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An Historical Look at the Negro Baseball Leagues: The Legend of the Black Knights

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The Edwin P. McCabe Honors Program

Senior Thesis

"An Historical Look at the Negro Baseball Leagues: The Legend of the Black Knights"

Terry Pierce

May 1994

Langston University
Langston, Oklahoma
AN HISTORICAL LOOK AT THE
NEGRO BASEBALL LEAGUES:
THE LEGEND OF THE
BLACK KNIGHTS

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Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the
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May 1994

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AN HISTORICAL LOOK AT THE
NEGRO BASEBALL LEAGUES:
THE LEGEND OF THE
BLACK KNIGHTS

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This thesis is dedicated to my grandfather A. W. Pierce, who was the inspiration to begin this quest into history.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

American baseball was never just a game; it was a passion of the nation. It rested up there with Mom and apple pie. Yet, as long as it was segregated, the entire nation would be. And segregated it was, like the movie theaters in the North, bus depots in the Midwest, restaurants in the West, and restrooms in the South. Blacks may not have been able to play in the major leagues before 1947, but they played the game nonetheless. They played wherever they could -- in the sandlots, city parks, and fairgrounds. They played in South Carolina and New York. They played in Santo Domingo and Mexico City. The very best of them played in the Negro National League, the Eastern Colored League, and the Negro American League -- the "major leagues" of black America. This is the story of the Black Knights.

Black baseball was avoided by the mainstream press, shunned by recordkeepers, and ignored by the white major leagues. Because the Negro Leagues were never big business the way the American and National Leagues have always been, souvenirs, photographs, and other memorabilia were not produced and collected at the same rate. The history is dizzyingly convoluted. Among leagues, teams, and players, stability was a rare commodity, and to keep the stories straight requires much juggling. The story of black baseball is basically unstructured. This research hopes to add to the information base and help mold out the true history of the Negro Leagues.
Statement of the Problem

This study hopes to fill in some of the gaps in the history of the Negro Leagues. More importantly though, this research is successful only if the readers can come away with a true sense of what the ballplayers of the era felt and why they played while enduring racism and humiliation. As Bruce Chadwick mentions in the Foreword to his book *When The Game Was Black And White*, anyone probing the subject of the Negro Leagues faces a journey into "an unchartered area, one with few maps, paths, or landmarks for guidance" (Chadwick 9).

Answers to specific questions were researched. These primary questions are:

1. When were the Leagues established and how long did they operate?
2. Who were some of the great players and personalities in the Leagues?
3. What was life for the players actually like?
4. What contributions, if any, were made by the Leagues and what were their impact on present day baseball?

Purpose of the Study

This study was conducted to pull together the previously written facts and history of the Negro Leagues with obscure oral history and data found through interviews, videotapes, articles, and books from and about those who played and lived during the era. Most do not understand the extent that the Leagues played in fulfilling many people’s lives. Baseball was not just white America’s pastime, but a love for blacks as well. This research hopes to answer those above-stated questions relating to the lifestyles of the players, the emotions which fueled them and the Leagues, and the contributions they left behind. Hopefully, the paper can shed some long deserved light on the Leagues and the men who made a large impact on the society of their time and beyond.
Organization of the Study

The introduction to the study, which includes a statement of the problem, research questions, and purpose of the study is presented in Chapter I. The pertinent literature on the history of the Negro Leagues is reviewed in Chapter II. The methodology is presented in Chapter III. The findings are discussed and introduced in Chapter IV. Chapter V consists of the summary and conclusions.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The history of the Negro Leagues has just recently come into the limelight of research. A few authors have taken the lead in the historical look at the lives and times of black baseball. These works have reminded some and introduced to others the importance the Leagues had, not only to those gifted athletes but to the whole towns and communities who rallied around their heroes.

One of these leading authors is Bruce Chadwick. His illustrated history of the leagues, *When The Game Was Black And White*, displays rare photographs and memorabilia. The addition of these helps the reader to visualize the conditions, feelings, and emotions that the players dealt with. Chadwick’s work distances itself from the other history books because of the quality and quantity of the pictures.

Others who have written in the same manner are Robert Peterson (*Only The Ball Was White*) and Donn Rogosin (*Invisible Men: Life in Baseball’s Negro Leagues*). Peterson takes a more historical path in telling the Leagues’ story. Rogosin prefers to use the intriguing stories of the men whose lives piece together the Leagues. Both works are entertaining as well as educational.

Besides books encompassing the entire Leagues, there are works about specific topics within the game. Janet Bruce’s *The Kansas City Monarchs: Champions of Black Baseball* focuses on the great Midwest team that had the largest following of any in the history of black baseball.
John Holway picked the biographies of several ballplayers to make up his work *Blackball Stars: Negro League Pioneers*. This is informative, but only in the lives of those he chose to highlight. The full scope of the Leagues is not apparent.

Jim O’Conner began at the end to tell his version of the Leagues. *Jackie Robinson and The Story Of All-Black Baseball* begins with Robinson’s breaking the color line of the major leagues in 1947. Even though this book does not point out all of the greats who dwelled in the Negro Leagues and instead highlights Robinson, it is noteworthy. It is perhaps the only book telling the history of the Leagues for children. This book for juveniles is a lone candle within the huge mass of literature on baseball aimed at children.

Harvey Frommer also took up the idea of describing Robinson’s feat in his book *Rickey and Robinson: The Men Who Broke Baseball’s Color Barrier*. This publication emphasizes the lives of Robinson the player and Rickey, the general manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers who had the insight to end the racism that hung over baseball for decades. The book also looks at cases of discrimination in sports during the same time period. This perspective is interesting in analyzing the parallel effects of segregation in several sports.

Since 1991 when over seventy former players from the Negro Leagues convened at baseball’s Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, hundreds of magazine and newspaper articles have been written. Most have been informative on the basic history of the black leagues. Some have been informative about the problems these men had to face and their plights after baseball. A few have attacked the lack of attention they received and deserved. Unfortunately, some only come about when a famous player has died, such as the recent deaths of James "Cool Papa" Bell and Roy Campanella.

One of the more interesting pieces is found in the February 23, 1992, edition of *The New York Times*. James E. Overmyer incorporated the Negro Leagues in his article entitled "Blacks have Never Found Room in Baseball’s Tower Suite." It pinpoints the major league’s inactivity in hiring or moving blacks and other minorities into front office executive positions.

M. B. Tolson
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He goes back to the majors' allowing black players to come from the Negro League teams, but not owners or front office personnel. The white owners looked at their black counterparts as disorganized and unprincipled. The owners believed the black leagues were corrupt because many of the owners were number barons.

The numbers men, who ran the types of lotteries now favored by state governments and were well-respected members of the black community, were among the few with enough money to invest in a team. They were smart entrepreneurs, too savvy to allow their game to be infiltrated by gambling. Black baseball had its share of problems, but accusations of fixed games were not among them, which is more than white baseball can say. Major League baseball threw away the chance of not only adding the assets of black ballplayers, but also black owners and general managers. Today the extremely conservative hierarchy is under attack for racial insensitivity.

Another article which stands out is one actually written by a former great of the Negro Leagues. Monte Irvin penned "The Time of a Lifetime" for *Sports Illustrated*'s July 19, 1993, issue. He recalls his times in black baseball as "some of the most enjoyable times" of his life (Irvin 106). He tells of his participation in the 1941 East-West Game, the Negro Leagues' version of the All-Star Game.

*Sports Illustrated* has been in the forefront of the number of quality articles about the Leagues as of recent years. In a Fall 1991 article *Sports Illustrated* evaluated Satchel Paige as the greatest pitcher ever. In the March 30, 1992, issue, Shelley Smith wrote of "Baseball's Forgotten Pioneers." Smith brought to light the "contributions made to the sport of baseball by former Negro league players" (Smith 72). As Smith shows, many of the players are in financial need. She believes baseball should be soliciting funds for those who contributed so much to the game. In the June 15 issue of the same year, Amy Nutt recalls the first black major league baseball player in 1884. "An All-But-Forgotten First" tells of Moses Fleetwood Walker who "played with the Toledo Mud Hens, sixty-three years before Jackie Robinson,
whom many consider the first black player to cross the color barrier" (Nutt 11).

The literature on the Negro Leagues can give a good picture of the times, but indepth
research on the history and men is still needed.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study was conducted to gather the present data on the Negro Leagues and to find missing or obscure information. The combining of these will add to the bank of information that has been collected and hopefully will supply new knowledge on the subject.

Focus questions presented in Chapter I were highlighted in every informative tool used in the research. The answers attained were not always parallel in the different materials, but their discrepancies were useful. The fact that not all answers were the same proved the individuality which is present in the telling of the history of the Leagues. People have different theories for circumstances which occurred. These led to a challenging study to ascertain a true history. Whatever the differences were, all avenues of information pointed toward a common light: those who played the game under the pressures of inequality and racism did so because of a true love of the game.

The study began with the books written about the Negro Leagues. These works have given an outline to the history and setting up of the Leagues. In the respect of a limitation in the use of books, the total number of works written is nowhere close to those compiled for the history of white baseball. Hopefully this thesis can show those authors that their diligent work did not fall on deaf ears or averted eyes.

Magazine articles have proved much easier to locate. The number of articles written on or about the Leagues has increased in recent years. These have been more personal than
the general history books. They have given real insight into the personal feelings and emotions of the players and Leagues.

Other than the two above-mentioned resources, which have offered the majority of information, video tapes, television programs, information from the Negro League Baseball Players Association, and oral stories have added to the thesis. Within these instruments, the missing link of the books and many articles is contained: the true stories of the life and times of the Negro Leagues. These hold the very essence of the whole paper. Anyone can read one of the history editions or recent articles on the subject, but this paper ties them together with the driving forces of the players and Leagues. This study gives a full historical look into the Negro Leagues. As well as the personal information, data was captured to display as statistics and pictures to help relay the importance and true meaning the Leagues had.

Limitation

There are limitations in the research of this topic. As stated in Chapter I, it is an uncharted territory. The total number of books is much less than needed. Autobiographies do not seem to be popular except those by the most famous of the Black Knights. These works provide the personal contact missing in the scarce history books. The number of articles is growing in magazines and periodicals. Unfortunately, the articles come about usually because of the death of a player. There is definitely a shortage of videos and programs on the Leagues. These limitations will be reduced only when more scholars and researchers decide to uncover and shed the needed light on the Negro Leagues.

This chapter gives the research pool used in the methodology of the paper. All of the tools used were specifically searched to find answers to the primary questions in Chapter I and to find any additional information not known or of interest in uncovering the legend of the Black Knights.
CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This study seeks to present a full, descriptive view of the Negro Leagues. The informative resources have been used to tie together loose ends in the history. Four primary questions were searched for in all tools used in gathering data. The findings will follow the order of these questions and their answers and other important information gained relating to the specific questions.

Beginnings

The first research question had to do with the formation of the Leagues. The question exactly: When were the Leagues established and how long did they operate? To secure this answer, the question must also deal with why the Leagues came about. During the early Nineteenth century baseball, as well as America, was segregated. From the beginnings of baseball, blacks were kept out of the major leagues. Yet, they were determined to play the game they loved. The true beginnings of the Negro Leagues took place in the formation of black teams in metropolitan areas in the 1870's and 1880's. Their success led to a professional minor league founded in 1887. The League of Colored Baseball Clubs began with teams in Cincinnati (the Browns), Washington, D.C. (the Capital Cities), Louisville (the Fall Cities), New York (the Gorhams), Philadelphia (the Pythians), Boston (the Resolutes), Baltimore (the Lord Baltimores), and Pittsburgh (the Keystones).

Even with the successful all-black teams, people still wanted to erase the color line which kept black baseball from being as prosperous as white baseball. Moses Fleetwood Walker did just that. In 1884 he bypassed local black teams and signed a contract with the
all-white Toledo team in the minor professional Northwestern League. During that first year, Toledo joined the American Association, a pro-league just below the status of the National League of today. Walker was the only black on Toledo’s team, or for that matter, on any team in the league. He endured the instant racism from fans, but the team members ultimately drove him out of the league. The white owners made sure there would not be any other blacks in the major leagues until Jackie Robinson in 1947.

Some black teams did not join leagues and played all over the country. They played basically anyone, anywhere, for the right amount of money. These barnstorming clubs played a very important role in the existence of the Leagues. Of course teams not belonging to a league of some sort had difficulty putting together schedules with other independent teams, renting stadiums, consistently drawing large crowds, and, most importantly, keeping players. By 1908 there were a dozen highly organized professional black teams playing in the Northeast, and a large number of others barnstorming around the country. Despite the fact that black baseball was thriving and continually growing, all efforts to integrate the majors failed.

Rube Foster was willing to challenge the barrier. In 1919 he put together a strong and well-financed plan to break the color line. He went to Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis and proposed that one all-black team join the National and American Leagues. This way, no white would play alongside a black. Black teams would stay in black hotels and would draw strong fan support from black communities. Foster was turned down. Out of this rejection was born the major leagues for blacks: the Negro Baseball Leagues.

In 1920, with Foster as the driving force, black owners from all over the United States met in Kansas City at the Paseo YMCA and formed the Negro National League (NNL). The league included the Chicago American Giants (Foster’s team), the Cincinnati Cuban Stars, the Indianapolis ABC’s, the Kansas City Monarchs, and the St. Louis Giants. The league added two eastern teams, the Atlantic City Bacharachs and Hilldale, a Philadelphia suburb of Darby,
as associate members to give the league a national scope. Flung over many states, the NNL experienced some chaos in its first few seasons.

Long on good intentions but short on real planning, the NNL got off to a promising if not shaky start. Despite league warnings, players still jumped from team to team. The small staffs of the clubs struggled to handle a professional league in which all the schedule had to mesh and a club could not take off for Ohio just because it got a good offer for a doubleheader. Organizing the league and keeping it on track required far more planning than barnstorming. And there was no league office, unless one counted Rube Foster’s pockets.

Expanding

The league needed an East Coast anchor to take advantage of baseball popularity in New York and to achieve real major league status. So, in the spring of 1923, the Eastern Colored League (ECL) was formed. The league was made up of the Brooklyn, Lincoln, and Cuban ballclubs from New York, as well as the Baltimore Black Sox, and the NNL’s associate members, Atlantic City and Hilldale. The two leagues had fourteen teams between them and some of the best ballplayers in the country. If only one league had been established, critics could have insisted that a league was just a fancy title for some teams that had played one another for ten years. Two leagues though were another matter. They formed a parallel universe to the sixteen-team white major leagues.

The development of the ECL did build the eastern audience needed as well as a national following. Because of the large growing interest in black baseball, towns in the South organized the Southern Negro Leagues. This smaller league consisted of the Atlanta Black Crackers, New Orleans Crescent Stars, Montgomery Grey Sox, Jacksonville Red Caps, Nashville Elite Giants, Birmingham Black Barons, and Memphis Red Sox. In addition to them, an all-black Texas-Oklahoma-Louisiana League was established in 1929, giving the black leagues the national scope they needed. (Within the Texas-Oklahoma-Louisiana League was
the neighboring Guthrie [Oklahoma] Black Spiders)

During the late twenties black baseball began to surge. The top owners of the NNL and ECL recruited the top players from the Southern leagues, semi-pro teams, and colleges. They rented major and minor league stadiums for big games and doubleheaders, providing the leagues with a big-time look. But the leagues were about to make a turn for the worse.

Striking Out

The ECL began losing teams because of the lack of financial support. Three teams dropped out in one season, and the Indianapolis club folded in 1929 when too many players left to join other clubs. By 1930 the ECL was a memory. But the spearhead of the leagues' downfall was the severe illness Rube Foster contracted in 1926. The man who had held it all together remained sick until his death in 1930. Foster's death, the stock market crash, and Depression of 1929-30 condemned the NNL. Dick Clark, head of the Negro League Committee for the Society of American Baseball Research, explained the events of the time period, and their effects on the leagues:

Blacks were always the hardest hit in economic downturns, and especially in the late twenties. Unlike now, there was no real black middle class. Most of them had low-paying factory jobs or small menial business clerk positions. They were the first to go in the waves of layoffs. They had no money to buy food or pay rent, much less go to Negro League games. Without that strong base of support, the teams couldn't make it.

(Chadwick 60)

By 1932, the Negro National League was dead.
Arise

Because some teams were strong enough to survive and hit the barnstorming trails, the thought of black baseball never really died. With the economy turning around, people could afford a weekend ballgame. With the emergence of the stars on the field and leaders running the teams, the league was reorganized in 1933-34. One of these new owners was Gus Greenlee. He served as the catalyst for reforming the streamlined league, made up of six teams. Their quick success brought the Homestead Grays to join them in 1935, and another league. In 1937, the Negro American League was formed, consisting of seven ballclubs (Rogosin 80).

As the thirties and forties unfolded, both leagues became increasingly prosperous. Black baseball, as a social and sports event, continued to grow in popularity. Black populations in big cities grew and likewise attendance for baseball in these cities. Blacks were now represented in large numbers, holding jobs that provided an income.

Crossing the Line

During the World War II years in the early 1940's, most of the top white ballplayers enlisted or were drafted. But primarily because they were too old to join up, many of the top black players continued to thrill crowds in the ballparks. The great success of the leagues caught the eyes of the white owners hungry to improve their economic gate numbers. When World War II ended, the storied Negro Leagues were bigger and better than ever. They had actually become too big.

The white owners needed new ideas and attractions to continue to make profits. The war years had severely cut their revenues, while the black teams increased. Integration was finally looked at by the general manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, Branch Rickey. After a lifetime in the Midwest and East, where he had seen the top black teams, Rickey knew how good the black players were. He decided that it was time the color line was erased. Rickey
knew he needed not only a talented black player, but a man who could take the abuse that would be heaped upon him. Jackie Robinson was his man. With the support of Commissioner Hap Chandler, who actually had to veto the owner’s no vote, Robinson was signed in 1945 from the Kansas City Monarchs. Years later Chandler explained his veto: "Why not? All the man [Rickey] was trying to do was sign a second baseman" (O’ Conner 63).

Robinson first appeared for the Dodgers farm team, Montreal, in a game against the Jersey City Giants on April 18, 1946. From that game forward there were no guesses as to how Jackie would do. He had four hits, with two being homeruns, two stolen bases, and two runs scored.

He moved up to the Dodgers in 1947, changing the face of baseball forever.

Opening the Door, Closing an Era

After Robinson’s entrance a few other talented blacks entered the league. The Dodgers also signed pitcher Don Newcombe and catcher Roy Campanella. The Cleveland Indians signed Larry Doby. By the end of 1947, Robinson was Rookie of the Year and five teams had blacks on their rosters.

With many of the black stars moving on to the majors, it was a triumph for the Negro Leagues, and a tragedy as well. Fans did not have to go to the black games to see their stars anymore, so they did not. Some of the top teams returned to the barnstorming trails when the leagues gave way by the 1950’s. Most teams played as long as they could until bankruptcy caught them. By the time the Dodgers won the World Series in 1955 led by Robinson and other black stars, the Negro Leagues and most black teams were gone. Some did continue to survive, but by 1960 all of the black teams had folded.

From 1920 and before to 1960, the Negro Leagues proved they could survive alongside the white major leagues. They had been so successful that they put themselves out of business by defeating the evil obstacle set against them from the beginning - segregation. The
Leagues were set up because of this problem, and they lasted until they resolved the problem.

PERSONALITIES AND PLAYERS

The Negro Leagues were made up of hundreds of great men who thrilled and entertained fans all over the country. These heroes served as role models to children whenever the black teams came to their towns to play. There are way too many teams to review them all, but some excelled beyond the limits of the Leagues.

Rube Foster is the father of black baseball. This large man was the energy and soul of the efforts to establish a black league. Before becoming the best of the Negro League managers, he had been the best pitcher for nearly a decade with the Cuban and Philadelphia Giants. He managed the Chicago Leland Giants to a 123-6 record in 1910. From 1911 until 1926 he was the president, general manager, and field manager of the Chicago American Giants—the leading black team in the Midwest (Chadwick 45).

Monte Irvin’s talents were honored in the obscurity of the Negro Leagues before his purchase by the New York Giants in 1949. Effa Manley, the owner of the Negro League Newark Eagles, said this about Irvin:

Monte was the choice of all Negro National and American League club owners to serve as the No. 1 player to join a white major league team. We all agreed in meeting, he was the best qualified by temperament, character, ability, sense of loyalty, morals, age, experience and physique to represent us as the first black player to enter the white majors since Walker back in the late 1880’s. (Peterson 76)

Josh Gibson was known as “the Babe Ruth of the Negro Leagues.” Next to Satchel Paige, the barrelchested catcher who generated tremendous batting power with little apparent effort was the biggest attraction of his race in baseball. He began as a pro at eighteen with
the Homestead Gray in 1930, and he also starred for the Pittsburgh Crawfords as Paige’s teammate. A brain tumor led to his untimely death at the age of thirty-five. Satchel Paige told this story about the man:

We was playin’ the Homestead Grays in the city of Pittsburgh. Josh comes up in the last of the ninth with a man on and us a run behind. Well, he hit one. The Grays waited around and waited around, but finally the umpire rules it ain’t comin’ down. So we win. The next day, we was disputin’ the Grays in Philadelphia when here come a ball outta the sky right in the glove of the Grays’ center fielder. The umpire made the only call possible. “You’re out,” he says to Josh. “Yesterday, in Pittsburgh.” (Smith 83)

For twenty-two years Leroy Satchel Paige was a legend in the Negro Leagues, thrilling fans with his famous "hesitation pitch" as he won hundreds of games. On his forty-second birthday he was sold by the Kansas City Monarchs to Bill Veek’s Cleveland Indians in the major leagues. As the oldest rookie in major league history, he had a 6-1 record. He eventually pitched three shutout innings for the A’s in 1965 at the age of fifty-nine. Veek recalled the great pitcher:

If his career had run its full course in the major leagues, Paige would have held every record there was. He had the best fastball, the best control, and the most knowledge of pitching of anyone. He also had his own priorities, like fishing. Once in St. Louis with the Browns, he arrived at the park in the seventh inning dragging a huge 80 pound channel catfish. (Peterson 112)
LIFE AND TIMES

The best way to try to picture the life of the players is to listen to them reminisce on those days.

James "Cool Papa" Bell -- We went into a lot of small towns where they’d never seen a colored person. In some of those places we couldn’t find anyplace to sleep, so we slept on the bus. We’d just pull over to the side of the road, in a cornfield or someplace, and sleep until the break of day; and then we’d go into the next town, hoping we’d find a restaurant that would be willing to serve colored people. Lot’s [sic] of time for months and months I played on percentage - all of us did - and we’d be lucky to make $5 a game.

(Rogosin 55)

Buck Leonard -- Every morning they would give us 60 cents to eat on all day, but we couldn’t. Breakfast at that time would cost about 25 cents and lunch would take 35 or 40 cents, and that would take care of the 60 cents.

(Rogosin 69)

When Negro League teams barnstormed through the South they were careful. They could not stay at any white-only hotels and often refused to stay at the run-down hotels available, so frequently they lodged in the private homes of black baseball fans. When acceptable accommodations could not be found, sometimes they slept on the bus or at the ballpark. Teams could not eat at white-only restaurants. Sometimes a light-skinned black player passed for white and ordered take-out sandwiches for the whole team, or a black cook who got to know the players at the ballpark would invite them to eat in the kitchen of the white-only restaurant where he worked. But more often than not, to avoid confrontations in
restaurants the team bus stopped at a grocery store on a dusty highway and players bought bread, butter, and cold cuts.

Jimmie Crutchfield played from 1930 to 1944. At the age of eighty-four now, he may have summed up the feelings of the players with this story:

It was July 24, 1934. The hottest day on record in Chicago, and we were playing against the Philadelphia Stars. A doubleheader in those flannels? We didn't have a dressing room, but at the end of those two games we were wet like we took a shower. And we drove all the way to Philadelphia like that. We knew that it wasn't until we got to the top of the mountains that there was a place we could eat; had to send someone round back to get us some sandwiches. We took off our shirts and tied them onto the windows of the bus and drove off. You had to love the game to put up with all that. But it was love, love for the game.

(Smith 89)

CONTRIBUTIONS

The Negro Leagues have never received the respect and acknowledgement they deserved, and many of the pioneering ideas have been taken as someone else's vision. Although the white major leagues did not have lights until 1935, the Kansas City Monarchs' owner, J.L. Wilkinson, first developed a portable light system in 1929-30. Following his lead, Pittsburgh's Gus Greenlee installed baseball's first permanent lights at his own ballpark in 1933. Black baseball also gave the baseball world the batting helmet and shin-guards to better protect batters from objects being hurled at them at speeds between 70 - 100 miles per hour. New, daring offensive strategies were used in the Leagues before the white majors. The hit-and-run and stealing bases were first perfected in the Leagues.
But the greatest contribution given to the game was the never-ending fight against segregation. Without the Negro Leagues, blacks would not have had a paved way into the majors. Pat Scantlebury said this:

I was never bitter about the segregation. That was the way it was in those days. I wanted to play and I could only play in black leagues so I played in black leagues. I always felt, after integration, that our efforts, all those games and all those bus rides, made it possible for Jackie Robinson and those who followed. Yes sir, we paved the way.

(Chadwick 79)

This chapter presents the results of the research and provides the answers to the primary questions of the study.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Chapter One presented the background to the study. It included the research questions to which answers were sought. Chapter Two presented the pertinent literature on the history of the Negro Leagues and other information dealing with this time era. Chapter Three provided a description of the research methodology and the informative tools used. Chapter Four was a presentation of the results found in answering the research questions.

Why were the Negro Leagues started and how long did they operate? Because of the segregation that passed throughout America at the beginning of the Twentieth century, blacks had to form their own leagues to play the game they loved. The first professional league began in 1920 and leagues lasted until 1960.

Who were some of the great players and personalities of the Leagues? Hundreds of men served as role models and heroes to fans across America. Some that stood out in the crowd were Rube Foster, Monte Irvin, Josh Gibson, and Leroy Satchel Paige.

What contributions, if any, were made by the Leagues and what were their impact on present day baseball? The Negro Leagues were the first to have night baseball with the use of stadium lights, a batting helmet, shin-guards, and the use of entertaining, daring baseball planning.

For those whose interest is sparked and wish to do further research on the subject, a suggestion: take a flashlight, shovel, and breadcrumbs. The flashlight will be needed to find the way in. The history is dark and not an easy one to decipher. The shovel is used when one finds the stories and data. It is shuffled into a chaotic pile. The breadcrumbs are to use as a trail to find one’s way out. The stories and history are hypnotic and can capture the attention. When one finds his way out, he should try to help straighten the path for others. Hopefully,
this research can act as a candle to guide or spark an interest into the legacy of the Black Knights.


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