

The Negro Leagues Courier

The newsletter of SABR's Negro Leagues Committee

Oct 1999

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Send all correspondence, both Committee and newsletter related, to
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** Denotes items available for SASE from Committee Co-Chairman
Dick Clark - Please affix enough postage (usually 1 stamp/4 pages)

The Hunt For Smokey Joe Williams

The following report came from Dick Clark.

The April edition of the Negro Leagues Committee Newsletter asked for any information on an obituary or a different death date for Williams. Jim Riley felt that a date later than the accepted 1946 one was highly possible. Shortly after this the question of where he was buried arose on the SABR-L since folks want to know Hall of Famers' final resting places. The Lincoln Memorial Cemetery was thought to be the place. It is located in Suitland, MD, right outside Washington DC. Bob Davids went there to search for the grave but he was working with the 1946 date of death and was told Williams was not there. In this same time frame Neil Lanctot informed me he believed the death date to be in 1951 and sent an article that said Williams died February 25, 1951. (Article available **1pg.) I relayed this to Bob Davids and he called Lincoln Memorial back with the new date and was told a Joseph Williams was buried there in 1951. Bob was given the exact site of the plot, also. Bob was unable to get back to the cemetery, so Todd Bolton and myself headed there on Monday, August 23rd. after we had attended the Negro Leagues Conference in Atlantic City, NJ. We hoped for the best but didn't get too optimistic. We spent a great deal of time talking to the folks at the Lincoln Memorial Cemetery. They located the journal containing the record of a Joseph Williams burial on March 3, 1951. The death date was the same as the article Neil Lanctot had sent. The journal notated Williams body had come from New York City. Things were looking good, but no birth date or notation of a marker. Finally we were taken to the actual site. Even when the locations are known it can be tough to find a grave. We finally found the site and HALLELUJAH this was it. It said Joseph Williams born April 6, 1886 died February 25, 1951. Our emotions at the moment are hard to describe but I'm sure most of you can imagine. Todd and I conducted an appropriate salute to the new Hall of Famer and took photos (being processed). A great mystery solved. However, an obituary is still needed. Also, many questions are still needed to be answered. How he got to Suitland MD. Who are the Smallwood and Crockett families. These are people also buried in the burial plot. And many more. A big thank you to all, especially Neil and Bob. Perhaps we can get The Hall Of Fame to erect a special marker to Williams at the site. More details later. A Great Day!

For the record, Todd Bolton came up with the following information concerning the Williams' death and grave site. Rollins Funeral Home (202) 399-2388 had the burial. The cost of the grave was \$40 and Williams was interred March 3, 1951 in Section D, Lot 543, Site 8 in Lincoln Memorial Cemetery, 4001 Suitland Road, Suitland, Maryland 20746, (301) 568-8410.

The names on the tombstone are: (On front) Frank Smallwood - Dec. 12, 1868-March 23, 1946; Moses I. Crockett- December 12, 1878-June 11, 1955; Joseph Williams - April 6, 1886-Feb 25, 1951. On back appears: Mother: Emma S. Crockett - Sept 20, 1879-April 10, 1959, Resting In God's Care.

Finally, one article is available concerning Williams induction into the Hall of Fame. "Reverence And The Thrills of Hall of Fame Rookies" **1pg.

Chairman's Comments

.. The committee wants to address some areas we need to work at. First ALL OF US need to find the burial site for one player per year, at least. Ideally we will want this work to continue until we have a burial site for everyone. The cemeteries are important to know. We must locate these men to see that a grave marker is in place and also verify any birth and death dates. This is related to the second point. We must energize our efforts to find missing biographical data for all players. My mailing address (and E-mail) will be the repository for new information. Jim Riley's biographical encyclopedia is the essential point of reference for seeing what has been done. Many NLC members will be coordinating efforts to exchange their findings these last few years. This is an exchange of information NOT dissemination of info. Finally, we will also be speeding up our research to locate a photo of every player. I have begun this a few years back and shall attempt to get the listing up-to-date. Then I can send out a want list to all to find missing guys.

We must now begin to get all information gathered so we may put forth our candidate to the Veterans Committee (meeting in March). Top people from our recent top 40 voting are Stearnes, Mackey, Redding and Suttles, to name a few. The NLC does not want to wait to see the direction the HOF is taking in election of Negro Leaguers. We want to exert any influence now and perhaps things will break our way.

- Dick Clark

Contributors

Many people have made this newsletter possible. They are: William Albach, Todd Bolton, Gene Bremer, Kim Castle, Dick Clark, Barry Evans, Bob Davids, Larry Hogan, Brent Kelley, Ted Knorr, Neil Lanctot, Larry Lester, Jerry Malloy, Gary Maurer, Andy McCue, Cliff Otto, Bob Peterson, John Russell, James A. Riley, Jay Sanford, David Skinner, Mike Stivers, Wayne Stivers, and Lyle Wilson

Committee News & Member Updates

Frank D'Amico has a new address. It is 93 Butcher Street, Hopedale MA 01747-1032.

John Russell has a new address. It is P.O. Box 331, Accord, MA 02018. His e-mail is jrrussell@russelectric.com.

SABR President James A. Riley has a new address. It is 630 Morgan Springs Ct. Canton, GA 30115 (770) 345-0860.

Negro League Con II: Atlantic City Bash

The following report is from Dick Clark.

The Second Annual SABR Negro League Committee Conference was a huge success. Combined with the Seventh Annual John Henry "Pop" Lloyd Lecture and Humanitarian Awards and the 50th Anniversary of the dedication of Pop Lloyd Stadium, it was truly a memorable four days.

The following NLC members were in attendance Todd Bolton, Adrian Burgos, Dick Clark, Jeff Eastland, Mike Everett, Tom Garrett, Leslie Heaphy, Larry Hogan, Lou Hunsinger, Brent Kelley, Ted Knorr, Larry Lester, Joe McGillen, Sammy Miller, Scot Mondore, Rick Morris, Claudia Perry, and Jim Riley. 18 in all an excellent turnout. Adrian Burgos rode with me on Wednesday as we drove to Larry Hogan's home in Northern New Jersey. We went to Atlantic City on Thursday and the first event was the wonderful exhibit by Todd Bolton, BEISBOL BEHIND THE VEIL: Latin Players in The Negro Leagues. Four players were in attendance Emilio "Millito" Navarro, Jose "Pepin" Pereira, Carlos Santiago, and Armando Vasquez. A great start to an exciting weekend. Todd has really done an excellent job in presenting the Latin experience in America. We then had a break and myself, Miller, Heaphy, Burgos, Garrett, and Eastland headed for the Boardwalk to eat and take in the sights. Jeff broke even and Tom came out ahead in gambling. The rest of us helped the economy. At 7:30 that evening we saw the play MIXED SIGNALS: The Story of Effa Manley and The Negro Leagues. This play was written by

Julianna Skluzacek and wonderfully portrayed by recent high school graduate Katherine Blasband. A terrific job!

Friday morning brought the first of the presentations done by the following Michael Gimbel, Brian Major, Sammy Miller, Lawrence Hogan, Dennis Burroughs, Stanton Green, Scot Mondore. On Saturday after the NLC meeting, Fry Gaillard, Frank Keetz, Leslie Heaphy, Joseph Dorinson, and Claudia Perry made presentations. On Friday we had the opportunity to have lunch with Dale Petrosky, the new President of the Hall Of Fame, Ted Spencer, Vice-President and Curator of the Hall, and Scot Mondore, fellow NLC member and Senior Research Associate at the Hall Of Fame Library. It was a very enlightening meeting and the NLC is truly looking forward to a solid working relationship with the Hall of Fame.

Friday night we went to the Surf Sandcastle Stadium for a doubleheader on Turn Back The Clock Night and more importantly the unveiling of the Historic bronze relief, OUT FROM THE SHADOWS: Negro League Baseball in America by sculptor Jennifer Frudakis. What a tremendous achievement, a truly beautiful piece of art. Before the second game of DH the players were introduced to the crowd, joining the Latins were Max Manning, Mahlon Duckett, Robert Scott, Stan Glenn, Pedro Sierra, Jimmy Dean, and Double Duty Radcliffe. Duty and Millito threw out the first balls and many pictures were taken of the veteran and current players.

After the Saturday morning presentations and lunch THE NEGRO LEAGUES AS A SUBJECT FOR THE ARTS, an informal discussion with artists, Richard Merkin, John Wolfe, Tina Hoggatt, and E.B. Lewis, was held at the Atlantic City Art Center. These artists had their splendid works at the Center and they were for sale.

Saturday evening the cocktail reception at the Convention Center was followed by the JOHN HENRY LLOYD HUMANITARIAN AWARDS DINNER. The honorees were Congressman John Lewis, Gordon Parks, and Art Dorrington. Another terrific time. Then on Sunday even more fun. A church service at Asbury United Methodist Church, where Pop Lloyd attended and later Family Day at Pop Lloyd Stadium. Several games were being played at the stadium that day. What an adventure, everyone should try attending the conference next year in Harrisburg, PA. A slew of photo copied and real articles, handouts, programs etc. are available. See below.

Many thanks and a job well done to both Mike Everett and Larry Hogan. Mike was there to make sure that everything went off smoothly while Larry took over the role of MC for just about everything. They both did a splendid job.

Items available from the Conference are: Pop Lloyd Conference Program **4pgs., Mixed Signals play program **2pgs., 7th Annual Pop Lloyd Award Program **12 pgs., order form for poster "The Legacy Continues" **1pg., Commemorative poster (photo copies) **8pgs., Warren Wilbert handout **6pgs., "Beisbol Behind The Veil" brochure **1pg., "Out Of The Shadows" relief handout **1pg., Two handouts about "Somebody To Cheer For" exhibit **1pg. each, and a photo copy of the program from a 1954 testimonial dinner for Pop Lloyd **2pgs.

Articles include "Art Imitates baseball: Ballpark Sculpture Celebrates Negro Leagues" from *The Press of Atlantic City* of 8/21/99**2pgs., "Remembering Pop Lloyd" by Belinda Manning from the *Pleasant News* of May 1998**2pgs., and "Newark Eagles: A Baseball Legacy" by Belinda Manning from the same publication **2pgs. Also available from unknown paper from 8/26/99 is "Shore Exhibit Keeps Pop alive" about the art exhibit. **1pg. From *The Philadelphia Inquirer* of Aug. 19, comes "A.C. Honoring A Negro Leaguer Whose Messages Hit Home". **2pgs.

Winners of the Robert Peterson Recognition Award for 1999 were: Frank Keetz, Mike Everett, Larry Hogan, Sammy Miller, Robert Peterson, Mike Kolleth, Kevin Keating, Sam Lacy, Moses Newson, Lyle Wilson, Todd Bolton, Jeff Eastland, Gregg Truitt, Adrian Burgos, Paul Bauer, James Riley, and David Skinner. Ted Knorr won the John Coates Next Generation Award and Larry Lester won the Tweed Webb Lifetime Achievement Award. For the record, while Larry Lester is usually involved in the complete awards process, this year he was kept out of the loop and so his award came as a complete surprise to him.

It will be remembered from the last issue the Jerry Malloy also won a Tweed Webb Award this year.

Obituaries

The past two months has been an unfortunate one in that we have ten deaths to report. Hopefully, thgis will not become a common thing.

Obit of Henry Kimbro from SCD available **1pg.

Josh Johnson died August 12, 1999 at his home in Springfield, Illinois at the age of 86. Obit from *The State-Journal Register* **1pg. Column on Johnson from unknown paper **1pg. Funeral Program for Johnson

****4pgs:**

Robert Bissant died on August 17, 1999 at the of 85 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Obit from *Minneapolis Star Tribune* of 8/21/99 **1pg., Obit from unknown paper **1pg. E-mail version of obit **1pg. (See Dave Pope below for additional obit).

Nap Gulley passed away Saturday, August 21. Obit from SCD **1pg.

Fran Mathews died on Tuesday, August 24th in Los Angeles.

Lonnie Summers died on Tuesday, August 24th in Los Angeles.

Dave Pope passed away on Saturday, August 28. Obit from *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* of Sept. 1 **1pg.

Double obit from SCD for Pope and Johnson available. **1pg.

Joe Medice recently passed away in New Orleans, LA.

An undated obit for Willie Mays, Sr, father of Hall of Famer Willie Mays, is available. **1pg.

Nathan Bussey died Aug. 27. **1pg. obit.

Harrisburg Events

The following series of reports comes from Ted Knorr.

The June 1 issue of Harrisburg Magazine featured a brief (horribly edited and truncated) piece on the Harrisburg Giants. Contact Dick Clark for copies.

A series of four lectures on Negro League baseball was presented at Penn State Downtown Center from June 8 through 17. Presenters included Eric Ledel Smith, Calobe Jackson, Fred Brillhart and Ted Knorr.

The third annual Harrisburg Negro League Commemorative Night was held on June 19. This year's honorees were the 1955 Harrisburg Giants. In addition to the regularly scheduled Harrisburg Senators game with the Senators wearing replica uniforms of the Harrisburg Giants, the following other features were offered: all fans received a Spottswood Poles baseball card with original artwork by noted sports artist Mike Mellet, youth were given Harrisburg Giant baseball caps, Negro League memorabilia and items were on exhibit, and surviving members of the 1955 Harrisburg Giants were in attendance.

The Williamsport Crosscutters held their inaugural Negro League Night on July 17 featuring former player Bernard Fernandez and free Kansas City Monarch caps. Both teams in the regularly scheduled New York-Penn League game wore a selection of replica Negro League uniforms.

Ted Knorr presented a talk and slide show on the Harrisburg Giants to the Kiwanis Club in Harrisburg on September 16.

May 2000 - Harrisburg Negro League Exhibit will be on display at the Pennsylvania Black History Conference in Harrisburg, PA

June 2000 (date to be announced) Annual Harrisburg Negro League Commemorative Night

NLC CON Y2K: Harrisburg in 2000

August 4-5, 2000

Registration: \$75 includes banquet, play and game; Registration for additional family member \$50 (i.e. at cost of banquet, play, game and conference packet). Register by January 1, 2000 at special rate of \$50. Any registration canceled by June 30, 2000 will receive a complete refund (50% thereafter). Send check along with name, address, phone, e-mail, number of attendees to Ted Knorr, 205 Mulberry Street #7, Harrisburg, PA 17104.

Should you have any questions, call (717)-238-5151 or e-mail to papabell@aol.com.

The hotel will be the Harrisburg Hilton & Towers, 1 North Second Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101; (717)-233-6000
Lodging: \$75 per room per night. Hotel will be accepting reservations soon.

Note to SABR Negro League Committee: Thanks to input received at this year's conference. Next year's agenda will be created per YOUR specifications. You spoke loud & clear. A conference should feature former players, research presentations, former players, a baseball game and more former players. To that end, I am shooting for 12 former players, 10 research presentations, 4 player panels, a Harrisburg Senators game, a keynote speaker, and a

banquet: Other not quite as popular items as a play, art, trivia, and baseball simulations will also be featured. Research presentations will focus more on baseball than sociology but a happy medium will be targeted.

IMPORTANT! YOUR ASSISTANCE IS REQUESTED!

To underwrite a conference such as this and bring it in at \$75 registration (keeping in mind that almost \$50 goes to the banquet, play, game and materials), a total of between \$6,000 to \$10,000 in donations over and above registration is required. I seek your input, suggestions, referrals, and donations to make it happen. Sponsors for some or all of the following are being sought:

Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Harrisburg, Women, Hispanic, General Player Panels - \$1,800

Keynote Speaker - \$500 to \$1,000

Program Ad - \$500 Prime Page, \$400 Common Page, \$250 ½ Page, \$150 ¼ Page, \$50 Business Card

Gold Sponsor - \$100

Silver Sponsor - \$50

Bronze Sponsor - \$10

Contact Ted Knorr (717)-238-5151 to participate in fund raising or to contribute. Any and all funds raised will go to the celebration of Negro League history and keep conference registration rate reasonable.

To give you an idea of the economy of scale, 60 attendees at \$75 each with NO CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP will allow for only three former players and one player panel.

Current and Future Individual Projects

Lyle Wilson recently submitted an article on the Butte (Montana) Colored Giants to *The National Pastime* for consideration.

David Skinner had an article in the SABR Conference program *Arizona's Baseball Roots: Mining Towns to Major Leagues*. The article is entitled "John Ford Smith: Arizona's Black Baseball Player" and is available. **3pgs.

From the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* comes an article entitled "A Field Of Dreams: Sealth High School Students Set Off By Bicycle To Dig Up Buried Chapter In Black Baseball History." **2pgs. To keep it simple a group of high school students set off on their bikes during the summer to investigate the history of the Negro Leagues. NLC member Lyle Wilson has been in contact with them throughout their effort and sent the Committee a letter detailing what they accomplished. **2pgs.

Anyone with information on the following players, please pass it on to Dick Clark. The players are Lefty Ricketts on the Monarchs and the Clowns, Mickey Kemper, Mitchell Garrett, Harry Crump, Walter F. Kennedy Sr., John (Bear) Gatewood of the Memphis Red Sox, Douglas King of the Homestead Grays, and Garland Redd.

Ted Knorr has analyzed the results of the 40 Top Negro Leaguers survey. Results available. **4pgs.

Negro League Related Articles

"Peanut Is Her Name, Baseball Is Her Game" about Mamie Johnson from *The Detroit Free Press* of Sept 16. **1pg

"When It Was A Whole Different Ballgame" about Moses Fleetwood Walker from 9/16/90 Akron Beacon Journal. **5pgs.

Picture of White Sox Greg Norton in Chicago American Giants uniform from 5/30/99 Chicago Sun-Times. **1pg.

"A Century In The Making" lists columnist Dave Kindred's dream. From the Sporting News. **1pg.

"Color Commentary" discusses the Negro Leagues and the Hall of Fame. From Texas Monthly of 8/99. **4pgs.

Two excellent pieces on Charles Howard of the Cubans. Giants and the story of how he was killed from the East Liverpool Evening News of August and December. **9pgs.

"A Visit With one of The Greats", a short piece about Armando Vasquez from the Jackson (MS) Advocate

of 7/15/99 **1pg.

"Brewers, Fans Salute Negro League Players" from the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel of 7/22/99 **2pgs.

Program from Milwaukee Brewers Walk of Fame Inductions **2pgs.

"Josh Gibson's Slide Into Sadness" from the 7/11/99 *Baltimore Sun* **3pgs.

"Former Negro Leaguers Keeping The Game Alive" from the *Scripps Howard News Service* **3pgs.

Photocopies of brochure (color not available) from Cleveland Indians "Barrier Breakers Series" concerning Minnie Minoso and Luke Easter **2pgs.

One page listing of cards in Ted Williams Premier Edition Card Set. **1pg.

Article about *The Diamond Angle's* 1999 Stars In Their Time inductees Spots Poles and Lou Dials **1pg. from the Summer 1999 issue. From the same issue an article by NLC member David Marasco on the Jacob Ruppert Memorial Cup **2pgs.

The Marketplace

The following book reviews come from Dick Clark.

I have recently read two additional books. *CATCHING DREAMS: My Life in The Negro Baseball Leagues* by Frazier "Slow" Robinson with Paul Bauer is an excellent read. Paul has done a wonderful job capturing Robinson's joyful spirit and determination to play baseball. Frazier's career was quite interesting and I believe everyone will thoroughly enjoy the easy going style that Bauer has used to make Robinson come alive. 230pgs 29 photos, (all personal ones). You should get it.

The other book is *AWAY GAMES: The Life and Times of a Latin Ball Player*. It follows Miguel Tejada's, currently the Oakland A's shortstop, young life. Also the book covers many aspects of early Black Latins and the inherent problems they encountered through the years. Very likely the best book ever in covering the entire Latin experience and obstacles in making the grade to the majors. 272pp 18 photos. Check it out.

Information on the book *THE SANTURCE CRABBERS: SIXTY SEASONS OF PUERTO RICAN WINTER LEAGUE BASEBALL* by Thomas E. Van Hyning available. **2pgs. I have read this book and it is both a complete history and an enjoyable read.

The latest Hunt Auction took place on Aug. 6-7. Some of the items sold and their prices (including a 10% buyer's premium) were a 1940's N. Y. Cubans pennant for \$467.50, a 1940s Homestead Grays pennant for \$605, an original photo of Josh Gibson at bat for \$3080, a 1931 Homestead Grays photo postcard for \$6325, and a 1943 Homestead Grays team picture for \$3410.

Reader Kim Castle reports that the auction site Ebay.com occasionally has bird houses for sale that are made by N.L. Jones who says he played in the Negro American League.