

The Negro Leagues Courier

The Newsletter of SABR's Negro Leagues Committee

"We are the Ship; All else are the Sea"

Feb. 2004

Editor: Col. 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).

Grave Marker for Jimmie Crutchfield

Since our last issue, we have received an update regarding the effort to raise funds for a grave marker for Negro League legend Jimmie Crutchfield. According to Jeremy Krock, who is heading up the project: "The outpouring of support from *The Negro Leagues Courier* notice has been fantastic. We have met, and now exceeded our goal, so placement will occur in the spring. I have gotten donations from all over, and some wonderful telephone calls. This has been a great Holiday experience for me. Thanks for all your help and I will keep you and your readers up-to-date on the progress."

Let me take a moment to add my thanks also to all the readers who participated/ donated to this most worthy cause. While I am aware that this small publication of ours is enjoyed by a great number of people, it is nice to see that it can also make a difference. Thank you all.

Contributors

They say a man cannot achieve greatness without the help of others. That's wrong. Some of us can. Nonetheless, I am forced by The Powers That Be to work with others so here are their names: Bob Bailey, Charlie Beck, Dick Clark, Jeff Eastland, Amy Essington, Leslie Heaphy, Tom Garrett, Ira Haynes, Tom Hill, Ted Knorr, Signe Knutson, Larry Lester, Jerry Malloy, Gary Maurer, Peter Morris, Rick Morris, Robert Peterson, John Russell, Wayne Stivers, and Lyle Wilson.

Okay, come to find out that one person did indeed know the identity of Joe Hill from two issues ago. It was one of our readers that is named, oddly enough, Tom Hill.

As for the last issue, it appears that I made a mistake. I thought perhaps Joe Hill was a bit to obscure so I tried to be nice and gave a simple name, Golda Mabovitch who was, of course, Israel Prime Minister Golda Meir. The problem was all those readers that guessed correctly were, in my opinion (which is the only one that really counts), a bit too flippant about getting the answer. So dust off your thinking caps because this time around the name has been pulled out of a dark and dank corner of history.

This time around, same rules, one fictional person, one real. Find the real one and tell me what they were famous for.

Committee News & Research Requests

The Professor Emeritus of the NLC, Robert Peterson, has a new address. It is 2530 Waynesborough Court, Macungie, PA 18062. Phone: (610) 965-4563

The staff of The Negro Leagues Courier is pleased beyond words to be able to wish happy birthday to Bill Cash (Feb. 21st) and Monte Irvin (Feb. 25th). They both turn 85 this year. In addition, on February 15th, Monte will be inducted into the Ted Williams Museum and Hitters Hall of Fame. Congrats, Monte.

We are glad to welcome new member Peter Morris. His address his 6461 Green Road, Haslett, MI 48840. Phone (517) 339-7128 E-mail – moxbib@voyager.net

Bob Zimmer of the Baseball Heritage Museum has asked me to forward to you the following information:

The "official" dates of the 2004 Malloy Conference will be Thursday, July 22 to Saturday, July 24 with optional activities before and after those dates. The conference will be at the Radisson Hotel at Gateway and the Baseball Heritage Museum.

On that same weekend, the Cleveland Indians will officially celebrate the 10th anniversary of Jacobs Field and the 25th Annual Sports Collectors Convention (The National) will take place at Cleveland's IX Center.

Anyone planning to attend the conference, or considering attending the conference, should email the Baseball Heritage Museum at info@baseballheritagemuseum.org.

Find of the Month

Before we get to this issue's "Find of the Month", a bit of information concerning last issues, which was of course Bob Bailey finding a death certificate for Christobal Torriente. One of Bob's questions was whether anyone knew for certain whether or not Torriente's body had been exhumed and sent to Cuba for reburial.

Jorge Figueredo, author of WHO'S WHO IN CUBAN BASEBALL and CUBAN BASEBALL: A STATISTICAL HISTORY 1878-1961 answered that question for us. He wrote, "I want to confirm that indeed Torriente's remains were disinterred from the Calvary Cemetery, in Queens, NY, and sent to Cuba in the early "1940's".

"The then head of the Sport Commission, Jaime Marine, obtained the approval and funding from the Batista government, then in power in Cuba, to have Torriente's remains transported from the U.S. and reburied at Colon (for Christopher Columbus, in Spanish) Cemetery in Havana."

Thanks to both Jorge and Bob for their work and keeping us informed.

Peter Morris, the NLC's newest member, has made his debut in true style winning the "Find of the Month" on his first try. He located, according to preliminary reports, a death date and burial spot for Homestead Grays pitcher, Ray Brown. We will have more on this in a future issue.

I personally hope to meet Peter at either the SABR National in Cincinnati or the Jerry Malloy Conference in Cleveland. I want to congratulate him, of course, but I also have a bit of a bone to pick with him. The reason for that is if he had not suddenly appeared with his Ray Brown info, I would have won the "Find of the Month" having found an obituary for Jud Wilson which ran in the June 28, 1963 issue of *The Washington Post*. The obit very powerfully illustrated the obscurity that Negro League players fell into before ONLY THE BALL WAS WHITE by Robert Peterson brought them back into the spotlight. The obit read, "Ernest Wilson, 68, a professional baseball player for many years died Monday after a heart attack. Mr. Wilson, who lived at 2209 N Street NW, is survived by his wife Betty."

Obituaries

Frank Bolden, long time writer for the Pittsburgh Courier and expert on the Hill District of Pittsburgh passed away on August 28. An obit from the PITTSBURGH POST GAZETTE is available. ** 5pgs

Arthur W. Anderson, who played for the San Antonio Black Sox passed

Curtis Johnson, outfielder-pitcher for the 1950 Kansas City Monarchs died on January 27, 2004 at St. Charles General Hospital in Luling, LA.

An obit for Joe B. Spencer is available. **1pg.

The following obits for Cowan "Bubba" Hyde, whose death was reported in the last issue, are available. "Bubba Hyde, 95, Negro Leagues Star" from the NY TIMES **1pg, "Ex-Negro Leagues Star Bubba Hyde Dies" from STLTodday.com **1pg, "Cowan F. "Bubba" Hyde, Negro Leagues Star" from the ST. LOUIS TIMES DISPATCH **2pgs, and **1pg from SCD

A funeral program for Wilber "Little Bullet" Rogan is available. **4pgs

The following is a list those involved with the Negro Leagues that passed away last year. Thanks to Larry Lester for putting the list together.

January 14 - John Ritchey passes away in Chula Vista (near San Diego), California. Ritchey was a catcher with the Chicago American Giants in 1947.

February 5 - Stokes Hendrix, age 89, dies in Nashville, TN. Hendrix pitched and played outfield for the Lincoln Giants and the Baltimore Black Sox.

March 26 - Charles Arnold, pitcher for the 1953 and 1954 Memphis Red Sox, dies in Michigan.

April 23 - Sherwood Brewer dies in Chicago, IL. He was 79 years old.

May 8 - Sam Lacy, sports editor of the Baltimore Afro-American weekly newspaper since 1944 and a key figure in the integration of major league baseball, dies at age 99. Lacy, the second black reporter (after Wendell Smith) to become a member of the Baseball Writers' Association of America was inducted into the writers' wing of baseball's Hall of Fame in 1998.

May 17 - Joe B. Spencer, Jr., dies in Gretna, LA. He was 83. Spencer played most positions except pitcher with the Homestead Grays and the Birmingham Black Barons. He spent five years in the minor leagues before retiring in 1955.

June 13 - Herbert Cato Moore dies in Detroit, Michigan. He was 81 years old.

June 18 - Hall of Famer Larry Doby, the first African American player in the American League, dies at 79 in Montclair, NJ. Doby joined the Cleveland Indians in 1947, coming from the Newark Eagles.

June 23 - Max Manning dies at 84 in Pleasantville, NJ.

June 14 - John Henry "Stink" Williams dies in Cincinnati, Ohio. He was 71 years old.

July 27 - Charlie Rivera passes away at Kings Harbor Nursing Home in the Bronx, New York.

September 10 - Josh Gibson, Junior, dies in Homestead, PA as a result of a fall.

October 8 - Juan Armenteros, of Miami, Florida, dies. Armenteros was a catcher for the Kansas City Monarchs from 1953 to 1955. He was also a teammate of Ernie Banks on the 1953 squad.

October 25 - Elijah "Buddy" Williams, outfielder for the Kansas City Monarchs, the Cleveland Clippers and other teams dies in Mary Esther, Florida.

November 5 - Collis Jones, Sr. dies in South Carolina.

November 20 - Cowan "Bubba" Hyde dies in St. Louis, MO. He was 95 years old.

December 5 - Wilbur Sidney Rogan, son of Bullet Rogan and former K.C. Monarch batboy dies in Kansas City, Missouri. He was 79 years old. In 1998, he traveled to Cooperstown, NY, to accept his father's induction plaque for the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Negro League Related Articles

"Art Project Tribute To Negro Leagues" **2pg from the PALM BEACH POST

"J.L. Wilkinson: The Man Behind the Monarchs (and the Globetrotters)" from THE KANSAS CITY STAR'S STAR MAGAZINE ** 6pgs

"Early Negro League Cards Discovered" from BECKETT'S **1pg

"Think of Centuries As Ballgames: Double Duty Just Started Game 2" from the CHICAGO TRIBUNE **1pg

"Buck Sure Knows How To Live" from THE KANSAS CITY STAR *2pgs

The latest "Curator's Corner" column from MEMORIES AND DREAMS, the official magazine of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, is about Monte Irvin **2pgs

"A Legend Alone" about Monte Irvin from THE KANSAS CITY STAR **3pgs

"A Royal Legacy Lives On" about the NLBMA Awards from THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

**2pgs.

The Marketplace

Neil Lanctot's new book NEGRO LEAGUE BASEBALL: THE RISE AND RUIN OF A BLACK INSTITUTION is scheduled for a May release. It has 498 pages, with 29 pages of pictures, and will sell for \$34.95. A review of the book will run in a future issue.

BLACK BASEBALL: A HISTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS & THE NATIONAL GAME by Kyle McNary and published by PRC Publishing Ltd. is on the shelves. It contains 176 pages and 187 pictures, a number of which come from our own Larry Lester.

An original copy of Sol White's HISTORY OF COLORED BASE BALL recently sold at auction for \$5000 while a baseball autographed by Jackie Robinson also sold for \$5000.

Recent Events

The celebration marking the NLC's new website was a tremendous success. The clown was a big hit and the pony rides were enjoyed by all, but the highlight of the day's events turned out to be the concert put on by Uncle Wiggly and the Wigglers, famed polka band.

Dick Clark won the award for best costume in the "Come As Your Favorite Foul Ball" division. Mr. Clark came as himself.

The website, which is still under construction, can be found at http://home.fuse.net/NLCommittee/paseo_ymca.htm

Upcoming Events

The 5th annual Smokey Joe Williams Scholarship Banquet will be held February 7th at the Sequin (TX) Guadalupe County Coliseum. A four-year scholarship will be awarded to a female and male senior from Seguin High School. The keynote speaker will be former Negro League standout Monte Irvin.

Our own Wayne Stivers may be attending the event and if so, perhaps we can persuade him to send us a report for a future issue.

NLC members Mike Everett and Monte Irvin as well as Belinda Manning, daughter of Max Manning, are planning a trip to Cuba as part of a baseball tour. In addition, according to reports, Monte hopes to see some former players while there. We hope to have a report from Mike in a future issue.

On The Web

If you are a SABR member, then you should by now be aware of the fact that member now have access to ProQuest, an online newspaper research site. Everyone should check it out because it is a great service. You can access it through the SABR website at www.sabr.org

Final Pitch

Since this is the first issue that will be distributed via the SABR website, we will have a number of new readers and therefore I would like to answer a few questions that I think some of the new readers might have.

The answers are:

- 1) Yes, the newsletter is always like this and the reason for that is I think it is funny.
- 2) I don't know why someone hasn't forcibly removed me from my position as editor but it is a good question.
- 3) It was the idea of someone else to send this to everyone that marked Negro Leagues as an interest so don't blame me.

Col. Sammy J. Miller