

The Negro Leagues Courier

The newsletter of SABR's Negro Leagues Committee

Dec 1999

Fiat Justina

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)

New Long Distance King Is Crowned

In an article published in the Sept. 26, 1991 issue of *USA Today's Baseball Weekly*, it was stated that Mickey Mantle was the King of Long Distant Clouts with one he hit out of USC's Bovard Field in 1961 traveling an ESTIMATED 660 feet.

According to information recorded in Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria's book *The Pride of Havana: A History of Cuban Baseball* and passed on to us by our resident jazz man and music critic Fred Brillhart, (a.k.a. The Great Fredrico), Hall of Famer Josh Gibson, and not Mantle is the Monarch of Mammoth Blasts. According to Gonzalez Echevarria, in Cuba on October 22, 1938, Gibson, who was with Santa Clara Leopards, hit a home run off Manuel Fortes out of LaBoulangier Park in Santa Clara. The home run ball ended its flight when it struck a weather vane on the roof of a nearby grocery store. Years later, when both the park and grocery store were still standing a Cuban baseball historian, Charles Montford Subirats, based on the testimony of eyewitnesses, put the homer to the tape measure test. The MEASURED distance was 704 feet.

Hall Of Fame News

In a press release dated October 6, 1999, The National baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York announced "... the Board has extended an amendment made to the Veterans Committee rules of election in 1995. The amendment call for two special elections - one exclusively for 19th century players and the other for Negro League players - to be held in conjunction with the regular election from 1995 through 1999. Both elections will continue for two more years." Press release available. **2pgs.

Resting Places Found

In the last issue of *The Negro Leagues Courier* a new requirement for the committee was announced in that each member must supply the committee with the resting place of at least one Negro League player, coach, owner, etc. per year. The results of that new search have resulted in the following:

Dick Clark found the resting places of Norman "Turkey" Stearnes who is buried in Lincoln Memorial Park in Detroit, MI. (**1 pg. obit from the 9/6/79 *Detroit Free Press* available) and Dr. J.B. Martin who is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery in Detroit, MI. (**1pg obit from the 4/30/73 *Detroit Free Press* available.)

Paul Debono found "Candy" Jim Taylor in Burr Oak Cemetery Chicago, IL. (**1pg. obit from unknown paper available)

Jerry Malloy tells us the S.K. Govern is buried in Eden Cemetery in Collingdale, PA.

Sammy Miller found Effa Manley at the Holy Cross Cemetery and Mausoleum in Culver City, CA. Jim Overmyer is credited with an assist here in that he made a passing reference that Manley had been buried in Culver City in his book "Queen of the Negro Leagues".

In the past years, the few people that have been doing research on the grave sites of former Negro League players have found many, including the above mentioned Candy Jim Taylor that are without headstones. Larry Lester has suggested that the NLC needs to setup up a subcommittee to raise funds to provide gravestones or to enhance substandard ones. Anyone that would like to be involved with this, aside from the required one grave site

per year, should, until a subcommittee head is named, contact Dick Clark.

Rich Puff has offered to track down the graves of any Negro Leaguers in the Albany, Schenectady, and Troy area of New York. Anyone with info on grave sites in that area, please pass it on to Rich.

The Hunt For Joe Williams

As reported in our last issue, the grave site of Hall of Famer Joe Williams has been found but there were many questions left unanswered. Recent developments have shown that at least some of these questions will remain that way. The search for a death certificate by Eric Enders and Jim Overmyer turned up one very strong possibility. Due to governmental red tape, (which is Latin for asinine policies), we are not able to get a copy of the certificate. In the city of New York, if someone died after 1949, the only way to get a death certificate is with written permission from the next of kin. If there is no known next of kin, then copies of the death certificate, are not available to the public. This is completely understandable in that I have read numerous history books where the release of a death certificate has led to a complete breakdown of civilized society.

Chairman's Comments

I trust you all had a happy Thanksgiving and have recovered from eating way too much. This is now the time to buy holiday gifts but more importantly the time to write to Veterans Committee members and promote your Negro League candidate for Hall of Fame selection. We have another two year window of opportunity to have a special Negro Leaguers vote. The highest vote getter from the NLC prior election process not in the Hall is Turkey Stearnes, followed by Biz Mackey and Dick Redding. Sol White has also gained support. I do believe Sol White should be sponsored for a 19th Century slot. Obviously, my choice is Stearnes, and since I know where all of you live.....However, please take the time to continue your campaign for your favorite. Contact me for Veterans Committee Members and/or Hall of Fame address if you do not already have the information. February 29, 2000 is the date of their meeting.

While we are on the subject of Stearnes, I would like to pass along this bit of information. CENTURY OF CHAMPIONS: 100 Years of Michigan Memories, lists 100 heroes of Michigan sports. This covers EVERY sport and great athletes. Number 1 through 5 were Joe Louis, Ty Cobb, Gordie Howe, Isiah Thomas, and Magic Johnson. Number 83 is Turkey Stearnes. I believe this is a very significant honor for Stearnes. Very nice to see.

Contributors

Many people have made this newsletter possible. They are: Todd Bolton, David Brewer, Fred Brillheart (a.k.a Fredrico), Adrian Burgos, Frank Ceresi, Dick Clark, Rory Costello, Bob Cottrell, Bob Davids, Paul Debono, Bob Eisen, Howard Elston, Eric Enders, Mike Everett, Irv Goldfarb, Jerry Hall, Chris Hauser, Larry Hogan, John Holway, Darryl Houston, Brent Kelley, Larry Lester, Gary Maurer, Jerry Malloy, Andy McCue, Scot Mondore, Luis Munoz, Jim Overmyer, Lou Parrotta, Claudia Perry, Bob Peterson, Bill Plott, Rich Puff, Jim Riley, Mark Rucker, John Russell, Fred Schuld, Troy Soos, Harry Stokes, Ron Teasley, Mike Webber, and Lyle Wilson.

Committee News & Member Updates

The NLC welcomes new member Eric Enders who, as was mentioned above, has taken part in the Hunt for Joe Williams. Eric works in the research department of the Baseball Hall of Fame Library and so will be a fine addition to the committee. Eric can be reached at: Research Department, National Baseball Hall of Fame Library, P.O. Box 590, Cooperstown, NY 13326. Phone (607) 547-0330/ Fax (607) 547-4094. E-mail: research@baseballhalloffame.org (Put Atten: Eric Enders in title line of all e-mails addressed to him)

Lyle Wilson's e-mail address is WIL1506@aol.com.

Paul Debono's address is 1502 North Dearborn, Indianapolis, IN 46201-1414. Phone (317) 266-8705. FAX (317) 636-0967. mail is pdebono@earthlink.net

Obituaries

Frank Duncan III died on October 2, 1999 in Detroit, Michigan. A funeral program is available **2pgs. Also available is an obit from NLB.com **1pg.

James Benton of the 1950 Memphis Red Sox passed away on October 17, 1999 near Seattle.

Edwin Charles Dimes who was with the Dayton Marcos and Akron Black Tyrites died on September 28, 1999 in Cleveland, OH. Funeral program is available **2pgs.

Current and Future Individual Projects

Anyone knowing of the whereabouts of either Jack Morelli and/or Mark Chiarello, the team that put together the Eclipse Cards Negro League card set, please pass that info on to John Holway.

Larry Lester's article on the first Negro League World Series, entitled "Groundwork", appeared in the 1999 World Series program. **4pgs.

Brent Kelley's latest from the 10/22/99 SCD "Peanut Johnson: The First Woman To Win A Pro Game" **1pg.

Paul Debono's article "The Indianapolis ABC's: The Pride of the Negro Leagues" appeared in Fall 1999 issue of *Traces*. **8pgs.

SABR member Gregory Bond is willing to help with research. You can contact him at gtbond@students.wisc.edu

Bill Plott is looking for a good commercial program (or someone's personal one) to compile stats from box scores. Any suggestions, contact Bill at P.O. Box 135, Wilton, AL, 35187.

Jerry Hall, 304 Sandoval Street, Walsenburg, Co 81089-8535, is seeking any info on his uncle, Leo Hood. He played in the 1940's.

Jerry Malloy's review of JACKIE ROBINSON: RACE, SPORTS, AND THE AMERICAN DREAM will appear in the next issue of NINE.

Jim Overmyer has been looking into the request of Monica Gayton-Tanksley regarding recognition of her family's home in Wellsville, New York which was used as a regular stopping place for the Homestead Grays. While the home does not meet the requirements for "plaque awarding groups" Jim knows of, he has come up with an interesting idea. He has suggested that we put together a list of places recognized by the NLC as "significant Negro League sites." While this idea is being considered we would like input from all readers concerning sites they think that should be included.

Jim also passed along the fact that Frank Grant was used as a model for a character in the 1895 novel entitled THE PLATED CITY by Bliss Perry.

An address list of those that attended the NLC/Pop Lloyd Committee Conference in Atlantic City this year is available. **3pgs.

Paul Debono is looking for information on the whereabouts of Earl Foster, the son of Rube Foster. Anyone with that information, please pass it along to him. He is also interested in sources for box scores for games played by the 1907 Leland Giants. He is also working on a listing of all American Giants games. Anyone wishing to help should contact him.

The following was submitted by Larry Lester. "I recently logged on the ESPN 50 Greatest Athletes of the Century web site. They also listed athletes who finished 51-100 in the voting. Satchel Paige finished 63rd and Josh Gibson 73rd. What is amazing that these men, did not finish in the top 100 of the baseball poll (also NO Latin Americans), but ranked in the top 100 of the world's greatest athletes, that included all sports, including race horses (Secretariat make the top 50). The ESPN poll was done by a panel of experts, which included the late Shirley Povich, Sam Lacy, Dick Schaap, Bob Costas, etc, etc. The baseball poll was done by us amateurs."

Rory Costello has recently found information that Roy Campanella formed a semi pro/ barnstorming team after his car accident called the Brooklyn Stars that played in Ebbets Field. Anyone with any info on this please pass it along to Rory at Rory1261@aol.com or to Dick Clark.

Rory also informed us that his research on baseball in the Virgin Islands is now available on the web at <http://members.aol.com/vibaseball/>

Chris Hauser is doing research on the life of Rollo Wilson. Anyone that might be able to help him out should contact him at CPHaus@aol.com

John Payne, 42 Pine Street, Clio, MI 43420 is looking for information an antique baseball pinball machine called "The Diamond." Anyone with info on it please pass it along.

Negro League Related Articles

"Ballplayers Find Resting Place In Cleveland" from the 9/16/99 *Cleveland Plain Dealer* **1pg.

A review of *The Negro League Autograph Guide* by NLC member Sammy Miller from the latest issue of *NINE* **1pg.

"A Historic Lineup Nearly Gone" from the 9/9/99 issue of *The Baltimore Sun* **1pg.

"No. Robinson Wasn't First" from the 4/6/99 issue of *The New York Times* **1pg.

"The Hairstons' Glove Affair: Three Generations Played In Majors" from the 10/1/99 issue of *The Washington Post* **1pg.

"When Black Baseball Was Big Business: Detroit Stars Were An Integral Part of the Negro Leagues" from the 10/6/99 *Michigan Chronicle* **1pg.

"Baseball's Latin Flavor Explored In Literature" from the 10/22/99 *SCD* **1pg.

"Lessons Coming To Life With A 30-City Bicycle Tour" from *The Seattle Times* (?) **2pgs.

"Lessons Coming To Life With A 30-City Bicycle Tour" from *The Seattle Times* of 10/12/99 ** 2pgs.
(This is not a typo. The two articles have the same text but different photos.)

"Negro Leagues Museum, Ford Motor Join To Start Satchel Paige Educational Program" from the 10/15/99 *Kansas City Call* **1pg.

"The 100 Greatest Black Athletes Of The 20th Century" from the 10/99 issue of *Ebony* **2pgs.

"Ballfield Memories: Negro League Veterans Recall Era" concerning Mamie Johnson from the 7/18/99 issue of *The Sunday Journal* **2pgs.

"Peanut's Straight Pitch" on Mamie Johnson from the 9/30/99 issue of *The Hartford Courant* is available. **1pg.

"Yesterday's Collectibles Shine At Atlantique City" from the 11/12/99 issue of *SCD*. **1pg.

A one page ad concerning the Harlem RBI (Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities) program. **1pg.

Two different article concerning Eddie Dwight of the Kansas City Monarchs. Both are from *The Kansan* and the set is available for **6pgs.

A web version of "Clowning In The Negro Leagues: A Disgrace or Grand Tradition" by P. Mills is available. **6pgs.

"Bullet Joe: A Son's Memories" from the 11/11/99 issue of the *Kansas City Kansan*. **3pgs.

From the 11/12/99 *Kansas City Star* **1pg article "Buck's Birthday Wish: Everything Will Be OK"

A **1pg ad from *SCD* for Classic Autographed Images of Negro League Stars.

Web version of "No Josting About Gibson's Talents" from *ESPN.com* is available. **3pgs.

Also available from *ESPN.com* is "Paige Never Looked Back". **3pgs.

"Artifacts From 1909 Fall Classic, Cuba On Display" from the 11/26/99 issue of *SCD* is available. **2pgs.

"Turkey Stearnes: A Quirky Batting Style Kept Him At The Top" from *NLB.com* is available. **1pg.

"Rare Film Footage of Negro League Games And Players Available On Video" article from *NLB.com* is available. **1pg.

The Marketplace

The latest Negro League offerings from Ebbets Field Flannel are available. **5pgs.

One page ad of Negro League caps available from Star Struck. **1pg.

The following short review is by Dick Clark:

I think SMOKE: The Romance and Lore of Cuban Baseball is a magnificent work. The text by Peter Bjarkman is solid, giving a fine overview of baseball in Cuba from the 1860's to the present. There is good coverage of post Castro Cuban baseball. However, it is the photos that make SMOKE a truly stunning work. Mark Rucker, of Transcendental Graphics, has done a superior job assembling this wonderful pictorial presentation. Hundreds of rare and never before seen pictures on every page. I found thirty or forty that are my favorites. My top pic is on page 82 of Cristobal Torriente (take either) or perhaps page 83. 259 pages only \$29.95 HIGHLY recommended, if you want to become educated on Cuban baseball.

Another book I recently had the pleasure of getting is EVERY OTHER SUNDAY: The Story Of The Birmingham Black Barons by Christopher D. Fullerton. This is the completion of the work by the late Chris Fullerton of his Master Thesis STRIKING OUT JIM CROW. It is 152 pages, with rosters, PLUS 47 pages of pictures and a CD with interviews with former players. Call 1-800-RICKWOOD to order.

Look for Troy Soos latest Mickey Rawlings thriller HANGING CURVE. This one involves the St. Louis Stars in the 1920's with our ballplaying detective.

Several major Negro league items were sold recently at the much talked about Halper Auction. Some of the items and prices were: a 1915 Rube Foster signed letter went for \$12,650, a 1908-1918 Negro League document collection went for \$18,400, a program from the 1924 World Series went for \$8,625, a 1909 Philadelphia Giants Negro League composite went for \$11,500, a ball hit by Josh Gibson in 1935 went for \$4,600, and a 1904 Sol White handwritten letter went for \$6,325.

A GAME FOR ALL RACES: A HISTORY OF THE NEGRO LEAGUES by Al Minsky and published by Metro Books is now available.

The Asbury Park Press is running a series of articles about the most outstanding Jersey Shore athletes of the century.

Upcoming Events

Buck O'Neil and Ted "Double Duty" Radcliffe will be speaking at the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York on February 23rd.