

The Negro Leagues Courier

The newsletter of SABR's Negro Leagues Committee

One Hundred Issues Old and Still Going Strong

August 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)

OFFICIAL PASS

The Jerry Malloy
Negro Leagues
Committee
Conference V



July 18-20, 2002
Memphis, Tennessee

Please wear this pass for access to all conference activities
and tours at sites including AutoZone Park,
The National Civil Rights Museum, and The Radisson Hotel.



Ewing Moving • Hanna & Associates, Inc. Collection Agency
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Blues City Bash



(See story page 2)

Contributors

They say a man cannot achieve greatness without the help of others. In this case, those others are: Todd Bolton, Dave Chase, Dick Clark, Rory Costello, Kit Crissey, Lou Hunsinger, Signe Knutson, Larry Lester, Jerry Malloy, Gary Maurer, Bob Mitchell, Bob Peterson, Bob Potts, Wayne Stivers, and Gregg Truitt.

Member and Reader Updates

The NLC would like to welcome new member, Bijan Bayne. His address is Bijan C. Bayne 2365 Madison Rd. # 212, Cincinnati, OH 45208 (513) 321-1547 bijanc@hotmail.com

Obituaries

Alfonso "Piggy" Gerard, who played with the Chicago American Giants, the Indy Clowns, and the New York Black Yankees passed away on July 14.

We have a number of obits from players whose deaths were announced in the last issue. In order to save time and space, they will be listed in groups.

A funeral program and 6 obits for Joe Black. **9pgs.

Three obits for William "Bobby" Robinson. **3pgs. We also have a funeral program for Mr. Robinson. **8pgs.

Four obits for James McCurine. **5pgs.

We have also received reports that the following individuals have passed away. Anyone with any info on the following, please pass it along.

Tommy Sampson,?

Rosell Sails, Feb 28, 2002 -

Eugene "Stank" White, April 26, 2002?

Leonard Wiggs, June 29, 2002?

Negro League Related Articles

Fund raising is underway to build a life size statue of Buck O'Neil in Kansas City. Two articles are available. **3pgs.

"Charles "Lefty" Robinson Organized and Starred for the Jefferson City (MO) Mohawks" from the *News Tribune* **2pgs.

"Camden (NJ) Makes Pitch To Honor Larry Doby" from the web site theestate.com **2pgs.

A bridge in Homestead, PA was recently renamed the Homestead Grays Hi-Level Bridge. We have several articles on this event. They are all available. **5pgs.

"Rumors of Negro Leaguer Piloto's Death Greatly Exaggerated" **1pg.

Tom Turner, who played for the Chicago American Giants, was recently named a "Daily Point of Light" by President Bush. **3pgs.

The latest "Diamond Kings" are Oscar Charleston and Ray Dandridge. **1pg each.

"Man Of A Century" (Double Duty) **5pp from *SPORTS ILLUSTRATED*

THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL 7/19/2002 **1pg "Baseball Envoy" (O'Neil)

"Timber Team" (Claybrook Tigers) **6pp from 7/4/2002 from *ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT GAZETTE*

"Baseball Owes Much Of Its Popularity to Negro Leagues" from the 5/29/02 issue of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* is available. **1pg.

On June 1, Patterson New Jersey held Larry Doby Day at Eastside Park. Program, two articles, and a copy of the Field Pass are available. **7pgs.

A flyer from the Milwaukee Brewers Wall of Honor Induction Ceremony of May 15, 2002 is available. **1pg.

This was followed by Leslie Heaphy's presentation on some of the lesser know players in the Negro Leagues. An excellent idea because all too often the story of the journeyman player is overlooked in lieu of the superstars.

I took the podium next to hand out the NLC's annual awards. Winners of the Robert Peterson Award that were in attendance were Larry Lester, Dave Chase, Bijan Bayne and Sammy Miller. Dick Clark was caught completely off guard when he was awarded the Tweed Webb Lifetime Achievement Award.

Winners of Peterson Awards that were not present were Tim Rives, Bob Bailey, Phil Dixon, and Bob Cottrell.

The final presentation of the conference followed with Bijan Bayne presenting on Black Baseball In New England.

Following Bijan's talk, prizes were awarded with the two grand prizes being a replica Grays jersey, which was won by Eric Enders, and a replica Memphis Red Sox jersey which was won by Mike Webber. I can guarantee that the drawing for the prizes was completely honest because I had spent most of the morning trying to rig the drawing only to be thwarted at every turn by Dave Chase.

After a picnic lunch in the park's Covington Pike Toyota Picnic Pavilion, we walked down to the famed Ernest Withers Photography Gallery on Beale Street where we were treated to a showing of some of Mr. Withers great Negro League photographs and stories told by Mr. Withers and Buck O'Neil.

A talk on the Hall of Fame Project headed by Mr. Lester, with Dick Clark and myself assisting, followed at W.C. Handy Park on Beale Street.

That ended the academic offerings of the conferences and after the group split up. Larry Lester, Leslie Heaphy and Yvonne Hopkins dined at Isaac Hayes' Restaurant. Dick Clark, Amy Essington, Eric Enders and I, dined at the King's Palace Café where we discussed various HOF project and baseball related issues. After dinner, and a quick stop at the famed A. Schwab store, we headed back to the ballpark for Saturday's game.

A number of former Negro league players were in town for a reunion and were honored before the game. Those present included Buck O'Neil, Reggie Howard, Carl Long, Frank Williams, Lee Mabon, Eugene Scruggs, Jesse Mitchell, Earnest Harris, Willie Lee, Jim Robinson, Elijah Gilliam, Earl Wilson, Lionel Evelyn, Carl Holden, John Miles, Jim Zapp, Gordon Hopkins, Harold Gordon, Henry Presswood, Clifford Layton, Ulysses Hollimon, Bill Little, James Cobbin, Sherwood Brewer, Clarence Jenkins, Sr., and James Ivory.

Dave Chase, who bent over backwards to accommodate us while we were there, arranged for Signe Knutson to get a press pass so that she could get onto the field to get pictures of the event for her website.

Buck O'Neil, who was interviewed numerous times during the weekend, entertained the crowd with his onfield antics as he threw out the first pitch Saturday.

Larry, who was interviewed by Jeff Bossert of WKNO-FM during the conference, along with Dick and myself chatted with some of the players in the third base picnic area after the start of the game. Dick was able to see some old acquaintances like Gordon Hopkins and Sherwood Brewer.

I really enjoyed the game due to the fact that I thought I would never get a chance to see a Memphis Red Sox game. I was wrong however due to the fact that the Redbirds worn Red Sox uniforms while the Rainers became the Homestead Grays. I was even happier when the Red Sox won the game even though they were no hit into the 8th inning. Article available. **2pgs.

Following the game, we gathered once again in the hospitality room, like we had every night, for some conversation before we finally said goodbye and headed off to our rooms.

I don't know about the others but I myself was saddened by the fact that the conference was over. I have been to three SABR Nationals and four Jerry Malloy Negro League Conferences and I must say that Dave Chase and the Memphis Redbirds, along with the sponsors of the event, outdid all of them and showed those of us in attendance a truly outstanding time.

NEXT YEAR: It was recently announced that the 6th Jerry Malloy Negro Leagues Conference will be held in Harrisburg, PA in 2003.

One great exhibit was the one concerning the Montgomery Bus Boycott. On display is a bus, which contained statues of a white bus driver and one of Rosa Parks, a true lady whom I have always admired. When our guide told us to get on the bus and take a seat, I found myself walking past the statue of Mrs. Parks, unable to take a seat in front of her.

The lunch counter, which is part of the museum's exhibit on the Lunch Counter Sit-Ins, also struck a personal note because as a young child on trips to East Tennessee, I had eaten at such counters as my mother and grandmother went about their shopping, never giving a second thought to being waited on or sitting next to African American person during these times.

Needless to say, the room that Martin Luther King Jr. stayed on April 4, 1968 and the balcony on which he was shot had a profound affect on all those present and a sober silent, broken only by an occasional question, descended over our group as we looked on.

After returning to the hotel following the museum tour, we found the NLC member Bill Plott had arrived and he, Dick Clark, Amy Essington, Eric Enders, and I went down to Beale Street where we finally wound up in the Blues City Bar where we heard some excellent music performed by the King Bees before returning to the hospitality suite at the hotel for some baseball talk and project discussions.

A nice article appear in the Commercial Appeal on Thursday, about Joe B. Scott and emphasis that the Redbird gave him a lifetime pass --- something other teams should do.

The Friday activities started at 8:30 in the Club Level Lounge at AutoZone Park where we were welcomed by Rita Sparks, the Memphis Redbirds Baseball Foundation President and then shown a video on the Memphis Redbirds, the only not for profit sports team in the country.

John Guinozzo, the official scorer for the Memphis Redbirds and the Memphis Grizzlies, gave a talk on the Memphis Red Sox, which included some fascinating stories that even I had not heard before.

A screening of the Memphis Red Sox video *Black Diamonds, Blues City* followed. For those that have never seen it is a terrific film but having seen it a number times myself, I, along with Dick Clark and Amy Essington, walked across the street to The Peabody Hotel to see their world famous ducks heading to work. (If you have never heard of the Peabody Ducks, you wouldn't believe me if I told you so just go to their website, www.peabodymemphis.com and check it out for yourself.) Once there we were joined by Larry Lester. We had an excellent vantage point for the parade (yes, the ducks parade through the lobby) and even though I had explained what would happen to the others, they were surprised when they saw it for themselves.

Around 11:30, we moved from the park, across what is referred to as the baseball campus, to the Toyota Center for lunch at The Plaza Club of Memphis where we were served a magnificent lunch of fresh rolls, spinach and currant salad with Italian dressing, peppered fish on rice with beans, and pecan pie drizzled with chocolate sauce and garnished with fresh berries. Without a doubt it was the finest food I have ever had at a ballpark. (The Toyota Center is park of the AutoZone Park complex).

After lunch the presentations continued with Wayne Dowdy from the Memphis Public Library gave a talk on the library's T.S. Hayes Collection. That was followed by Brian Carroll who presented a comparison of the press coverage by black papers of the Negro Leagues and the majors. Following Brian was a player panel that was moderated by our own Larry Lester. The players were Buck O'Neil, Jim Cobbin, Reggie Howard, William O. Little, Sherwood Brewer, and Dennis Biddle.

After the panel, there was another video presentation, this one on the Claybrook Tigers of Claybrook, Arkansas. It was very informative, or so Bill Plott told me. I actually missed it because Dick, Amy, and I snuck out in the middle of the player's panel and visited Graceland. After grabbing a bite to eat at the Rockabilly Café, we then headed over to Sun Records.

After our site seeing tour, we headed back to AutoZone Park for the first of the two games between the Redbirds and the Tacoma Rainiers that were on the agenda for us. That night, I separated from the group and went to the game with my sister and two nephews, who made the trip with me. The highlight of the evening was when my three-year nephew and me were shown on the big screen talking to Rocky the Redbird, Memphis' team mascot.

Saturday morning found us once again in AutoZone Park, where the day started with a presentation by Dave Chase and Lloyd Johnson giving a talk on the Professional Players Database, which will be housed at The National Pastime in Memphis in a building just behind AutoZone Park.

Before anything else, we would like to thank the sponsors of The Jerry Malloy Negro Leagues Committee Conference V for making possible what turned out to be the finest conference we have ever had. The Negro Leagues Committee is indebted to:

Black Business Directory
WLOK 1340 AM
MLGW
Ewing Moving
Hanna & Associates, Inc. Collection Agency
Willie Martin Insurance
CADD Solutions, Inc.
Radisson Hotels

In addition we cannot forget to thank everyone at the **Memphis Redbirds** and especially **Dave Chase**, a true gentleman whom I and many others feel it was a privilege to have met. They all made the conference an event that no one will ever forget.

Memphis, TN – The clock has just moved past 11:30 pm on Saturday July 20th and the final event of the fifth Jerry Malloy Negro League Conference has just ended. As I write this the sounds of downtown Memphis filter through the night air and find their way into my room. As I listen to them I find myself looking forward to getting home after nearly a week on the road and at the same time mourning the ending of what will always be remembered as one of the best trips of my life.

I arrived in the Blues City at roughly 12:30 local time Thursday after a six-hour drive from the mountains of East Tennessee, where I had been visiting family since Monday, and was immediately greeted by beautiful AutoZone Park, directly across the street from the Radisson Hotel, which was to be my base of operations while in Memphis.

Once I had registered, I strolled the two short blocks to Beale Street, the most holy site to a true blues fan like myself, and after a quick jaunt down the Mecca of Mournful Music, I made my way back to the hotel. After grabbing a bite to eat, I walked over to the stadium for what was listed on the schedule of events as a "Tour of AutoZone Park". To be completely honest what I was expecting out of this tour was nothing at all like what we got, it was much better and it set the tone for the rest of the conference. We would continually be getting more than we expected.

The tour of the park took us through the indoor batting cage, the Redbirds locker room and training area, the video room where the players could examine their batting performances during the games and then out onto the field through the home team dugout. Once we left the field, we toured the areas of the stadium open to the public before going upstairs and seeing the private boxes and the press area.

Having lived in the Greater Cincinnati area for the past twenty-six years where a baseball stadium is something that looks like a giant toilet bowl, AutoZone Park struck me as a beautiful and awe inspiring site and many times over the weekend, as I made my way to the various events of the conference, I would find myself pausing to look at both the outside and inside of the park, finding myself feeling the better for it each time.

The next event on the schedule called for us all to meet at the front of the hotel. By this time Dick Clark, who had been a little late in arriving, has joined our merry band and so all three of the officers of the NLC, Dick, Larry Lester, and myself were all accounted for, as were committee members Leslie Heaphy, Signe Knutson, Eric Enders, and Amy Essington.

Dave Chase, the Executive Director of The National Pastime, joined us here, as did the Ambassador of Black Baseball, Buck O'Neil, for a bus ride that took us to the former sites of Martin Stadium and Russwood Park, before carrying us to the National Civil Rights Museum which is located at the site of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the Lorraine Motel. Even though the museum usually closes at 5:00pm, special arrangements were made for an after hours tour for those attending the conference.

Any attempt to describe all that we saw at the museum would undoubtedly not do justice to this fine place and so I will simply state that those responsible for the museum have done an excellent job, making the museum a place every American, regardless of race, should visit at least once.

"It's Our Duty To Pay Tribute To Radcliffe" from the 7/5/02 issue of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* is available. **2pgs.

"At 100, 'Double Duty' Brings Baseball History To Life" from the *Associated Press*. **3pgs.

"Nelson Pushing For Expanded Pensions For Negro League Players" from the *Associated Press*. **2pgs.

"Visit To KC Becomes Baseball History Lesson" from the *Kansas City Star*" and written by Dave Winfield. **1pg.

Recent Events

The Detroit Tigers held their Annual Negro League Celebration Night on June 29, 2002. For the third straight year the same weekend as the SABR National Convention. They did things right by having many players sign autographs (and receive a nice fee) and then after honoring on the field, went up to a luxury box to watch the game in which, Pittsburgh wore Crawfords uniforms and the Detroit the Stars. Cecil Kaiser, Ron Teasley, Herald Gordon, Mel Duncan, Marvin Jones, and Ray Miller were among the guests. All had a grand time. Thanks to Lucky Smith for the report of the events.

The National SABR Convention in Boston, June 26-30, 2002 was another great affair. Among the presentations were Integrating Boston: African-Americans on the Field and in the Press Box, by NLC member Amy Essington and Annie Russell. Gail Rowe on Tim Murnane's Mysterious Beaneater Fan (a Black man). Bijan Bayne had a wonderful Poster presentation on Black Semi-Pro Baseball in New England 1882-1946.

The Bob Davids Tribute Table was an excellent way to remember Bob. There was a sterling tribute to Bob at the Banquet and the luncheon was topped by the awarding of the Bob Davids Award to a most deserving Evelyn Begley.

An outstanding Latin America Committee meeting introduced, through an excellent presentation, a new book on Latin American baseball coming out in the fall by Eduardo Valero, Henry Martino, and Edwin Fernandez. It should be a great addition to one's library.

Some of the other books that were being sold in the vendor area included the following on Negro League baseball. Larry Lester's BLACK BASEBALL'S NATIONAL SHOWCASE: The East-West All-Star Game was being autographed by the author on Friday.

BASEBALL IN THE CAROLINAS Black Professional Baseball in North Carolina from World War I to the Depression; has chapters by Bijan Bayne, and also a piece on The Cannon Street All-Stars.

THE AMERICAN GAME: Baseball and Ethnicity, from Southern Illinois Press has an impressive chapter by Jules Tygiel "Unreconciled Strivings: Baseball in Jim Crow America"

LATE INNINGS: A Documentary History of Baseball, 1945-1972 by Dean Sullivan is a continuation of his trilogy. EARLY INNINGS and MIDDLE INNINGS were excellent. Again there are many important pieces related to Black Baseball.

THE HURRAH GAME: Baseball in Northampton, 1823-1953 published by Historic Northampton was a surprising find and contained many stories on Black teams barnstorming in the area.

THE BEST OF BASEBALL by Warren Wilbert includes a survey done with many members of the NLC. Among the rankings are Bill Foster 6th for Left-handers; Paige 4th and Joe Williams 5th for right-handers. Josh Gibson number 1 catcher. Buck Leonard 5th at first. Pop Lloyd 2nd and Willie Wells 5th at Shortstop. Judy Johnson was 9th for third basemen. Charleston 5th and Cool Papa Bell 13th in the outfield. Martin Dihigo was ranked as 2nd best as a utility player.

The final book I purchased was Bill McNeil's COOL PAPAS AND DOUBLE DUTIES: The All-Time Greats of the Negro Leagues. This book has over 50 players and historians selecting their top teams. Every NLC member who contributed is in this book. It is very nice to see all the familiar names with their thoughts in print.

The Convention publication THE NORTHERN GAME-AND BEYOND: Baseball in New England and Eastern Canada also has a couple of pieces within "The Boston Red Sox and the integration of African-American Players", "Diamonds Aren't Forever", "Red Sox Break The Mold in 1967", and "T.H. Murnane and the Mysterious 'Darkhue White'".

Of course, the highlight of any convention is the Negro Leagues Committee meeting. (Always well structured). Our 9:00 AM Friday meeting had 45 people in attendance (I believe this is a new record) the majority of the time was used to discuss and update the Hall Of Fame Negro Leagues Project. Larry was able to show folks day-by-days for batting and pitching plus the schedule developed by inputting the boxes. 1925 was the example shown and we talked about all aspects of the project and answered a host of questions. We recruited several more folks to come aboard including Eric Enders and Wayne Stivers coming on to the box score section. A very smooth and informative meeting. NLC members in attendance were Co-Chairs Larry Lester and Dick Clark, Amy Essington, Eric Enders, Steve Bennett, Jan Finkel, Scott Flatow, Joe McGillen, Lou Hunsinger, Ted Knorr, Wayne Stivers, and Claudia Perry.

The Boston trip also enabled myself to stop in Cooperstown at the HOF for a meeting to show them progress on the Stat section. Also for Larry and I to do some face-to-face editing of much of the work done so far. A really good time.

Upcoming Events

A press release for the 7th Annual Judy Johnson Night in Wilmington, Delaware, which will take place on August 17th, is available. **1pg. This year's honoree will be Jackie Robinson. Planned highlights include a commemorative postal cancellation, a silent auction, and the awarding of two \$500 Judy Johnson Memorial Scholarships. Former Negro Leaguer Toots Ferrell will be in attendance, as will other former players.

Baseball As America, "an exhibition of treasures" from the Hall of Fame is currently traveling across the country. Information about the exhibit and a schedule are available. **3pgs.

A copy of the invitation to the John Henry "Pop" Lloyd Committee 10th Annual Humanitarian Awards and Lecture is available. **2pgs.

The Marketplace

The latest catalog from Ebbets Field Flannel is out. This time around, the company has added a new line to their catalog. They have introduced a more affordable line of jerseys than cost \$99 instead of the \$175 their normal ones cost. The new line includes several Negro league offerings. **7pgs.

Wayne Stivers has new a autographs catalog out that contains 26 pages of Negro League offerings. It has some great items in it. Anyone interested can contact Wayne on how to get a copy by e-mailing him at wstivers2@aol.com or by calling (303) 674-3718.

Some recent auction prices for single signed baseballs are: Jackie Robinson \$926, Roy Campanella \$683, Martin Dihigo \$1,158, and Satchel Paige \$453.

The Negro Leagues Baseball Museum recently made a major purchase from Lelands.com when they placed the winning bid for Newt Allen's old Kansas City Monarchs uniform. The winning bid was \$22,000. An article concerning the sale from *The Kansas City Star* is available. **1pg.

The Final Pitch

A careful look at the banner of this issue of *The Courier* will show that this was our hundredth issue. An overview of what has appeared in the newsletter since it's debut in November of 1985 was to be included in this issue. Space limitations however, and the importance of covering the Jerry Malloy Conference and the SABR Convention, has made it necessary to put this off until our next issue.

Sammy J. Miller