

The Courier

A Publication of SABR's Negro Leagues Committee

"We are the Ship, All Else the Sea"

Editor, Larry Lester

December, 2012

In the News

The Infinite Baseball Card Set

by Gary J. Cieradkowski

I run my own design and illustration shop in Northern Kentucky. To say I am a big baseball fan would be an understatement. When my Father died suddenly this past fall, I lost my baseball pal. No longer did I have someone to talk about obscure players and trade baseball trivia with. I created a blog and card set as a way of continuing that friendship and sharing it with others.

When I create the illustrations for my website, "[The Infinite Baseball Card Set](http://www.infinitecardset.blogspot.com)," I strive to make the uniforms as accurate as possible. Many a time I wished there were a Marc Okkonen-like book for the Negro Leagues--a one-stop uniform reference to help date photographs and a clear resource depicting the graphics won by the great blackball teams in the years before integration. After many years of collecting, I decided to attempt such a book and began developing a template upon which to illustrate a few classic Negro League teams.

As you can see from the sample layout of the [Baltimore Elite Giants](#) below, I used Okkonen's "[Baseball Uniforms of the 20th Century](#)" as a jumping off point but decided to make the drawings

BALTIMORE ELITE GIANTS



larger and vary the poses to make pages of these ballplayers visually appealing. As a start to my project, I would like to complete the Negro National League team uniforms for 1933-1948 since photographs are fairly easy to come by and [East-West Game](#) team pictures are a great help. Of course, as anyone knows who

attempts to document anything on the Negro Leagues, this will be a difficult project and will likely never be complete and comprehensive. However, I would like to take a swing at it! I'm not sure where this project will take me, but I am interested in talking with anyone who is interested in such a reference or who has any photographs that would be of help. You can contact me through [The Infinite Baseball Card Set](http://www.infinitecardset.blogspot.com) website:

www.infinitecardset.blogspot.com

A checklist of cards can be found at:

<http://infinitecardset.blogspot.com/p/card-for-sale.html>



The Pete Hill cards pictured above can be found at:

<http://infinitecardset.blogspot.com/p/pete-hill-baseball-card-set.html>

These cards are not mass-produced slick cards by any stretch of the imagination. They are printed one at a time and created just for collectors who really like obscure players. I don't sell to dealers and because they are hand cut they will never be "slabbed" into those plastic cases with a grade.

While I have a large amount of research completed I still have much more to collect. This is all new ground for me, but I really think I may have something that would be a great addition to the available books on the Negro Leagues.

The Jerry Malloy Negro League Conference Goes East

Exciting news for 2013. We are heading to Newark, New Jersey. We will be honoring black baseball in New York and New Jersey with a focus on **Abe** and **Effa Manley**, the 1946 **Newark Eagles** championship team, the **Lincoln Giants** of N.Y., and the **New York Black Yankees** plus much, much more. We are currently working with the Newark Bears to finalize a game date, which will dictate the conference weekend dates.



The city is filled with amenities -- the Bears' Riverfront Stadium is walking distance to the Prudential Center,

the Paul Robeson Theatre, and the New Jersey Performing Arts Center.

Attendees can take advantage of the area to see the Newark Historical Society, the Newark Museum (the largest in the state), Newark Public Library (where the Manley papers are housed), and of course downtown Manhattan, a 15-minute subway ride away. You must visit the awesome New York Public Library.

Some conference highlights include the authors and player panels, vintage auction items, special guests, along with some top notch presentations.

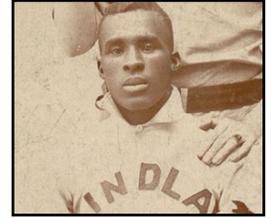
We are partnering with the Newark/East Orange School districts and the Newark Bears to promote our educational mission..

The on-site planning committee includes **Dr. Robert Cvornyek** (Rhode Island College), **Dr. Leslie Heaphy** (Kent State University), **Dr. Lawrence Hogan** (Union County College), **Jim Overmyer** (author of Effa Manley and the Newark Eagles), **Audrey Vernick** (author of She Loved Baseball: Effa Manley), and **Dr. Brian Heaphy** (principal at Edward T. Bowser Elementary School in East Orange).

Stay tuned for more information about the **Call for Papers** and **Conference registration**.

Jeremy Krock Watch Update

The Forest Lawn cemetery (Buffalo, NY), the final resting place for **Grant "Home Run" Johnson** is eager to assist in recognizing Mr. Johnson and obtaining a stone for his plot.



A point of contention is knowing Grant's accurate dates of birth and death. Existing research (book & internet) give two different birth dates: September 21, 1872 and September 21, 1874. Krock has a copy of his Erie County Home index card that yields the 1872 date.

Existing research (book & internet) inaccurately lists his date of death as either September 5, 1953 or September 5, 1963. In fact, his correct date of death is September 4, 1963 (as listed on his Erie County Home index card and confirmed in an obituary notice of his passing in the Buffalo Courier-Express). Krock is seeking to obtain his death certificate from Buffalo City Hall. Any biographical assistance is appreciated in resolving these dates.

In other news, **Ted Page's** ashes will be disinterred from a community vault with plans to place a grave marker in early spring.



Walter Ball and **Pete Hill** markers are in the early stages of production, while the marker for **Sol White** has been installed with a tentative dedication date for early 2013.

As actress Verna Bloom, playing Sarah Belding in the movie "High Plains Drifter," claimed *"They say the dead don't rest without a marker of some kind."*

\$\$\$ When you RENEW your SABR membership for 2013, please consider earmarking extra funds for the JERRY MALLOY NEGRO LEAGUE CONFERENCE and/or Jeremy Krock's HEADSTONE RESTORATION PROJECT for unmarked graves.

For more information or to donate to the **Negro League Baseball Grave Marker Project**, visit <http://www.nlbgmp.com>.

No-No's in Blackball

Until recently, the earliest documented no-hitter by a black pitcher was given to **George "Cannonball" Wilson**, of the **Chicago Columbia Giants**, for defeating the Whiting Greys in 1900. The "Black Rusie" struck out 11 and walked one batter in a 9-0 win. Lefty Wilson was also the ace of the **Page Fence Giants** (Adrian, Michigan), and historians have noted an earlier no-hitter by him on June 29, 1896, in defeating the Defiance Michigan team 6-0. The box score for this game has not been found.



In **Sol White's** History of Colored Baseball in 1906, he wrote "*Wilson is one of most difficult men to hit among the Colored pitchers. He is a bronzed Waddell [Rube].*" Ten years later, **Dave Wyatt**, added in a Chicago Defender article that ". . . old leaguers will tell you that they never gazed upon a more perfect pitching machine than Wilson." Additionally, his Adrian Daily Telegraph obituary noted that "*Charles Comiskey . . . after watching him pitch a game, said he would give a fortune for Wilson if he were white and eligible to play in league baseball.*"

However, the battery of Tony Kissel and Wayne Stivers found an earlier no-hitter by a black pitcher for an organized team which faced the best competition of their times, on July 9, 1889. It was pitched by **William Henry "Bee" Seldon** of the **Trenton Cuban Giants** on July 9th against the Bordentowns, a Middle States League team. Without the aid of Hall of Fame second baseman **Frank Grant**, Seldon struck out three and walked two batters, en route to a 2-0 win. A full account of the game was reported in the Trenton Daily True American.

It is well known that in 1903, **Danny McClellan**, of the **Cuban X-Giants** pitched the first recorded perfect game by a black pitcher, against the Penn Park Athletic Club of York, Pennsylvania, champions of the Tri-State League.

Meanwhile, Jim Overmyer, author of Effa Manley and the Newark Eagles found another no-hitter. This one a perfect game in 1917, by **Daniel "Gatling Gun" Johnson**, of the Bacharach Giants. The Atlantic City Daily Press reported that Johnson had "*perfect control and used his slow out drop and made them bite the air.*" Johnson struck out 10 Pleasantville (Atlantic City, NJ) batters to capture a 2-0 win.

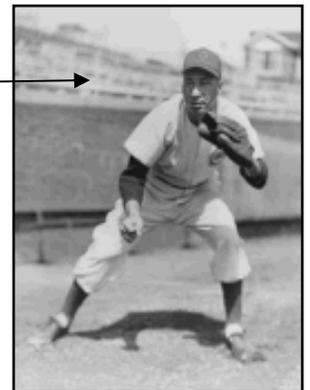
Other no-no highlights by ebony hurlers include, the 1926 World Series no-hitter by **Claude "Red" Grier** of the **Bacharach Giants**. His defeat of the **Chicago American Giants**, was the first in Negro League series play. Grier shutout the American Giants 10-0, walking six and striking out 8 batters.

In 1946, **Leon Day** of the **Newark Eagles** pitches the only Opening Day no-hitter in Negro league history, when his team beats the Philadelphia Stars, 2-0. Day allowed one walk with no strikeouts reported.



In 1952, **Roy Campanella**, on June 19, becomes the first African American to catch a no-hitter in the Major Leagues, the first of three career no-hitters for Campy. He caught **Carl Erskine**, as the **Dodgers** defeated the Chicago Cubs, 5-0. Erskine was a special guest at the 2011 Jerry Malloy Negro League Conference in Indianapolis.

In 1955, **Sam "Toothpick" Jones**, of the National League **Chicago Cubs**, becomes the first black pitcher to throw a no-hitter in the majors. He defeated the Pittsburgh Pirates, 4-0, yielding seven walks, striking out six batters in Wrigley Field. Sad Sam's second no-hitter came in 1959, but was called after seven due to rain.



In 1962, **Earl Wilson** became the first African American to throw a no-hitter in the American League. His **Boston Red Sox** defeated media star **Bo "No-Hit" Belinsky** and the Los Angeles Angels, 2-0, in tough Fenway Park. Along the way, the 26 year-old Wilson walked four and struck out five batters, plus hit a solo homer over the green monster.



Earl Wilson and catcher Bob Tillman

In 1963, **Juan Marichal**, of the **San Francisco Giants**, becomes the first Latin American-born pitcher to throw a no-hitter, beating the

Houston Colt .45's, 1-0. The sky-high-kicker struck out five and walked two batters in Candlestick Park .

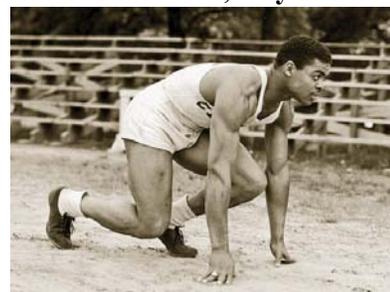
And finally, in 1969, **Don Wilson**, of the **Houston Astros**, pitches his second no-hitter. He is the first African American pitcher to have two nine-inning no-hitters to his credit. Wilson defeats the Cincinnati Reds, 4-0, walking six batters and striking out 13. Back in 1967, Wilson no-hit the Atlanta Braves 2-0 at the Astrodome.

This no-hitter was the first ever pitched either in a domed stadium, or on artificial turf. Along the way, Wilson struck out 15 batters, including former **Indianapolis Clowns** star **Hank Aaron** for the final out. It should be noted that **Sam Jones'** second no-hitter in 1959, was a seven-inning contest.

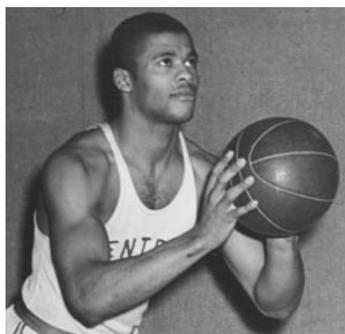
Are there more perfect games by African American mound men out there? Can anyone find a no-hitter earlier than 1889? May the research begin.

On October 5, the University of Indianapolis honored the memory and contributions of two alums, **Ray** and **George Crowe**, by renaming one of its student residences after the brothers. The university rededicated New Hall to "Ray and George Crowe Hall."

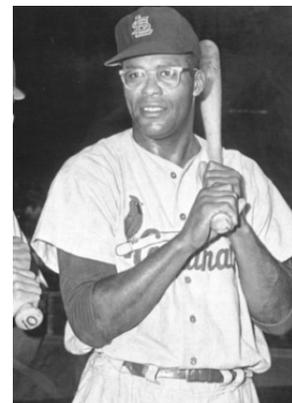
Ray Crowe coached future NBA star **Oscar Robertson** and **Crispus Attucks High School** to the 1955 Indiana State High School Basketball Championship, the first time in history an African American basketball team won a state title. Crowe's team repeated in 1956. Ray has been inducted into the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame (1968), and the University of Indianapolis Hall of Fame (1987). In 1966, he was elected to the Indiana House of Representatives, serving two terms and chairing the House Education Committee. Ray passed away in 2003.



While playing for Franklin High School in 1939, **George Crowe** was named Indiana's first Mr. Basketball. George was a professional basketball star with the **Los Angeles Red Devil**,



alongside teammate **Jackie Robinson**, and the **New York Rens**. From 1947 to 1949, he played first base for the **N.Y. Black Yankees**, **N.Y. Cubans** and the **Philadelphia Stars** before launching a major league career in 1952 with the Boston Braves and later with the St. Louis Cardinals and Cincinnati Reds, where he was named an All-Star in 1958. Upon retirement, Crowe held the ML record (14, later broken) for pinch-hit homers. He has been inducted into the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame (1976), the University of Indianapolis Hall of Fame (1986) and the Indiana Baseball Hall of Fame (2004). George passed

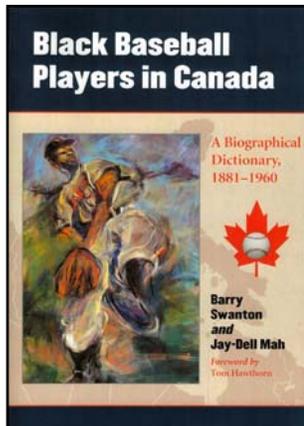


away in 2011.

Dugout Reading

Black Players in Canada: A Biographical Dictionary, 1881 - 1960 by Barry Swanton and Jay-Dell Mah.

In an era when black baseball players had limited playing prospects in the United States, they found a more hospitable and level playing field in Canada. The entries in this dictionary contain biographical sketches career highlights and statistics for hundreds of players, as well as information about their teams and leagues.



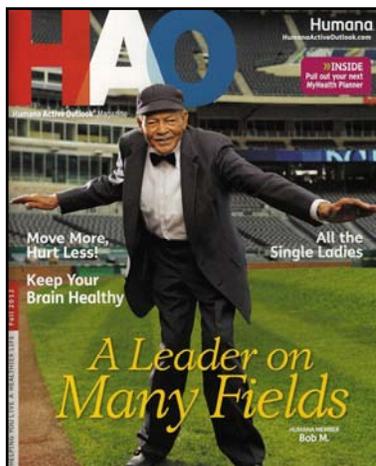
The foreword mentions that Mah has built a comprehensive website, <http://www.attheplate.com> about the history of

baseball in Western Canada in the 50's and 60's. Swanton wrote the obscure history of the **ManDak** (Manitoba-Dakota) **League** profiling the circuit that provided work for Cuban, Canadian and American players while entertaining fans in prairie cities on both sides of the border.

Get your copies today at: www.mcfarlandpub.com/book-2.php?id=978-0-7864-4468-7

You're SAFE - Check out the Fall issue of HAO, the **Humana Active Outlook** magazine. The cover features the last living Negro League umpire, **Bob Motley**. The magazine includes wonderful vintage photographs of Motley in uniform, and his wife Pearl of 61 years. The recent recipient of the **Congressional Medal of Honor** for his service at Montford Point, the Marine candidly tells his story from the "Battlefield to the Baseball Field." Request a copy from the editor, Suzette Shoop, at P.O. Box 740003, Louisville, KY 40201.

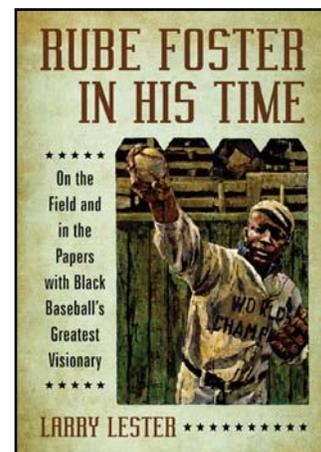
Also note, he is the author, with his son Byron Motley, of "**Ruling over Monarchs, Giants & Stars: Umpiring in the Negro Leagues and Beyond.**" Check it out!



More Dugout Reading . . .

Rube Foster in His Time: On the Field and in the Papers with Black Baseball's Greatest Visionary by Larry Lester.

Although Andrew "Rube" Foster (1879–1930) stands among the best African American pitchers of the 1900s, this baseball pioneer made his name as the founder and president of the **Negro National League**, the first all-black league to survive a full season. In addition to founding this groundbreaking black-owned and -operated business, Foster also founded and managed the **Chicago American Giants**, one of the most successful black baseball teams of the pre-integration era. This definitive biography combines period editorials and correspondence with insightful narrative to provide a comprehensive portrait of this innovative Hall of Famer. From the unstructured early days of black baseball, when Foster gained glory as a hard-throwing pitcher, through his struggles to establish the NNL and the Giants, to his tragic death from complications of syphilis, this work pays overdue tribute to an authentic American baseball icon.



The 264-page book contains 83 photographs, along with appendices detailing his pitching career, legal briefings, and a medical report. Team depth charts are provided along with landmarks in his honor. Signed copies are available from the author at LarryLester42@gmail.com.

FIRST GAME BETWEEN ALL-BLACK TEAMS?

John Zinn found the following clip in the October 24, 1855 issue of the *Newark Daily Mercury*:
"BASE BALL - A match game of Base Ball was played between the St. John's and Union Clubs (colored) yesterday afternoon. Two innings were played when it commenced to rain. The St. John's Club made ten runs and the Union Club only two. The game is to be played again on Friday at 2 o'clock, on the ground of the St. John's Club, foot of Chestnut Street."

There was no account of the replay in either the *Daily Mercury* or the *Newark Daily Advertiser*. Any accounts of this game can be sent to: LarryLester42@gmail.com & jzinn84@comcast.net

Sunrises!

SEND YOUR FAVORITE NEGRO LEAGUER A **BIRTHDAY CARD**.

DECEMBER

- 2ND - HENRY ELMORE - 71
3RD - BILL HAYDEN - 88
4TH - TED TOLES, JR. - 87
6TH - BILL LITTLE - 78
7TH - **ENRIQUE MAROTO - 80**
9TH - QUACK BROWN - 82
14TH - HENRY SAVERSON - 83
16TH - JOE MARBURY - 74
20TH - **MALHON DUCKETT - 90**
21ST - CHARLES WELLS - 81, PAUL CASANOVA - 71
23RD - MAYNARD JORDAN - 84
25TH - JOHN MITCHELL - 75
26TH - **ORLANDO O'FARRILL - 90**, REGGIE HOWARD 78
27TH - JIM COBBIN - 78

JANUARY

- 8TH - DAVEY WHITNEY - 83
9TH - FRANK MARSH - 82
21ST - **PORTER REED - 90**, JIM ROBINSON - 83
26TH - RON TEASLEY - 86
27TH - SAM TAYLOR - 84
28TH - TOMMY TAYLOR - 75
30TH - LONNIE HARRIS - 82
31ST - ERNIE BANKS - 82

FEBRUARY

- 4TH - ERNIE NIMMONS - 83
5TH - HANK AARON - 79
9TH - **MIKE HOULEMARD - 80**
12TH - BILL DUMPSON - 83
20TH - **WALTER MCCOY - 90**
23RD - WILLIE SHEELOR - 85
25TH - **MONTE IRVIN - 94**
26TH - MICKEY STUBBLEFIELD - 87



The Oldest Living NL Players are:

- William "Bill" Stewart, **99**, **PORTLAND ROSEBUDS**
Walter "Buddy" Williams, **98**, **NEWARK EAGLES**
Jamuel Tarrant, **98**, **BALTIMORE ELITE GIANTS**
Tom "Teetum" Turner, **97**, **CHICAGO AMERICAN GIANTS**
James "Red" Moore, **96**,
BALTIMORE ELITE GIANTS
Warren "Dadd" O'Neil, **95**,
DETROIT STARS
Bernard "Toto" Fernandez, **94**,
PHILADELPHIA STARS
Ross "Satchel" Davis, **94**,
CLEVELAND BUCKEYES
Monte Irvin, **93**, **NEWARK EAGLES**
Note: Irvin is the oldest living Negro League Hall of Famer.



Sunsets

HAROLD LORENZO "BIG RED" GOULD, 88, of Millville, NJ, died November 9, 2012, at the New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home in Vineland.



Gould pitched two years, 1947-48 for the Philadelphia Stars.

He has been inducted into the **South Jersey Hall of Fame** (2001) and the **New Jersey Hall of Fame** (1994).

Additionally, in 1999, he was named one of Cumberland County's "People of the Century".

An everlasting tribute came in 2009, when the Korean War veteran published his autobiography titled "**He Came from Gouldtown**," revealing his skills as pipe welder and a trainer of thoroughbred horses, among other talents. Interment was at Gouldtown Memorial Park in Fairfield Twp, NJ.

ROBERT LOUIS "BOB" WIGGINS, 86, died November 15, 2012, at Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital in Riverside, IL. A native of Greensboro, Alabama, Wiggins was a fleet outfielder for the 1960 Raleigh Tigers of North Carolina.

In 1955, he started work for the Diversified CPC International, makers of cornstarch, corn coil, syrup and chocolate, etc.. While at CPC, the Chicago White Sox offered him a tryout in 1959. After the 1960 season, he hung up his cleats and worked for CPC until 1995.

Interment was at Bethania Cemetery in Justice, IL.

SABR's Negro Leagues Committee

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Dick Clark Co-chair, Tstearnes@comcast.net

The Courier is a quarterly newsletter published by the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR); in March, June, September and December. Inquiries, submissions and research requests can be sent to Larry Lester. Back issues can be found [HERE](#).

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