

The Negro Leagues Courier

The newsletter of SABR's Negro Leagues Committee

"We are the Ship, all else are the Sea"

April 2002

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

In Loving Memory

We lost a valued member of our NLC, Bob Davids, SABR founder passed on February 10th. I met Bob in the early 80's at a SABR convention. I was immediately struck by his marvelous sense of humor and his humility. When I became chairman in 1985 I had a list of several hundred potential NLC members. I send out a questionnaire prior to our first newsletter. Bob sent his back, promptly, and mentioned that he didn't think he would be able to contribute much and didn't think he should "take up space". I signed him up anyway and Bob was mistaken. He was a significant contributor over the years. He was the head person in discovering all the 19th century Black players in Organized Baseball. He was the spearhead to dedication of a plaque at the grave of Bud Fowler. He produced an excellent booklet on Fowler, as well. Bob passed along numerous articles over the years. He completely fulfilled the qualities of a SABR member, but what would you expect. I was very pleased to have him as a friend. However, my fondest memory of Bob is the hearty laugh I got from him when I mentioned my two favorite Negro League player names..... Warren Peace and Harry Butts. We will miss you Bob. - Dick Clark

The Jerry Malloy Negro Leagues Committee Conference V

Where: Memphis, TN
When: July 18-20, 2002
Hosts: The National Pastime: Museum of Minor League Baseball
The Memphis Redbirds (St. Louis Cardinals, AAA, PCL)
The National Civil Rights Museum

Programming for this summer's Negro Leagues Conference will be held at several venues in Memphis including The National Civil Rights Museum, AutoZone Park, Beale Street and other locations to be announced.

It promises to be an action packed three days with a few surprise guests, if current negotiations go well and a couple of unique video presentations.

Thursday, we will open the conference at the site of the Lorraine Motel with special programming offered by the staff of the National Civil Rights Museum; Friday we will shift to AutoZone Park, the \$80 million park is the crown jewel of minor league ballparks. After a day of research presentations we will see the Memphis Redbirds take on the Tacoma Rainiers (Seattle).

Saturday's highlights include a lunch/ballpark picnic and a visit to Beale Street. That evening, the Redbirds will wear uniforms of the Memphis Red Sox and the Rainiers will transform into the Homestead Grays as Memphis salutes the Negro Leagues. The Redbirds are working to put together an impressive group of former Negro League players as apart of this tribute.

Conference registration fee is \$95.00 with special discounts for students. Fees include all sessions, transportation to and from sites, nightly hospitality suite, lunch on Friday and Saturday, ballgame tickets and conference goody bags.

The headquarters hotel will be the Memphis Radisson, located across the street from AutoZone Park and a short 2-block walk to Beale Street. The hotel rate will be in the \$79 to \$99 range.

To offer research presentations and for additional information including airfare contacts and hotel, please contact Dave Chase, Executive Director, The National Pastime, 175 Toyota Plaza, Suite 300, Memphis, TN 38133; (901) 722-0207; dchase@MemphisRedbirds.com

Research presentations are still needed so if you are interested, please contact Dave Chase. The NLC's own Eddie Bedford is planning to present one entitled "Summer Reading". I know from previous conferences that we have some fine presenters so let's get Dave the people he needs.

Working Schedule

Thursday, July 18

Noon – 4:30 Registration, Goody Bag Distribution

6:00 – 6:15 Buses leave hotel to Martin Stadium historic marker and Russwood Park historic marker and the National Civil Rights Museum

7:15 – 10:00 Program at NCRM

10:15 – 10:30 Buses return to hotel

10:00 – Midnight Hospitality Room at hotel

Friday, July 19

7:30 – Noon Registration continues

8:30 – 9:00 Opening Remarks, Welcome, Redbirds Video, The Jernigans, and Rita Sparks

9:00 – 9:45 Session I

9:45 – 11:30 Memphis Red Sox video and Presentation

11:30 – 1:30 Lunch at The Plaza Club

1:45 – 2:30 Session III (T. H. Hayes Collection)

2:30 – 3:15 Session IV

3:15 – 3:30 Refreshment Break

3:30 – 4:15 Session V (What's new on the Bookshelves)

4:15 – 4:30 What's Going On Tonight

7:30 – 10:30 The Memphis Redbirds host the Tacoma Rainiers (Seattle)

10:00 – Midnight Hospitality at the hotel

Saturday, July 20

8:30 – 8:45 Opening Remarks

8:45 – 9:00 Player Database Update

9:00 – 9:45 Session VI (The National Pastime)

9:45-10:30 Player Panel I

10:30 – 10:45 Refreshments

10:45 – 11:30 Player Panel II

11:30 – 1:30 Ballpark Picnic

1:30 – 1:45 Walk to Withers Studio, Beale Street

1:45 – 3:15 Withers Gallery, tour and presentation

3:15 – 4:00 Negro Leagues Project Update, W. C. Handy Park

4:00 – 4:15 Tonight's Negro League Salute

4:15- 4:30 Return to hotel

7:30 – 10:30 Redbirds host Tacoma (The Redbirds will wear Memphis Red Sox uniforms and Tacoma will wear Homestead Grays uniforms).

10:00 – Midnight Hospitality Room at Hotel

It seems to me that Dave Case has gone above and beyond the call of duty putting together this year's conference. I must say that I am really looking forward to this year's convention. The fact that I did not make last year's conference in Kansas City only adds to the excitement.

I am really pleased to see large blocks of empty time on Friday and Saturday between 4:30 and 7:30 pm. It will be nice to have the time to see the sites of Memphis. Dick Clark and I have already made plans to make a visit to "Graceland" on one of these two days. Another big plus is that since there is nothing planned for after 10:30 on any night, there will be plenty of time to hit Beale Street and hear some blues.

Dick Clark and myself have added a new item to the schedule. We plan on dedicating a historical marker across the street from the site of Russwood Field. It will mark the birthplace of a fine individual that has devoted many years to the field of Negro League history and in that time has co-authored several books, designed the NLC's award certificates, and proven to be a fine newsletter editor. In addition to that, he is as cute as a speckled pup in a red wagon.

NLRAG Progress Report

The work of the Negro League Researchers/Authors Group, despite some aspects of certain phases of the project taking longer than expected, is going strong with work being done by individuals across the country on many different subjects.

The inputting of statistical data continues with the first years (1920-1925) being finished and sent to Larry Lester, who along with Dick Clark, are coordinating the project. Despite a few minor problems, which must be expected in projects of this size, all those involved are learning as they go. Larry has fine-tuned the spreadsheet program used by the group to make the entry of data easier, while some of those actually inputting the data have developed a "short-cut pipeline" to pass on tricks that make inputting repetitive information, such as game dates, go quicker. Dick (1925) and I (1922) have a little contest going on to help break up the tedium of the project. As is well known, the black newspapers depended on each team to report the outcomes of the games and built their boxes from these reports. Sometimes the result, apparently through miscommunication, caused some interesting boxes to be printed. Dick and I are seeing who can find the funniest or most out of the ordinary mistake. Dick was winning for a while with the results of a double header that had two different results in two different papers. I took over the lead when I found a box that reported that Lemuel Hawkins of the Kansas City Monarchs had been hit with a pitched ball by Jose Mendez, also of the Kansas City Monarchs. I'll let you know when a final winner is decided. The loser has to sing "I am a Little Teapot" at the first NLC conference after the end of the project.

The designing of a pamphlet detailing the work of the NLRAG project is currently being designed. Current plans are to make it available at the Hall of Fame and other Negro League related functions in order to increase the public awareness of the project as well as build interest in the Negro Leagues in general. Hopefully we will be able to make the pamphlet available to readers of *The Courier* once it is finished and distributed.

Rick Morris, who is heading up the Oral History phase, of the project has already located over 700 interviews.

New information is continually being added to the ballparks list and military list mentioned in a previous issue. The old newspapers we are getting the boxes from for the stats project are a great source for ballpark info while the papers from the 1940's, courtesy of Todd Bolton, were good about detailing who was serving in or had served in the military.

As always, anyone interested in becoming involved in the project that has not yet been contacted, can get in touch with Dick Clark. If you have already been contacted but not yet assigned any work, just be patient. Your time is coming.

Contributors

They say a man cannot achieve greatness without the help of others. In this case, those others are: Gary Ashwill, Bijan Bayne, Todd Bolton, Tim Booker, Fred Brillhart, Dave Chase, Dick Clark, Elias Dudash, Jeff Eastland, Daniel Ginsburg, Bill Hickman, Larry Hogan, Signe Knutsen, Neil Lanctot, Larry

Lester, Jerry Malloy, Gary Maurer, Dick Miller, Rick Morris, Bob Peterson, Bob Potts, John Russell, Jay Sanford, Wayne Stivers, and Lyle Wilson.

Member and Reader Updates

Our great Bwana, Dick Clark, has been listed in the "Spirit of SABR Salute" that appears in *The SABR Bulletin*. Those listed are recognized as "SABR members who, on their own initiative, or on request, have assisted other members in their research projects". Personally, I find Mr. Clark's inclusion a bit suspicious, especially since "nominators will not be identified."

Jeff Eastland has a new address PO Box 456, Garrisonville, VA 22463. Email is the same.

Carlosb@simplyweb.net is the new address for Carlos Bauer.

Frank Ceresi has a new address and e-mail. They are 916 Dewolfe Drive, Alexandria, VA, 22308.

E-mail: fceresi@fcassociates.com

Andy McCue has a new e-mail address. It is agmccue44@earthlink.net

Lyle Wilson spoke at the University Lions Club on Feb. 27 of this year, covering in part, the Negro Leagues and Seattle's local African American baseball history.

Neil Lancot reports that he has finished his manuscript on the Negro National League and the Philadelphia Stars. Because of its length (it's long!), he may split it into two separate books, one on black professional baseball between 1933-52 and the other just on Philadelphia/the Stars/etc.

Obituaries

An obit of Al Smith from the *Sports Collectors Digest* of Feb. 8, 2002 is available. **1pg.

Anyone who attended the NLC Conference in Atlantic City, NJ in August of 1999 should remember James L. Usry who regaled those present with his memories of Pop Lloyd. Usry, who was principal at one of the schools Pop worked as a janitor at and was also a former member of the New York Reins basketball team and the first black mayor of Atlantic City, passed away recently. **1pg obit from the Feb. 25, 2002 issue of *Jet*.

Walter C. Wright, former member of the New Orleans Black Pelicans passed away recently. More info as it becomes available.

Ed Martin, basketball coach at Tennessee State, died 02/25/2002 in Nashville. He played in the Negro Leagues.

Negro Leaguers Updates

Todd Bolton has informed us that Russell Awkard is in the hospital in intensive care. He had a stroke and is in a coma. Please keep him in your prayers.

On The Web

Signe Knutson has updated her website recently. You can see it at:
<http://www.execpc.com/~sshivers/index.html>

Tim Booker has passed along the site www.thehistorymakers.com. It is an African-American history site that includes some info about sports and Negro league baseball. Currently featured are Double Duty, Ernie Banks, Henry Presswood, Bobby Robinson, Al Spearman and Johnny Washington.

Negro League Related Articles

For those interested in becoming a member of The Negro League Players Association Foundation should request an application. It is available for **1pg. For as little as ten dollars you can help out and receive a membership card and the NLBPA newsletter.

"Exhibit Looks At Afro-American Baseball League In N.J." from the Jan. 24, 2002 issue of *The Haddon Herald*. **1pg.

The city of Newark, New Jersey is looking for players and family members of players from the Newark Eagles. Contact information is available. **1pg.

"Bonds: Remember Your Roots" from the Feb. 13, 2002 issue of the *Kansas City Star* concerning major league players ignoring the Negro League Baseball Museum's awards program. **1pg. Also available is an ad concerning the awards ceremony. **1pg. as well as "Two Players Remember Negro Leagues Roots" **1pg.

"Players Relive Negro League memories" from the unknown publication. **2pgs.

This month's award for well timed news reporting goes to the *Sports Collectors Digest* for finally publishing Dick Miller's coverage of last year's Jerry Malloy Negro League Conference. The article that covered it came out in their Feb. 15, 2002 issue. **1pg.

Two excellent articles are available from the latest issue of *The Diamond Angle*. They are "Leon's Great Day" concerning a 17 inning pitching performance by Leon Day in the ManDak League in 1950 and "A Baseball Mystery" which examines the baseball career of "Satchel Paige Jr." Both are available for **1pg.

"Fleeting Fame", an article covering the life of Fleetwood Walker, which was published in the Spring 2002 issue of *American Legacy*, is available. **2pgs.

"Black Baseball Made Its Mark", "Black Player Went To Bat For Bellingham", "Visiting Black Players Were Among The Best", "Black Baseball Came With The Army", and "Writer Tracks Early Black Games" are all part of a series of articles that ran in Feb. 24, 2002 issue *The Bellingham Herald*. **5pgs.

From an unknown publication comes two pieces entitled "Diamond Kings: John Jordan "Buck" O'Neil" and "Diamond Kings: Buck Leonard". **2pgs. For both.

CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER, (no clue when) "League Park fans have dreams for famed field" **1pg.

"The National Pastime In The Nation's Capital" from *Sports Collector's Digest* **2pgs.

Recent Events

The city of Newark, New Jersey held an African American History Month Luncheon that entitled "Saluting The History of The Negro Leagues" on Feb. 27, 2002. Copy of invitation is available. **2pgs.

Upcoming Events

Hall of Famer Leon Day will be inducted into the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame at a ceremony in Portsmouth, VA on April 27. A press release concerning the event and how to get tickets is available. **2pgs.

The North American Society of Sports History conference will be held in French Lick, IN, May 23-25. Next fall Dr. Steve Butler of Earlham College in Earlham, IN will teach a sociology course entitled Jackie Robinson. Dr. Richard Zamoff at George Washington University also teaches a course on Robbie.

On July 16 Bijan C. Bayne will be a part of the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum's Sandlot Series lectures. He will speak on the Struggle of the Latin American Major Leaguer- 1950's and 1960's.

Don't forget that the SABR Con is this June in Boston. You can get all the registration information from recent issue of *The SABR Bulletin*. The Negro Leagues Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for Friday, June 28 for 9:00 am.

The Milwaukee Brewers will present their 6th annual "Walls of Honors" ceremony, Wednesday May 15th 2002. Two former Negro Leaguers will be among those that are enshrined on the "Walls" at Miller Park, Gordon Hopkins (Indianapolis Clowns) and Jesse Mitchell (Birmingham Black Barons). The enshrinement will be at 2pm, followed by pre-game ceremony and autograph session during the game Wednesday night against the Cincinnati Reds.

The Marketplace

Phil Dixon's book, "The Monarchs, 1920-1938, Featuring Wilber "Bullet" Rogan", is out. You can obtain a copy by sending \$ 19.95, plus \$ 4.50 shipping to: Mariah Press, 1214 S. Norton Avenue, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, 57105. There are 233 pages and there are over 111 photos.

In Chris Holaday's new book "Baseball in the Carolinas" there is a chapter on Black semi-professional baseball in the region from World War One to the beginning of the Great Depression. McFarland publishes the book.

We Make The Call

Robert C. Cottrell has sent a copy of his newest book, BLACKBALL, THE BLACK SOX, AND THE BABE: BASEBALL'S CRUCIAL 1920 SEASON to *The Courier*. It contains 321 pages including 26 pages of footnotes, many photos and two chapters on Negro League baseball with many other Negro League related items scattered throughout the piece. A review will appear in a future issue.

The Final Pitch

In this section in the last issue of *The Courier*, I apologized to you the readers for what I felt was a below par issue. When Bwana Clark read this he immediately phoned and told me it was not necessary in that he felt the issue was fine... While he could have edited it out before sending it to the printer, I told him I was not happy with the issue and to leave it in place, feeling that was the end of it. It was not. Just a couple days later, I began to receive e-mails from several people telling me that I was off the mark in my beliefs. I heard from cherished friends like Jeff Eastland, who reminded me that "You can't hit a home run every time out." I heard from friends of friends like Helen Hill, a reader who is one of the late Jerry Malloy's "many, many Rockford College friends" who wrote "You need not apologize, as your love for the subject and wonderful sense of humor comes through each page of this issue and all other issues." I even heard from complete strangers such as Mike Webber, writer of the Kansas City SABR newsletter who told me "Just do your best, I enjoyed this newsletter... I enjoy all of them, actually."

I would like to thank everyone for his or her kind words. It was a great moral booster to hear from each and every one of you. Due to the fact that it happens so very rarely, I am not used to admitting that I was wrong but I will gladly do so in this case. Don't get me wrong, however. I am still glad that I included the apology in the last issue. If I hadn't, I would have never heard from the above-mentioned people, and I am very glad that I did.

Sammy J. Miller