

The Negro Leagues Courier

The newsletter of SABR's Negro Leagues Committee

We Are The Ship, All Else Are The Sea

April 2003

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Editor: Col. Sammy J. Miller

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

Players and Historian Named Kentucky Colonels

Newport, Kentucky - On a cold and blustery February 25th, a small group gathered in the glass enclosure that holds the world's largest free-swinging bell, the World Peace Bell, for a special ceremony which saw the bell toll in recognition of African American History Month and the Bluegrass State's newest Kentucky Colonels. The Kentucky Colonel honor, which can only be awarded by the Governor of Kentucky and is given to "individuals with strength of character, leadership, and dedication to the welfare of others" was bestowed upon several persons during the ceremony sponsored by the Corporate Diversity Roundtable. Those honored included former Negro League players Don Johnson, an infielder for the Chicago American Giants and the Birmingham Black Barons and Charlie Davis, a pitcher for the Memphis Red Sox, as well as Negro League historian and NLC member Sammy J. Miller, who, once "commissioned", were to go forth and be "Kentucky's ambassadors of goodwill and fellowship around the world". I realize that will be a bit of a stretch for Sammy but who knows, he might be able to pull it off.

There was an article run in the KENTUCKY POST about the event in which Sammy was interviewed but he was misquoted so many times, he refused to make it available.

6th Annual Jerry Malloy Negro League Research Conference

As most of you know the 6th annual Jerry Malloy Negro League Research Conference will be held this summer in Harrisburg, PA

- 6/26 Hbg Senators Negro League Commemorative Night (\$7)
- 6/27-28 scheduled activities are pending advanced registrations and will be defined as we go along)
- 10 research presentations (5 booked, need 5 more, send abstract)
- 2 special presentations by local Negro League researchers
- panel on integrating the Eastern Negro League: '54 - '55
- trivia contest
- son/daughter of players panel (tentative)
- player panel (players TBA depending on some advance registration)
- banquet
- optional Phillies v Orioles or additional Senators games
- entertainment
- site tours

I need you to demonstrate your interest by registering for conference (\$50), 6/27 banquet (\$30) and 6/26 game (\$7). Send check to Ted Knorr, 309 Fox Ridge Court, Harrisburg, PA 17102. Call hotel to make reservations at 717 234 5021.

Call (717 238 5151) if you need more or e-mail (papabell@aol.com)

Ted Knorr

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: Tim Booker, Dick Clark, Juanita Garrett, Cappy Gagnon, Leslie Heaphy, Ted Knorr, Signe Knutson, Larry Lester, Jerry Malloy, Gary Maurer, Bob Peterson, Jerry Pollock, Jay Sanford, Lucky Smith, Brad Snyder, Wayne Stivers, Gregg Truitt, Kevin Tulley, and Lyle Wilson.

Committee News & Research Requests

Jay Sanford has moved to 13851 West 67th Court, Arvada, CO 80004 phone is (303) 423-7714.

Eric Enders has produced another book, 100 YEARS OF THE WORLD SERIES, very impressive looking.

An enlarged and revised edition of Larry Hogan's book A BLACK NATIONAL NEWS SERVICE: THE ASSOCIATED NEGRO PRESS, CLAUDE BARNETT, AND THE GOLDEN AGE OF BLACK JOURNALISM is available from St. Johann Press. **2pp info sheet available. We are listing it here with the assumption that the book is longer than the title but that might be asking too much.

Obituaries

Lawrence Williams, who played for the Chicago American Giants, passed away at the age of 86 on Feb. 28. **2pp obit.

Stoke E. Hendrix Sr., 89, passed away Feb. 5. Hendrix played for several teams including the Nashville Elite Giants. **2pp obit.

Negro League Related Articles

**1pg from SCD on "NLBPA Produces Negro League Apparel" (it sells at J.C. Penny)

MOBILE PRESS REGISTER, **1pg on Mobile Sports Hall of Fame and Ed Scott.

Program of first annual tribute **8pp. **4pp brochure of The State of Alabama Sports Hall of Fame.

**2pp "Breaking Down Barriers" (Carl Long) from KINSTON (NC) FREE PRESS, 2/9/2003

**1pg from PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS "Negro Leaguer (Harold Gould) Played For Love of the Game"

**2pp from the DETROIT FREE PRESS by Brad Snyder (see We Make the Call section) "Black Baseball's Return Caught On".

**2pp "Georgia Sports Hall of Fame: Class of 2003" about Josh Gibson

**1pg from the SOUTH BEND TRIBUNE "Players Recount Joys, Hardships of Segregated Baseball"

**1pg from THE DENVER POST "Buck O'Neil", an interview by Adam Schefter.

**3pgs on the NLBM Legacy Awards from various publications.

Upcoming Events

Gary Maurer reports that the Wall Of Honor induction ceremony in Milwaukee is scheduled for May 12, at Miller Park. Carl Long and Jim Robinson will be inducted. Induction 2:00 PM and pre-game ceremony 6:30PM

The NLC meeting at the upcoming SABR National in Denver will be held at 8:00am on Friday, July 11. Please excuse the tearstains on this part of the newsletter. It breaks my heart that I

will be missing the meeting. I have been to several in the past and can think of nothing that compares to them.

We Make The Call

Due to other pressing matters that demanded his attention, our regular reviewer, Dick Clark was unable to due this column this time around and so Sammy Miller will do our reviews of "BEYOND THE SHADOWS OF THE SENATORS" written by Brad Snyder and published by Contemporary Books and CUBAN BASEBALL: A STATISTICAL HISTORY by Jorge S. Figueredo and published by McFarland & Company.

"BEYOND THE SHADOWS OF THE SENATORS"- Snyder's contribution to Negro League literature is a welcome addition in that it gives enthusiasts a long over due history of one of black baseball's greatest dynasties, the Homestead Grays. With team histories being sorely lacking, any well-written and well-researched book that would fall into the category is a welcome addition and Snyder's book meets both of these criteria. In addition, Snyder takes the reader along as he examines Sam Lacy's battles for and Clark Griffith's battles against integration. His extensive research and his eighty-seven pages of notes are wonderful and should be a guide to anyone planning to write any non-fiction book. Proof of the value of such exhaustive research is that Snyder is able to shatter some long held myths about certain events.

That is not to say that there are not problems with the book, and although these would probably not jump out at the average reader they reached out and grabbed this reviewer by the neck. One of the main problems with the book is that Snyder uses some sources that could be classified, in my expert opinion, as questionable at best, a common occurrence by writers in their first outing in the Negro League field.

The problem that struck me the most however was the fact that once Snyder begins his attempt at shattering myths based on evidence, he seems to take it a step too far and begins making claims that he never attempts to back up with proof. His statement that "several ballpark histories dubiously claim he (Josh Gibson) cleared the back wall of Griffith Stadium's left field bleachers" without offering proof (lack of a box score in this field means nothing) left a sour taste in my mouth as did what seemed to me an attempt to validate long held but unproven rumors that Gibson was a drug addict. Another problem was that Snyder claimed that Gibson did not suffer from a brain tumor because his death certificate did not list it. It struck me that, at least in some cases, Snyder fell into what has become the vogue in recent times for writers, revisionist history.

This book, despite its problems, should definitely be added to any Negro league enthusiast's library.

Our Call: A triple due to sloppy base running. (It had home run potential.)

Editor's note: Other reviews on this book can be found at www.beyondtheshadow.com.

CUBAN BASEBALL: A STATISTICAL HISTORY - While some baseball fans love and live for statistical books like this, I don't. Truth be told, I find box scores in the newspaper boring. I mean come on people leave the box scores out and save a few trees. That being said, I loved this book. In my opinion, the time Negro League players spent in Cuban is a fascinating subject that deserves more coverage. While Gonzalez Echevarria's THE PRIDE OF HAVANNA and Rucker and Bjarkman's SMOKE gave us the stories of Cuban baseball in recent years, this one gives us, for the first time, the numbers in an informative, yet entertaining way. The 544-page book, with 182 pictures and 10 appendices is a landmark piece and should be a part of any Negro League enthusiast's library.

Our Call: A homerun.

The Marketplace

Issue # 72---Spring, 2003 of THE DIAMOND ANGLE is out and is the book review issue. Included is a review of Leslie Heaphy's THE NEGRO LEAGUES, 1869-1960. Contact James Floto 728 Kupulau Dr., Kihei, HI 96753 or online at tdaflow@Aloha.Net. Always a good read.

A chapter of Peter Morris's new book BASEBALL FEVER: Early Baseball In Michigan, is on Women and African Americans in Early Baseball.

Recent auction sales of Negro League items included a Jackie Robinson signed baseball for \$957, a cut signature of Josh Gibson for \$1448, a baseball signed by Josh Gibson for \$24,200, a game used Homestead Grays cap for \$10,450, a Negro League flannel with 201 autographs for \$7,736, and a original copy of Sol White's HISTORY OF COLORED BASEBALL for \$12, 887.

"Clowning Around: The Miami Ethiopian Clowns and Cultural Conflict in Black Baseball" by Raymond A. Mohl appeared in the 2002 edition of *Tequesta: The Journal of the Historical Association of Southern Florida*.

OUT BY A STEP: THE 100 BEST PLAYERS NOT IN BASEBALL HALL OF FAME by Mike Shalin and Neil Shalin and by published Diamond Communications is out and includes Negro Leaguers Dick Lundy, John Beckwith, Christobal Torriente, George Suttles, Dick Redding, Ray Brown, Jose Mendez, and Wild Bill Wright in the main section and several others in the Honorable Mentions section.

Col. Sammy J. Miller