

The Negro Leagues Courier

The newsletter of SABR's Negro Leagues Committee

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

Feb. 2002

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

NLRAG Progress Report

The NLRAG is currently finishing up a progress report for the Hall of Fame and is unable, due to circumstances beyond our control, to include a progress report in this issue of *The Courier*. Rest assured that everything is moving along very well and we will have a report for you in the next newsletter.

Contributors

You can't blame all this on me. Others responsible are: Scott Allen, Bob Bailey, Carlos Bauer, Todd Bolton, Adrian Burgos, Dick Clark, Jeff Eastland, Tom Garrett, Tom Hill, Larry Hogan, Signe Knutson, Larry Lester, Jerry Malloy, Gary Maurer, Rick Morris, Jim Overmyer, Lou Parrotta, Bob Peterson, Bob Potts, Jay Sanford, David Skinner, Wayne Stivers, and Lyle Wilson.

Member and Reader Updates

Lucky Smith has a new address. It is 687 Tall Oaks Boulevard #13, Auburn Hills, Michigan, 48326. His new phone number is (248) 844-1428
Adrian Burgos has signed a book deal. University of California Press will be publishing his book.

Obituaries

Al Smith, former Cleveland Buckeye, died in Chicago on January 3, 2002 at the age of 73. Obits available. **3pgs.

A program from the funeral of Sam "The Jet" Jethroe is available. **2pgs.

Safe At Home

That big third base coach in the sky waved the following Negro League veterans, and wife, home in 2001:

1. January 12 - John Phillips passes away in Chicago Heights, Illinois. He was 85 years old.
2. January 29 - Larry "Schoolboy" Kimbrough passes away in West Philadelphia.
3. February 1 - Charles "Red" House dies in River Rouge, Michigan. He was 88 years old.
4. March 6 - Wesley "Doc" Dennis dies of pneumonia in Nashville, Tennessee. He was 83 years old.
5. April 17 - Ted Rasberry, former owner of the Kansas City Monarchs and the Detroit Stars dies.
6. May 17 - Ike Brown dies in Memphis, Tennessee.

7. Stanley Miarka dies May 28, 2001 in Bridgeview, IL. Miarka, who was white, played for the Chicago American Giants for one year.
8. May 31 - Santos Amaro, a star in the Mexican and Cuban leagues dies in Veracruz, Mexico. He was 93 years old.
9. June 13 - Felix Delgado dies in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico.
10. June 15 - Albertus Avant "Cleffie" Fennar dies in Paramus, NJ. He was 90 years old.
11. June 16 - Sam Jethroe dies in Erie, PA at age 84.
12. July 6 - Allie L. Thompson, passed away in Pittsburgh, PA at 92.
13. July 19 - Helyn Curry, wife of Larry Doby, dies Montclair, NJ.
14. August 23 - Manuel Rivero, at age 92, dies in Rising Sun, MD, at the Calvert Manor Health Care Center.

Final Resting Places

Once again, Bob Bailey has come through for us and most members of the NLC have fallen down on the job where the search for burial sites of former Negro League players is concerned. Bob was kind enough to supply us with the following information:

Leniel C. Hooker- died 12/18/1977 in Newark, NJ- He is buried in Glendale Cemetery, Bloomfield, NJ (along with Pat Scantlebury and Mule Suttles).

Napoleon Cummings (Chance)- died 04/22/1974 in Atlantic City, NJ. He is buried in Greenwood Cemetery, Pleasantville, NJ.

Elihu (the Atlantic City paper spells it Elihue) D. Roberts- died 03/23/1975 in Atlantic City, NJ. He is buried in Lincoln Memorial Park, Mays Landing, NJ.

Clarence Bernard "C.B." Griffin, late of the Columbus Bluebirds, Cleveland Red Sox and Brooklyn Eagles was born August 26, 1911 and died February 27, 1991 in Columbus, Ohio. He is buried in the soldiers' section of Green Lawn Cemetery, Columbus, OH. He served in the Army during WW II and worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad in Columbus.

Dave Skinner supplied us with the information that Agustin "Tinti" Molina is buried in Necropolis de Colon in Havana, Cuba, as is Jose "Kiki" Magrinat.

Dave also passed along that Alejandro Oms is buried in Santa Clara Cemetery, Santa Clara, Cuba.

Negro League Related Articles

Four pages of articles and photos concerning Buck O'Neil's 90th birthday celebration are available. **4pgs.

"Museum Gets Support From Major Leagues" from the 12/20/01 issue of *The Kansas City Star* **1pg.

A brochure from the Negro Leagues Museum concerning upcoming events is available. **2pgs.

Available from the most recent issue of *Nine* are a review of THE COOPERSTOWN SYMPOSIUM ON BASEBALL AND AMERICAN CULTURE **2pgs., a review of RICKEY AND ROBINSON: THE PREACHER, THE PLAYER, AND AMERICA'S GAME **2pgs., and from the magazine's oral history section, "Mamie "Peanut" Johnson: The Last Female Voice of the Negro Leagues" **6pgs.

Sports Collectors Digest's recent issues have contained a number of Negro League related articles. From the 1/25/02 issue is a fascinating piece by Jim Stinson entitled "Shocking Find In Baseball Memorabilia Search" detailing a recent trip to Cuba. Much of the story concerns Martin Dihigo and includes information on what became of many of his career mementos after his death. Great piece. **3pgs. Also available is a "Non-Hall of Famer Autograph Guide" to Negro League autographs** 1pg. It is interesting but I would be very surprised if you could find a 3x5 signed by Sam Bankhead for \$25 dollars. If you do, though, let me know. Also available is "The Other Half of Baseball" by John Holway **1pg.

Jay Sanford sent in a number of articles that ran in *The Chicago Defender* in 1920. They are available in two different groups. The first, **3pgs, contains three separate pieces from Rube Foster's

column "Pitfalls of Baseball". The second **9pgs includes articles covering many different topics including articles on the meetings in Kansas City to form the Negro National League.

"Negro League Pensions" from the 11/28/01 issue of *USA Today's Baseball Weekly* **1pg.

An article on Wendell Smith by Mark W. Schraf of *Spitball Magazine* is available. **8pgs.

Also available is **8pgs from DIAMONDS IN THE DARK: AMERICA, BASEBALL, AND THE MOVIES by Howard Good

For **5pgs, you can read an excerpt from SLEEPER CARS AND FLANNEL UNIFORMS: A LIFETIME OF MEMORIES FROM STRIKING OUT THE BABE TO TEEING IT UP WITH THE PRESIDENT by Elden Auker and Tom Keegan. The excerpt covers Auker playing against the Kansas City Monarchs.

A book review by our own Eric Enders of THE NEW BILL JAMES HISTORICAL ABSTRACT is available. **2pgs.

The Marketplace

Before we get to the regular news that appears in this section, it is necessary to explain a new policy being put into effect here at *The Courier*. Throughout the lifetime of this newsletter, we have tried to bring you reviews of as many Negro League related books as possible. In most cases, taking money out of our own pockets to purchase them, just so we would be able to tell you whether or not they were worth the price. In effect we were spending our money in order to help you decide on whether or not to spend yours. Due to the fact that the number of and prices of new books are every increasing while the health of the economy is not, this will no longer be a feasible exercise. Therefore if you wish to have a book reviewed by *The Courier*, you must send a complimentary copy of said book to either Dick Clark and/or myself.

Please remember that are many roles that Mr. Clark and I fill, both in our lives as Negro League historians and in our somewhat normal everyday lives. If you do send a book, take this into account as well as the fact that you can't send a book two weeks before the next newsletter is out and expect it to be reviewed in the next issue. While I cannot guarantee that your book will be reviewed in the first issue of *The Courier* that comes out after the book is received, I can guarantee that it will be reviewed as soon as possible.

Finally, please take into account that not all reviews are glowing. Up to this time, if either Mr. Clark or myself felt that a book was not worth the purchase price for any one of a number of reasons, we have chosen not to make any mention of the book. Since that will no longer be possible under the new "you send it, we'll review it" policy, please remember that any review published in *The Courier* is the opinion of the reviewer and does not represent the opinion of *The Courier*, the Negro Leagues Committee, nor SABR.

And now the news:

We have the some auction sales of Negro League related items we thought we would pass along. A single signed Hilton Smith baseball recently sold in an Internet/phone auction for \$4,653 dollars, a single signed Martin Dihigo baseball sold in Las Vegas for \$4,836, while in Carefree, AZ a single signed Jackie Robinson ball sold for \$2,200. Other items that sold recently include a 1943 Kansas City Monarchs warm-up jacket from the family of J.L. Wilkinson for \$8,630, a letter signed by C. I. Taylor went for \$3,873 and a lot of 138 Negro League photos went for \$4,135.

As mentioned above, the latest issue of *Nine* is out and in addition to the above mentioned articles it contains "The Persistent Color Line: Specific Instances of Racial Preference in Major League Player Evaluation Decisions After 1947" by Steve Treder and "In The Shadow Of Greatness" by Irving Goldfarb.

Information regarding Negro League books from McFarland is available. **3pgs.

We Make The Call -

In line with our new policy regarding book reviews, we are including a new section in this issue. In the future, depending on the response of authors to the "you send it, we'll review" policy we have enacted, this is where you will read reviews of new Negro League related books. We are pleased to be able to include the first two reviews of this section. And, just for the record, Mr. Robert Cottrell and Larry Lester, both met the requirements put forth above. The following reviews are by Dick Clark.

THE BEST PITCHER IN BASEBALL: The Life of Rube Foster, Negro League Giant by Robert Cottrell is an excellent work. It is well documented and footnoted entirely. I learned a lot of new information on Foster's travels and life. Truly outstanding coverage of his yearly pitching record. I highly recommend it to everyone. It is available from online sources if you cannot locate in your local bookstore. A wonderful addition to anyone's library.

I have to agree completely with Dick's opinion of the book. I found that I could not put it down. It was a thoroughly enjoyable book, with something for everyone from the hardcore Negro League historian to the person with only a passing interest in the Negro Leagues.

Dick's Call: Home Run

Sammy's Call: Home Run

THE BEST PITCHER IN BASEBALL and Cottrell's other new book, BLACKBALL, BLACK SOX AND THE BABE: BASEBALL'S CRUCIAL SEASON are available at amazon.com.

Larry Lester's monumental effort, BLACK BASEBALL'S NATIONAL SHOWCASE: THE EAST-WEST ALL-STAR GAME has just been released by University of Nebraska Press. This is the ultimate work on the showpiece of Negro League Baseball. It's 398 pages of text and 100 pages of appendixes cover all aspects of the games. The book includes play by plays, accurate box scores (not a single East-West game was correctly reported in any newspaper) *Chicago Defender* and *Pittsburgh Courier* coverage as well as complete individual hitting and pitching statistics, and even financial records. It is completely footnoted and contains 59 photos including many that have never been published before. An absolute must for any baseball lover.

As is usually the case, Dick rambles on and leaves little for anyone else to say but I'll give it a shot. It is not very often that you can call a book, regardless of the author, the definitive work on the subject that it covers. Usually the label "definitive work" is attached to a book by some over zealous geek in a public relations office somewhere who knows less about the book's subject than I do about animal husbandry. While I may be somewhat of a geek, and indeed sitting in an office at this moment, I know this subject and can say, without fear of ever being proven wrong, this is the DEFINITIVE work on the East-West game and that there will never be a better book on the subject.

Dick's Call: Home Run

Sammy's Call: Home Run

If you can't find BLACK BASEBALL'S NATIONAL SHOWCASE: THE EAST-WEST ALL-STAR GAME at your local bookstore, it is available at a 30% discount at amazon.com. Also available at Amazon.com by Larry are: Black Baseball in Detroit, or Chicago, or Kansas City or Pittsburgh for \$18.99.

In addition, Larry Lester would like to receive any additions, correction, etc. concerning the East-West book that you might come across. You can send these to him either via e-mail or through regular mail.

The Final Pitch

It seems that at one time or another in our lives, we are each buried under so much work that must be done, we over extend ourselves, and in the rush to complete all the tasks assigned to us, something suffers. I am in such a situation right now and the item that has suffered is this issue of *The Courier*. The front page, compared to previous issues, suffers from a lack of a good lead story, and the lightheartedness I usually try to include in an attempt to bring a smile to the faces of the readers is sorely lacking. You will see a jibe at Dick Clark and one at myself in the "We Make The Call" section but only because that was the last section written and I had noticed the problems with this issue before I had written it.

While some people may look at *The Courier* as nothing more than a photocopied newsletter that ranks below supermarket tabloids when it comes to literary importance, I don't. I look at it as a serious publication with an important role to fill in the lives of a group of people that all share the same interest. Because of that fact I always try to give my very best in each and every issue. This time I around, in my mind, I didn't accomplish that, and for that, I apologize.

Sammy J. Miller