

The Negro Leagues Courier

The Newsletter of SABR's Negro Leagues Committee

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

Aug. 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).

SABR 34 Recap

As always the SABR Convention was a success and a most enjoyable time. Everyone here at The Courier would like to extended a hearty congratulations and thank you to all those involved.

(Editor's note: I would like to say that while I realize that some of the following recap does seem a bit hard to believe, it is, much to my own embarrassment, the truth.)

Dick Clark, our great and wise leader, stayed with yours truly over the weekend and he arrived in Florence, Kentucky at about 10:00 pm on Wednesday night. A greeting for a man of his stature was arranged and he had a motorcycle escort to my humble abode. After we had spent sometime chatting and I had introduced him to the Southern delicacy of fried pies, we hit the sack in order to get an early start the next day.

The following morning we arrived in Cincinnati in plenty of time to find a parking spot and make it to the official welcome at 8:45 am. Traffic had not been bad despite it being rush hour and so things were going our way. That ended rather abruptly when Dick asked me the name of the hotel where the convention was being held. Problem was that I had no idea. So there we stood, in the middle of downtown Cincinnati with no idea where we were supposed to be. (Let me take a moment here to say in my own defense that I very rarely go to Cincinnati and so it was pretty much a "foreign" city to me.)

One of us remembered that there was a Cincy Shop in the lobby of the hotel and low and behold we spotted right across the street from the parking lot a hotel with just such a shop in the lobby. As I am sure you have all figured out by now, it was of course the wrong hotel. If you didn't figure that out, don't feel bad because neither did we until we had questioned employees and searched the hotel's conference rooms. So once again we found ourselves back on the street with no idea where to go. Dick, who had been to several business conventions in Cincinnati in earlier years, took the lead and declared he knew where another hotel, that had to be the one, was located and so off we went. Under Dick's expert guidance we journeyed through the streets of the Queen City for about twenty minutes and he did indeed lead us to a hotel. Problem was it was the same hotel we had started at. Figuring I had respected my elders enough for one day, I declared that I was going to lead our little expedition now and that we were going to Fountain Square.

"Why", asked Clark starting what would turn out to be a conversation I swear I saw in a Three Stooges short one time. "Because that is where the hotel

is," I answered. "I thought you didn't know where the hotel was," he responded. "I said I didn't know what the name of the hotel was," I replied, "but you never asked where it was." "Where is it?" "By Fountain Square," I said and then gave him the address. When I gave him the address, you would have thought that he would have been pleased, but from the look on his face, pleasure was not what he was feeling at that moment. Anyways, we finally made it to the correct hotel (the Westin) at 9:15, thus missing the opening ceremony. After registering, we ran into various NLC members Wayne Stivers, Leslie Heaphy (who, come to find out, had recently injured her ankle in a selfless act of heroism, the story of which proved to be an inspiration to all who heard), Tom Garrett, and Paul Debono. After chatting for a while and taking what would turn out to be the first of many trips through the vendors room, Dick, Leslie, Paul, Barry Evans and I went out for some lunch. Afterwards Dick and I went out and hit an old bookstore and the made our way back to the hotel. When we returned we ran into Wayne Stivers again. He was kind enough to invite Dick and I to his room to look at some of his one of a kind collectibles, my personal favorite turning out to be an original House of David basketball warm up suit. While we were doing this, Wayne's roommate for the trip, Rick Meister, made an appearance. It was the first time I had met either Wayne or Rick and it was a genuine pleasure. I would have to guess that we sat around and chatted and told stories for a couple of hours. At about 5:00 all of us went down to the lobby where we met Leslie Heaphy and headed out for dinner at the famed Montgomery Inn. Finding our way there was not overly difficult and the baseball gods smiled on us in that, despite not having reservations and several other groups waiting, we were seated immediately. After a great dinner, as we were leaving the restaurant, Dick told me to get out the map that the hotel gave us because we were not going back to the hotel the way we had come because Dick wanted to avoid the traffic of the ballgame that was scheduled for that night. It sounded like a simple enough plan, until I realized after we had been driving only a few minutes, that we were already off the map. One of the favorite story topics at any convention or conference is "the worst place I have ever been" in connection with our Negro League or baseball related work. Everyone in that car has a new story to tell next time that topic comes up. Once we came upon a street we knew the name of, we found we were eighteen blocks north of the hotel in a rather unpleasant part of the city. Wayne summed the situation best when he said "When you see a funeral home, Dick, just go ahead and pull over because we are dead." Fortunately we did get back to the hotel safely, after which we returned to Wayne and Rick's room to take a Brooklyn Dodgers trivia test Wayne had put together for the next Denver Chapter meeting. It proved to be one of the hardest tests I have ever taken. Dick and Leslie, who worked together, did very well. I, on the other hand, proved to be an embarrassment to my species. After chatting for a while both in Wayne's room and around the hotel, Dick and I headed back to Florence. Friday morning we were up early and just managed to get to the hotel in time for the 8:00 Negro Leagues Committee meeting. We had an excellent turnout of about 35 people, including Larry Lester who had come in the night before. Peter Morris was awarded the NLC's first "Find of the Year" Award. (More on that in a future issue). He won it for his excellent work on the life of William Edward White, the first black to play in the majors.

After the NLC business was taken care of, we had a report/Q&A on the Hall's of Fame's Negro League project. An excellent discussion took place and much was covered. Once the meeting was over, the copies of the reports that went to the Hall of Fame were available for convention attendees to look at and they proved to be very popular. Someone representing the Committee and the NLRAG were at the table answering questions for several hours.

After grabbing some lunch with Larry Lester and his always lovely wife Val, Dick and Barry Evans, it was back to the hotel to take care of various questions asked by people needing help from the NLC and chatting with friends. Starting at four, we took in a couple of presentations that concerned the Negro Leagues. The first, which was well presented "Everyone Came to Dexter Park: The Power of Bushwicks Baseball" by Tom Barthel. The second was "But Few Can Touch Him: George Wilson and Integrated Wisconsin Baseball, 1905-1907. I cannot tell you how impressed I was with this young man and his presentation. I am hoping that we can draft him into the Negro Leagues Committee in that he would be a welcome addition. After the presentations, it was off to dinner and then to the ballpark to see the Negro League ignoring Cincinnati Reds take on the St. Louis Cardinals. It gives me immense pleasure to tell you that St. Louis defeated the Reds by a score of 7-5. The next day, Saturday, after a bit of a late arrival, we made our way to the scout committee meeting and the Latin America committee meeting before the banquet and luncheon. That took up most of the day and at about 5:00 in the afternoon, Dick, Wayne, Rick and I headed out to Florence where we had dinner and took in a Florence Freedom baseball game. That proved to be, regrettably, the last day of the conference for me. Something came up and I had to miss the Sunday morning meeting of the Women's Committee and the Ballparks Committee. This year's convention was the very best SABR gathering I have ever attended. I had a great time and found myself saddened by its ending. For those of you that could not make it this year, make plans to attend next year's in Toronto. It will undoubtedly be a great time.

Jerry Malloy Conference Report

July 22-25, 2004

Having just returned from the Jerry Malloy Conference I can say it was a great success again. Thanks to Bob Zimmer, Morris Eckhouse, Jim Kastro, Ike Brooks, the Baseball Heritage Museum and all others involved in putting together a great gathering. Things began with registration for many on Thursday evening and then it was off for dinner and good conversation at Flannery's for some while others went to the ball game at Jacob's Field. Friday really got the conference going with a welcome from the local committee and morning presentations by Joe Marren and Phil Lowry, which Morris delivered nicely in Phil's absence. The audience learned about black baseball in Western New York and about how statistics should be counted for the Negro Leagues. We also listened to a radio broadcast from 1949 that was a tribute to Satchel Paige.

The afternoon kicked off with a presentation by Amy Essington and an update on the Baseball Heritage Museum. Then we held a trivia contest in which 12 people took part. Our three finalists were Dominic Denaro, Dick Clark and Ted Knorr. When all the questions had been asked and answered our winner for the 2004 contest was Dominc. Prizes were given to all three and a certificate to the winner. It was then off to the game to watch Joe B. Scott, former Memphis Red Sox player throw out the first pitch with a nice strike right over home plate. Though the Royals lost, sorry Larry, the game was an exciting affair won with a homer by Ben Broussard in the last of the eleventh.

Saturday was a busy day with presentations, panels and a visit to the Baseball Heritage Museum. Tim Rives presented a fascinating paper on the connection between T. Y. Baird and the KKK and Bob Allen talked about his video project and the Throwback Tour 2004 involving a group of youngsters from the Philadelphia area. Bill Cash, Harold Gould and Joe B. Scott talked about meeting the kids and getting a chance to interact with them on their

historic journey. The audience also got to hear about the literature that has been written on the Negro Leagues since the publication of Only the Ball was White. Morris Eckhouse moderated a discussion by Larry Lester and Dick Clark on the best of the books that have been written. The discussion ranged from narrative histories to player biographies and team histories and statistical and photographic accounts. Many of the books mentioned were for sale in the merchandise room set up for the conference where BaltimoreChop.com, Willie Fordham, Chuck Hinton and Larry Lester had books for sale.

In the afternoon the Negro Leagues Committee presented some Robert Peterson Awards to Lucky Smith, Louis Manley, and The Baseball Heritage Museum for their contributions to furthering the knowledge and research being gathered on the Negro Leagues. The highlight of the day was the player panel involving Harold Gould, Bill "Ready" Cash and Joe B. Scott. The listeners got to hear a bit about what travel was like, who the best players were and where they did and did not like to play. For example, Bill Cash liked Shibe Park but not Baltimore because it was too hot. The other afternoon panel involved five individuals talking about throwback uniforms and was moderated by Ike Brooks. The panel included Bob Zimmer, Scott Turner from Stall and Dean, Arana Lynch from the Call and Post (he did a series of articles on the conference in the three weeks leading up to the convention), Larry Lester and a collector of Negro League memorabilia, Wayne Davis. They talked about why the prices are so high, sizes so large and the education that does or does not go along with the selling of such merchandise. We also had a Negro League Committee meeting to update people on the progress of the Hall of Fame project—great work by all!! This is an exciting project that will truly help educate the public. In addition we got to see some t-shirts designed by Signe Knutson of Satchel Paige and Jud Wilson, and artwork done by Dominic.

The conference ended with a visit to the Baseball Heritage Museum. Here we got to see all the memorabilia and history that has been collected by Bob Zimmer and is being displayed in his building on historic 4th street. This is a fascinating venture and we hope to be invited back for the conference when the Museum is fully open.

If you missed the conference this year watch for upcoming details about 2005 in Chicago. Eddie Bedford will be planning and organizing the 8th Jerry Malloy Conference. Other Robert Peterson Awards will be given to Bob Bailey, Michael Everett, Jorge Figueredo, Jeremy Krock, Neil Lanctot, and John Russell.

Report submitted by Leslie Heaphy

Articles available are:

"Legends Alive: Festival Honors Black Baseball History" from THE PLAIN DEALER (Cleveland OH) of July 22, 2004 about the Jerry Malloy Conference **2pgs

"Cleveland To Host This Summer's Negro Leagues Conference" from the CALL AND POST (Cleveland) of July 8, 2004 *1pg

"Joe B. Scott Was Breaking Barriers Before Jackie Robinson" from the CALL AND POST of July 15, 2004 **1pg

"Were Negro League Players Better than Major Leaguers: Bill 'Ready' Cash and Other Players Will Shed Light on the Issue During Conference" from the CALL AND POST of July 22, 2004 **2pgs

A photocopy version of the conference program is available. **10 pages.

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, Tim Booker, Dick Clark, Jeff Eastland, Amy Essington, Leslie Heaphy, Signe Knutson, Jeremy Krock, Larry Lester, Jerry Malloy, Gary Maurer, Peter Morris, Robert Peterson, Patrick Rock, Wendell Scott, Wayne Stivers, and Lyle Wilson.

Dick Clark and Larry Lester both found the name that did not belong in the contributors list, that of Wendell Scott, the first black driver to compete in Nascar racing.

Committee News & Research Requests

We welcome two new NLC members.

Ike Brooks 2573 Coventry Rd., Shaker Heights, OH 44150, (216) 932-2391, Fax: (216) 932-2394, ibrooks@netzero.net

Dominick Denaro, 4401 Brooklyn Ave, Cleveland, OH 44109, (216) 635-1446
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Grave Markers Continue to Be Prepared

As everyone remembers, an effort to get a grave marker for Jimmie Crutchfield resulted in a swell of donations from across the country. So much was raised in fact that the excess was to be put to use for markers for other players. It was discovered that both Candy Jim Taylor and John Donaldson were also buried in the same cemetery as Jimmie Crutchfield (Burr Oak Cemetery in Chicago). Since Donaldson was at one time a scout for the Chicago White Sox, the team has graciously donated the money for his head stone. (Wonder if the Cincinnati Reds would do something like that? HA HA HA! I am so funny.)

As a result, it made it possible for the extra funds to be used to purchase a marker for Candy Jim Taylor. Tentative plans are for all the headstones to be dedicated on the same day. When the exact date is decided upon we will list it in the next newsletter. If it will occur before the next newsletter, we will send out an announcement via e-mail.

Negro League Related Articles

"MLB Agrees to Make Payments to Negro League Players" from the WASHINGTON POST of 5/15/04 *2pgs

"Their Common Bond is Baseball: Mix of white, African-American, Latino 13-year-olds on a Barnstorming Tour" from THE KANSAS CITY STAR *1pg

"Helping More Players" from PENSIONS AND INVESTMENTS Magazine, 6/28/2004 **1pg From NLBPA Website, "Wilmer Fields Passes Away" and "Wilmer Fields: A legend of stability" 6/19/2004 **4pp The CHICAGO TRIBUNE MAGAZINE of June 20, 2004 was about baseball in Chicago. The Negro League parts of the magazine are available. **13 pgs. "Negro League Star Endures Prejudice on the Road to Peace" from THE COURIER-POST of July 13, 2004. **4pgs "Norfolk Will Honor the Negro Leaguers" from the DAILY PRESS of July 10,

2004. **1pg "Homework Pays off for Negro League Fan" from the SPORTS COLLECTOR'S DIGEST

*1pg

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES, 5/30/2004, "Separate but unequal: Black baseball history"

**2pp

CHICAGO DEFENDER, 5/22/2004 99-year anniversary issue. **8pp

The magazine SPORTS MARKET PLACE ran in its August 2004 an article on Josh Gibson by David Laurell. (**5pgs) Reading the article one will find that part of it sounds familiar. That is because parts of an article on Gibson by Larry Lester were used in the article with out crediting Larry. The following was received by Mr. Lester and is printed here to explain the situation.

Larry:

Having more time I just revisited your site and found your piece on Gibson. I certainly do apologize for the sentences I used. While doing research on Gibson I jotted down tons of notes from things I found on line and in resource books and when I went to write the piece at a later date didn't realize that in some instances I jotted down things verbatim. I would be upset if my work was blatantly used without my permission and completely understand why you would be. I sincerely hope you accept my apology.

Yours truly,

David

Obituaries

Famed member of the Homestead Grays Wilmer Fields passed away June 4, 2004. *1pg obit from THE WASHINGTON POST is available

Rev. Arnold "Gatemouth" Brown, famed blues artist and one time owner of the Birmingham Black Barons passed away May 19, 2004. He was 90 years old.

William "Sou" Bridgeforth, former owner of the Baltimore Elite Giants, passed away on July 22, 2004. He was 97 years old.

Obit for James McCurine from 5/30/2002 **1pg

The Marketplace

THE GOLDEN GAME: THE STORY OF CALIFORNIA BASEBALL by Kevin Nelson and published by Heyday Books is on the shelves and contains a section on Jimmy Claxton.

BASEBALL AND PHILOSOPHY: THINKING OUTSIDE THE BATTER'S EYE edited by Eric Bronson and published by Open Court is available at bookstores now. It contains a section entitled "The Negro Leagues and the Contradictions of Social Darwinism".

Recent Events

Carl Long Day was celebrated on Friday July 23rd. A pre-game ceremony at historic Granger Stadium honoring Carl and over twenty others, including Frank Evans, Mamie Johnson, Ira McKnight, Walt Lundy, Jesse Mitchell, Gordon Hopkins. Over a three-day period many banquets, cookouts, barbeques (pig pickin) were held. A really great time. From THE FREE PRESS, Kingston, NC

7/23/2004, "Legendary player to be honored tonight" *1pg and "A Long Night" from 7/24/2004 **2pp.

Negro League Cafe Opens in Chicago on July 29, 2004

The Negro League Cafe, a new restaurant celebrating black baseball history, opened Thursday, July 29 at the corner of 43rd and Prairie in Chicago.

A press conference held in conjunction with the Professional Negro League Players Association began at 10:30 a.m. on July 29. Mamie "Peanuts" Johnson, the only known female Negro Leagues ballplayer still alive, was in attendance. She was recruited to be a pitcher for the Indianapolis Clowns in 1953 and her record was 33 - 8. During the evening of the 29th the Grand-Opening dinner featured a roast of Ted "Double Duty" Radcliffe, the oldest living Negro Leagues ballplayer. The upscale restaurant serves Caribbean-influenced soul food and features artwork by father-and-son artists John D. Wolfe and John A. Wolfe. Their Americana-style folk art evokes the rich history of the Negro Leagues, which were professional baseball leagues formed in the early 1900s by black players not allowed to play in the major leagues because of racial segregation. Since Negro League teams played in Cuba, Mexico and the Dominican Republic during the winter months, it was only natural for chef Rhamell Moore to incorporate Caribbean cuisine with the classic soul food on his mouthwatering menu. Dishes include catfish with lime rice, jerk-seasoned ribeye steak with plantains, chili roasted Cornish hen with orange red pepper salsa and house collard greens. Appetizers include fried green tomatoes with a citrus vinaigrette and chicken wingettes served in a choice of flavors: mango, buffalo, jerked, and spiced peach glaze. A Wall of Fame in the lounge area honors legendary players such as Josh Gibson, Satchel Paige, Cool Papa Bell, Pop Lloyd, and Ted "Double Duty" Radcliffe. And Curry proudly notes there are twelve former Negro League players currently living in Chicago, more than in any other US city. The Negro League Cafe is at 301 E. 43rd Street. For more information call (773) 536.7000

Upcoming Events

"Pop" Lloyd Committee Announces Celebration

Contact: Michael Everett, Projects Coordinator 609-513-2783

ATLANTIC CITY, NJ - This year's 12th Annual Pop Lloyd Weekend celebration will be held October 1-3, beginning with a conference entitled, After The Cheering Stops, at The Richard Stockton College The conference on Friday, October 1 will feature human rights activist Richard Lapchick who is internationally recognized on sports issues and is often described as the "racial conscience of sport." Scheduled participants also include Calvin Hill of the Super Bowl Champion Dallas Cowboys, John Isaacs, star forward for the 1939 Harlem Rens, Herb Douglas, 1948 Olympian, and a panel of veteran Negro League baseball players. The conference will be followed by an evening's jazz performance at the Stockton Performing Art Center by the Steve Wilson Quartet and special guest vocalist Carla Cook. Wilson's distinctive sound and technique will combine with the provocative style of Carla Cook in a tribute to the 100th Anniversary of New Jersey native Count Basie. Both Cook, nominated for a GRAMMY in 1999 for Best Jazz Vocal Performance, and Wilson have recently released recordings on the MAXJAZZ label. The annual "Pop" Lloyd Humanitarian and Youth Awards dinner will be held Saturday October 2 at the Taj Mahal Casino. The gala event pays tribute to the career and life of John Henry "Pop" Lloyd and those that played Negro League baseball. This year's Humanitarian Award recipients include Dallas Cowboy's All-Pro, Calvin

Hill, 1964 Olympic gold medallist Billy Mills, 1948 medallist Herb Douglas, and Atlantic City educator Joseph Brown. Area high school students will be recognized for their exemplary character, community commitment and academic achievement. The weekend concludes on Sunday, October 3 with a commemorative church service at historic Asbury United Methodist where "Pop" Lloyd and his wife were members followed in the afternoon by the Atlantic City Community All-Star softball game at "Pop" Lloyd Stadium. This game recognizes outstanding individuals who serve the Atlantic City community and its youth.

We Make The Call

This time around we will be talking about NEGRO LEAGUE BASEBALL: THE RISE AND RUIN OF A BLACK INSTITUTION by Neil Lanctot. Readers will remember Neil from his excellent book on Hilldale from a few years back.

This book however is not up to his former book. First off, the title of the book is misleading. It should read "The Business of Negro League Baseball" because that is what this book is about, not the game of baseball. While this is indeed an important part of Negro League history, it is not what was expected by the reviewer when he started reading the book.

A further problem with the book, and one I found out others experienced, is that this book is a very difficult read. Reading this book was not as enjoyable I had hoped it would because of that fact.

Our Call: A triple because the book covers a much ignored subject.

The Final Pitch

Dick Clark forwarded me recently a note from the POWERS THAT BE that, and I quote: At its meeting just before the convention, the board adopted the revisions in the policy manual sections relating to research committees. There is only one major difference from the version circulated to you earlier. It is the last item under Section II, the duties of committee chairs. It requires all of us to use the tools on the SABR web page to distribute newsletters and to archive old committee newsletters and other materials."

Just for the record, I would like to state that I was contacted by someone in SABR asking if we would be willing to archive old newsletters on the SABR site several months ago. I, being the agreeable person that I am, said of course we would so long as information on how to do it was forwarded to me. Such information was never received by yours truly. Because of that I took it upon my self to put together a NLC website on my own. It has not however been updated since it's creation due to the fact that I learned shortly there after that I would be moving and possibly changing my net provider.

So, the NLC will fully comply with the above-mentioned directive when 1) I am finished moving and 2) I receive info on how to archive them at the SABR site. Thank you for your kind attention.

Col. Sammy J. Miller