Dee-fense" from the 3/7/01 issue of the New York Times **2pgs.

Hall of Fame Grant Awarded

On February 14 the National Baseball Hall of Fame announced that it had awarded its \$250,000 grant for a comprehensive study on African Americans in baseball from 1860 to 1960. The grant was awarded to The Negro Leagues Researchers/Authors Group, which is led, by Dick Clark, Larry Lester, and Larry Hogan, and is made up of a great many readers of The Negro Leagues Courier.

A copy of the Hall of Fame's press release is available. **2pgs.

First Jerry Malloy Book Prize Winner Announced

The University of Nebraska Press (UNP) and the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) congratulate Joseph A. Reaves III for winning the first ever Jerry Malloy Book Prize. Reaves, a journalist who covered war and revolution in Asia and Europe is also a former baseball writer for the Chicago Tribune and served as a baseball press officer at the 2000 Olympic Games in Australia. He currently teaches journalism at Northern Arizona University.

His award-winning manuscript, "Taking in a Game: A History of Baseball in Asia", will be published by the University of Nebraska Press. It presents an informed and entertaining account of baseball in Korea, mainland and Taiwanese China, the Philippines, and Japan. Reaves applies his extensive knowledge and firsthand experience of Asian culture and politics to highlight the history, evolution, and contemporary state of baseball in Asia.

We are also happy to be able to report that the fund for the Jerry Malloy Memorial bench at Rockford College has succeeded beyond all expectations. Tom Hill, who has put up a memorial web page to Jerry, reports that over \$2000 dollars has been raised. That is enough for the bench with money left over to place books in the college library in memory of Jerry. For more info you can go to <http://thomashill.home.mindspring.com> You can also continue to send donations to fund. The address was listed in that last newsletter.

Contributors

Thanks to the following for their assistance in making this newsletter possible: Bob Bailey, Bijan Bayne, Bill Cash, Dick Clark, Jeff Eastland, Tom Hill, Leslie Heaphy, Larry Hogan, Larry Lester, Jerry Malloy, Gary Maurer, Ray Nemec, Jim Overmyer, Lou Parrotta, James Passannante, Bob Peterson, Bob Potts, Al Quimby, Denis Repp, Prior Smith, Gregg Truitt, Art Voellinger and Lyle Wilson.

Committee News & Member and Reader Updates

The staff of The Courier would like to welcome new committee member Bijan C. Bayne. His address is 5500 Montgomery Rd. #10, Cincinnati, OH. Phone: (513) 351-7293 E-mail: bijanc@hotmail.com

We would also like to welcome another new member, Phil Ross. His address is 175-20 Wexford Terrace, Jamaica, NY 11432.

Rod Nelson's new e-mail address is RockyMtnSABR@aol.com. His new address is 1550 Platte Street #455, Denver Co 80202. His phone is still (303) 893-6767.

Prior Smith has been doing the Canada Calling radio broadcasts from universal Studios in Orlando lately.

Lyle Wilson recently visited three elementary schools to discuss the history of the Negro Leagues as part of Black History Month.

The following is from Paul Bauer:

Dear Friends, Relatives, and Countrymen,

"As some of you may have heard, I am in the process of closing my bookshop and will concentrate on selling books by mail. I enjoyed the shop but after fifteen years I found myself looking forward to the day when I could get out a bit more and enjoy a more flexible schedule. This change will do that.

It will also give me more time to wrap up the biography of writer Jim Tully, my partner, Mark Dawidziak, and I have been chipping away at for nearly ten years.

My new e-mail is pbauer@core.com. My home number remains 330/677-1847."

Organizing Black America: An Encyclopedia of African American Associations by Garland Publishing (2001) includes 10 entries pertaining to the Negro Leagues, five by Leslie Heaphy and five by Lyle Wilson. These cover nine of the leagues and the Hall of Fame.

Obituaries

The staff of The Courier is saddened to report the following deaths. Philadelphia Stars legend Larry "Schoolboy" Kimbrough died on Wednesday, January 31, 2001 in Philadelphia. He was 77. Kimbrough spent ten seasons in the Negro Leagues with the Stars and the Homestead Grays. Funeral Program **2pgs.

Wesley "Doc" Dennis, who was a staple on the Baltimore Elite Giants, died in Nashville, Tennessee on March 6, 2001 of pneumonia. Dennis, whose career spanned from 1942-1955, played all the infield positions except catcher, for the Elite Giants, the Philadelphia Stars, and the Birmingham Black Barons. He was 83. "Nashville Baseball Star Doc Dennis Bore Discrimination With 'No Regrets' by Dwight Lewis from The Tennessean.com **3pgs.

Charles "Red" House, who played 3rd for the 1937 Detroit Stars, passed away on February 1, 2001 in River Rouge, Michigan. He was 88. Funeral Program **2pgs.

John Phillips, a pitcher for the Baltimore Elite Giants from 1939-1940, died on Jan. 12, 2001 in Chicago.

An obit for Edward Finney, who played 3rd base for the Baltimore Elite Giants from 1948-1950, is available. Finney died on March 17, 1998. **1pg.

Final Resting Places

Bob Bailey has passed along the following resting places to us. Memphis Red Sox legend Larry "Iron Man" Brown is buried in New Park Cemetery in Memphis, TN.

Lovell Harden is buried in Lakeside Cemetery in Erie, PA.

Nip Winters is buried in Union Hill Cemetery, Kennett Square, PA.

Charles "Red" House is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery, Detroit, MI.

More than a year has passed since the requirement of one gravesite per year from Negro League Committee members was instituted and a number of you have yet to fulfill this requirement. It is a possibility this lack of response derives from the belief that nothing will happen to those of you that do not submit a gravesite. PERHAPS this is a correct assumption. The threat of consequences for failure to meet this requirement should not however be the reason that all NLC members submit at least one gravesite. The motivation behind doing it should be the desire to make sure that all these players are remembered and properly memorialized. That is the reason that most of you became involved in this committee, wasn't it? So please, those of you that have not submitted a gravesite yet, please do so.

Finally, just for the record, there will indeed be consequences for the failure to meet this requirement. Just thought you might like to know.

Updated version of the burial list is available. **4pgs.

Once again Bob Bailey, in addition to supplying us with numerous gravesites, has written the following for The Courier.

Who Else Is There?

Crown Hill Cemetery is located on the north side of Indianapolis, IN and is probably the grandest cemetery in the Indiana capital. A large, well-landscaped cemetery it boasts the top of Indianapolis society as resting there. Thus far three Negro Leaguers have been identified as being buried there: Robert "Tiny" Baldwin, Junious Bibbs, and C. I. Taylor. Fourteen other major league players and one major league umpire are also interred there. Names like Charles Baughman, Harry Deane, John Grim, Allen McCauley, William McGill, William Pearce, Bill Whaley, and Charles Whitehouse are not household baseball names; each earned a line in the Baseball Encyclopedia and reposes at Crown Hill. Perhaps better known are Hod Eller, Rex Dawson, and nineteenth century pitcher Thomas "Toad" Ramsay. Three of some special note are a trio of obscure brothers who played in the majors in the 1800s: Bill, John, and Len Sowders. I am only aware of one other cemetery with three major league brothers (the Mansells in St. Joseph's Cemetery, Auburn, NY). Harry Giesel is the umpire at Crown Hill.

These ballplayers rest among some famous Hoosiers at Crown Hill. President Benjamin Harrison is a permanent resident as are three Vice Presidents: Charles Fairbanks, Thomas Riley Marshall, and Thomas Hendricks. There are also assorted Senators, Congressmen, Mayors and others of the political calling along with John Dillinger, who answered to a different calling. Businessmen Eli Lilly, of the drug company fame, Lyman Ayres, founder of the L. S. Ayres department store chain, and inventor Richard Gatling, who gave us the Gatling Gun. Rev. Richard Taylor Andrews, an Indianapolis Civil Rights Leader and actor James Baskett, best known for portraying Uncle Remus in Disney's "Song of the South" rest along with Robert Irsay, who ordered the relocation of the NFL Baltimore Colts to Indianapolis. There are a large number of people, as might be expected, involved with the auto racing business. Perhaps best known are Tony Bettenhausen and Augie Dusenbery. Men of letters like poet James Whicomb Riley and novelist Booth Tarkington rest at Crown Hill, as does a different kind of letter-man, the father of TV personality David Letterman.

Negro League Related Articles

"Sultans of Swing" by our own Eric Enders from Major League Baseball 2001 considers "the underrated statistics of hitting for power and getting on base" of the "top 10 hitters of all time" is available. **4pgs. Two of the top ten are Josh Gibson and Oscar Charleston.

"Sports Illustrated's Top 20 Dynasties of the 20th Century" is available. **4pgs. Dynasty #17 is "1937-1945 Homestead Grays". The ranking is much to low but nonetheless is it nice to see they made it.

"Baseball's 'Black' Trailblazer: The Peculiar Story of Effa Manley and her Negro League Team" from the 2/13/01 issue of The (Newark NJ) Star-Ledger **3pgs.

"A League of Her Own: 'Peanut' Johnson Remains A Pioneer And A Fireballer" from the 2/27/01 issue of The Seattle Times. **1pg.

Two interesting undated articles from Sport magazine are available. They are "(Sam) Jethroe And The Sophomore Jinx" **5pgs and "Is-Larry Doby A Bust?" **3pgs.

"Still Left Out: Former Negro League Player Bob Mitchell Is Fighting Major League Baseball About The Way Pensions Are Distributed To Surviving Negro League Players" by Bill Chastain (with Larry Hogan apparently working as his headline writer) from the 1/27/01 issue of the Tampa Tribune is available. **2pgs.

"Home Run Tours Efforts For A Home Town Park" from the 3/5/01 issue of The

Photographs:

1. Outfielder Vic Harris (Homestead Grays) talking with an unidentified New York Cuban.
 2. Robert "Rob Roy" Gaston (Homestead Grays) taking a cut during a game at Forbes Field.
 3. Fans in the "bleachers" at Forbes Field. [It looked to me that this was a loose use of the word "bleachers"; the seats appear to be the ones behind the plate, near the dugouts, rather than the real Forbes bleachers down the left-field line.]
 4. Josh Gibson, in uniform and gear, on the field at Forbes.
 5. An unidentified player in a Crawfords uniform, standing on their "practice field".
 6. Jackie Robinson, in his Dodgers uniform, at Forbes in 1947.
- (There are also a couple of shots of celebrities and others at the Crawford Grill #1.)

For those interested, the show is at the Westmoreland County Museum of Art, in Greensburg, PA. It runs through June."

During the weekend of February 23-25, the Isle of Capri Casino & hotel in Bossier City, LA held a Negro Leagues reunion. Approximately 55 former Negro League players were in attendance. The event included a memorial service at Fairgrounds Field for Riley Stewart, a players breakfast, and a night of jazz at a local club among other things. A handful of the players rode on a float in a Mardi Gras parade while there. The players present included Frank Barnes, Dennis Biddle, Frank Bradley, Sherwood Brewer, James Cohen, Carl Long, Enrique Maroto, Pedro Sierra, James Cobbins, Melvin Duncan, Frank Evans, William Felder, Neale Henderson, Gordon Hopkins, "Pee wee" Jenkins, Curtis Johnson, Mamie Johnson, Willie Lee, John Miles, Jesse Mitchell, Bob Mitchell, Red Moore, Bobbie Robinson, Tommy Sampson, Jake Sanders, Al Spearman, Eugene Williams, Frank Williams, Archie Young, and Jim Zapp.

Upcoming Events

Among the inductees to the Greater St. Louis Amateur Baseball Hall of Fame on Saturday, April 7, 2001 will be Vernell Jackson. Vernell pitched in the Negro Leagues ** 1pg recap of career available **2pp press release.

The Final Pitch

Remembering that one of the most basic freedoms our forefathers founded this country upon was the right to vote, I urge everyone to vote in the upcoming SABR elections, making your choices on the grounds of your own personal beliefs and conscience.

Sammy J. Miller

Kansas City Star. **2pgs.

"In 'Fuzzy' World, Chatty Pets Have Negro League Names" from the 3/17/01 issue of The Kansas City Star. **3pgs.

"Satchel Paige School Unveils Statue Of Its Namesake" from the 3/18/01 issue of the Kansas City Star. **2pgs.

"Life-Size Satchel Paige Statue Unveiled At School" from the 3/21/01 issue of USA Today's Baseball Weekly. **1pg.

"Negro Leagues' Founding Day Recognized" from the 2/13/01 issue of The Kansas City Star. **1pg.

"Thoughts Of Grandfather Never Far From Hairston" from the 2/22/01 issue of The Baltimore Sun. **3pgs.

"(Wilmer) Field's Dream: Keeping The Memory Alive" from the 2/12/01 issue of the Toronto Sun. **2pgs.

"Black History Quiz" from the 2/14/01 issue of USA Today's Baseball Weekly. **1pg.

"Ex-Players Recall Era of Negro Leagues" from the 3/4/01 issue of the Cleveland Plain Dealer. **1pg.

The Marketplace...

The following books of interest to our committee were listed in the USA TODAY BASEBALL WEEKLY, MARCH 21-27, 2001.

For young readers:

JACKIE'S NINE by Sharon Robinson \$15.95

COMING HOME (Josh Gibson) by Nanette Mellage \$15.95

Regular Books:

SMASHING BARRIERS: Race and Sport In The New Millennium by Richard Lapchick \$18.95

SACHEL SEZ (Paige) by Sterry & Eckstut \$9.95

THE COMPLETE BOOK OF BASEBALL'S NEGRO LEAGUES: The Other Half of History by John Holway \$26.95

COOL PAPAS AND DOUBLE DUTIES: The All-Time Greats of The Negro Leagues by William McNeill (McFarland) \$35

THE PITTSBURGH CRAWFORDS by James Bankes (McFarland) \$24.95

On the Web

Everyone should check out www.conniejohnsonbaseball.com. Lots of great info on Connie's career.

Recent Events

Denis Repp submitted the following report on an exhibit of the work of photographer Teenie Harris.

"Charles 'Teenie' Harris was an African-American photographer, working in Pittsburgh from about 1940 into the 90s. Most of his work appeared in the Pittsburgh Courier, although he did free-lance work, too. His beat was Pittsburgh's African-American community, which included its baseball.

While the show featured many fine photographs, and would be valuable to anyone with an interest in that time and place, it must be pointed out to this group that the baseball content in the exhibition is rather limited. There are six baseball photographs included.

The baseball section is preceded by a note that Harris himself was a shortstop on the team that won Pittsburgh's sandlot championship in 1926; with a friend, he helped end this team's sandlot days as it was transformed into what would become the Pittsburgh Crawfords.