

# The Negro League Courier

The Newsletter of SABR's Negro Leagues Committee

February 1999

Editor: Sammy J. Miller

Send all correspondence, both Committee and newsletter related, to  
Committee Co-Chairman Dick Clark, 1080 Hull, Ypsilanti, MI 48198-6472  
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\*\* Denotes items available for SASE from Committee Co-Chairman  
Dick Clark - Please affix enough postage (usually 1 stamp/4 pages)

## Special Announcement from the Chairman

The time is upon us again when the Veterans Committee will meet to decide the fate of countless Negro League players that still deserve to be in the Hall of Fame but are not as of yet. This will mark the last year that the special elections will be held but that should not deter us in our letter writing campaigns. Leon Day, Willie Foster, Willie Wells, and Bulltlet Rogan have made it. Who knows who will be elected when the Vets Committee meets on March 2. We can only pray Buck O'Neil continues to be the beacon the Veterans Committee members turn to as Negro Leaguers will once again grouped with umpires, managers, and executives, or as the group is often referred to as, the "non-players." As capable as Buck is however, he can not do it alone. We must continue our education of everyone and rectify the inadequate representation of Negro Leaguers in the Hall of Fame.

Be sure to take the time to write to the members of the Veterans Committee and let them know of the countless Negro League players that you feel should be inducted. If the list of those you feel deserve induction contains players not on the original list of 25, then make this fact known to them. There is no valid reason, with all the research that has been by ourselves and others, that every deserving former Negro League player shouldn't be in the Hall of Fame.

For those of you that wish to take part in the annual letter writing campaign to the Veterans Committee, here is how you go about it. The following was quoted directly from an instruction sheet issued by the Hall of Fame:

"If you wish to write to any of our Veterans Committee members, please write each member, individually, putting the correspondence in its own stamped envelope, C/O The National Baseball Hall of Fame, P.O. Box 590, Cooperstown, NY 13326. We will forward your correspondence in its original envelope to each member. We will not forward correspondence to any member that isn't already in a stamped envelope."

The current members of the Vets Committee are : Buzzie Bavasi, Joe L. Brown (Chairman), Buck O'Neil, Hank Peters, Bill White, Yogi Berra, Juan Marichal, Stan Musial, Pee Wee Reese, Ted Williams, Bob W. Broeg, Ken Coleman, Jerome Holtzman, Len Koppett, and Allen Lewis.

Dick Clark

## A Few Words From The Editor

As everyone should know by now this marks the first newsletter under a new editor. Due to the increase in public awareness and the requests for information concerning the Negro Leagues, the numerous jobs Dick Clark filled became too much for one man. For that reason, he decided it was time to step aside from the newsletter and let someone else assume the mantle. I am quite honored by the fact that Dick chose me. He filled this post for thirteen years (1985-1998) and always put out a newsletter that was both enjoyable and informative. I shall try my best to uphold his fine example.

## Contributors

This newsletter reflects the worthy contributions of the following: Paul Bauer, Eddie Bedford, Todd Bolton, Tim Booker, Eugene Bremer Jr., Dick Clark, Mike Everett, Larry Hogan, Ted Knorr, Larry Lester, Dalton Miller, Bob Mitchell, Jim Overmeyer, James Passannante, Bill Plott, Elvis Presley (just making sure you're paying attention),

### Obituaries

Johnny Evans, former infielder for the Indianapolis Clowns and the Detroit Stars died January, 9, 1999 in Long Island, New York.

Luther Hughes, Sr., pitcher for the Detroit Stars in 1947 died in Sarasota, Florida on Sept. 22, 1998. He was 80 years old.

We have just received word that former Birmingham Black Baron pitcher Clarence Carl Moore, age 78, died Saturday, Nov. 6, 1996 after a one year illness.

### 40 Best Negro Leaguers

This election has not had the results that had been hoped for where NLC members are concerned. As of Jan. 21, Co-Chairman Dick Clark had received 53 ballots with 165 different players receiving votes. The major problem is that he has received ballots from only 15 committee members. Due to this fact, the deadline has been extended from Feb. 1 to Feb. 15. Ballots can be sent by e-mail, snail mail, or fax, but no telephone calls. The final results will be published in the April 1999 newsletter. Any committee member whose name does not appear on the following list should finish and submit their ballot immediately. Committee members who have already voted are: Scott Allen, Luis Alvelo, Todd Bolton, Rich Bozzone, Dick Clark, Bob Davids, Jeff Eastland, Ted Knorr, Larry Lester, Jerry Malloy, Sammy Miller, Jim Overmyer, Jim Riley, Kaz Sayama, Prior Smith, Gregg Truitt, and Lyle Wilson.

### Committee Announcements

Most, if not all, of you that receive your newsletter by e-mail mostly likely received an e-mail message from a company named DMD Designs advertising items related to the Negro Leagues that they have for sale. Several questions have been sent to SABR president Larry Gerlach concerning these e-mails. He is currently looking into this due to the fact that it appears that DMD Designs apparently "used the NLC mailing list for the solicitation." More info as it becomes available.

Bob Davids passed along a truly amazing find. A boxscore from July 1894 covering a game whose participants included Bud Fowler, Grant "Home Run" Johnson and a player using the name "Zane" It was actually future writer Zane Grey, using the name to protect his college eligibility. \*\*1pg.

Committee member Sammy J. Miller requested that committee members be reminded that he is no longer involved with the production of the Blackball Calendars. While he was always grateful to hear the comments of his fellow Negro League enthusiasts while he was involved, any future comments regarding the product should be sent to the publisher.

David Marasco's latest article from The Diamond Angle concerning home runs at Griffith Stadium in 1945 is available. \*\*1pg.

Al Ritter reports that he is alive and well. His new address is 260 West Jersey Street, Gladstone, OR 97027. Phone number is (503) 656-2313.

Brent Kelley's latest Negro League interview from Sports Collectors Digest was with Casey Jones of the Memphis Red Sox. \*\*1pg.

David Skinner has returned from a very successful trip Cuba. He was able to take in the local baseball scene as well as gaining new insights into the island's baseball history and the roles of Afro Cuban and African American players in it. While there he met Sevro Nieto, one of the foremost historians in Cuba baseball history. Senor Nieto filled in some spots in David's research on the Long Branch (NJ) Cuban teams of the 1910's. Senor Nieto is seeking a publisher and english translator for several proposed works.

### Online Announcements

A new book, "Baseball On The Web" by Rod Edelman, and published by MIS: Press, a subsidiary of Henry Holt and Company, Inc. is available. The 400 page book contains a short chapter (seven pages) on the Negro League related web sites. \*\* 6pgs.

Laura Weir has passed on that the Negro League related website she is in the process of constructing should be up and running by the time you read this.

John Puttock and others are putting together a new foundation to give financial assistance to former Negro League and Major League ballplayers. The foundation's website will be located at [www.forgottenheroes.org](http://www.forgottenheroes.org). According to John anyone "with suggestions, criticism, or information on people who might benefit" should contact

him through either e-mail at [forgottenheroes@msn.com](mailto:forgottenheroes@msn.com) or by phone at (626) 568-7807.

David Skinner, P.O.Box 777, Bisbee, AZ 85603, (520) 432-3995 can also be reached at [leopardo@webtv.net](mailto:leopardo@webtv.net).

The Diamond Angle quarterly has a new website at [Http://www.aloha.net/~tdaflow/](http://www.aloha.net/~tdaflow/)

### Negro League Related Articles

Jet Magazine 11/30/98 "The Sporting News Names 25 Blacks On Its List of 100 Greatest Ballplayers...." \*\*1pg

2/3/34 articles from unknown publication have picture and article on three sport star (baseball, football, & basketball) Joe Lillard. \*\*2pg

Nice picture of two sport star (baseball & football) Bob Marshall \*\*1pg

"Aaron's Last Home Run Ball Is Back" from Sports Cards, 1/99, \*\*1pg

A display entitled "110 years of Baseball at Lockhart Field" ran at the Benzie Shores District Library in Frankfort, MI until June 15, 1998. The items on display were loaned to the library by newsletter contributor Pete Sandman. \*\*1pg from the April 5, 1998 Benzie County Advisor entitled "Historic Baseball Materials on Display at Library."

Undated boxscores covering games including Rube Foster, Pop Lloyd, Spots Poles, and Bruce Petway. \*\*1pg

The Winter 1998 issue of the American business Law Journal contained an article entitled "Major League Baseball's Monopoly Power and the Negro Leagues" by Alfred Dennis Mathewson. If interested in the article, check with the largest public library in your area.

It was reported in the December newsletter that legendary Memphis Red Sox pitcher Verdell Mathis passed away on Oct. 30, 1998. Additional obit "Lefty's Gone", Jackson Advocate, 11/12/98 \*\*2pgs.

An undated obit of Samuel D. Solomon is available. \*\*1pg. According to the obituary, from an unnamed paper, Solomon who trained Muhammad Ali, Sonny Liston, Leon Spinks, and other famous fighters, fought over 300 lightweight and welterweight bouts in his life and spent time as a catcher in the Negro Leagues. Anyone with information on Mr. Solomon's playing days should pass it on to Dick Clark.

\*\*1pg. article from The Times "MLB Is Faced With Big Play Opportunity" concerning former Negro Leaguer Robert "Bob" Mitchell Sr.'s attempt to get pensions from MLB for all former Negro League players.

Only one Negro League related appeared in the latest issue of the Baseball Research Journal. It was entitled "Notice on Nat Peeples: The Only African American in the Southern Association". \*\*1pg

### Current and Future Individual Projects

Pete Sandman, Box 801, Frankfort, MI, 49635 is seeking any available information and as well as photos of J.C. Hartman and Kelly Searcy.

Eugene Bremer Jr., 3853 North Wood Road, University Heights, Ohio, 44118, is looking for information concerning his father Negro League veteran Eugene Bremer Sr. Anybody that can help, please do so.

John Russell, P.O. Box 990267, Boston, MA, 02199, who has supplied the committee with much useful information from the Social Security Death Index is looking for information as to when during their careers that Martin Dihigo and Biz Mackey became switch-hitters. He is interested in seeing if become switch-hitters had any effect on their average and power. He is also interested in any information about James "Cool Papa" Bell wearing glasses. One picture of Bell running the bases circa 1937 has him wearing them. John would like to know the reasons for this.

Paul Bauer announces that an agreement has finally been reached on the title of the upcoming autobiography of Frazier Robinson. The title is to be "Catching Dreams: My Life in Baseball's Negro Leagues". Last reports were that it was due out in February. No word as to whether the title problem will push back the publication date. The book will also have a foreword by the ever eloquent Buck O'Neil.

Nick Wilson is working on a book that will be based on accounts of ballplayers from the 1920's.

Would anyone with information regarding the New England Colored League please forward it to Lyle

Wilson. It would be greatly appreciated.

Tim Vrana, 1128 Junco Court, Columbus, IN, 47203, (812) 376-9787, is interested in getting involved in Negro League research. Anyone that could use some help, get in contact with Tim.

SABR member Bill O'Keefe is willing to help with research. He contacted be contacted at 4222 Cooke Street, Duluth, MN, 55804-1946. His phone is (218) 525-7382 and his e-mail is WPOKRO@aol.com.

### Upcoming Events

The Discover Greatness Traveling exhibit is currently at the Minnesota Historical Society and will be there until March 14, 1999. The address is 345 Kellogg Boulevard West, Saint Paul, MN 55102. The exhibit will be at the Museum of African American History, 315 East Warren, Detroit, MI 48202 from April 4 until May 16, 1999, and at the Afro-American Cultural Center, 401 North meyers Street, Charlotte, NC, 28202 from June 6 until July 18, 1999.

An exhibit entitled "Living Legends of the Negro Leagues", featuring recent potraits by Milbert Orlando Brown will be showing from February 6th until February 31 at the Art Atrium II Gallery in downtown Portsmouth, Virginia. The exhibit will also include taped interviews of former ballplayers and a lecture area Negro League players. \*\*1pg

An exhibit entitled "*Somebody To Cheer For: Black Professional Baseball and African-American Community Life in New Jersey, 1860-1950*" will be opening at the Middlesex County Museum in New Brunswick, New Jersey on Sunday April 11, 1999 at 3:00pm and will run through the summer of 2000. Committee member Dr. Larry Hogan will be one of the guest curators of the exhibit that wil divided into five chronological sections. It appears that it will be an outstanding exhibit. I could not do justice to all the exhibit will include in the limited space available here. All the info is available. \*\*4pgs.

### Negro League Con II: Atlantic City Bash

Special correspondent to The Negro League Courier, Mike Everett from Atlantic City, submitted the following report on the "Pop Lloyd Stadium 50th Anniversary Celebration and SABR Negro League Committee Conference".

"Last August, the Society for American Baseball Research's Negro Leagues Committee held its first Negro League Conference in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The conference, sponsored by the Historical Society of Dauphin County and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission was attended by approximately 100 people. A number of veteran Negro League players also attended. Considering the success of this conference, the John Henry "Pop" Lloyd Committee has agreed to host this year's event in connection with the 50th Anniversary Celebration of "Pop" Lloyd Stadium.

#### **Thursday, August 19 -**

The Conference unofficially opens with an exhibit at the Atlantic City Public Library entitled "*Beisbol Behind The Veil: Latin Americans In The Negro Leagues*". This would be followed by a reception and program featuring some of the veteran Latin players and exhibit curator, Todd Bolton.

#### **Friday, August 20**

**Turn Back The Clock Night** at Surf Stadium, home of the minor league Atlantic City Surf, celebrating Negro League baseball and featuring veteran players and participating teams wearing Negro League uniforms. Prior to the evening's game, there will be an unveiling of a bronze relief by Jennifer Frudakis, depicting the development of Negro League baseball up to Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier. Invitations to the unveiling will be sent to all living players depicted in the mural. Included are: Willie Mays, Henry Aaron, Larry Doby, Monte Irvin, Max Manning, and Jackie Robinson. Rachel Robinson will be invited to represent her husband.

#### **Saturday, August 21**

Panel Discussion - Negro League Legends: *Their Children Recollect & Reflect*

A gala dinner celebrating the 50th anniversary of the dedication of "Pop" Lloyd Stadium will feature the 7th Annual John Henry "Pop" Lloyd Humanitarian Award and Lecture. Invitations will be extended to veteran Negro League players, George Will, Gov. Tom Kean, Eddie Robinson, Frank Robinson, Congressman Lewis, and

Lena Horne.

**Sunday, August 22**

Closing Breakfast

Church Service will be held at Asbury Methodist where "Pop" Lloyd was a member.

Festivities at "Pop" Lloyd Stadium with players and families which will include Bar B-Q and Celebrity Softball.

In conjunction with these events, Richard Merkin has agreed to display his art work on Negro League baseball along with two other artists. Richard Merkin illustrated the book, *Leagues Apart*, and dedicated it to local legend Max Manning.

In addition, Mike Ross from Here's Broadway, Inc. has expressed an interest in bringing a version of the play, *Bingo Long and His Traveling All Stars*, to the area as part of the celebration. We are currently exploring the details and looking for possible venues."

The editor would like to thank Mike for his report. In addition to the above mentioned events, there will be the ever popular and always enlightening NLC meeting, led by our great bwana, Dick Clark. This will also mark the second year that the NLC Webb, Coates, and Peterson certificates will be awarded. As before the winners will be decided by the NLC Awards Committee. Please remember that bribes are not only accepted but encouraged. Make your checks payable to the "Send Sammy Miller To Martinique Fund."

Just for the record, the final tally, supplied by Ted Knorr, lead man for the Harrisburg Negro League Con, shows that SABR members got a \$131 value for \$60.

Anyone interested in presenting research papers at the Atlantic City Conference should begin getting their ideas together. If you wish to beat the rush, you can send an outline at anytime. The deadline for outlines is June 1. The final presenters shall be notified by June 30th. Send outlines to Sammy Miller, 3916 Archer Court, Florence, Ky 41042.

### The Marketplace

The 1999 "Blackball Calendar is available from IOKTS Production, 7007 Carroll Ave., Takoma Park, MD, 20912 for \$12.00 (plus \$3.00 s&h). Advertisement \*\*1pg.

\*\*2pg listing of back issues of The Diamond Angle available from the publisher. List details both what appears on the cover and stories in each available issue. The current issue, # 60, is available for \$4.00 from James Floto at The Diamond Angle Quarterly, 706 South Alu, Wailuku, HI 96793. The Diamond Angle is also preparing its ballot for their 1999 election for its Stars In Their Time (S.I.T.T.) Hall of Fame. A final ballot can be requested from James Floto at the above address. Various pieces concerning the S.I.T.T. Hall are available. \*\*3pg.

SABR is offering "The Baseball Research Journal Reprint of Vol. 1-3 for \$12.00 (postpaid). It is 186 pages long and contains the following Negro League related articles: "Many Old Negro League Stars Still Around" by John Coates, "East Meets West In Negro All Star Game" by Merl Kleinknecht, "Smoky Joe Williams" by John Coates, "The One-Man Team- Cristobal Torriente" by John Holway, and "The Southern League of Colored Base Ballists" by Bill Plott. Mail orders to SABR, 812 Huron Road E #719, Cleveland, OH 44115

The "Pop" Lloyd Committee is offering a 12"x36" entitled "The Legacy Continues" which "is filled with images that recall the great voices from Atlantic City's storied baseball history." It contains images of Pop Lloyd, Max Manning, as well as many others. It is well worth the \$15.00 price tag in that you not only get a great baseball poster but help continue the work of the "Pop" Lloyd Committee. \*\*1pg ad.

The Random House "Pro Baseball Dictionary" has entries of many Negro League stars.

American Memorabilia, Inc. has limited editions of some of the photos of the late Charles "Teenie" Harris available for \$60 each. They include two different Josh Gibson poses (one standing in his gear, one in catching stance in gear), a 1942 Homestead Grays team picture, and 1942 and 1943 Crawfords team pictures. Harris, who died this past June in Pittsburgh, was an artist in the truest sense of the word when it came to his photographs of African American life in Pittsburgh. \*\*1pg.

"Middle Innings: A Documentary History of Baseball, 1900-1948" by Dean Sullivan is now available and is 238 pages in length. The Negro League related articles in the book are: "Philadelphia Giants Win Black Championship (1906)", "Sol White On Colored Baseball (1907)", "Reports On Two Black Women's Teams (1908)", "New Division In Baseball (1923)", "Negro National League Is Chartered (1924)", "No-Hitter in Negro World Series (1927)", "Smokey Joe Williams Fans Twenty Seven Players (1930)", "First Negro League All-Star

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Game (1933)", "Satchel Paige Pitches Bismark to Semipro Title (1935)", "Are Black Players Up to Major League Snuff? (1944)", "Negro Ace Standout Prospect".

James H. Bready's book "Baseball In Baltimore", 254 pages, with photos and index is available. See the December issue of the SABR Bulletin, page 19, for ordering information. Two chapters, totally twenty six pages, in the book cover the Negro League aspect of Baltimore's baseball history, one entitled "Yea, Black Sox" and the other "Yea, Elites". While I have not had the chance to sit down and read the book, I have scanned over the two Negro League related chapters. They are indeed well written and include some very interesting photographs.

Ebbets Field Flannels has a new catalog out that contains many new Negro League related items. The best of the new items would have to be the Negro American League, Negro National League, and Eastern Colored League baseball caps. They are made out of weathered cotton twill with an adjustable leather strap and sale for \$25 each. For a catalog call 1-800-377-9777 or got [www.ebbets.com](http://www.ebbets.com).

A complete uniform from the (Satchel) Paige All-Stars from the 1940's that had once hung in the Helmes Museum in Los Angeles, recently sold at auction for \$2530, including the auction house premium.

The Negro League Autograph Guide by Kevin Keating and Mike Kolleth should be in your local bookstores at anytime. It contains more than 500 signature samples. It also contained a special chapter on the Negro Leagues and the Hall of Fame written by committee member Sammy J. Miller. \*\*1pg. review from The Vintage & Classic Baseball Collector.

\*\*2pgs. "Plenty of 1999 Sports Wall Calendars Available" from Sports Collectors Digest.

"From Maryland To Cooperstown: Seven Maryland Natives in Baseball's Hall of Fame" by Lois P. Nicholson and published by Tidewater Publishers is now available. It contain a chapter, sixteen pages long, on Judy Johnson.

The latest issue of The Vintage & Classic Baseball Collector contains "The Truth About The Jackie Robinson Case" by Arthur Mann. It is an article that orginally appeared in The Saturday Evening Post in 1950.

"Professional Baseball in North Carolina: An Illustrated City-by-City History, 1901-1996" by J. Chris Holaday and published by McFarland & Company contains some information on the Negro Leagues.

An article from the Jan. 29, 1999 issue of the Sports Collectors Digest entitled "Great and obscure in Alerta Cuban premiums" is available \*\*1pg. It discusses not only the famed "Antonio Alcaides" but also a set of cards put out in Puerto Rico in the early 1950's.

### Those We Lost In 1998

All jokes and kidding aside, please take a moment to remember those former Negro League veterans that left us in the past year: Robert Henry "Henny" Landers (1/7, age 67 in Kansas City, MO), Lionel Wilson (1/23, age 82 in Oakland, CA), Booker T. Robinson (1/29, age 78 in Lakeland, FL), Roy Welmaker (2/3, age 84), Gene Collins (2/9, age 73 in Detroit, MI), Robert "Pepper" Sharpe (in San Diego, CA), Gene Richardson (in San Diego, CA), Carlos "Earthquake" Ascanio (2/27, age 82 in Caracas, Venezuela), Gentry Jessup (3/26, age 83), John Wyatt (4/6, age 63), Charles "Hawk" Marvray (4/6, age 69), John Kennedy (4/27, age 68) Ray Noble (5/9, age 79), Daniel Black (5/12, age 72), Charlie "Hoss" White (5/26, age 70), Charles "Teenie" Harris (6/12, age 89 in Pittsburgh, PA), Al Campanis (6/21, age 81), Lee Moody (7/4, age 81), Alton Clay (8/15, age 74), Vincent "Shortie" Lee (9/18, age 89), Luther Hughes (9/22, age 80 in Sarasota, FL), Verdell "Lefty" Mathis (10/30, age 83), Robert "Bob" Thurman (10/31, age 81 in Wichita, KS).

I can think of no more fitting words to end this section than some spoken by the legendary Mule Suttles. I believe that each of these gentlemen would also find them fitting.

*"When I die, have a little thought for my memory, but don't mourn me to much."* - George "Mule"

Suttles.

Rest in peace, gentlemen.

### Final Remarks

Well, there you have it. The first issue of the new and revised (I won't go so far as to say improved) NLC newsletter. I would imagine you will find a couple of mistakes and if so, I apologize. Each and every one of them are my own fault and not that of our correspondents. Even with the mistakes, I hope you enjoyed reading it.

Sammy