BLACK BASEBALL, BLACK ENTREPRENEURS, BLACK COMMUNITY

DISSERTATION

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By

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ABSTRACT

During the 1980s, popular and professional historians of baseball gave increased attention to the black experience in the national pastime. This scholarship has enhanced our knowledge of black involvement in baseball, examined the trials and triumphs of black ballplayers and extolled their competency as they confronted racist America. Their research has also pointed to the connection between black baseball and black community, particularly emphasizing how the game served as a unifying element to communities in transition and how it influenced to bridge class distinctions.

While these efforts have dramatically expanded our knowledge, their approaches in examining black baseball has been problematic. Essentially, their approaches limits our comprehension of the structure of black baseball and the multiple meanings the game has had for African-Americans. A major deficiency is the overwhelming emphasis on the experience of players and the game on the field. While they have noted the connection between black baseball and black community, most of the research,
especially in popular works, has neglected to analyze this linkage. While some academics state that black baseball served as a unifying element and a bridge in class distinctions, their vision is based on limited case studies, presenting a monolithic response within the black community, and is generally more stated than substantiated. Part and parcel of these deficiencies is the virtual absence of any analysis which intersect the role of local businessmen and communal patterns with the development of black baseball.

This study examines the interconnection between black baseball, the black community, and the black entrepreneurs, from 1880 to 1930. It analyzes the forces that led to the professionalization of black baseball and the creation of both the Negro National and the Eastern Colored Leagues. Three themes serve to unify the narrative: (1) the role of local entrepreneurs in the organization and development of the structure of black baseball; (2) black baseball's relationship with black community development; and (3) the rise and eventual demise of both the Negro National League and the Eastern Colored League in the 1920s.
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INTRODUCTION

During the 1980s, popular and professional historians of baseball gave increased attention to the black experience in the national pastime. This scholarship has enhanced our knowledge of black involvement in baseball, examined the trials and triumphs of black ballplayers and extolled their competency as they confronted racist America. Their research has also pointed to the connection between black baseball and black community, particularly emphasizing how the game served as a unifying element to communities in transition and how it influenced to bridge class distinctions.

While these efforts have dramatically expanded our knowledge, their approaches in examining black baseball has been problematic. Essentially, their orientation limits our comprehension of the structure of black baseball and the multiple meanings the game has had for African Americans. A major deficiency is the overwhelming emphasis on the experience of players and the game on the field. While they have noted the connection between black baseball and black community, most of the research, especially in
popular works, has neglected to analyze this linkage. While some academics state that black baseball served as a unifying element and a bridge in class distinctions, their vision is based on limited case studies, presenting a monolithic response within the black community, and is generally more stated than substantiated. Part and parcel of these deficiencies is the virtual absence of any analysis which intersect the role of local businessmen and communal patterns with the development of black baseball.

This study examines the interconnection between black baseball, the black community, and the black entrepreneurs, from 1880 to 1930. It analyzes the forces that led to the professionalization of black baseball and the creation of both the Negro National and the Eastern Colored Leagues. Three themes serve to unify the narrative: (1) the role of local entrepreneurs in the organization and development of the structure of black baseball; (2) black baseball's relationship with black community development; and (3) the rise and eventual demise of both the Negro National League and the Eastern Colored League in the 1920s.

New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago were chosen to investigate the unsubstantiated assumption by earlier scholars that black baseball blossomed in these communities in the early part of the twentieth century. The comparative approach is also adopted because the recent scholarship on black urban history emphasizes that there were important
differences over time, by region, and in accordance with communal size. At the center of the structural development of black baseball was the efforts of local businessmen to gain a hegemony over their respective baseball communities. The ways in which the various forces differed in each of the three cities impacted on the extent and degree to which local entrepreneurs influenced the course of events. The study also looks at why black entrepreneurs prior to 1930 enjoyed more operational autonomy in Philadelphia and Chicago when compared to their New York counterparts.

In an effort to establish linkages between both the African American and baseball scholarship, Kenneth Kusmer's framework for analysis was utilized. Kusmer argued that the examination of the black urban experience could be organized around the notions of external (forces impinged upon blacks by whites), internal (the black response to these forces), and structural (forces that were nonracial in nature, but impacted upon the black urban experience). Further, he also suggested that black urban studies should go beyond the examination of a single community, and examine several communities in conjunction -- carefully studying a range of variables -- at different points in time. After several attempts of utilizing this approach, I found it difficult to construct the narrative around the notions of external, internal, and structure forces, and therefore
made some modifications. Using this terminology proved to be confusing. I replaced the notion of external, internal, and structural forces with an effort to establish intersections between both the African American and baseball scholarships, to identify the variables that had the most significant impact upon black baseball development. These variables were the impact of black migration and community settlement; the emergence of the economic philosophy commonly attributed to Booker T. Washington; the rise of the black middle class; the emergence of semiprofessional baseball; and the changing attitude business had towards baseball.¹

A brief glimpse of black baseball's history began early in the century with Sol White's History of Colored Baseball. White was black baseball's amateur historian of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. He also achieved distinction as a player, manager, and promoter of the black game. His book exemplified the baseball guide books that were written in the game's early years. Guide books were usually published by outsiders -- like a restaurant owner, or a local merchant -- who were willing to bear the expense of printing to get their advertisement to the public. They also served to widen the scope of the game by enabling fans to keep abreast of the changing rules and teams and to follow, by statistics and articles,
the latest deeds of their heroes of the diamond. White chronicled the plight of black players in the late nineteenth century playing in white organized leagues -- the origins of the first black professional teams, like the Cuban Giants -- the establishment of the color line -- and painted a rosy picture of black baseball's future. While it is unavoidably sketchy and uneven document, it serves as an adequate overview for the research of future scholars. ²

In the 1930s, popular works by James Weldon Johnson and writers of the Works Project Administration (WPA) reinforced White's assessment of black baseball. They chronicled the career of John "Bud" Fowler, the first black player to play in white organized leagues, outlined the exploits of the Cuban Giants, and briefly discussed early twentieth century teams, like the Bacharach Giants. These works merely served to preserve the exploits of these early black teams and players, and provided little or no analysis. ³

By the 1970s, a generation of academics had studied innumerable aspects of African-American history; however, they virtually ignored their sporting experience. This has resulted in the research of preintegration black
baseball being examined primarily by amateur historians. They have basically approached the subject in an uncritical, even celebratory fashion.

Researching black baseball is especially difficult due to the sporadic coverage it received in both the black and white press respectively. Instead of systematic research in archives and traditional sources, historians have relied upon more informal ways of obtaining information -- primarily, the use of oral history. While these interviews are valuable in preserving firsthand accounts, they are compromised by the players' magnanimous recreations, resulting in distorting the grim realities of racial segregation. In addition, both the lack of documentation and an understanding of African-American history generally and baseball history particularly is also symptomatic of much of the writing on black baseball.

The popular study of black baseball in the 1970s began with the works of Robert Peterson and John Holway. These efforts provided a broad overview of black baseball in the era of segregation, and introduced a host of black stars of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to a new generation. Peterson's work, in particular, sought to tell why and how black baseball evolved after the Civil War, and how the Negro Leagues developed. In their own words, black baseball stars recreated the itinerant lifestyle and flamboyant play of the Negro Leagues. In
confronting the difficult task of researching black baseball in the segregated era, Peterson indicated the most fruitful part of his research was interviewing former black players. Therefore, in what can best be described as the Peterson model, oral history became the primary tool for researching black baseball. The fundamental underpinning of the Peterson model is that in the era of segregation, the caliber of play in the Negro Leagues were equal, if not superior, to the major leagues. 

Unfortunately, our understanding of black baseball has not progressed appreciably beyond the Peterson model. Donn Rogosin, one of the first academic to examine black baseball, relied heavily on the remembrances of ex-Negro Leaguers to assess the culture of the black game. Rogosin uses black baseball "to open the window of black life during segregation," and he shows how the lives of Negro Leaguers reflected the efforts of black society in general and attacked the "porous" barriers of apartheid "ideologically, economically, and emotionally." 

The oral histories captures the essence of life in black baseball. While they greatly enhance our knowledge, there are limitations in how they can be used. Human memories tend to gravitate toward exaggeration and romanticism. The issue of accuracy is essential for anyone interested in analyzing oral expression of memory in historical research. It is evident that memories are
limited and a complete reconstruction of them are virtually impossible. John Bodnar recently asserts that people both search for common memories to present needs and refashion the past to please both the people with whom they discuss and interpret it. Therefore, questions regarding construction of memory illuminate how individuals, ethnic, and racial groups, and cultures establish their own identities and how they connect with larger scale historical processes. 6

The researchers using the oral history genre sought to capture the living truth about black baseball before it vanished away. However, their studies have not been contextualized by either an understanding of African-American history generally and baseball history particularly. There is a tendency towards a more emotive than interpretative design in most historical works to date. This has resulted in providing a sense of the Negro Leagues that is more experiential than analytical and presents an abridged view of black history, along with a bias presentation that sets integrated baseball as a universally desired objective and an unqualified good.

The scholarly studies of black baseball began in the mid-1980s with the works of Janet Bruce, Rob Ruck, and Neil Lanctot. The interpretation elaborated by these scholarly works may be briefly summarized as follows. Black baseball served as a unifying element of communities
in transition, while at the same time, bridging the gaps between class distinctions. Teams, like the Kansas City Monarchs and the Homestead Grays, were major social institutions in the black community. The works of Bruce and Lanctot provided an extensive look at the financial and organizational structure of both the Monarchs and the Hilldale Athletic Club of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In addition, they also examined their barnstorming excursions and provided insights into both teams relationship within the community. Moreover, these scholars argue that black baseball developed and prospered after World War I -- faltered in the late 1920s -- and eventually collapsed in the wake the Great Depression. 7

Ruck's examination of sport in black Pittsburgh provides the most comprehensive examination of the linkages between baseball and black community developments. Although he explores several sports, baseball is the primary focus of his study. Ruck relates both the accomplishments and failures of black baseball in Pittsburgh to the socioeconomic realities that are both external and internal to the black community. What is significant about Ruck's work is his contextualization of baseball with other sports, instead of assessing it in isolation. Moreover, he argues that the integration into Organized Baseball resulted in
the black community losing control of its sporting life and serve to limit, as opposed to expand long overdue opportunities.  

While the scholarly works have agreed that black baseball served as an unifying element within the black community, the claim is more asserted than demonstrated. To validate this position it is valuable to move beyond the examination of single cities to a comprehensive study of an examination of the histories of many communities -- carefully studying a range of variables -- at different points in time. Kusmer states that generalizations drawn from a single community in black urban history has proved to be problematic, and that many assumptions are more stated than corroborated. He cites Gilbert Osofsky's influential article "The Enduring Ghetto" stressing the damaging effects of poverty and segregation, resulting in "an unending and tragic sameness about Negro life in the metropolis over two centuries." Osofsky had relied primarily upon information from New York and Philadelphia and evidently felt that the two cities could be used interchangeably. Conversely, black baseball scholars have also relied heavily on the generalizations drawn from the communities they studied. The limitation is that often these communities are not representative and Ruck concludes that the hegemony black Pittsburghers enjoyed in their neighborhood was atypical.
More problematic with the scholarship has been that black baseball scholars have not sufficiently linked baseball to broader themes in African-American history. For example, Bruce cites that the establishment of black baseball teams, like the establishment of separate institutions, was only a temporary solution until the ultimate goal of integration was achieved. What Bruce failed to recognize was that the establishment of separate institutions was a solution to achieve the ultimate goal of integration. African American baseball owners, like other businessmen, did not seek to isolate themselves from the larger society, selling only to blacks, nor were consumers to patronize black businesses only because they were black. African Americans were to advance themselves by free competition on the open market. Their economic philosophies were essentially a laissez-faire formula for black advancement through individual commitment by individual blacks to the gospel of work and wealth. Their ultimate goal was not to build a black counter culture. Through the advocacy of black unity and self-assertion on a political level, while encouraging cultural and economic assimilation, would eventually result, theoretically, in the integration of blacks into mainstream American society. For all its limitations, Peterson's work did, at least, attempt to identify the forces that led to the development of the Negro Leagues.
This study aims to combine the Peterson model aspirations to a comparative analysis of three African-American communities -- New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago -- with the analytical framework of black urban historian Kenneth Kusmer. It is my intention to provide a more coherent and comprehensive account of black baseball from 1880 to 1930. This endeavor covers a multitude of issues, but three broad themes serves to unify the narrative. The first is the role of local entrepreneurs in the organization and development of black baseball. In the late nineteenth century, black baseball did not begin as a community based enterprise. The rise of the black middle class after Emancipation, combined with the changing attitude business had toward baseball, resulted in the creation of all-black teams that catered to a white clientele. The Cuban Giants, one of the first independent black teams, emerged as the model for future black clubs to emulate. Commonly referred to as semiprofessionals, both hotel and local white businessmen often financed the Giants as a means to promote their business and provide an alternative source of entertainment. The Giants were also the first black team to make playing baseball year round -- commonly referred to as barnstorming -- as a means of economic survival. Corporate sponsorship enabled whites to gain a foothold in operating black teams. Moreover, while this paternalistic business relationship enabled
African Americans to take an active role in the management of the club, the principal assets that constitute a baseball club -- the franchise, the players under contract, and the ball park -- were under white control.

But with the transformation of the black community in the early twentieth century, black entrepreneurs -- utilizing the Cuban Giants as a model -- were able to capitalize on opportunities brought about by the impact of the Great Migration. African American baseball owners were an expressed image of the economic philosophy commonly attributed to Booker T. Washington. While these owners did not seek to cater to a growing black market exclusively, they did seek to operate a segregated enterprise within the framework of a national economy. In other words, the segregated economy -- black independent teams -- would operate within the framework of a national economy -- white semiprofessional baseball. These black independent clubs became the foundation for both the Negro National and Eastern Colored Leagues. Moreover, it was Andrew "Rube" Foster's aspirations, the founder of the Negro National League, to create a successful enterprise that would eventually cater to a white clientele. In this way, the white organized leagues would accept black baseball as a legitimate business enterprise.
To understand the organizational structure of black baseball, it is especially valuable to explore the business practices established by the National League in the late nineteenth century. These collusive agreements became the model for future leagues, both black and white, to pattern themselves after. Obstacles such as franchise shifting, labor unrest, and poor economic conditions, almost destroyed Organized Baseball. These obstacles also plagued the black professional leagues in the 1920s, causing black baseball entrepreneurs to seek alternate ways to respond to them. While the independent nature of black baseball served as a stopgap measure, these entrepreneurs recognized the need to establish an organized league as a means of economic stability. 11

The relationship between baseball and black community development constitutes the second theme of the study. Black migration in the 1880s and the later Great Migration during World War I had a dramatic impact on the demographics of northern cities. Migration gave rise to new civic and religious institutions and encouraged the expansion of existing ones. It also stimulated the drive for African-American business development. While migration did not remove the barriers that had constantly hindered black business development -- like the inability to secure credit -- it vastly expanded the market for business enterprises. Black baseball clearly illustrated this expansion. However,
this growth exhibited a profound difference in development from city to city and from decade to decade. There is a relationship between the business practices established by independent teams -- the desire of entrepreneurs to establish a black professional league patterned after Organized Baseball -- and the Great Migration -- impacting on the organization and the development of black baseball.  

Finally, the rise and eventual demise of both the Negro National League and the Eastern Colored League form the third theme of this study. The economic gains generated by World War I, however miniscule, gave African-Americans greater discretionary income and leisure time than ever before. Interest in semiprofessional baseball was at fever pitch. Black baseball reached its peak during the postwar period, with several communities in the Northeast, Midwest, and Upper South able to support professional teams, often under black leadership. But by the mid-1920s, the nervous breakdown of Andrew "Rube" Foster, followed by the collapse of Hilldale leader Edward Bolden a year later, marked the beginning of the end. The Great Depression and Foster's death in 1930, was the final nail in the coffin as black baseball experienced the rise of new leagues only to see them collapse due to economic turmoil, a brief return to independent ball, and the emergence of new entrepreneurs
-- Cumberland Posey, Gus Greenlee, and Abe Manley - who would take control of black baseball in the upcoming decades. 13

The narrative is divided into three parts. In part one, "From Slavery to Money Period," chapter one traces both the forces that shaped the black experience, and origins of baseball among freedmen and slaves. Chapter two analyzes the impact of both the black middle class and the changing attitude of business towards baseball in the development of all-black teams. Chapter three discusses the relationship of the black independent teams with white organized baseball. In part two, "Black Baseball In The Age of Booker T.," chapter four traces the dramatic changes that occurred in the black community, and the rise of Chicago as the black baseball capital. Chapter five traces the origins of black baseball in New York and Philadelphia. Chapter six deals with the rise of Andrew "Rube" Foster. In part three, "The Rise and Fall of the Negro National and Eastern Colored Leagues," chapter seven analyzes the impact of the Great Migration on baseball. Chapter eight analyzes the obstacles that hindered league formation, and the rise of the Negro National League. Chapter nine discusses black baseball's war over players, and the rise of the Eastern Colored League. Chapter ten deals with the forces that led to the decline of the two leagues. Chapter eleven discusses the reorganization of
both leagues, and the collapse of the Eastern Colored League. Chapter twelve discusses the collapse of the Negro National League, and highlights the forces that would influence black baseball after 1930. In my conclusion, I will discuss baseball's significance to black community development.
REFERENCE LIST


8. Ruck, *Sandlot Seasons, 182-200*


10. Bruce attempted to developed a framework for analysis primarily from the work of August Meier, in particular *Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963). This attempt to link baseball to the integrationist perspective was also based on the comments of Sol White in the *History of Colored Baseball*. White, the eternal optimist, stated that "some day the [color] bar will be dropped and some good man will be chosen from out of the colored profession that will be a credit to all, and pave the way for others to follow." However, White's aspirations was not indicative of all black players. Moses Fleetwood Walker, the first black
to play in Major League Baseball in the late nineteenth century, was so bitter as result of his experience in white leagues that he advocated total separation of the races. Much like the later Garvey movement, Walker suggested that black Americans should emigrate to Africa, and if need be, force blacks to leave America. For a detailed discussion on Walker advocating the separation of the races see Our Home Colony: A Treatise on the Past, Present and Future of the Negro Race in America (Stuebenville, Ohio, 1908); White, History of Colored Baseball, 85. Allan Spear briefly discusses the new black leadership's effort to organized a black professional league, with its home base in Chicago, in Black Chicago: The Making Of A Negro Ghetto 1890-1920 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 77-90, 116-118.

11. For a discussion on the early practices established by the National League see Seymour, Baseball, 75-86; Voigt, American Baseball, 60-80.


13. Andrew "Rube" Foster and Edward Bolden are two black baseball entrepreneurs that illustrates the profound differences the game had from city to city. Foster managed the Chicago American Giants, without question the most successful black team of the early twentieth century. Foster mastered the barnstorming system developed by the Cuban Giants, while at the same time, developed significant civic ties with Chicago's black community. What was significant about Foster's use of barnstorming, was the continuity he was able to develop. Foster was able to developed a continuous playing schedule by playing local teams in the Chicago area during the summer months, and playing in the California Winter League during the winter months. In contrast, Bolden developed a continuous playing schedule by establishing a network between both black and white semiprofessional teams in the Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware area. Both of these systems of operation enable these entrepreneurs to gain a hegemony in their regions. The differences, however, were instrumental in the formation of separate leagues.
PART ONE
FROM SLAVERY TO MONEY PERIOD
INTRODUCTION

From slavery to emancipation, a ball playing tradition existed within the African American culture. Special occasions, weekends for rest and relaxation, and seasonal celebrations allowed blacks to engage in ball games as part of their leisure activities. Ball games gave way to baseball as the game became more formalized. When emancipation celebrations emerged, athletic contest, baseball in particular, became an integral part of the festivities.

Economic transformation, institutional racism, and structural inequality impacted upon the growth and development of the black community. In response to these forces, institutions that defined the black community emerged. It was within the context of institutional development that black baseball evolved into an organized sport. The game served as a means in which the mulatto elite could socialize in recreational setting, and pattern their lives after affluent whites. More important,
advocating white middle-class values would be an essential element in promoting the black game in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

By the late 1860s, commercialism would affect the black game. Direct challenges would be issued and social activities would no longer accompany the game. Teams would charge admission and share in the gate receipts. Mulattoes were the first to organize baseball clubs, and clearly were in an advantageous position to capitalize on the opportunities that would present themselves in the 1880s.

Tracing the evolutionary process of both the professionalization and commercialization of baseball among African Americans from 1780 to 1890 is the aim of this section. Chapter one discusses the forces that shaped the black experience after the Revolutionary War, the origins of ball playing among African Americans, and the rise of organized ball clubs. Chapter two explores the forces that led to both the professionalization and commercialization of baseball among African Americans, through the emergence of the Cuban Giants. Chapter three highlights the business practices that led to the formation of white Organized Baseball, the first effort to form a black professional league, and the impact white league affiliation had upon the Cuban Giants.
CHAPTER I

BLACK BASEBALL BEGINNINGS
FROM SLAVERY TO EMANCIPATION

The rise of black baseball emerged at a time when urban society in America underwent an enormous transformation. The forces that shaped modern America -- industrialization, urbanization, and immigration -- operated in New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago's African American communities within a framework of institutional racism and structural inequality. Although these forces manifested themselves in diverse ways in each city, black were still unable to compete on equal terms with either native-born Americans or the thousands of newly arrived immigrants. African Americans recovered somewhat during the Civil War and Reconstruction decades, only to suffer again under much the same circumstances in competition with the arrival of "new" immigrants in the 1880s.

Despite the numerous obstacles, African Americans would enjoy and participate in ball games, particularly the newly "National Pastime." During slavery, special
occasions and seasonal celebrations enabled blacks to engaged in ball games as part of their leisure activities. Recreational activities were an integral part of leisure celebrations and as the process of manumitting slaves occurred in northern cities, ball games gave way to baseball and this sport became an essential part of emancipation celebrations. Additionally, the internal forces that impacted upon African Americans baseball -- the rise of social organizations -- entrepreneurial and economic activities -- and middle-class formation -- began to take root in antebellum America. Both the rise of social organization and middle-class formation were instrumental in the development of black baseball into an organized sport.

The institution of slavery existed in northern states until the opening decades of the nineteenth century. Moved primarily by the rights of man, both state legislatures passed acts of gradual emancipation -- Pennsylvania in 1780 and New York in 1799. Thus, being born on New York or Pennsylvania soil guaranteed freedom and slaves from other states sought asylum there. The effects of gradual emancipation resulted in an increase in the African American populations of both New York City and Philadelphia.

At the same time, the impact of growth, economic transformation, and the structural development of northern cities affected blacks adversely. The result of the new
industrial order and the emergence of the factory system occurred within a context of widening occupational opportunities, particularly for whites. In addition, the manufacturing sector had traditionally provided the first step up the occupational ladder to new arrivals to the city. Between 1850 and 1880, the number and proportion of skilled positions increased significantly with the economy's expansion. This benefited immigrants and especially their American born children in terms of upward mobility. Further, consolidation led to the professionalization of police and fire departments and expanded the public school system.¹

A more profound effect upon the antebellum populace than industrialization was the railroads. This mode of transportation increased market size, destroyed local economies, and placed individuals in an intensely competitive economy. The enlarged market created opportunities for many, but it also produced drastic change and bitter disappointment for others. For example, during the decade of canal supremacy, high shipping costs enabled small businessmen to establish modest manufacturing firms throughout the state as a means of supplying local needs. The railroads reduced costs drastically; they enabled enterprises in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh to ship their wares into the hinterland, thereby damaging, if not
destroying, smaller businesses. Moreover, while many companies in the interior of a state failed, the number of individuals employed in manufacturing fell considerably.\(^2\)

Economic transformation in the antebellum period resulted in an internal reshuffling of both resources and business activities. Some individuals managed to successfully compete in the new market system and continued business as usual. However, others switched into endeavors that promised better rewards. African Americans were hurt by the changes. From the outset, blacks were not only excluded from the new and well-paying positions, they were driven out of traditionally unskilled jobs, denied apprenticeships for their sons, and prevented from practicing skills they already possessed. African Americans did not reap the benefits of increased opportunities in skilled positions brought on by economic expansion. Frederick Douglass appealed to antislavery bosses to give young blacks employment as blacksmith apprentices, cabinet makers, joiners, etc. But the majority of abolitionists focused their energy and resources on the condition of slaves, rather than their African American neighbors. In regards to the few blacks who were already in a trade, they "either have too little capital or too little enterprise to bring up and employ apprentices and journeymen." \(^3\)
But segregation, exclusion, and poverty did not completely define the black experience in the mid-nineteenth century. Newcomers to New York and Philadelphia, for example, were also likely to see emerging institutions in the black community. The church was recognized as the key institution. It helped shape the black community's identity in terms of race and class, was both an expense and a source of professional employment, and served as a forum for discussion and the focus of much social, intellectual, and recreational life. Emerging institutions -- like The New York African Society For Mutual Relief and the African Society in Philadelphia -- exemplified a philosophy that became popular in the late nineteenth century -- the doctrine of self-help. These societies were black-operated and were almost always affiliated with the church.  

Despite the numerous obstacles African Americans confronted, a few blacks adjusted to the economic transformation. By 1840, shops and services were available to the community, and before foreign white merchants saw the possibilities of this local trade, it was controlled by enterprising free blacks. They published a newspaper, operated first-class restaurants, dry good shops, hair dressing establishments, and tailor shops. The restaurants and the richer stores were located in the financial district
or in white shopping neighborhoods. But the majority of black establishments were in localities where African Americans congregated. 5

Yet the small number of black businesses exemplified a lack of opportunity. This occurred not because of a lack of efficiency, but largely due to half free status carrying numerous social and economic handicaps white merchants never had to face. In addition, there were only a few blacks in the North, and their small numbers in a particular city was not sufficient to support local businesses. Furthermore, businesses in the North were better developed, requiring more efficiency and capital than in smaller urban communities of the South, and blacks had fewer opportunities to figure in the business world. More important, the unprecedented industrial development of the North and West tended to leave the small black business man behind. The black enterprises that did exist illustrated the courage of black businessmen who risked their resources which might be damaged or destroyed by a race riot. 6

Institutional racism and structural inequality infringed upon African American's ability to compete on equal terms with native-born white and the newly arrived immigrants. However, blacks were still affected by the mid-nineteenth century baseball craze. African Americans who had adjusted to the economic transformation of the
antebellum period would, in the Civil War decade, form sport associations. Moreover, baseball became the vehicle in which these sport organizations would provide its members with both recreation and a means of displaying their privileged status.

FROM BALL PLAYING TRADITION TO ORGANIZED EVENT

Examining the transition from leisure-time celebrations to emancipation celebrations provides the best evidence of a ball playing tradition in African American culture. Slaves were allowed time off during certain periods of the calendar years to pursue recreational activities. As the process of manumitting slaves in northern cities occurred, status groups in the form of elite social organizations emerged. Baseball as an organized sport evolved from these social organizations and became a means of socializing with other members who shared the same cultural characteristics. In addition, these early black baseball clubs, particularly the Philadelphia Pythians, would develop a paternalistic relationship with white baseball clubs, suffer the first recorded act of segregation, and by 1869, exhibit the first signs of commercialism in the black game.

The ability to pursue leisure activities were contingent upon time off on the weekends, special occasions, and the planting and harvesting cycle. Saturdays and Sundays were normally set aside for rest and relaxation
on plantations. A few celebrations were staged when there was a plantation visitor, or when a member of the master's family had a birthday or got married. The most extensive slave holidays were seasonal celebrations observed annually when the most critical plantation chores, planting and harvesting, had been completed. 7

While some plantations celebrated Thanksgiving and Easter, Christmas was the biggest slave holidays between the slack period of fall harvesting and spring planting. As early as the eighteenth century, upstate New York slaves observed Pinkster, a slave Easter celebration of parading, dancing, games, drinking, and eating. Christmas was the longest and most universally observed slave holiday during this or any other period in the slaves' calendar year. Frederick Douglass cited ball playing as one of the most popular leisure activities of a slave's Christmas holiday. He indicated that "by far the larger part [of the slave population] engaged in such sports and merriments as playing ball, wrestling, running foot races, fiddling, dancing, and drinking whiskey . . ." In regards to playing ball, Douglass was probably referring to some variations of "rounders" and/or "town-ball," two of the most popular ball games on slave plantations. 8

Spirited athletic contests were an integral part of slave holiday customs. As Northern states began the process of emancipating slaves, these contests were borrowed from
the slave custom as the foundation of Emancipation celebrations. Ball games gave way to baseball as it began to grow in popularity, and remained the most popular Emancipation celebration event. By the late nineteenth century, in cities in upstate New York, like Oswego, Binghamton, and Norwich, black Americans had established a tradition of meeting to celebrate their freedom from bondage. Moreover, baseball was connected to an event where African Americans countenanced racism in their country and rallied for civil rights. 9

During the process of manumission, a significant group among free blacks, known as mulattos, had already existed. Primarily the off springs of slave women and white masters, these mulattos had been freed because of kinship to their owners. At the time of the first decennial census in 1790, there were 59,000 free blacks in the United States. By 1830 there were 319,000 free blacks in the United States, and thirty years later the number had climbed to 488,000, of whom 44 percent lived in the South Atlantic states, and 46 percent in the North. Blacks trained as skilled artisans, a domestic servant for a wealthy white family, or an entrepreneur catering the needs of a white clientele would, in the decades following the Civil War, become the nucleus of the black middle class. This was especially true in northern and bordering cities like Boston, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and New York. 10
In addition to occupational status, a long history of free ancestry was treasured, especially if one's forebear included distinguished white people. Members not only belonged to old families, but restricted themselves to marrying within the group, socializing only with other members, and striving to maintain similar lifestyles. Distinguishing characteristics of status groups lies in the criteria used to determine membership eligibility. In addition to family background, membership in social clubs and churches, and skin color are just some of the most common traits status groups used to establish boundaries. Some members emerge as acknowledged leaders, as either well or less respected, and eventually an informal hierarchy of most members from lowest to highest occurs based on the criteria unique to the group. At this level, it may be athletic ability, or hosting lavish parties that determines who holds the position at the top. In the larger society, those individuals with the most desirable characteristics in a community will be ranked highest, and if substantial enough, will form a group. Black baseball served as a means of this status group to socialize with members with the same characteristics, display their athletic talent, and give some of the most lavish parties of the nineteenth century. 11
The earliest evidence of a black organized ball club can be traced to Jamaica, New York, in January, 1860. The Henson Base Ball Club exemplified the plight of black Americans in dealing with the unwritten laws of segregation. The black citizenry of Jamaica were denied access to public facilities, which affected the baseball club, because "the prejudice is so strong." They endured racial hostility and were even attacked by some of the white citizenry. 12

During the Civil War years, a plethora of newspapers reported contests among all-black teams. In 1863, the Brooklyn Eagle reported a local game between the Unknowns and the Monitors with the headline: "A New Sensation in Baseball Circles - Sambo as a Ballplayer and Dinah as an Emulator." The Newark Daily Advertiser stated that "considerable excitement was created among the colored 'boys' of this city . . . by a base ball match between the Hamilton Club of this city and Henson Club of Jamaica, L.I. both composed of the descendants of Ham." All black nines swept through black communities of many American cities and towns during the 1860s. They appeared in Newark, Camden, New Brunswick, Boston, Chicago, Rockford (Ill.), Ripley (Ohio), Washington, D.C., Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Carlisle (Pa.), Brooklyn, New York, Utica, Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Albany, Rochester, Johnstown, and Lockport (N.Y.), Baltimore, and New Orleans, among other places. 13

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Several factors contributed to the emergence of several all-black teams in the 1860s. First, John Hope Franklin states that by 1860 free blacks were concentrated in six areas, which included cities like Baltimore, New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. More important, free blacks were inclined to concentrate into urban areas, the very regions that baseball exploded among whites in the 1850s. There were 25,600 African Americans in Baltimore, 22,000 in Philadelphia, 12,500 in New York, 10,600 in New Orleans, and 3,200 in Charleston. The greater opportunities, both economic and social, doubtless accounted for their tendency to concentrate in cities. 14

A second factor dealt with the high value the mulatto elite placed on a long history of free ancestry, particularly if blacks were connected to an elite family. Baseball historian Harold Seymour states that the upper classes had given their "imprimatur to the game," and this served as a signal for the people at large to embrace it. He cites a contemporary writer who indicated that the "great masses, who are in a subordinate capacity," could participate in baseball, while at the same time the "best citizens" were encouraging it everywhere. Baseball served as a means of disproving the idea of black inferiority, and demonstrating themselves worthy of citizenship.
Moreover, blacks would both exhibit their athletic skills in the national pastime, while at the same time advocate white middle-class values.  

Finally, both the inexpensiveness of the game and the plethora of vacant lots made it easy for the average person to follow in the footsteps of the elite. Baseball also benefited from the fact that most adults knew the game because they played it as a child. Their familiarity with it and nostalgia for it combined to make them good spectators. While blacks at times found it problematic to find a field to play on, this obstacle did not dampen their enthusiasm.

It was within this context that the Philadelphia Pythians emerged as the most prominent African American team in the 1860s. They provide the best evidence of the game's amateur era in the black community. The Pythians were composed of prominent members of Philadelphia's black citizenry and would be the foundation of the Quaker City's black middle class in the late nineteenth century. Baseball became an event in which the mulatto elite could socialize with other members of their "distinguished" group, and maintain a similar lifestyle by staging week long galas that generated enthusiasm in the black community.

The Pythians' organization consisted of four clubs and it amounted to a kind of roll call of the leading black politicians, educators, and lawyers of the next thirty
years. But the majority of the players, like the white baseball clubs of that era, were artisans, petty proprietors, and clerks. All of the Pythians were native-born Americans and were slightly older, an average age of 28, than their white counterparts. Many of the Pythians were also active in other black social and civic organizations. Approximately two-fifths of them belonged to the Banneker Institute, a literary and debating society that shared a room with the baseball club. One-third of them joined civil rights organizations, such as the Pennsylvania Equal Rights League and the Social, Civil, and Statistical Association of the Colored People of Pennsylvania. 17

Octavius Valentine Catto was the driving force behind the Pythians Base Ball Club. The son of a Presbyterian minister, he was a leading figure in Philadelphia's black community. In addition to the Pythians, Catto was the corresponding secretary of the Pennsylvania State Equal Rights League, and was the spark behind the efforts to end streetcar segregation in 1867. Despite his stocky size, Catto was an agile baseball player, and while a student at the Institute for Colored Youth, had learned to play cricket in games played against the Lombard School. It was there he met Jacob White who also became a pivotal figure in the Pythian organization. White later became principal of the Robert Vaux Consolidated School, and was
also asked by W.E.B. DuBois to edit his classic work, *The Philadelphia Negro*. It was during his stint in the army that Catto began to play baseball.  

Baseball provided black Philadelphians with a social event that, in some cases, lasted an entire week. The players were showered with picnics, dances, and lunches. Black women planned social activities that caused great excitement within the community. No doubt some of these week-long activities were also part of the Emancipation celebrations there. In September 1867, the Bachelors from Albany was the first black team to visit Philadelphia. Later that same month, the Mutual and Alert baseball clubs of Washington visited the city. The Mutual club had on its roster two young prominent African Americans of the day -- Charles R. Douglass, son of Frederick Douglass, and Hugh M. Brown, later principal of the Cheyney Training School. By the end of 1867, the Pythians had compiled a 9-1 record.  

The game and the following social events were relatively expensive undertakings. As a means of securing revenue, the Pythians charged club dues of five dollars for active members and one dollar for inactive ones. In addition to the entertainment, the dues were needed to buy equipment, and to ensure that the Pythians remained essentially an elite organization.
Securing an adequate playing facility was an obstacle the Pythians constantly confronted. South Philadelphia provided green pastures available for games. But the threat of hostile Irish-Americans forced the club to cross the Delaware into Camden, or the Schuykill into Fairmont Park. Historian Roger Lane suggests that one reason why the Pythians consolidated into one club was that there were safety in numbers. 20

One solution to this obstacle was an arrangement made with the all-white Philadelphia Athletics. The Pythians shared the Athletics' facilities and Harry Hayhurst, the A's captain, would also umpire the all-black nine's important games. Relations were then good with a chance of them getting better. In 1868, Jacob White congratulated the Athletics after a "brilliant victory" that upheld "the pride of Philadelphia on the base-ball field." The Athletics secretary thanked White for "these manifestations of confidence from our brethren in the city, that have met us on all sides." 21

While both clubs expressed mutual respect for each other, Octavius Catto had his own agenda. According to the competitive shortstop, the skill of the Pythians was attracting "considerable interest," and not a little anxiety, among the white fraternity. A "true championship," especially for supremacy in Philadelphia, would match both blacks and whites together. Considering their mutual
relations with the Athletics, not to mention the eternal optimism blacks felt at the end of the Civil War, the possibility of such a contest seemed plausible.

Clearly the formation of the Pythians illustrated the efforts of the mulatto elite to gain acceptance into mainstream America. Given the mania surrounding baseball during this period, the game became a way in which this status group could try to pattern their lives after upper-middle-class whites. It was also common among white clubs to entertain with parties, dinners, and dances. Additionally, a great deal of emphasis was placed on white values and the imitation of affluent whites, an attitude that inclined the black elite to separate themselves from the rank-and-file of black society. The Pythians sought to create an acceptable moral image that advocated white middle class values. Club members were prohibited from drinking liquor, playing cards, and gambling. The team would also not tolerate "unbecoming language or conduct" that would bring disrepute on the club or the Banneker Institute. The Philadelphia Sunday Mercury reported that the Pythians were "well-behaved gentlemanly set of young fellows . . . [who] are rapidly winning distinction in the use of the bat." 22

In 1867, the Pythians filed an application to gain admission to the National Association of Base Ball Players (NABBP). This organization was the first centralized
organization which governed the sport during the Civil War era. Players and representatives met annually at a convention "to revise the rules, settle disputes, and control their own game." The NABBP became the first baseball organization to bar black players and clubs from membership. Their rationale for this discrimination was that "by excluding them [the Pythians] no injury could result to anybody, and the possibility of any rupture being created on political grounds could be avoided." While the plight of African Americans was a hot political topic in the nation's capital, the NABBP's rhetoric was a mere smoke screen to hide their racial prejudice. 23

The following year the Pythians attempted to gain admission into the Pennsylvania Convention of Baseball Clubs. No doubt being a member of this governing body would sanction Catto's aspirations of a true championship. While Hayhurst supported the Pythians, the majority of white teams opposed the black team's membership. Raymond J. Burr, the Pythians' representative, was informed by members of the Athletics that it was in the black club's best interest to withdraw their application, "than to have it on record that we were black balled." After several meetings, it became apparent that the Pythians' application would be rejected, marking the second time the Pythians were excluded from an organized baseball league on the basis of race. 24
By 1869, evidence of commercialism occurred in black baseball. Colleges, like Howard University and Lincoln University, offered direct challenges with no social events following the game. The Mutual Club of Washington arranged a game promising only "a suitable boarding house" and to "share with you the proceeds of the gate and assume no other responsibility." The Mutual Club expected to draw a good gate. Later that same year, the Uniques of Chicago came to Philadelphia; an enclosed grounds was available and "thousands" paid to see the game. Next came the Monrovia Club of Harrisburg; all games ended with a Pythians victory. By the end of the year, the all-black nine from Philadelphia were undefeated. However, as a result of the informal ban, Catto's aspirations of a true championship against white competition never occurred. 25

By 1871, the Pythians reached their peak in popularity and success; but it was to be short lived. On October 10, at a time when African Americans won the right to vote, Octavius Catto was about to exercise his right as a citizen. While leaving the Institute of Colored Youth, Catto was drawn into an argument with a white man and was shot to death. Blacks considered this an act of premeditated murder. Catto had long been a target of white hostility due to his leadership role and militant stance in advocating civil rights for African Americans. He was also becoming more of a national figure, aiding the administration of
the freedman schools. Praise came from his Republican friends that "he was prominent in politics being looked up to and confided in by his people as a man of earnest conviction and judgments beyond his years." The violence that had occurred on election day resulted in a riot with at least two other blacks killed and many blacks and whites wounded before the melee subsided. On October 21, a mass meeting of both black and white citizens passed resolutions deploping the bloodshed and censuring city officials for not maintaining order. Investigators of the riot revealed more police abuses than mob violence. The exclusion of the Pythians from both the NABBP and the Pennsylvania Convention and the death of Catto illustrated the steady decline in race relations at a time when optimism for black America was so high. 26

Yet baseball did not die but grew in popularity. As racial hostilities eased enough to allow blacks onto the playing field, more and more African Americans learned to play the game. By the 1880s, aspiring African American entrepreneurs would seize an opportunity to transform baseball into a commercialized amusement.
REFERENCE LIST


6. Ibid.


16. Ibid.


21. J.C. White to Philidore S. Bell, Esq., September 7, 1868, and Bell to White, September 14, 1868, in the records of the Pythian Base Ball Club, American Negro Historical Society Papers, Leon Gardiner Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; in Kirsch, Creation, 168, 177.

22. For a discussion on white baseball clubs giving lavish parties as part of their festivities see Seymour, Baseball, 13-22; Sunday Mercury in Casway, "Pythians," 121.

23. The objectives of the NABBP in Seymour, Baseball, 42; Adelman, A Sporting Time, 126-29.


CHAPTER II

INDEPENDENT BALL
THE RISE OF SEMIPROFESSIONAL BASEBALL
THE BIRTH OF THE CUBAN GIANTS AND
THE GORHAMS OF NEW YORK

The emergence of black professional teams in the nineteenth century coincided with both a change in attitude business had toward baseball, and the rise of the mulatto elite after Emancipation. When the game ceased being a "problem" for businessmen in the Gilded Age, company sponsored teams appeared and became a source of company pride. Their success led to transforming the prior ambivalent attitude on the part of businessmen, to one of full-fledged acceptance. More important, this change in attitude illustrated how the mulatto elite utilized their status position for economic gain by creating black professional teams.

Occurring simultaneously was the transition of amateur teams into semiprofessional ones. This transition, combined with business's changing attitude towards the game and the rise of the black middle-class, enabled blacks to shape
the dimension of black baseball's future. These black semiprofessional teams were primarily white enterprises with white power brokers controlling the principal assets that constitutes a professional ballclub. Although their business relationship was a paternalistic one, blacks still established the business practices that sustained an independent club. At the same time, their social interaction with the black theatrical profession enabled these black entrepreneurs to create a playing style on the field that was inherently African American.¹

Both the distinction of white ancestry among a subordinate group and opportunities to exploit this characteristic for economic and social gain, led to the emergence of a small mulatto elite in urban communities in both the North and South. Feeling privileged over the unmixed blacks around them, they distanced themselves and developed their own social and community life. Their lifestyle was often patterned after that of whites whom they were able to observe closely because of their frequent contacts in service capacities. This clearly defined status group of mulattoos that had appeared by the Civil War ascended to the top of the social ladder; they would continue to grow during the fifty years after emancipation.²

With their roots in white society, the mulatto elite evolved primarily through a paternalistic relationship with upper-class whites. In the larger cities of the North
as well as the South, craftsmen, barbers, headwaiters, and other small businessmen serving the needs of a wealthy white upper class played a prominent role in the local black elite. While this was a continuation of the roles some free blacks assumed before the Civil War, for others these occupations offered the only opportunity to rise above the common condition of the black masses. Historian David Katzman called barbering the "single most important black business" of that era.  

It was from within the ranks of the mulatto elite that aspiring entrepreneurs sought to capitalize on the baseball craze by creating a business enterprise. The mulatto's relationship with the wealthy white upper-class placed them in contact with power brokers who could financed such a venture. More importantly, these black baseball teams would cater to a white clientele, and would reflect an effort on the part of the mulatto elite to gain acceptance in American society by assimilating to American middle class ways.

The rise of the mulatto elite after emancipation occurred almost simultaneously with the emergence of semiprofessional or semipro teams. In the 1870s, semipro teams could be classified into three categories: local teams or "stay at homes;" traveling teams; and touring teams. Local teams usually played games within a close proximity of their home base. These teams developed a
close knit network with other semipro teams, perhaps within a hundred mile radius, as a means of decreasing both travel and overhead expenses. Traveling teams had no home base and would barnstorm the nation for gate receipts. Touring teams fell under both classifications and were the elite of the semipro teams. Possessing their own grounds, combined with the reputation as a "crack" team, enabled these clubs to expand their travel itinerary and establish rivalries with teams in more lucrative markets, like New York City. Independents generally belonged to no league but paid its players and charged admission. They commonly discharged their players in the winter, unless they toured the South. Independents often signed their players to one year contracts only rarely containing the newly created reserve clause for the following season. At the beginning of each season, players had to make new arrangements. During the season, independents either paid its player a weekly salary or a "co-op" plan, a method in which a team's share of the gate receipts was divided among the players and owners. 4

Semiprofessional teams utilized the same business practices as Organized Baseball in terms of generating and distributing revenues. A home team would share a percentage of the gate receipts -- normally 40 percent -- or pay a guarantee -- a fixed amount usually set at
$250, commonly referred to as a "heavy guarantee" -- to the visiting team. This guarantee was essential to attract the top clubs to their home grounds. 5

The emergence of independent teams as professional enterprises was the direct result of the changing attitude business had towards baseball. At first, the business community was ambivalent towards the game. Large numbers of young blue and white collar workers, and some employers, played amateur baseball. However, there was little formal support and occasional outright opposition from many businessmen. Employers feared that baseball would distract workers from their job commitments. This fear blinded them to the fact that baseball, in many ways, imitated business practices and promoted attitudes beneficial to constructive work and play. By the 1880s, employers began to recognize that baseball was compatible with business, a central reason the game was popular among urban workers in the first place. 6

By the early 1880s, the rise of the mulatto elite, the transition of amateur teams into semiprofessionals, and the changing attitude of business towards baseball led to a movement that created several all-Negro teams. Aspiring entrepreneurs, particularly in the hotel industry, seized an opportunity to capitalize on the novelty of an all-black team playing baseball on a "major league" level. These clubs were race based in terms of the players on
the field (the labor force) and in managing the day-to-day operations of the enterprise. At the same time, the business arrangement established by these entrepreneurs exemplified the paternalistic relationship the mulatto elite had with upper-class whites. The principal assets that constituted a professional baseball club -- the franchise, the players under salary, and the playing facility -- were controlled by whites. In 1882, the Cincinnati Enquirer noted, "Philadelphia has a nine of colored professionals." This could have possibly been the Orions, one of the strongest teams in Philadelphia at that time. Another professional team, the St. Louis Black Stockings, according to the Cleveland Leader of May 1883, enjoyed the pick of the best colored players in the country. The Sporting Life reported in August of 1884, that the Athletics beat the Mutuals, 30-5, at Baltimore then "failed to pay their unfortunate brothers from Philadelphia their share of the gate receipts, and the latter had to walk home." 7

The Cuban Giants were the most prominent African American club of the era. The Cuban Giants emerged from the consolidation of three black teams into a top notched independent club -- were sponsored by a wealthy capitalist during the regular season -- and were also sponsored by the Hotel Ponce de Leon in St. Augustine, Florida, as a source of entertainment for the hotel's guests. The Giants
developed a "stay-at-home" travel schedule playing games in New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, from April to October. They also scheduled exhibition games with the National League, American Association, National Colored League, and Eastern League clubs, circuits that constituted Organized Baseball. They exemplified the independent team employed to represent a city.

Tracing the origins of the Cuban Giants is a bit complicated due to the lack of evidence. Statements made by S.K. Govern, the club's manager, indicated that the Giants evolved from the Manhattans of Washington D.C. who played from 1881 to 1884. Sol White states that in 1885 Frank Thompson, head waiter of the Arygle Hotel in Babylon, Long Island, chose the best ballplayers from among his waiters and organized a club as a means of entertainment.

On October 15, 1887, the *New York Age* reported:

> Mr. F.P. Thompson, formerly of Philadelphia, but now of the Hotel Vendome [in Boston], organized in May 1885, in Philadelphia, the Keystone Athletics. On July 1, they were transferred to Babylon L.I. During the month of August a consolidation of the Keystone Athletics, the Manhattans of Washington, D.C., and the Orions of Philadelphia, took place, under the name of the Cuban Giants. The proprietors were Messrs. F.P. Thompson, L. [sic] K. Govern and C.S. Massey.

To explain how this consolidation occurred, it is necessary to trace the Cuban Giants' evolution from the Argyle Hotel. 8

The Argyle Hotel was erected in February 1882 as a mammoth summer resort hotel. Hundreds of affluent New Yorkers took the hour-long train ride to spend their summers
away from the city. They were entertained with nightly orchestral music, riding stables, and full dress balls on festive occasions. The hotel also had one of the first golf courses in the country. It was managed by the South Country Club of which Argyle guests were considered members with every privilege. In addition, tennis, croquet, archery, and baseball could also be enjoyed. 9

The emergence of the Argyle Hotel was significant to the evolution of the Cuban Giants for several reasons. First, the development of leisure activities were an integral part of the resort hotels in the Gilded Age. Late nineteenth century observers of American society understood what historians are just beginning to appreciate. In a variety of ways, the involvement in sport, whether as a participant or a spectator, was advocated as a vehicle for alleviating some of the problems inherent in the transformation of the United States into a modern industrial state. In terms of the resort hotel industry, sport provided its clientele with leisure activities designed as an outlet from the rigors of their career pursuits, as well as means of flaunting their social "elite" status. The emerging leisure component also enabled an aspiring entrepreneur -- like Frank Thompson -- to seize an opportunity to establish a commercial enterprise. Clearly Thompson, as the hotel's headwaiter, had the sanction of
upper management to hire waiters known more for their baseball skills, rather than their ability to wait tables.  

In addition to having the approval of upper-management, the environment this hotel resort created, made contacts with potential wealthy investors possible. Evidently, Thompson and S.K. Govern's paths had crossed during that summer of 1885, or even prior to it. According to Sol White, the Athletics' played against the strongest teams of New York City and Long Island, winning six, losing two, and tying one. He added that the caliber of play by the club led Thompson to start them on the road as professionals. To accomplish this, Thompson needed two things: a wealthy financial backer; and a road manager who was a good booking agent and knew the game of baseball. To attract a wealthy investor, a strong black independent club with talent on the same level as the top white teams, not to mention clubs in Organized Baseball, would have to be assembled. Apparently, the consolidation of Govern's Manhattans and Thompson's Athletics was attractive enough for John F. Lang, a white entrepreneur from Philadelphia, to finance them.  

Finally, the signing of the Philadelphia Orions' three top players completed this evolutionary development of the Cuban Giants. White suggests that Lang was behind this obvious player raid of the Orions. White added that the "move was one of the most important and valuable acts
in the history of colored baseball." It made the Cuban Giants one of the strongest independent teams in the East. However, the evidence suggest that it was Govern who was the catalyst for this move. Of the three men that made up the Giants' management team, Govern had the most experience in running a ball club. Even White conceded that Govern, a native of St. Croix of the Virgin Islands, was a "smart fellow and a shrewd baseball man." While the signing of Shep Trusty, pitcher; George Williams, a second baseman; and shortstop Abe Harrison made the Giants a strong independent, it also marked the beginning of a legacy that would plague black baseball throughout its history. Raiding semipro clubs of their top players would cripple many of the great black teams and drive many of its entrepreneurs out of the game. 12

When the Argyle closed on October 1, 1885, the Cuban Giants embarked on its first road trip. Babylon's weekly newspaper, the South Side Signal, indicated on October 10 that the Giants had played several games since leaving the Argyle and were victorious in every one. The club had even managed to schedule a game with the New York Metropolitans of the American Association, although they lost 11-3. A few days later, the African American club met the Association's Philadelphia Athletics, also losing that game also 13-7, but a Sporting Life correspondent stated that the A's needed help from the umpire to ensure

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victory. The victory over the Bridgeport, Connecticut, team, champions of the Eastern League, was the high water mark of the Giants' inaugural season, and it established their reputation as a top independent team.  

The evolution of the Cuban Giants illustrated the changing attitude business had toward the National Pastime. The Giants' origins occurred at a time when business firms began hiring semiprofessional "ringers" to play on company teams. As a representative of the Argyle Hotel, the Giants were in an unique position to attract a wealthy financier as a means of developing a profitable commercial enterprise. With its victory over the Bridgeport club, the Cuban Giants would capture the attention of a New Jersey "capitalist" who saw them as a "valuable asset."

THE CUBAN GIANTS AND TRENTON, NEW JERSEY

From 1886 to 1888, the Cuban Giants established a home base in Trenton, New Jersey. Financed by white businessmen and securing a playing facility enabled the Giants to establish business practices that ensured economic stability. A home base provided the Cubans an opportunity to develop a profitable market to operate in. They established good press relations, scheduled games with the top clubs of the era, and created a "respectable" image needed to ensure white middle-class patronage. At the same time, the Giants' inaugural season illustrated the primary obstacles that plagued independent teams. Playing
facilities with poor access and scheduling games with weak teams impacted adversely on attendance. Since, the Giants were also not affiliated with an organized league, they were vulnerable to player raids, but by 1887, the club's management made the necessary adjustments to remedy the situation.

In the 1880s, Trenton, New Jersey, was a progressive city in terms of its race relations. Its African American community struggled to achieve some measure of equality in civil rights which made news not only in Trenton, but also captured national attention. The Civil Rights Act of 1875 received its first challenge through the efforts of two Trenton African Americans, Horace Deyo and Henry Ongue. Their efforts paved the way for much needed social legislation. The city could also boast of an all-white sandlot team that was owned by an African American man, R. Henri Herbert, the African American community's leading political figure, managed the Herbert Nine. Although the club did not dazzle the sandlot world, its existence illustrated that baseball in Trenton was a unifying element across race lines. Moreover, the Cuban Giants filled a void when the Trenton franchise of the Eastern League transferred to Jersey City in 1885.14

Evidently, John Lang was not willing to finance the Cuban Giants for the 1886 season. On April 30, the Trenton True American reported that Harry Simpson of the Trenton
Browns had signed several of the "Cuban Giants" for the local club. In an effort to revive interest in professional baseball in Trenton, Simpson sought to organize a strong independent club and at the same time capitalize on the novelty of a black team playing at a high caliber. Apparently his efforts paid dividends. On May 4, the True American reported that the "prospects for base ball in Trenton this season are looking up." The Browns had defeated the Jersey Blues of Hoboken, New Jersey, 8-7. The signing of the Cuban Giants along with the enthusiasm of the press captured the attention of a "capitalist" who would seize an opportunity to invest in a commercial enterprise with promising potential. 15

Walter I. Cook was a descendent of one of wealthiest and oldest families on the Eastern Shore. He was the youngest of three sons born to William and Elizabeth Cook. His father was the director of the Trenton Banking Company, the Trenton Savings Fund, the Camden & Amboy Railroad Company, and the New York Division of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company. Walter, in association with his brothers, Edward and Henry, established the Cook Brothers real estate and insurance business. In May 1886, Walter Cook, along with his partner John M. Bright, assumed control of the Cuban Giants and secured the services of S. K. Govern to manage the club. 16
Although white investors financed the Cuban Giants, African Americans ran the day-to-day operations. In many ways, the Giants' management team was ahead of its time. It exemplified the modern corporation with its separation of management from ownership. In addition to Govern, the Giants also had a club secretary, George Van Sickle. However, Govern was the driving force. Much like a modern day general manager, he signed players to one year contracts, utilized the press to schedule games, and was even responsible for selling season tickets. Player salaries were determined by position: pitchers and catchers were paid $16.00 per week plus expenses; infielders earned $15.00 per week plus expenses; and outfielders received $12.00 per week plus expenses.\(^{17}\)

The Giants established a method of scheduling games that became the model for black clubs in the early twentieth century -- the booking system. The successful manager utilizing this system would have an uncanny ability to attract the best clubs on a consistent basis. To attract major league clubs, like the St. Louis Browns, Govern would offer either 40 percent of the gate receipts, or a "heavy" guarantee, usually $250. Because the Cubans were a full-time enterprise, Govern would book either local "stay-at-homes," or college teams to round out the schedule. A flat guarantee, normally $150, were offered to these clubs.
In this way, Govern would operate a segregated club within the framework of both the major and minor leagues, and semiprofessional baseball.

Clearly the Cuban Giants were a race based enterprise designed to cater to a white clientele. Early promoters of professional baseball sought to create a lofty moral image, shrouded in Christian propriety, as a means of selling their enterprise to the middle-class spectator. The notion of an acceptable moral image was vital to the success of a commercialized amusement. It had to possess and advocate values that appealed to a "respectable" class of citizens who judge this product not only on merit, but also on the perceived quality of those who endorse it. To accomplish this, a vocabulary was constructed that championed the values of this "respectable" class: temperance, sobriety, and moral respectability. Moreover, the most valuable commodity of this industry -- the players -- would represent this image formed by the owners. In essence, the lofty moral image was a marketing campaign to sell professional baseball to the middle-class spectator.18

Black baseball players were also expected to embody the values advocated by the white middle-class spectator. The Trenton True American praised the Cuban Giants for being "thoroughly disciplined," a behavior which did not describe clubs from previous years. In addition, the Giants
were also lauded for being gentlemen both on and off the field. On May 10, 1886, the Trenton Times not only acknowledged the Giants' fine fielding and batting, they also received generous applause for their conduct. While this acclaim may not have been consistent in other cities, the Cuban Giants were accepted and considered the representative of Trenton, New Jersey in the baseball world.¹⁹

Despite the concerted efforts of the Cuban Giants' management team, the club's opening season illustrated the obstacles independent teams confronted. Because they were not affiliated with a league, the Cubans could not rely upon a fixed schedule of league games. This placed them in a precarious position of scheduling contests with semipro clubs and college teams that were no match for this talented black club. Consistently winning games by scores of 21–4 and 16–1 hardly made games interesting enough for fans to patronize. This resulted in the club scheduling a large number of road games, particularly in the New York area. In addition, if the Giants desired to attract either a major or minor league club to its home base, it had to ensure a substantial guarantee. The sporadic home attendance made this a difficult and often precarious undertaking.²⁰
Trenton fans patronized the Giants when major league clubs came to town. On May 27, the St. Louis Browns of the American Association invaded Chambersburg grounds; it marked the first time the Cuban Giants packed the ball park. The *True American* reported that by the time the game started, "there was not an unoccupied seat anywhere." Hundreds of "kranks" stood along the right field area and "Everybody who is anybody was on hand. From bank officials down to everyday sports [fans], the fever had apparently 'caught on,' and the results was a good-natured, wildly enthusiastic assemblage of over two thousand people." Although the Giants lost 9-3, St. Louis, according to the *True American*, were so satisfied with the turnout that they indicated they would return later in the year. 21

While the financial arrangement between the Browns and the Giants proved economically rewarding, white players on the Major League club had a different agenda. On September 10, 1887, the Browns were set to play the Giants in White Farms, New York. Browns President Chris Von der Ahe had reached an agreement whereby the Giants management would pay a guarantee of $250, or half of the gate receipts if they exceeded that amount. Von der Ahe received a telegram indicating that the ball club was "in a crippled condition," and unable to play. Later that same day, the players sent a letter to the Browns' President, signed by everyone, except player-manager Charles Comiskey and
pitcher Fred Knouff, refusing to take the field against an all-black club. While the letter angered Von der Ahe, he did not insist that his club play the game. The Browns boycott was indicative of the ambiguous nature racial prejudice embodied in Organized Baseball. On the one hand, the bigotry of white players had gained a wider acceptance in the late 1880s, while on the other hand, white owners saw no problem playing the black club from Trenton when economic renumeration was at stake.22

The fever pitch brought on by the St. Louis Browns visit was short lived. The Giants could only rely on a limited number of home games with big league clubs. Western clubs, like Cincinnati or Kansas City, could only be counted on when they made their eastern swing against League clubs. Furthermore, because the Cubans were not league affiliated, they were also subjected to player raids.

Minor leagues in the 1880s saw no problem taking a black player if they could help their ball club. George Washington Stovey, considered "the first great African American pitcher" of the late nineteenth century, played primarily on white teams. In June 1886, Govern signed this "southpaw" to a contract that ran through October 15. It was evident that Stovey had a great reputation up to that time. His signing attracted the attention of Patrick Powers, manager of the Jersey City Blues of the Eastern League. On June 24, 1886, the Trenton Times
reported that Powers had made efforts to lure Stovey to his club. The Jersey City manager offered Stovey $200 a month; the lefthander refused. Two days later, Powers went to Trenton with a notification from George M. Ballard, President of the Eastern League, ordering Stovey to report to Jersey City the following day. Evidently Stovey had signed a contract with the club a few days earlier. In what could be considered as blackmail, Powers made the Cuban Giants an offer they couldn't refuse. If the Giants enforced their contract with Stovey, Eastern League clubs would refuse to schedule games with them. The Giants capitulated, although it was a "hard deal" for them. Powers admitted the contract the Giants had with Stovey was binding and made a cash offer for him. 23

The Stovey signing exemplified the effectiveness of collusive agreements among organized leagues. Exhibition games between league clubs and top independent clubs were a means of economic survival in the early years of Organized Baseball. However, independent clubs, regardless of whether they were well managed and financed, were vulnerable without some semblance of self-protection. Legally, the Cuban Giants had a right to go court and prevent Stovey from playing with Jersey City. But from a business standpoint, it was not in the best interests of the Cuban Giants to pursue the matter if it meant the loss of lucrative exhibition games. Therefore, a compromise was inevitable.
More importantly, league affiliation appeared to be the solution to both the Cubans' attendance problem and being vulnerable to player raids. 24

In mid-July 1886, it appeared that the Giants had the opportunity to join a minor league. The Meriden club of the Eastern League disbanded; rumors circulated that the Giants would take their place. According to Govern, Eastern League President George M. Ballard assured the Giants' management that the Cubans would take the Connecticut club's place. The only drawback appeared to be whether the Giants would assume Meriden's schedule along with its poor record, or start "a fresh on their own account." However, on July 20, the Eastern League rejected the Cuban Giants' application and decided to play out the season with five clubs. 25

The press cited racial discrimination as the driving force that governed the Eastern League's decision. The Newark News stated that, "While the dusky team is classed among the first class clubs . . . there is little prospect of it being admitted, as the color line will be drawn tight." The Meriden Journal added, "the dread of being beaten by the Africans had something to do with the rejection of the application of the Cuban Giants." Meriden, they added, "is glad that it is out of a League in which race prejudice is so strong that a first class clubs is refused admission simply because its players are black." 26
What is ironic about these contemporary accounts is that some of the Eastern League clubs had black players. Before Meriden folded, Frank Grant played second base and was the club's superstar. Jersey City had the flame throwing George Stovey, while Fleet Walker played for Joe Simmons's Waterbury club. The real reason for rejection became apparent during the 1887 campaign. In that season, Eastern League officials asked the Cubans to join their loop for a second time, but as a member of the National Agreement, the Eastern League adopted the National League's policy of prohibiting the scheduling of Sunday games. League affiliation would mean that the Giants would lose lucrative games in the New York vicinity. Given that the Eastern League were once again asking the Giants to replace a disbanded franchise, which obviously illustrated the circuit's economic instability, this was not in the club's best interest. The Cubans rejected their offer.27

On September 13, 1886, Walter Cook announced that the Cuban Giants would not play anymore home games. He indicated that the biggest drawback to the club's attendance was the "inferior" location of Chambersburg Grounds, making it virtually inaccessible for fans. For example, the Cubans had an average attendance of 870 fans in their opening season. With ticket prices at twenty-five cents, the average revenue the Giants accrued was $217.75, which meant the club operated at a loss. To recover some of
this lost expenditure, the Giants scheduled exhibition games in Long Island, New York. In three games reported in the *True American*, the Giants average attendance was 3,000 fans, netting a profit of $450 a game. One game in New York met the club's weekly payroll plus expenses of $300. 28

In response to these logistical problems the Giants management team made a series of moves to rectify them. First, in addition to re-signing the ball players for the 1887 season, Govern secured a lease on the Long Island Eastern League grounds in Brooklyn, New York. This enabled the Giants to schedule Sunday games against the top clubs in that area. Next, Walter Cook and John Bright leased the East State street cricket grounds -- a location more preferable to Cook -- and built a large new grand stand to seat from 1,500 to 2,000 people. Having access to Long Island grounds in Brooklyn, along with Trenton's strategic location between New York and Philadelphia, the Giants management attempted to schedule more games with both major and minor league clubs. More important, Govern sought to expand the Giants' territorial market by promoting the club in New York and New Jersey. 29

Although the Cuban Giants did not completely solve their home attendance problem, they scheduled more games with teams from the National League, the American Association, the International League, the National Colored
League, and the Eastern League. On April 12, 1887, the Trenton Times reported that "The new and handsome grounds on East State street were crowded with ladies and gentlemen." The Times praised Cook's effort to provide Trentonians with a roomy and comfortable park with easy access. Even more important were the clubs the Giants played throughout the season, as they competed against big league clubs like the New York Mets, the Buffalo Bisons, the National League champion Detroit club, and the Cincinnati Red Stockings. On October 19, the Sporting Life reported that the Cuban Giants would make their first road trip West playing against Louisville; Indianapolis; Wheeling, West Virginia; Cleveland; Pittsburgh; and Cincinnati. Without question, the managerial moves of Giants management team paid big dividends. 30

While securing a playing facility and white investors provided the economic resources needed to run a ball club, the players were still the most important commodity to ensure success. From 1886 to 1889, Govern was able to keep intact a nucleus that made the Cuban Giants the top independent club in the East. Clarence Williams, catcher; Jack Fry, first base; George Williams, second base; Abe Harrison, shortstop; Ben Holmes, third base; outfielders, Billy Whyte, Ben Boyd, and Arthur Thomas; and pitchers Shepherd Trusty, and later George Stovey, comprised the
ball club that was the pride of Trenton, New Jersey. But another black club from Manhattan would challenge the Cubans for eastern supremacy.

**BLACK BASEBALL'S FIRST RIVALRY**
**BASEBALL COMEDY AND THE BIRTH OF**
**THE COLORED CHAMPIONSHIP**

The rise of the Cuban Giants occurred at the same time another prominent black independent emerged, the Gorhams of New York. The Gorhams were the first known African American club that was black owned and operated, and were the chief rivals of the Cuban Giants. Their rivalry evolved into a series of games known as "Colored Championships." Tracing the origins of the colored championship series reveals the impact the old black middle class had on shaping the dimensions of black baseball's future. It also shows how the black theatrical profession affected the evolution of these black clubs, and provides the best explanation of the origins of the name Cuban Giants.

Little is known about the backgrounds of both the owner and manager of the Gorhams. The earliest evidence indicates the club was formed some time in 1886, and headquartered in Manhattan, during a period when many of New York's black middle-class resided there. The management team consisted of Ambrose Davis (owner) and Benjamin Butler (field manager). On August 15, 1886, the Trenton True American reported that the Gorhams had challenged the Cuban
Giants for the "colored championship of the United States." Davis had wanted to arrange a series of three games with the Trenton nine, but Walter Cook declined the offer until the Gorhams "had shown what stuff they were made of." Cook's reservation proved accurate; the Cuban Giants demolished the Gorhams 25-4. 31

Although their point of origin appears to be in the Manhattan area, the Gorhams of New York can best be classified as a traveling team. Throughout their brief history, the club leased playing facilities as far south as Easton, Pennsylvania, and as far north as Newburgh, New York. They had developed a close knit stay at home schedule, playing white semipro teams in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Like their rivals the Cuban Giants, the Gorhams were a race based enterprise designed to cater to a white clientele. In 1887, the Gorhams had declined an offer to become a member of the Eastern League. Like the Cuban Giants, their reason for rejecting was due to the Eastern League's policy forbidding the scheduling of Sunday games. 32

The move to establish a colored championship series appears to be the efforts of one man, John "Bud" Fowler. Fowler was born in Fort Plain, New York, on March 16, 1858 and spent his childhood in Cooperstown, New York, where he learned to play ball on the Cooperstown Seminary campus. In addition to his baseball skills, Fowler was
also a barber. In 1877, he was a member of the Maple Leafs of Guelph, Ontario, Canada in the International Association. For the next twenty-five years, Fowler drifted around the country, from Massachusetts to Colorado, playing wherever African American players were permitted. He played in crossroads farm teams, in mining camps, in pioneer settlements of the West, and in cities of the East. In 1884, Fowler was a member of the Stillwater club of the Northwestern League, and along with Moses Fleetwood Walker, became the first African Americans to play in Organized Baseball. In 1887, Fowler was a member of the Binghamton Bingos of the International League, but left the club because of the racial hostility of his white teammates.33

After his banishment from the Bingos, Fowler joined the Gorhams' management team. On August 10, 1887, the Sporting Life reported the following item:

The Gorham Club of New York City, has leased grounds here and will make this its headquarters during the remainder of the season. Under the management of J.H. Fowler, late second baseman of the Binghamtons, the Gorhams have become the champions of the State Colored League.

Who ever heard of a New York Colored League; and when and where did the Gorhams win the championship title? There is but one colored organization now in existence that can lay claim to superiority over all other clubs of its race and that is the Cuban Giants Club. They can knock the sox out of any colored club that could be pitted against them.

Fowler was exhibiting his skills as a promoter of the black game. Clearly such an assertion could not go unchallenged without a contest on the field. More importantly, this
proclamation marked the beginning of an informal yet somewhat logical format in which a colored champion could be crowned. By beating all the top black clubs within a particular territorial region, gave that club the right to proclaim itself as colored champion. In later years, being the colored champion served to stimulate fan interest, establish territorial rivalries -- primarily in the East and Midwest -- and become a viable tool to generate revenue.34

Championship contests personified the cultural characteristics that linked the game to both the social galas of the Civil War era Philadelphia Pythians, and the emerging popular culture of the Gilded Age. Sol White states, "When teams travel to a far section of the country to meet for a championship struggle, there is always given to the visitors a most hearty welcome." In what could best be described as a booster coalition, an aggregate of fans escorted the visiting team to their hotel and then showed the visitors "a good time while they are in the city." In the New York area, such a good time could be found in an area known as "Black Bohemia."35

Beginning in the 1880s, blacks frequented clubs in New York's Tenderloin district. The neighborhood was surrounded by the striped shadows of the El on West Fifty-Third Street. Whether centered in Joe Stewart's Criterion, Johnny Johnson's, or Ike Hines's, both black
theatrical and sport professionals created for themselves a congenial atmosphere. This congeniality was one of emulation and guildship, an environment in which artistic ideas were born and developed. Of these clubs, the best known and most popular was Ike Hines. It walls were lined with pictures of black historical figures, sports personalities, and theatrical performers. Entertainers used part of his club for rehearsing their acts. 36

Many of the personalities who frequented Black Bohemia were drawn from the baseball field. When the Cuban Giants were in town, they generated a great deal of enthusiasm and, according to James Weldon Johnson, "were always good story material for sports writers because they introduced baseball comedy." The origin of the name Cuban Giants was unclear. Previous scholars of black baseball suggest that the players sought to avoid, to some extent, the onus of being American Negroes in their native land. By "passing" as Cubans, speaking gibberish that sounded like Spanish on the field, they would somehow appease the white spectator and ease racial tension. The notion of easing racial tension is a valid one. The bigotry of white ballplayers had gained a wider acceptance by the late 1880s, and was instrumental in forcing black players, like Bud Fowler, out of Organized Baseball. However, white owners in both the major and minor leagues saw no problem playing these black clubs when it was economically feasible for
both parties. But what is often overlooked is the business structure under which professional baseball evolved -- particularly the independent clubs -- as well as the other business characteristics, like self promotion -- not to mention the social environment -- that impacted on both the Cuban Giants and the Gorhams of New York. 37

Baseball must stimulate interest to maintain consistent patronage. The unpredicted outcome of a game had always been its most appealing characteristic. Because independents at times had to schedule contest with teams that were not of high caliber, alternative measures were obviously developed to stimulate fan interest if a game became too one-sided. Additionally, as we shall see later, during the winter months the Cuban Giants played in the hotel resort industry. Thus, the Giants were cast in the role as both competitors and entertainers. Moreover, the social interaction with theatrical performers had obviously impacted their vaudevillian flair on the diamond. Observing a Bert Williams or George Walker, two of the biggest black comedians of the era, or watching the top minstrel performers of that era, trying out a new act at Ike Hines's undoubtedly provided insights for the Cubans to create their own comic style. The Giants developed a series of comedy routines including a pantomime that would later be referred to as "shadow ball." This act involved assimilating an imaginary game on the field without the
use of a baseball. Ben Holmes, the Cubans' third baseman, became renowned for his horseplay around the bag and doing the cakewalk up and down the sidelines. Contingent upon the tenor of the game, the Cuban Giants were either fierce competitors or vaudevillian entertainers. 38

Finally, where did the name Cuban Giants originate from. In addressing this question the emphasis should be placed upon the fact the Cuban Giants were both competitors and entertainers. It was a testament to these players' ability that they could function at a peak level under such circumstances. One clue lies in the makeup of both management and the players. There were two characteristics that linked them to the mulatto elite -- occupational status and skin color. Both Frank Thompson (headwaiter) and Bud Fowler (barber) worked in occupations commonly associated with the black middle-class. Their abilities to self-promote was evident due to their connections with white power brokers who financed their clubs. In terms of skin color, virtually every player, not to mention those who played in Organized Baseball, were light-skinned blacks. Thus the name "Cuban" was for their light skin. The name Giants could have possibly evolved due to their consolidation. The merging of three teams into one elite
black club made the Cubans "Giants" among the black independents, as their records against white clubs attested to. 39

The notion that the Cuban Giants sought to avoid the onus of being American Negroes is somewhat problematic. In some ways, this suggests that the Cubans were both cowards and ashamed of their cultural heritage. There is no evidence that suggest these notions were true. If the Cubans spoke gibberish on the field, it was no doubt part of their comedy act they developed. Newspaper accounts do not suggest such behavior occurred, nor do they indicate that Cubans sought to disguise their identity. The Giants were still subjected, in some situations, to racial hostility from both fans and players. But they, like Jackie Robinson eighty years later, would endure. The Giants symbolized the mulatto elite's expectation that creating a successful enterprise, the Cuban Giants, they would be accepted into the mainstream of American society.

In 1887, there were neither theatrics nor no threats of racial hostility in the first colored championship between the Gorhams and the Cubans. It was at Newburgh, a small resort town in upstate New York, that the Gorhams finally came through with a victory over the Cuban Giants. The game was tied in the ninth inning when Oscar Jackson
of the Gorhams forced Cuban catcher Clarence Williams to drop the ball in an attempt to block home plate. The Gorhams won the game, 4-3. 40

The following year, the championship contest was determined by a baseball tournament in New York City. Five clubs entered the tournament: the Cuban Giants, the Keystones of Pittsburgh, the Gorhams of New York, and the Red Stockings of Norfolk, Virginia. In addition to being crowned the colored champion, a silver ball was donated by John M. Bright. After a fierce battle the Cuban Giants were crowned colored champions of the East. 41

Throughout their rivalry, the Gorhams took a back seat to the Cuban Giants, although among all the northern black clubs who competed in the 1880s, they had the best record against the Trenton nine, albeit a losing one. Another factor that plagued the Gorhams was its classification as a traveling team. They could not create and sustain a territorial market due to the lack of a home playing facilities. But their ability to establish business contacts with white power brokers to secure playing facilities was a testament to the business acumen of Ambrose Davis, Bud Fowler, and Benjamin Butler. The Gorhams operated for six years in an era when some clubs didn't last a month.
Securing a home facility, establishing a rivalry with the Gorhams, and creating an itinerate playing style made the Cuban Giants the model for other black clubs to emulate. But there was a new frontier to conquer and Frank Thompson once again played a pivotal role. Florida awaited the Cuban Giants.

THE CUBAN GIANTS AND FLAGLER'S FLORIDA

The consolidation of the Cuban Giants coincided with the rise of the hotel resort system in Florida. In the same summer of 1885, Henry Morrison Flagler made the decision to build the Hotel Ponce de Leon in St. Augustine, Florida. Much like the Babylon Hotel in Long Island, the Ponce de Leon integrated a network of recreation and leisure activities designed to attract and entertain a wealthy clientele. Such a commercialized amusement system enticed the elite to spend their winter months away from the cold northern cities and enjoy the warm Florida climate. Moreover, Flagler's vision of making St. Augustine the "Newport of the South" once again provided Frank Thompson an opportunity to incorporate black baseball as part of this commercialized amusement system.

Newport, Rhode Island was the most famous of American resorts. It was acclaimed as a retreat for wealthy Americans as early as 1729. Cleveland Amory, the chronicler of American "high society," indicated that Newport was firmly established as a leisure center in what he termed
"the Southern Planter era." Rich cotton planters congregated in Newport during the summer months when the city began to decline as a trade city after the American Revolution. After Reconstruction, Henry Flagler and other entrepreneurs sought to bring leisure aspects of the Gilded Age to Florida. His first project was transforming St. Augustine into a stylish vacation area by building one of the country's most luxurious hotel. 42

Flagler visited St. Augustine with his second wife, Ida Alice Shourds, in December 1883, and stayed until March 1, 1884. The visit gave them ample opportunity to see the city and its culture. Established in 1565, St. Augustine was the United States' oldest permanent settlement. People commonly referred to it as the "ancient city," and among its tourist attractions were Fort Marion -- the Spanish Fort of San Marco -- the old city gate, the seawall, the Catholic cathedral, and the Hugenot Cemetery. 43

St. Augustine's history was also its major obstacle. It had a reputation as a coastal town locked in time. John Temple Graves, a southern newspaperman, stated, "Now put on thy misty garments, OH ST. AUGUSTINE! Gather the cobwebs around thy ancient ruins. Lay out the speaking emblems of thy antiquity; for the time of the year is come when the people gather from afar to see the patriarch of

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cities with a Ponce de Leon flowing in its heart!" That image changed a decade later and Henry Flagler was primarily responsible for that transition. 44

While St. Augustine had long been a winter mecca for the infirm, Flagler saw the city's pleasant climate as an enticement for the wealthy as well. Joseph W. Howe, a contemporary writer, advised invalids and their families that the city had a pleasant winter temperature, although it had more humidity than inland Florida towns. In his Winter Homes for Invalids, Howe informed his readers to select a private residence, if possible, for "the old hotels in the town generally lack all the requisites of a healthy residence, and, unless they improve, they should be shunned under all circumstances." The accommodations available were mediocre at best during Flagler's trip to St. Augustine. The most attractive characteristic of the city was its average yearly temperature of seventy degrees with an average winter temperature of sixty degrees. 45

The origins of the resort hotel system began with the erection of the San Marco Hotel. Upon his second visit to the city in February 1885, Flagler stayed in the new hotel where he met the builder, James A. McGuire, and manager Osborn D. Seavy. Seavy, an experienced New England hotel man, first came to Florida to operate Isaac S. Craft's winter hotel, the Magnolia, then became the manager of the Ponce de Leon. As was the custom with many hotel
managers during the Gilded Age, Seavy managed the Magnolia during the winter and Craft's Maplewood Hotel in Bethlehem, New Hampshire during the summer. Through his efforts more Easterners spent the winter of 1885 in St. Augustine than ever before. 46

The construction of the Ponce de Leon Hotel was completed on May 30, 1887; but it did not open its doors to the public until January 10, 1888. At first, Flagler did not realize that building the plush hotel would lead to further development. A second hotel would cater to people who were not so wealthy; the Alcazar Hotel was built across the street to accommodate this group. He also built a casino which contained a large indoor swimming pool, therapeutic baths for treatment of various illnesses, a bowling alley, billiard rooms, and a ballroom. There were also adjacent tennis courts. 47

A variety of entertainments were sponsored by the hotels. Exhibitions in the casino were popular; horsemanship tournaments were held regularly. Guests enjoyed both tennis and golf. Some of the more ambitious guests would visit the antiquated rink in town to watch cake walks sponsored by African American bell hops and waiters of the hotel. Couples would link arms, sometimes of the same sex, stepping in time to unaccompanied singing around a table laden with two cakes. The couples judged the "most graceful" and "most eccentric" then took the
two cakes. The evening began with a "back dance," conducted in a brisk, strutting, double shuffle with the performers holding their heads back. This was followed by singing and the cakewalk itself, for which prizes were awarded. In a decade when Jim Crow segregation became more and more rigid, the cakewalks were an opportunity for blacks and whites to meet in a cordial atmosphere. More importantly, the opportunities created by the resort system and the cordial atmosphere enabled Frank Thompson to bring black baseball South during the tourist season.48

Evidently Thompson and Seavy's paths intersected during the summer months in the New England area. The link between them was the Cuban Giants. On January 17, 1889, the St. Augustine Weekly News reported that "colored employees of the Hotel Ponce de Leon will play a game today . . . with a picked nine from the Alcazar." The article added that both teams possessed some of the best black talent in the country, composed mostly of the Cuban Giants. During the team's St. Augustine years, Thompson had formed an organization called the Progressive Association of the United States. The New York Age cited on February 23, 1889, a written correspondence by Govern indicated that Thompson had called a meeting "to inaugurate a course of annual sermons to the hotel men that came to St. Augustine each winter, and the citizens in general, upon our [race]
progress the past twenty-five years." Thompson was named president of the organization and Govern its secretary and at least two players were charter members.49

With the opening of the Hotel Ponce de Leon, the concept of year round baseball -- barnstorming -- was fully developed. Prior to settling in Trenton, the True American reported that the Cuban Giants were undefeated both in Cuba and throughout their tour of the South. Govern obviously saw the potential of such a venture on an island where the game had taken root as early as the 1860s. American baseball arrived in Cuba at a time when a transition of the island's foreign relations shifted from colonial Spain to the United States. North American sailors, students, businessmen, and Cubans who had traveled north carried the game back to this Caribbean island as part of their new found cultural baggage. By 1878, the first official Cuban baseball championship was held. In the following years various teams and leagues were organized and "baseball fever" swept the country. This fever pitch enabled the Cuban Giants to play baseball in Cuba during the winter months of December and January, and travel to St. Augustine in February just in time for the opening of the resort season. Throughout the opening decades of the twentieth century, black baseball entrepreneurs would emulate this barnstorming pattern.50

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Flagler's vision of St. Augustine being the Newport of the South never materialized. By 1894, the city's share of the tourist population began to decline. Vacationers stopped only briefly on their way to or from Palm Beach and other more southerly resorts. Local business leaders were unresponsive to the call for civic improvements to make the town more attractive. St. Augustine's town council was under constant criticism to clean up the streets. Anna Marcotte, the outspoken editor of the Tatler, published repeated demands for civic responsibility: "Shall this be the Newport of the South, or a Coney Island?" The answer to her question was already apparent; Palm Beach would be the winter Newport. 51

Black baseball accompanied Henry Flagler to Palm Beach, Florida. In 1894, he built the Royal Poinciana Hotel and later The Breakers. Because of the efforts of Frank Thompson and S.K. Govern, black baseball would benefit greatly from this paternalistic alliance with Henry Flagler. Two decades into the twentieth century, both the Royal Poinciana and the Breakers would still sponsor the top black teams from the North to entertain their distinguished guests. On January 25, 1907, Arthur Spalding, an organist at Flagler's Whitehall Hotel, wrote to his sister in New England describing a specific contest that took place:

"... Both teams are colored and composed of employees of the Breakers and Poinciana hotels, who however are hired because of their baseball ability and then incidentally given employment as waiters or porters."
Many of them play on the Cuban Giants team during the summer so that the quality of baseball ranked with professional white teams. The greatest sport was in listening to the coaching and watching the antics of a full grandstand back of first base. Their sympathies were pretty evenly divided between the two teams, so accordingly whenever either team would make a hit, then was the time to watch the bleachers. The crowd would yell themselves hoarse, stand up in their seats, bang each other over the head, and even the girls would go into a perfect frenzy as if they were in a Methodist camp meeting. The third baseman on the Poinciana team was a wonderful ball-player and kept the whole crowd roaring with his horseplay and cakewalks up and down the sidelines.

CONCLUSION

The changing attitude of business towards baseball enabled the mulatto elite to seized an opportunity to establish black baseball enterprises. With the exception of the Gorhams of New York, black baseball teams were primarily white enterprises, with whites controlling the three principal assets that constitutes a professional baseball club. Yet African Americans did establish the business practices that sustained a professional ballclub outside Organized Baseball's league structure. Establishing good press relations, locating and developing player talent, selling season tickets, and creating the year round barnstorming pattern made black independents a profitable enterprise.

Although these African American entrepreneurs' business relationship was a paternalistic one, blacks still had a major influence on shaping the dimensions of black baseball. Creating all-black clubs illustrated the mulatto
elite's effort to distance themselves from the black masses, by playing primarily white teams and developing business contacts with white power brokers. Yet at the same time, black clubs still maintain a semblance of African American culture. Self-promotion was the strongest asset these black businessmen possessed. Black baseball clubs would advocate white middle class values as a means of catering to a white clientele. At the same time, the influence of the black theatrical profession on the playing style on the field cast black clubs in the role as both entertainers and competitors.

Sol White refers to the late 1880s as the "money period" in black baseball. Clearly the business relationship established by the mulatto elite with wealthy whites illustrated why White made such an assertion. But black baseball's league affiliation with the minor leagues caused the house of cards to crumble at its foundation.
REFERENCE LIST

1. I am drawing primarily from the work of Harold Seymour in order to make it easier to follow the numerous teams at the community level. His definition uniquely describes the types of black clubs that emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. See Baseball: The People's Game (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 236-75.


6. Steven M. Gelbar, "Their Hands Are All Cut Playing:' Business and Amateur Baseball, 1845-1917," Journal of Sport History 11(1984): 24-25. Melvin Adelman argues that there are several drawbacks with Gelbar's thesis, including an inadequate explanation regarding the triumph of cricket over baseball. He also cites a problem with the framework, since sociologists of leisure have for more than a decade questioned whether congruent theory does explain the work-leisure relationships. Finally, Adelman accurately points out that baseball's emergence as a popular participatory and spectator sport preceded the rise of the corporate world of business. The drawbacks of the Gelbar thesis goes beyond the scope of this study. My purpose is to analyze the linkage between and the professionalization of black baseball. While the evidence is limited, there is a connection between the rise of the corporate world of business, particularly in the hotel industry, and black professional baseball that began in the 1880s. See Melvin Adelman, "Baseball, Business and the Workplace: Gelber's Thesis Revisited" Journal of Social History 23(1989):285-304.

University Press, 1970), 34; Cleveland Leader account in Seymour, Baseball, 539; "Notes and Comments," Sporting Life August 27, 1884, 6.


11. The Cuban Giants were known by many names in its early history. In order to avoid confusion, I will refer to them primarily as the Cuban Giants. White, History, 8.

12. Ibid., 8-9, 150.

13. The South Side Signal's account of the Giants first road trip in Peterson, Only, 35-36; Giants' victory over Bridgeport in White, Colored Baseball, 10. Evidently Frank Thompson did not accompany the club on that first road trip. He was a hotel man by trade.


17. For an example of Govern signing players and making scheduling inquiries see "The Cuban Giants," Sporting Life December 8, 1886, 4; "Mr. Cook's Complimentary Benefit," Trenton Times August 19, 1886, 1. Player salaries in White History of Colored Baseball, 10.


20. The Giants' sporadic attendance was based on the press reports of both the Trenton Times and the True American from May to October 1886. Both dailies emphasized that the Cuban Giants were a top class club and deserved to be patronized.


24. The nature of Organized Baseball's business practices will be discussed in detail in chapter three.


28. "No More Base Ball," True American September 13 1886, 3. The average attendance figures are based on the newspaper accounts of both the Trenton Times and True American. This average is somewhat skewed due to when the newspapers did indicate that the Cubans drew a good crowd, no estimate was given. The highest reported home attendance of the opening season was 2,100 fans on Independence Day. See "The Ball Field," True American July 7 1886, 3. For the reported attendance figures of the Cubans' games in Long Island see "THE 'GIANTS' VICTORIOUS," Trenton Times May 10 1886, 1; "A Victory for Trenton," True American July 12 1886, 3; "The Giants Shut Out," True American August 2 1886, 3.


30. "THE CUBANS RATTLED," Trenton Times April 12 1887, 1; For games against Organized Baseball clubs see for example "THE GIANTS ON TOP," Trenton Times April 16 1887, 1; "TURNING THE TABLES: THE CUBANS DEFEAT THE METROPOLITANS WITH GREAT EASE," Trenton Times May 7 1887, 1; "CINCINNATI DEFEATED," Trenton Times June 15 1887, 1; for the Giants western tour see "The Cubans Go West," Sporting Life October 19 1887, 1.


32. White, History, 14-16.


35. White, History, 35.


38. There was no mention of the Cuban Giants speaking gibberish in either the Trenton True American or the Trenton Times, and only two accounts referred to any clowning by the Giants on the diamond. The press disapproved of these "antics." See "Baseball Briefs," Trenton Times April 22 1887, 1; "Baseball Briefs," Trenton Times May 7 1887, 1.


40. White, History, 36.

41. Ibid.


CHAPTER III

LEAGUE AFFILIATION
ORGANIZED BASEBALL'S "PECULIAR INSTITUTION"
THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE BLACK INDEPENDENTS

In the late 1880s, black baseball's affiliation with the white minor leagues proved to be a disastrous one. This business relationship occurred at a time when the nation experienced an economic downturn, leading to a decline in race relations. The downturn also resulted in numerous businesses, baseball included, engaging in cutthroat competition. Player raiding was a destructive business practice and it had a devastating effect on the black independents. Moreover, the raiding of player rosters, economic turmoil, and the decline in race relations led severing the business ties with both major and minor league clubs established by the mulatto elite.

To understand the decline and fall of the black independents, it is necessary to examine the nature of Organized Baseball's "peculiar institution." In 1876, the National League was formed by a group of clubs that
sought to bring greater financial stability to the game. Low fan turnout in small cities and high player salaries were the new league's most pressing financial concerns. Certain collusive practices emerged as a means of relieving those pressures. The league attempted to stabilize markets by granting exclusive territorial rights to franchises and established a minimum size for a city as one condition for league entry. Player salaries constituted a large percentage of team costs. Concerned with the financial consequences of unrestrained competition for players, the league secretly introduced a player reservation rule to gain control of labor costs. These practices would eventually lead to placing the game on a sound economic footing. More important, while the systemic dimension of Organized Baseball began in 1876, the maturation of its institutional structure did not emerge until the late 1880s. It was within this time frame that a window of opportunity for both African American players and teams opened up, only to close by the end of the decade.

A free labor market existed in baseball's early years. Players made agreements with clubs and even accepted compensation in advance, only to move elsewhere in response to a better offer. This process of changing teams from season to season was known as revolving. The National League began with no sanction against revolving during the off season. The free market for players led to bidding
wars and even higher player salaries as teams tried to increase their chances of winning a pennant. The owners recognized that some action had to be taken if player salaries were to come down or even remain at a reasonable level.

While labor relations are of prime importance in any business, they are especially significant in baseball, a particularly unique business. Like any other businessmen, baseball owners are interested in turning a profit. Owners must market their product successfully and their teams must approximate each other in skill to accomplish this. Contests have to be sufficiently interesting in order to attract fans. People would hardly pay to see a champion Atlanta Braves team play a high school team. This is why no single owner can sell the product by himself. He must market in cooperation with his fellow owners. Major League owners are not only competitors, they are also partners who must cooperate with each other to a much greater degree than in more conventional enterprises.  

No one recognized the need for cooperation among fellow owners more than William A. Hulbert. On February 2, 1876, he assembled interested parties from St. Louis, Louisville, Cincinnati, New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Hartford and founded the National League of Professional Base Ball Clubs. The formation of the National League was significant in the structure and conduct of the sport. Up to this
point, baseball organizations, amateur or professional, were primarily player associations. The formation of an organized league transferred power from players to owners. Restrictive measures were enacted in an effort to bind players more tightly to clubs. In essence, Hulbert sought to bring order to professional baseball by "reducing the game to a business system such as never heretofore obtained." Another element to this system was the establishment of a league bureaucracy composed of club owners, a league president, secretary, and a board of directors with authority to enforce rules and supervise league operations. 2

The prospective owners drew up a league constitution and formulated business practices that constituted Organized Baseball. Generally speaking, the league constitution consisted of two broad objectives: a desire to elevate baseball and make ball-playing "respectable and honorable" by enacting "proper rules" for the conduct of the game; and, a desire to protect and promote the "natural interests" of clubs and players and to establish and regulate the baseball championship of the United States. In an effort to improve baseball's business operation, restrictive measures in the form of controlling consumer markets were introduced. Commonly referred to as territorial rights, each league club was given exclusive control of its own city and surrounding areas within a five mile radius.
No league club could play an outside team in another league city, even if the local league club consented; the constitution allowed but one club to a city. Theoretically speaking, other clubs could join the circuit, but in reality they had little chance of doing so. The owners had no intention of having more than eight clubs in the league. A member club had to leave before a new one could enter. 3

The nature of the National League's collusive agreements enabled baseball owners to establish a moral agenda. This lofty moral image, shrouded in the rhetoric of Christian propriety, forbade any club to schedule games on Sunday and prevented the sale of alcoholic beverages on its grounds. This agenda also outlawed betting or pool-selling, banned players from fraternizing with the fans, and had rowdy fans ejected from the game by the umpires. Severe penalties were enacted against players who engaged in unacceptable behavior. The notion of an acceptable moral image was vital to the success of a commercialized amusement. 4

In an effort to maximize profits, the League owners instituted population requirements for league admission and developed a balanced schedule. To ensure gate receipts, a new club had to represent a city of not less than 75,000, unless given special exemption by unanimous vote of the incumbent members. Two black balls were enough to block admission of a new club. Members were required to pay
$100 annual dues. Each club played ten games with every other club between March 15 and November 15. Five of the ten games might be played on the club's home grounds. 5

The business practices devised by the National League was pivotal to the development of professional baseball. They provided a wellspring uniquely designed to nourish the formation both of a monopoly and of competition. Under its auspices, member clubs were to compete with each other for prestige and receipts, but only within the confines of the proposed structure. In the following years, the League brought to professional baseball stability, the disruption of bitter trade wars, and even racism. It provided a high caliber of play on the field and trouble with ballplayers, both black and white. It built up public confidence in the "National Pastime," while at other times, created public discontent. 6

Yet the origins of Organized Baseball's business practices were not enough to maintain its financial stability. Economist Paul Gregory cites that the adoption of the first reservation rule on September 30, 1879, was to a large extent due to the numerous player desertions that occurred in the previous five seasons. Under this collusive agreement, each club could reserve five ballplayers for the 1880 season. Other teams were permitted to sign any other player from a club's roster, except the five protected ones. The aim was to hold player salaries
down as teams reserved their five best players. But the rule was contingent upon the cooperation of club owners not tampering with each other's reserve players. 7

The creation of the reservation rule enabled owners to stop revolving altogether and provided them with tremendous operational autonomy. It was also instrumental in the creation of the first uniformed contract. Player contracts contained no reserve clause at this time. But the rule enabled clubs to enforce regulations against players found guilty of being drunk or otherwise engaging in conduct reprehensible to baseball. Players guilty of such transgressions could be suspended and become ineligible to play for any other club in the league.

Yet the founders of the National League did not always follow their objective of limiting professional baseball to large cities. Before the close of the 1876 season, both the Philadelphia Athletics and New York Mutuals refused to go west for their final scheduled games. Both clubs stated that they lost money and did not want to go deeper in debt. Since this was a direct challenge to league authority, attention was focused upon the league directors, awaiting to see how they would respond. After gaining the presidency, Hulbert, at the league's winter meeting, moved to expel both clubs. The move was a bold stand on behalf of the league's new authority; but it cost the league

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its two largest cities. The leaders named no replacements and operated the league with six clubs the following year, despite the potential profit losses. 8

The expulsion of Philadelphia and New York exemplified the league directors' emphasizing respectability over profits. From their perspective, club owners held to the belief that major league baseball was to be honest. Perhaps after a few years of humility and sacrifice, the public would reward them by coming to the games in droves. From 1876 to 1880, Voigt found that National League owners lost an average of $2,220.84 per season. While such pattern of thinking appears naive from a modern view, it should be noted that America was in the midst of a financial depression during these years. The American public did not enjoy the luxury of spending money for frills like baseball. Therefore, the league's policy of staying the course and focusing on its public image seems plausible. 9

Yet the directors persistent moral boycott of New York and Philadelphia left the league vulnerable to an outside challenge. One newspaper urged clubs from excluded cities like Pittsburgh, Washington, and Baltimore to form a real major league. The writer's point was a valid one because the National League of 1880 was indeed a small town circuit. They had taken in towns like Milwaukee and
Indianapolis, only to replace them with Troy and Syracuse. The addition of both Cleveland and Buffalo would once again make the National League an eight club circuit. 10

In 1881, the National League faced its first challenge to its operational autonomy. The American Association was financed by wealthy brewmasters and had franchises in Baltimore, Cincinnati, Louisville, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis. Being financed by wealthy investors and having franchises in larger cities, the National League sought a compromise with the American Association. Their compromise resulted in the creation of the National Agreement, which became the constitution of Organized Baseball.

On February 17, 1884, three organizations -- the National League, the American Association, and the Northwestern League -- met in a "harmony conference" to formulate the National Agreement. Also known as the Tripartite Pact, league officials first addressed the disposition of the players. The reserve clause was extended to cover eleven players on each club; eventually, it would be extended to cover the entire roster. Men reserved by both the League and the Association were guaranteed a minimum salary of $1,000; men reserved by the Northwestern League would receive at least $750. All contracts were for seven months, and no club was to negotiate with players for the following season until October 10. A 20-day waiting
period was required for clubs to bargain with released players. The leagues agreed to acknowledge each other's suspension and expulsion of players by refusing to sign or play a club that utilized them. Finally, an Arbitration Committee was formed, composed of three representatives from each circuit, and league classification was established. The National League and the American Association were classified as "major leagues," while the Northwestern League was a "high minor league." 11

The National Agreement marked the beginning of Organized Baseball. It was the first formula that regulated competition among leagues for players and territories. The Agreement was also the first official document to include the reserve provision -- a major source of controversy for Organized Baseball in the following decades. It served to tighten the reserve clause's effect and curtailed the bidding for players between both clubs and leagues. In terms of territorial rights, the National Agreement contributed immensely to the permanence and value of the club franchises.

But the National Agreement would also impact Organized Baseball's race relations. The same collusive practices that placed the game on a sound economic footing, was also instrumental in the drawing the color line in its labor force, and severing business ties with black independents
clubs. What began as a "gentlemen's agreement" escalated into a national one in terms of systematic exclusion along race lines.

**ORGANIZED BASEBALL'S RACE RELATIONS**

Organized Baseball's collusive practices became the vehicle which set in motion the process of systematic exclusion, known as the color line. While increased racial hostility and both white players and fans was instrumental in the exclusion of black players, the structural parameters that gave the color line its autonomy has often been overlooked. By the 1890s, these collusive practices would also be the catalyst for clubs, under Organized Baseball's umbrella, to not schedule games with black independent clubs.

Theoretically, the National Agreement was to exemplify a network of clubs and associations working in agreement with some general plan of enforcing contracts and barring players deemed detrimental to the game. However, this plan did not envision the emerging power struggle within the organizational structure. Both the National League and American Association scheduled exhibition games with minor league teams under Agreement protection, as well as with the top independent clubs. These games would be a valuable source of revenue for struggling minor league clubs -- particularly games with the era's most prominent team -- the Chicago White Stockings, the forerunner of
the National League Cubs. But as white players voiced their opposition to playing a club with a black player, management extended the definition of the gentlemen's agreement to include the exclusion of players on the basis of race. Failure to comply to this collusive agreement could have resulted in the loss of revenue, and the opportunity to schedule these clubs for future contests, a situation most ball clubs could not afford.

Moses Fleetwood Walker was the first African-American to play in the major leagues. In 1881, Walker began his baseball career as a catcher for Oberlin College's varsity baseball team. The following school year, Fleet left Oberlin and attended the University of Michigan, becoming the catcher of that team. After his brief stay there, Walker moved to Pennsylvania, playing for his first professional team. During the summer of 1882, Walker signed with a team in New Castle, an independent team that played in various small towns throughout western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio. Walker's talent on the diamond attracted the attention of William Voltz, former sports editor for the Cleveland Plain Dealer. Voltz worked for a group of businessmen who were forming a professional baseball team in Toledo. Voltz signed Harlan F. Burkett, a curveball pitcher who played with Walker at Oberlin. When Burkett
recommended Walker to him, Voltz signed Walker as the second player on the Toledo Blue Stockings, which entered the Northwestern League in 1883. 12

The Northwestern League was formed in 1879, earning the distinction of being the first organized league in the western part of the country. The league originated in four cities: Davenport and Dubuque, Iowa; Omaha, Nebraska; and Rockford, Illinois. However, the circuit collapsed after only one season. The league reformed in the autumn of 1882 and two years later, became the first minor league to seek protection under the National Agreement. It was recognized in eight cities: Bay City, Grand Rapids, and East Saginaw, Michigan; Fort Wayne, Indiana; Springfield, Peoria, and Quincy, Illinois; and Toledo, Ohio. 13

Walker found playing baseball in small midwestern towns a racially uncomplicated experience. He spent his first year with a winning team, playing in a relatively favorable environment, which probably fulfilled his desire for excitement and financial gain. Local newspapers in Ohio and throughout the Northwestern League praised Walker as a "man of fine education and a perfect gentleman." 14

On August 10, 1883, Walker experienced his first encounter with racial prejudice in professional baseball. It was the first of four such encounters with the era's most prominent star -- Adrian C. "Cap" Anson. This first
baseman batted over .300 -- including two seasons over .400 -- for twenty-one of his twenty-five years. He was the first player to accumulate over 3,000 hits for his career. As a manager, Anson was a stern disciplinarian, known for punishing beer drinkers with $100 fines, conducting bed checks with a legendary thoroughness. He was resented by sensitive players who detested his domineering attitude. Anson also had an innovative side in terms of game strategy. He had his fielders back each other up on fielding plays and also sanctioned base stealing experiments. However in 1883, Anson's legendary persona was still in its infancy, and he was renowned as the large, loud, and intimidating manager of the Chicago White Stockings. 15

When Anson brought his White Stockings to Toledo, he announced his team would not play if Walker was in the lineup. This position stunned the Toledo Blade which indicated that when the National League club arrived at the Union depot, they were mistaken for Haverly's Mastadons or Callendar's Consolidated, two black teams. Evidently, the Chicagoans' sunburned faces left it "a matter of doubt as to their being tainted with black blood." Toledo club officials informed Anson that Walker had a sore hand and was not scheduled to play. But Anson was not content with this declaration and indicated that the White Stockings would not play ball "with no nigger." In response to this
obvious threat, the Toledo management instructed the White Stockings manager that "he could play his team or go just as he blanked pleased." Fearing the possible loss of their share of the gate receipts, and no doubt concocting a plausible explanation for his actions to Albert Spalding, Anson backed down. Walker was put in right field and played the entire game. 16

What was significant about this episode was the Blade's high esteem of Walker and its admonishment of Anson. The newspaper praised the black catcher's genteel manner and scholarly demeanor. On the other hand, the Blade blasted Anson charging him and his club with containing "a greater proportion of the 'bum' element than any ball club in America." Furthermore, the newspaper added that Toledo had played exhibition games with American Association clubs like New York, Columbus, and St. Louis without incident. But in the case of the National League, "the Chicago club was of more delicate fiber, more susceptible to deleterious influences and hence could not play, with a colored catcher against them." Clearly, Walker was both a media and fan favorite in Toledo. 17

In 1884, Walker became the victim of a conspiracy. Organized Baseball was experiencing its first outside threat from a rival league, the Union Association. Under the direction of the National League, war was directed against outsiders through threats of player raids or direct
competition within a particular territorial region. During the war, an event occurred that at first seemed unrelated to Walker's plight. Initially, the reservation system was designed to protect a team's roster. But there was no method in which a player could be transferred between clubs. The St. Louis Browns wanted to transfer the contract of pitcher Tony Mullane to Toledo. However, a business practice was not established whereby Mullane could be released without giving clubs other than Toledo the right to sign him. A.G. Mills, then the National League president, ruled that a qualified release was not possible under the National Agreement. However, Mills suggested that a letter should be circulated among the clubs stating the Browns' intention and pledging clubs not to negotiate with Mullane. This crude waiver rule established the precedent known as the gentlemen's agreement. 18

In April 1884, Toledo manager Charlie Morton had agreed to another exhibition game with Chicago, contingent upon the assurances that Walker would not play. Jonathan Brown, Spalding's secretary, assured Morton that although "the management of the Chicago Ball Club have no personal feeling about the matter ... the players do most decisively object and to preserve the harmony in the club it is necessary that I have your assurance in writing." The White Stockings secretary also warned that if Toledo went back on its word after Chicago arrived, the ball club would not take the
field and nonetheless claim a $100 guarantee for their troubles. On game day, Fleet Walker was held out of the Toledos lineup. 19

Why did Toledo give in to Spalding's demands, when a year earlier, they defended their right to play Walker? Several factors led to the Toledo's capitulation. First, the Association's expansion move failed to recognize its new member's financial status, personnel, or facilities. The move illuminates baseball historian David Voigt's thesis regarding the ability of National League officials to cleverly persuade the Association to expand in an effort to weaken their organization. This decision resulted in a number of factors: increased travel expenses, weakening the American Association's competitive balance, and decreased revenues due to these new teams being a poor gate attraction at home games. In addition, Association clubs had no assurances that these clubs could pay their guarantee. 20

Second, the plight of the Toledo club clearly exemplifies the ill-advised move to expand. Toledo found itself in a new, faster level of competition. As a member of the Northwestern League, it competed in a circuit whose teams never traveled more than a couple hundred miles from home. In the American Association, Toledo played as far east as Brooklyn and as far west as St. Louis, with ten other stops between those terminals. Toledo suffered as
a gate attraction when scheduling exhibition games. Top independents and minor league clubs would much rather schedule exhibition games with Anson's White Stockings -- or the St. Louis Browns, with their star player manager Charles Commiskey -- than a Toledo club, whose previous notoriety extended only within a two hundred mile radius. Even more destructive was that the Northwestern League had to replace Toledo with another franchise in Stillwater, Minnesota, which expanded its closely knit tri-state format, resulting in increased travel expenses. Clearly this illustrates why five minor leagues collapsed during the Union war. 21

Throughout the one year Union war and the subsequent 1885 season, National League officials had position themselves to set the agenda for Organized Baseball. When the American Association was found in violation of the ten-day waiver rule in a Brooklyn-Cleveland player deal, Spalding demanded that the Association either expel Brooklyn or allow Henry V. Lucas's Union Association St. Louis club to gain entry into the senior circuit. This permitted the National League to operate a franchise in that territorial market. The American Association's position was further weakened when John B. Day, owner of the New York clubs in both circuits, weakened the Metropolitans by creating more favorable situations for the National League Giants. For example, Day compelled the Mets to
start games earlier when both his teams played on the same day. To add insult to injury, the Mets were relegated to the less desirable diamond on the old Polo Grounds. Despite stiff opposition by the American Association, its officials yielded to the demands of National League officials. Albert Spalding emerged as the dominant owner in Organized Baseball. This placed him in an advantageous position to influence Organized Baseball policy -- which included the exclusion of black players on the major league level. 22

The Gentlemen's Agreement between Toledo manager Charlie Morton and Albert Spalding established the precedence for drawing the color line in Organized Baseball. Both the Union Association war and Anson's opposition to playing a club with a black player were influential in Spalding sanctioning his manager's racist behavior. More important, given the ever presence of racism, the elimination of blacks from Organized Baseball was not simply reduced to the onset of both Jim Crowism generally or to men, like Cap Anson. Organized Baseball was engaged in a war that it was not sure it could win. It should also be noted that the expansion of the American Association -- which enabled Toledo to become a member -- and not an attempt by the owners to sign black players landed Walker in the major leagues. The union war had a dramatic impact upon the restrictive practices, which was instrumental

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in the owners gaining tighter control over their labor force. These practices also impacted upon Organized Baseball's race relations. While the owners would fight wars over the services of white players, they appeared more than willing to utilize collusive agreements to exclude black players from the major leagues.

Ironically, Moses Fleetwood Walker embodied the characteristics League owners sought in projecting its lofty moral image. But he was excluded because of his color, illustrating the irrationality of institutionalized racism. Although the major leagues had established the precedent of exclusion, the minor leagues had not completely embraced Spalding's gentlemen's agreement.

Harold Seymour argues that the National Agreement became the first formula for regulating competition among leagues for players and territories. It also contributed immensely to the permanence and value of the club franchises. New leagues began seeking the National Agreement's protection, as the Tripartite Pact proved its worth. Yet at the same time, the National Agreement became the prime mover for institutional racism, although there was no written clause asserting this. Some scholars suggest that the National Association of Base Ball Players established the precedent for drawing the color line in baseball. But the NABBP's scope extended only in New York and surrounding areas. In contrast, the National Agreement
was clearly "national" in scope as its tentacles extended as far west as Chicago and St. Louis. It marked the beginning of a conspiracy in Organized Baseball that lasted over sixty years. 23

THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF COLORED BASE BALL PLAYERS

By the late 1880s, black independents had reached their peak in the Gilded Age. Several were operating quite adequately at this time. As a result, several investors of all-black nines made the first attempt to organize a Negro League patterned after the National League, limiting membership to clubs in leading cities. The National League of Colored Base Ball Players represented the only time a segregated league attempted to operate within the structure of Organized Baseball.

The plight of this black league illustrate the obstacles that plagued the Negro Leagues throughout their history. The early black independents had developed a close knit stay-at-home schedules, operating within a hundred miles of their home base or point of origin. The league represented an ambitious undertaking, as black clubs initially would travel as far east as Boston and as far west as St. Louis. Long railroad trips meant increased travel and overhead expenses, leading many of the prospective entrepreneurs not to make a full commitment to this venture. Moreover, the unwillingness of the Cuban
Giants to join the venture doomed it to failure. It also marked the beginning of the end of the black independents of the 1880s.

On November 17, 1886, the Sporting Life reported that Walter S. Brown, a Pittsburgh newsstand manager, announced that six clubs were committed to organize a black professional league. Brown sought to form an eight team league, with aspirations that the Cuban Giants would join the circuit. The commitment of this prominent black club would give the league some credibility, but on November 29, 1886, the Cubans indicated that they would not join the league, citing long traveling distances between cities as their major concern. Despite the Giants' rejection, Brown remained firmly committed to the prospective black league. 24

On December 9, the National League of Colored Base Ball Players held their first convention at Eureka Hall in Pittsburgh. Delegates from Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Washington, Louisville, and Pittsburgh laid the ground work for the upcoming season. Cincinnati's delegation was headed by Bud Fowler, who was selected to serve on the constitution committee. Philadelphia's delegation provided further evidence that these black independents were white owned enterprises catering to a white clientele. The Sporting Life reported on December 8, that the Pythian Base Ball Association had elected the
following officers: Gilbert A. Ball, president; Herman Close, corresponding secretary; and Albert J. Reach, treasurer. Reach was a great player during baseball's amateur era. By 1869, he had opened a retail outlet in the Quaker City for cigars and other goods, including baseball equipment. One of his early and valued customers were Octavius Catto's Philadelphia Pythians. By 1874 his stock had reached an estimated value of $3,000 to $4,000, and by the next decade Reach expanded his line of sporting goods, making him the dominant sporting goods manufacturer. He would eventually lose out to Albert Spalding when the sporting goods industry came under monopolistic control. With the absence of the Cuban Giants, Reach's association with the new league gave the circuit some semblance of credibility. The league adopted the use of the Spalding ball, which at the time was manufactured by Reach, and after a lively debate sought protection under the National Agreement.  

On February 3, 1887, both the Philadelphia Pythians and the Gorhams of New York became the seventh and eighth members of the league; at the same time, Brown made allegations of tampering. In an ironic move, the Pythians hired S.K. Govern to manage the club. It was unclear why and even how Govern would manage both the Pythians and the Cuban Giants at the same time. Although he did not
provide concrete evidence, Brown alleged that some members of the older associations were tampering with his players, and were trying to cripple the league. 26

Under the terms of the National Agreement, a league placing a franchise in major league territory would have to seek permission to operate there. Evidently, neither the National League or the American Association viewed the Colored League as a serious threat and granted them permission to operate in their territory. In addition, the Sporting Life questioned whether the Colored League needed protection. In an editorial entitled "Do They Need Protection?", it was argued:

The progress of the Colored League will be watched with considerable interest. There have been prominent colored base ball clubs throughout the country for many years past, but this is their initiative year in launching forth on a league scale by forming a league . . . representing . . . leading cities of the country. The League will attempt to secure the protection of the National Agreement. This can only be done with the consent of all the National Agreement clubs in whose territories the colored clubs are located. This consent should be obtainable, as these clubs can in no sense be considered rivals to the white clubs nor are likely to hurt the latter in the least financially. Still the League can get along without protection. The value of the latter to the white clubs lies in that it guarantees a club undisturbed possession of its players. There is not likely to be much of a scramble for colored players. Only two [sic] such players are now employed in professional white clubs, and the number is not likely to be ever materially increased owing to the high standard of play required and to the popular prejudice against any considerable mixture of races. 27
While white clubs may not have scrambled for black players, Brown's allegation was not without foundation. There was one man who had a vested interested in seeing the National Colored League fail -- Albert Goodwill Spalding. According to Voigt, it appeared that Reach "might become the octopus of the [the sporting goods] industry." His business relationship with Catto's Pythians illustrates that the Philadelphia magnate had a history of supplying black clubs with equipment. Clearly his association with this prospective black league showed that a potential lucrative market existed. This could explain Govern's involvement in the league. By managing the Pythians, Govern could obtain sporting equipment at discount prices for the Cuban Giants and the black club from the Quaker City. In essence, Reach attempted to corner the market among the black independent clubs. But it also revealed how the mulatto elite's business connections with wealthy whites placed them in a state of vulnerability. Their business venture with Reach occurred at a time when Spalding was making his move to corner the sporting goods industry. In addition, one sure way to cripple this black league was for Spalding to encourage his fellow owners not to schedule exhibition games with colored league clubs. In the end, Spalding would gain control of sporting goods industry, and it was no coincidence that Negro League clubs would be one of his best clients in the twentieth century.28
Brown had more internal problems to deal with in his organization. On December 7, 1886, two days before the Colored League's first convention, the Binghamton Leader announced that Bud Fowler had signed with the Bingos of the International League. It was evident that Fowler's color worked against him while playing in white leagues and was no doubt instrumental in his constant moving from club to club. But Fowler also had a reputation for being a peripatetic, leaving clubs for unknown reasons. He had an uncanny ability for spotting black talent, a valuable asset for the Colored League. However, Fowler's signing poses the question just how committed were these black clubs to this enterprise. 29

Several factors led to a lack of commitment by these black clubs. First, as the Northwestern League can attest, early minor leagues evolved from a regional format. In other words, to decrease overhead expenses, an association of clubs in say, for example, a hundred mile radius would establish a tight knit circuit. In addition to scheduling league games, contest with top independent teams were scheduled on a regular basis. This served as a means of generating additional revenues, while at the same time, decreasing the amount of overhead to operate a club. Even black clubs, like the Gorhams and the Keystones, benefited from this arrangement. 30
If this regional arrangement proved to be an effective way of operating, then why would a prominent black club that developed a good reputation risk the chance of losing it, not to mention increasing their overhead expense by expanding its travel itinerary? Throughout its organizational stage, black clubs from Cleveland and a more notable one, the St. Louis Black Stockings, sent letters pledging interests, but never sent delegates to any organizational meeting. Why would the Black Stockings travel East and play Baltimore, without the assurance of a substantial guarantee to cover their travel expenses? Moreover, if Baltimore were a poor team, the chances of attracting gate receipts to turn both a profit and pay the guarantee, would be minimal at best. It was just not in the Black Stockings' best interest to travel that long of distance, if they could do better in a regional format.\textsuperscript{31}

Early indications of some of these black teams playing exhibition games against their white counterparts in the minor leagues were not encouraging. Even the Keystones of Pittsburgh did not fair well against white clubs. In a game on April 20, 1887, a club from Reading, Pennsylvania, soundly beat the Keystones, 20-4. In a brief two game series with Wilkes Barre, the Philadelphia Pythians were defeated by scores of 29-2 and 11-1. Even the colored leagues' results against the Cuban Giants were also discouraging. Both the Keystones and the Pythians lost
to the Cubans by respective scores of 21-3 and 10-2. Results such as these hardly made the National Colored League appealing. 32

On March 14, 1887, at the National League of Colored Base Ball Players final convention, evidence of noncommittal became even more prevalent. Both the Capital City club of Washington and Cincinnati failed to solicit their bonds and were dropped from the league. As a result, Brown announced that the league would operate in six cities, and that it would be divided into two divisions: New York, Boston, and Philadelphia would make up the "Eastern League," while Pittsburgh, Baltimore, and Louisville would constitute the "Western League." All clubs would have open dates between league games, to enable them to take advantage of any opportunities to schedule exhibition games. The inaugural season would be classified as an "experimental" one. 33

But when the Colored League began its season, some of the league club's financial difficulties became evident. The Resolutes of Boston were stranded in Louisville on May 8 and could not meet their obligation to play Pittsburgh two days later. To ease the financial strain, the game with Pittsburgh was canceled, and the league rescheduled the Resolutes to play Baltimore, the league club within the closest proximity. But Boston could not fulfill this obligation either. Walter Brown would not officially
announced that the Colored League had disbanded until May 20. While it is unclear regarding the plight of the other clubs, the Gorhams, the Resclutes, the Pythians, and Keystones continued playing as independents throughout the late 1880s. 34

Clearly the lack of commitment on the part of the owners contributed to the National Colored League's demise. The unwillingness of both the Cuban Giants and the St. Louis Black Stockings, who like the Cubans were also a prominent black independent, doomed the league to fail. Even more significant, drawing the color line in Organized Baseball's labor force, and the Colored League's failure marked the start of the severing of business ties between white professional clubs and black independents. But the final death nail would not be driven until the breakup of the most prominent black club of the era.

**THE BREAKUP OF THE CUBAN GIANTS**

The Cuban Giants' affiliation with the Middle States League illustrates how the combination of external, internal, and structural parameters destroyed black clubs in the early twentieth century. A transfer in the Cubans' ownership dramatically impacted the way the club would operate. A combination of ill-advised changes in league policy and the Middle States League officials unwillingness to enforced them, led to league instability and a subsequent reorganization. When the officials did enforce league
policy, it resulted in three franchises -- Harrisburg, York, and the Cuban Giants -- linked in a myriad of controversy. Moreover, the Middle States League exemplifies how player raiding had a devastating impact on the baseball business. Finally, the Middle States League provided both a glimpse of how the Negro Leagues would operate in the 1920s, and how the nation's economic downswing had on an industry attempting to regulate itself.

On June 25, 1888, Walter I. Cook died. The True American described him as "a most liberal patron" who took on the task of bringing the Cuban Giants to Trenton, "thus giving the city the best base ball it ever had." More importantly Cook's death led to transforming the way in which the club operated during the regular season. The Giants lost a wealthy financial investor who had the team's best interests at heart, the dissolution of its corporate structure -- separation of management from ownership -- and the club coming under the control of Cook's former partner, John M. Bright. 35

Unlike Cook, Bright did not come from a wealthy family. Known to the players as J.M., Sol White described Bright as "a lover of the game and a money getting man," and "the leading spirit of his day in keeping the game before the public." However, the New York Amsterdam News probably provides a more objective analysis of the Giants' new enigmatic owner. The News described Bright as extremely
selfish in financial matters and "naturally shrewd" when it came to devising schemes to promote the Giants. He was full of ideas when it came to generating revenue. He would develop a reputation for holding up games after his team reached the grounds as a means of demanding a "boost in his stipulated guarantee" when the grandstand was full. Unlike his predecessor, Bright's dealings with his players and with S.K. Govern were penurious at best leading to dissension and occasional turnover in personnel. 36

Bright's business acumen was instrumental in getting the Cuban Giants into an organized minor league. No doubt the loss of Cook's financial resources was also instrumental in this decision. On November 19, 1888, delegates representing eight cities in four states (Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut) met to organize the Middle States League. New Jersey was represented by S.K. Govern. Initially, league organizers sought to establish a ten club league with five teams in the East and five in the West. Only one game would be played in each city on a trip, and cap on player salaries of $75 a month was instituted. League organizers admitted the Cuban Giants primarily as a gate attraction. It marked the first time an all-black nine was admitted to a white minor league. Unlike most minor leagues of the era, the Middle States League did not seek protection under the
National Agreement. Despite its high aspirations, league organizers settled with a six club format in two states. Five clubs in Pennsylvania -- Philadelphia, Reading, Harrisburg, Lancaster, and York -- and the Cuban Giants constituted the new circuit. 37

Baseball scholars have been critical of the autocratic nature under which Organized Baseball emerged. Yet without a strong governing authority, operating a professional league was virtually impossible. The early minor leagues had an unique obstacle that made it difficult to develop a strong bureaucracy. There was no incentive for a franchise to remain with an organized league for a period of time. If a club believed that they were getting a raw deal in their current league, or league affiliation proved not to be economically beneficial, they simply jumped to another league, disband, or operate as an independent. Even the National Agreement could not solve this dilemma for the minor leagues. 38

The Middle States League's umpiring system exemplified the loop's weak bureaucratic structure. It also linked the Harrisburg, York, and the Cuban Giants together in a series of controversial events. No league illustrated David Voigt's thesis portraying the umpire as an universal symbol of hate more than the Middle States League. While owners and directors discovered that the umpire as a villain could be profitable, the fan saw them as a threat to the
hopes of the home team and to the spectacular performances of their heroes. Since both the player and the umpire were subject to off days, it was convenient to have a moral persecutor -- a person who had a bad habit of misusing power -- like the man behind the plate to blame. As a result, the umpire became the scapegoat cast in the role as the villain to serve as a safety valve for the frustration of the fans. Such frustration would become the spark that led to bitter resentment between the Harrisburg and York clubs.\footnote{39}

Initially, the league organizers devised a home umpire system; in other words, the home team was responsible for supplying and paying the umpire. The selected official would then have to be approved by league secretary William Voltz, the former president of the Toledo Blue Stockings of the Northwestern League. On April 29, 1889, the Harrisburg\emph{ Patriot} reported that the York officials were disappointed when umpire Harry E. Powell was not appointed to the staff. Apparently his exclusion was due to poor communication. According to Voltz, five names were submitted to him in which Powell's name was included. Since there were no special recommendation for a desired appointee, Voltz selected three men he deemed competent.\footnote{40}

On May 3, 1889, an episode occurred that led to abolishing the home umpiring system. In a game at Harrisburg, the York\emph{ Gazette} charged that the Ponies'
home umpire, Frank Dubbs, of making calls favoring the home team. The Gazette cited the Harrisburg Star to reinforced their accusation. On May 15, league officials abolished the system, giving secretary Voltz the authority to create a traveling umpire system, hiring a staff at $50 a month. 41

On June 20, a second controversial event surrounding the umpire occurred that required league action. According to the Harrisburg Patriot, Apology Sturgeon was threatened with violence unless he made calls against the Ponies. He made a close call at the beginning of the game for the Ponies that led to a near riot. Stones were thrown at Harrisburg infielders attempting to field ground balls, leading to several errors. Harrisburg manager James Farrington was ejected from the game. The York Gazette, on the other hand, asserted that several calls went the Ponies way. With a runner on third base, the Harrisburg pitcher threw a pitch that got pass the catcher. The ball was retrieved by a fan who threw it back to the pitcher. The runner on third, recognizing that the ball was dead, headed slowly for the plate. When the pitcher tagged the runner out, the fans exploded. When Sturgeon recognized his error, he reversed himself and called the runner safe. At this point, the Ponies were ready to walk off the field, but leaving the field meant forfeiting either the gate receipts or the stipulated guarantee, so the Ponies
remained. As a result of this calamity, Harrisburg refused to take the field for a contest scheduled the following day. 42

Harrisburg manager James Farrington filed a protest with league officials. After York directors William Whorl and J.W. Hedrick stated the circumstances of the incident, a unanimous decision was made in favor of Harrisburg. York's management was admonished for the poor umpiring and providing no police protection. League officials also reversed the local umpire's decision awarding the game following the near riot to Harrisburg. It marked the only time during the season that league directors took decisive action in settling a dispute. Yet their direct action marked the beginning of a bitter rivalry between both the Harrisburg and York franchises. It also exemplified that this rivalry transcended the game on the field. For the remainder of the season, the dailies of both cities would verbally abused each other constantly. The York Gazette referred to the Harrisburg contingent that accompanied the team as "foul mouthed and strong breathed," while referring to their fans as "cultured and refined." The Harrisburg Patriot, on the other hand, charged that York's fans treated the Ponies as "'scrubs' . . . and baseball robbers." More importantly, the Harrisburg-York rivalry
eventually led to the use of underhanded tactics throughout the league's brief history -- one which would adversely affected the Cuban Giants. 43

From June to August 1889, a series of events occurred that threatened league stability. League officials made a couple of ill-advised decisions by extending the schedule from 60 to 70 games, and expanding the league from six to eight clubs. Clubs from Norristown, Pennsylvania and Norwalk, Connecticut filled the final two berths. The league's weaker franchises, both economically and on the field, virtually ruined any chance of achieving competitive balance. The factors that contributed to the weaker franchises' instability to run an adequate operation -- the ballpark's location, the weather, and National Agreement clubs raiding their rosters -- placed the Middle States League in both an economic and administrative muddle.

Less than two months into the regular season, three clubs -- Lancaster, Reading, and Philadelphia -- disbanded. The Philadelphia Press cited poor patronage, due the club's poor showing on the field, as the primary reason for the Lancaster's collapse. The franchise was reported to be $1,000 in debt, and the team's directors deemed it better to fold than run the risk of losing more. The New York Clipper reported that the factors that sacked Reading included the weather, the distance of the grounds from the city, and the impossibility of scheduling Sunday games
because of Blue Laws. The Philadelphia Giants were in National Agreement territory and were doomed to fail. As a result, the league was classified as an "outlaw" and could have been subjected to both territorial and player raids by other Agreement leagues or associations without compensation. But the Giants' poor play on the field made the club no threat to the major leagues; they had lost all but one of their first 21 games. They could not compete for patronage against the National League Phillies or the American Association Athletics. The Giants sold their team captain, John Irwin, to the National League Washington Senators for a reported $3,000, further illustrating the club's weak financial position. 44

National Agreement teams did raid Middle States League franchises for players. For example, the St. Louis Browns signed away both John Stivetts (pitcher) and James Gill (outfielder) from the York Hayseeds. While league officials stated that they would take action against those clubs raiding the roster of league clubs, in the end they did nothing. 45

The instability of the league's franchises led to the directors engaging in the game of constant franchise shifting. The Gorhams of New York replaced the Philadelphia Giants. Since they were a traveling team, the Gorhams had to secure a playing facility. They first attempted to operate in Lancaster; when that failed they moved to
Easton, Pennsylvania. There entry into the league caused some consternation from members of the press, particularly the Harrisburg Patriot. Both the Gorhams and the Cuban Giants were characterized as being "dirty foul mouthed ball players" and the Patriot editor asked, why "cannot a negro baseball player be just as respectable as a white one?" But the real cause of concern was the presence of two black clubs in the league. "If [the league] cannot support itself without making it a mixed color arrangement," the Patriot argued, "it would be better to throw up the sponge." Despite these obvious racial slurs of the Harrisburg press, the Gorhams' business arrangement with the city of Easton proved unworkable. The New York Clipper reported that attendance was so poor that the club could not pay their guarantees. On August 21, after compiling a record of fourteen wins and eighteen losses, the Gorhams dropped out of the Middle States League and returned to New York. 46

The game of constant franchise shifting continued. A club from Hazleton replaced the Reading club, while Lancaster was replaced by a team from Shenendoah, Pennsylvania. On August 9, both Shenendoah and Norwalk were expelled and clubs from Lebanon, Pennsylvania, and Wilmington, Delaware added. After their expulsion, Norwalk joined the Atlantic Association. 47
Finally on September 9, after losing four straight games to Harrisburg, York disbanded. While the Harrisburg press boasted that the Ponies' superior play knocked their hated rivals out of the league, York president William Whorl cited player insubordination and financial difficulties as the club's primary obstacles. Throughout the season, the Hayseeds experienced a constant turnover in both management and labor personnel. In addition, like the Reading franchise, York's playing facility was not easily accessible to the public. While the club had been a competitive one throughout the season, winning 45 and losing 28, the community, with its heavily influenced German population, became disillusioned with the team's transient players and their drunken disorderliness. Clearly the constant franchise shifting, not to mention the ill-advised decisions to expand the league and schedule, exacerbated any chance of generating revenue from league games. 48

The frequent movement of teams, economic instability, and the lack of continuity in enforcing league policy, led to a controversy over who won the league pennant. At the end of the season the Cuban Giants were in first place a few percentage points ahead of Harrisburg. The Ponies protested on the grounds that the Cuban Giants played fewer games. Through a series of decisions on appealed
games, league officials awarded the pennant to Harrisburg, adjusting the totals to give the Ponies a record of 64-19 (.771), barely ahead of the Cuban Giants, 55-17 (.764). The decision outraged Bright, who immediately filed a protest with the league. For months he argued that he was robbed of the pennant, but his protest was never resolved. Several factors led to the league failing to address Bright's protest. First, the scheduling system lacked any rationale or continuity. Clubs could either classify games with other league clubs as either exhibition games or league games. The advantage to this evidently was that if the home team lost, the game was declared an exhibition; but if they won, the contest was a league game. To compound matters, the constant franchise shifts made it virtually impossible to render a rational decision. The league's constitution provided no remedy regarding the disposition of league games with disbanded clubs. Furthermore, expanding the league and schedule complicated any chance for a logical outcome for this dispute. Finally, Bright's action further exacerbated a ruling in his favor. The York Gazette reported that league officials had canceled a game between the Cuban Giants and Wilmington in order to allow the Cubans to make a trip through New York state. Bright indicated that after mid-September, the Giants would play no more games in the Middle States League. At the
end of the season, the Middle States League was in such a chaotic state that league reorganization was essential for its survival. 50

**LEAGUE REORGANIZATION**

The reorganization of the Middle States League triggered a virtual domino effect in the destruction of the black independents. This devastation began when an attempt was made to place a second club in Harrisburg to compete against the pennant winners. When the league officials decided that only one club could operate in the Pennsylvania capital, the original Ponies merged with the old York club, and raided the Cuban Giants' roster for players. The internal division within the Cubans' management, leading to further dissension among the players, created an environment that was right for the dismantling of this great club. In retaliation, Bright engaged in some player raiding of his own, which led to the dismantling of the black independents and marking the end of the "money period" in black baseball.

Since August 26, 1889, Middle States League directors recognized the need for reorganization. They felt that the failure to seek protection under the National Agreement was a terrible handicap to the league. Raiding the player rosters of league clubs by Agreement teams contributed to the circuit's chaotic condition. In addition, it was customary for teams under Agreement protection not to
schedule exhibition games with outlaw leagues or associations. Given the league’s catastrophic economic state, exhibitions with Organized Baseball clubs could have possibly relieved some of this burden, but events occurring in Harrisburg would have a dramatic impact on both the reorganization of the league, and on the future direction of the Cuban Giants.  

On October 30, 1889, the Sporting Life reported that a group of investors had planned to place a franchise in Harrisburg in direct competition against the existing one. This syndicate was known as the Harrisburg Athletic Association, a contingent of local businessmen led by John Westbrook and George Fleming. The Harrisburg Patriot indicated that the Athletic Association was well financed and had made plans to secure a new playing facility on Hargest Island, located in the center of the city. Their biggest acquisition was securing James Farrington as the club's field manager. Since his victory in the Harrrisburg-York protest, not to mention his club winning the pennant, Farrington had become a very influential man in the Middle States League. His signing also insured that last year's ball club would also accompany him. 

Directors of the league's current club were outraged by this obvious invasion of their territory. Judging by their actions, they were not about to go away quietly. Led by club president Samuel Crook, "the old club" invested
$1,000 in the grandstand, purchased uniforms, bats, and other essential equipment. They appeared to have one asset in their favor. According to the Sporting Life, the old club's grounds were more convenient for the fans due to its better access to the street car lines.53

On December 2, 1889, at Harrisburg's Leland House, the Middle States League was reorganized and renamed the Eastern Interstate League. The new league initially was composed of eight cities: Lebanon, Allentown, Easton, Wilkesbarre, Scranton, Altoona, and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; and Wilmington, Delaware. Two applications were received from Harrisburg -- one from the Harrisburg Athletic Association -- the other from the old club. Both contingents stated their case as to why they should be admitted into the reorganized league. In Crook's absence, Fred Ebel and J. Monroe Kreiter Jr. represented the old club. They argued that their group had been put to much expense in starting a club last season, and did not make their expenses because of the weather. They added that if another club was permitted to operate, it would destroy their business and reduce their opportunity to recover their losses. At this point the Athletic Association's spokesman, James Farrington, addressed the meeting. He stated that the new club was better financed and the league would be guaranteed that a club would be maintained in Harrisburg. League organizers conducted a secret ballot
to determine which one would be admitted. The vote was taken fifteen consecutive times, each ending in a deadlock. 54

At the evening meeting, John Westbrook arrived and offered the old club a proposal to remedy the situation. Previously, the Association offered to buy the old club for $500; it refused. Given the old club's previous investment prior to the meeting, their rejection was predictable. Westbrook indicated that he would agree to buy the club after it was appraised to determine its market value. After careful consideration for about an hour or two, the old club rejected the offer. A new vote was taken and the new Harrisburg club was admitted into the league. It is unclear why league organizers chose the Harrisburg Athletic Association over the old club, but from this point on, the Association contingent would be a major influence in determining league policy. 55

With the Harrisburg situation out of the way, league directors focused on other considerations to complete the reorganization. A new constitution was proposed and a guarantee fund of $4,000 was incorporated. Each club was required to deposit $500 at the beginning of the season as a guarantee that a league club would complete it. Five umpires, a source of heated debate, was selected, four regulars and an alternate, by the president and approved by the board of directors. The home club would allow the
visiting club the option of taking a $65 guarantee, or 40% of the gate receipts. Organizers also instituted a salary cap of $100 per player per month and that a club could have an unlimited roster. Finally, the organizers elected William Voltz president, secretary, and treasurer; and William Douglass of the Allentown club, vice-president.56

Despite their exclusion from the reorganized league, the old club was determined to operate a team in Harrisburg for the 1890 season. From their perspective, league affiliation -- particularly one under Agreement protection -- was essential to compete against the better financed Athletic Association. Second, the old club would have to field a team of equal or better talent in an effort to lure patronage away from the new club. While it may or may not have been known to them, the time was right for a player raid on the Cuban Giants’ roster.

From as early as December 5, 1889, rumors circulated that the old club filed an application to enter the Atlantic Association. At the time, the Atlantic Association appeared to be a better circuit, having clubs in larger cities like Washington D.C., Baltimore, and Newark. In addition, it was under the protection of the National Agreement. If the old club was admitted, this would have hampered William Voltz’s plan to have the Interstate League under Agreement protection. Two clubs could not operate within a five
mile radius of each other. In addition, no league or association under Agreement protection would schedule exhibition games in that city. While the old club had every intention of gaining admission into the Atlantic Association, it is also evident that this move was also a ploy to cripple the Interstate League. 57

Rumors also circulated at this time, that the old club had signed the Cuban Giants to play under their management. Old club officials emphatically denied such efforts were made. At the same time, Bright asserted that the Cuban Giants would field a team for the upcoming season, and operate out of Trenton, New Jersey.

Were the Cuban Giants about to break up? There were several factors that indicated such steps were inevitable. The death of Walter Cook led to a dramatic change in the way in which the club operated. While the team continued to win on the field, the team's management strategy changed dramatically. Under Cook's ownership, the Giants paid all their guarantees, met their scheduling commitments, and the players were compensated handsomely. On the other hand, Bright was in no financial condition to maintain the standards Cook developed. Alternative measures were devised, which usually meant utilizing underhanded tactics, like canceling league games in favor of more lucrative ones with semipros teams in larger cities, and not compensating players in a way they were accustomed to.
This transformation in operational procedure injured the team's credibility, a luxury an all-black team playing predominantly all-white clubs could ill afford, particularly at a time when racism among white players was on the rise.58

But the biggest factor that indicated that a breakup was eminent was the resignation of S.K. Govern. A contemporary wrote in the True American that Govern was a "colored man" with exceptional executive ability, and that the club would miss his services. No doubt the Middle States fiasco and the new way in which the club was managed influenced Govern's decision to leave. He was placed in the unenviable position of apologizing to league officials for constitution violations and ensuring them they would be followed in the future. But clearly Govern was the glue that kept the organization together. His loss marked the beginning of an era in which the Cuban Giants were relegated to a traveling team, barnstorming the nation for gate receipts.59

From February to April 1890, a series of events occurred that led to the dismantling of the Cuban Giants. First, the old club directors failed to gain entry into the Atlantic Association. The Association was experiencing internal division within its own ranks and never considered the old contingent's application. Furthermore, if the old club intended to field an all-black nine, this, as we shall see later, possibly influenced the Association
directors to reject their application. If the old Harrisburg contingent had aspirations to run a club in 1890, an alternative plan would have to be devised. 60

At the same time a change occurred in the Interstate League's original plans. Allentown could not secure a franchise and was replaced by Lancaster. The league directors decided to operate without Scranton and Wilkesbarre due to the travel distance and lack of commitment from those cities' delegates. Although York did not send delegates to the February 24 meeting, they did send a telegram stating its commitment to the enterprise. 61

At the March 25 meeting, an effort was once again made to place a second franchise in Harrisburg. Although Farrington stated no objection of a second club operating in the state capital, the application angered the Harrisburg manager who left the meeting until the issue was resolved. It was finally agreed to reject the application so that the league would have one club in Harrisburg. The league was now complete with six Pennsylvania clubs: Harrisburg, Altoona, Easton, Lancaster, Lebanon, and York, Pennsylvania. 62

While the old Harrisburg contingent failed to place a second club in the state capital, they had secretly entered into a collusive agreement with the York delegates. In late April, the York Base Ball Club filed an application
to the court of York County, Pa., for a charter of incorporation. Wright states that, "Harrisburg Group, Inc." put up $1,500 in capital allowing York representative William Whorl to sell $500 of stock at $15.00 per share. With the stock arrangement, Harrisburg Group, Inc. had controlling interest in the York Base Ball Club. The York Gazette cited that "Harrisburg people have obtained grounds here and plan to place a team of colored players in a new league." Sol White reinforced this assertion stating that "A party of Gentlemen who backed the Harrisburg Club of 89, secured the grounds in York, and sign[ed] the Cuban Giants as representatives of the Eastern Interstate League." By mid-April, Crook and his associates had secretly signed several of Bright's Cuban Giants and began scheduling exhibition games in York.63

The Athletic Association's invasion of Harrisburg Group, Inc.'s territorial region had a devastating impact on the black independent teams in the East. Player raiding became a contagious disease. The Athletic Association was also affected by it when it signed catcher Clarence Williams and Frank Grant marking the total decimation of Cuban Giants' roster. In response to this raiding of his roster, Bright engaged in the same activity. He signed the top players from both the Boston Resolutes and the Keystones of Pittsburgh. Apparently this raid marked the end of those black clubs; no reference is made of them
after the 1890 season. Bright, however, would manage to field a team. According to the *Cleveland Gazette*, he scheduled games throughout New York and New Jersey, winning 80 games and losing 24. 64

The signing of Frank Grant started another controversy between the Harrisburg and York clubs. York also claimed to have signed Grant and filed a protest with league president William Voltz. They also filed suit in Harrisburg municipal court before Judge Joseph Simonton. On May 19, Voltz ruled in favor of Harrisburg; Judge Simonton reinforced this decision by ruling on June 7 in favor of the Ponies. In response to losing Grant, York officials invaded the Gorhams of New York's roster, signing Sol White, Andy and Oscar Jackson, and catcher William Jackson of Detroit. 65

The Interstate League exhibited remarkable stability from the previous year, and also had an exciting pennant race. Only one club, Lancaster, dropped out of the league and was replaced by Allentown. By the end of June there was a three team race between York 27-10, Harrisburg 27-15, and Altoona 27-16. The Monarchs continued to lead the league by late July with only Harrisburg still challenging them for the pennant. But the Colored Monarchs would be denied the championship. With York (40-16, .714) a few percentage points ahead of Harrisburg (39-25, .697), the Ponies' directors jumped to the Atlantic Association. 66
The loss of Harrisburg led to the Interstate League folding. York fans felt Harrisburg jumped to the Association to be saved from the embarrassment of losing the pennant should that occur. However, Harrisburg had filed an application with the Atlantic Association in late June. But because of the club's black players, Williams and Grant, the Association was reluctant to accept the Ponies. To remedy the situation, Harrisburg's directors entered into a gentlemen's agreement. In an effort to retain Grant on their roster, the Ponies dropped Clarence Williams. 67

The Colored Monarchs completed the 1890 season as an independent. York fans were incensed when Crook and his associates elected to move the club to Harrisburg. From the state capital, they maintained their York affiliation and played clubs from the defunct Interstate League and wherever they could schedule games. By the end of the season, the Monarchs traveled over 6,000 miles in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, compiling a record of 88 wins and 27 losses. 68

The plight of both the Interstate League and the black independents was emblematic of the economic downswing that began in the 1890s. This economic climate, linked primarily to the Panic 1873, ushered in a period of intermittent periods of recovery and depression. Compared to the inflationary profit boom of the 1860s, the depression
fostered an entirely new business environment – one of cutthroat competition. In 1891, incensed by the player raid of his own club, Gorhams owner Ambrose Davis returned the favor. Davis signed away the entire roster of the York Colored Monarchs, added Clarence Williams, Frank Grant, and George Stovey, and renamed his club the Big Gorhams. According to Sol White, this club was the strongest contingent ever, winning 100 games and losing 4. They represented Ansonia, Connecticut in the Connecticut State League until the circuit disbanded in July. Even more significant was the caliber of clubs the Big Gorhams played. They played against primarily weak semipro teams, and scheduled virtually no games with either major and minor league clubs, marking the beginning of the severing of business ties between Organized Baseball and the black independents. As a result the season was a financial disaster, leading to the Big Gorhams disbanding. It would be another fifteen years before another African American club was black owned and operated, and by 1892 only J.M. Bright survived the purge. 69

**AFTERMATH: TOWARDS THE AGE OF ACCOMMODATION**

The business practices devised by the National League became the model for other professional leagues, both black and white, to emulate. The National Agreement provided the road map in which this new industry, Organized Baseball, could establish some sense of regulation and control.
 Owners recognized the need to market their product in cooperation with their fellow owners. They had to cooperate with each other to a much greater degree than in the more conventional enterprises. An organized league transferred power from the players to the owners, and bound players more tightly to clubs with its restrictive measures. Moreover, these business practices established a league bureaucracy with the authority to enforce rules and supervise league operations.

While these business practices set the game on a sound economic footing, they also set in motion the process of excluding players on the basis of race, and severing the business ties with black independent clubs. It should be noted that excluding players out of Organized Baseball was a process that occurred over a period of years. In the 1890s, light-skinned Cubans would play on some minor league teams under Agreement protection. The popular prejudice of white players and the subsequent hostility was instrumental in forcing blacks out of Organized Baseball. But it could not have been successful without the owners working in cooperation to maintain a policy of exclusion. 70

Despite the color line, black clubs still scheduled a good deal of exhibition games with both major and minor league clubs. But the failure of the National Colored League, the increased racial hostility of white players,
and the economic downswing contributed to scheduling fewer
exhibition games with the black independents. By 1892, virtually no games were scheduled with blacks.

The plight of the Middle States League illustrated the pitfalls that would affect black baseball in the early twentieth century. Raiding the roster of ballclubs for players was one of the most destructive practices in the baseball business. It could put a club out of business overnight, and once owners were affected by this disease, it became contagious. The weak bureaucratic structure led to raiding player rosters because of the Middle States League's unwillingness to enforce league policy. In addition, the weak bureaucracy resulted in some ill-advised decisions that undermined any chance of establishing authority and supervising league operations. Securing a good playing facility was as significant as the labor force. Easy access to the park for the fans was vital in an industry that required consistent patronage. Developing a fan base was essential for prospective owner to gain a hegemony over a particular territorial region.

Finally, the paternalistic business relationship became a double-edged sword for the early black entrepreneurs. On the one hand such an enterprise as the Cuban Giants could not have existed without white philanthropy. On the other, it hindered blacks from developing a business relationship with a particular community to secure leases
or buy property for an adequate playing facility. While African Americans managed the day-to-day operations of the club, they were not in position to develop civic ties with influential businessmen outside the baseball business needed to stimulate community interest. For example, transportation to and from the ballpark was an essential element to maintain consistent patronage. Black entrepreneurs were not in a position to establish a business relationship with traction magnates that was economically rewarding to both parties involved. 71

Despite this paternalism, the mulatto elite were instrumental in shaping the dimensions of black baseball. The creation of black independent teams exemplified their efforts to develop a successful enterprise, that advocated white middle-class values, as a means of gaining acceptance into American society. The mulatto elite seized an opportunity, brought on by the changing attitude business had toward baseball, to create a successful business, while at the same time maintain their contacts with wealthy whites. The plight of the early black baseball entrepreneurs also highlighted the essential dilemma of the emerging black middle-class: no amount of fame or success could shield any black against the fundamental and all pervasive subordination forced on blacks of all backgrounds and occupations at that time. The social ties with the black theatrical profession influenced the
development of baseball comedy. It cast the players in the role of both competitors or entertainers. While this behavior was frowned upon in the early twentieth century, it was a testimony to both the versatility of the athletes on the field and the promotional skills of the management personnel. Moreover, the most significant promotional tactic -- the World's Colored Championship -- became the means for black entrepreneurs to stimulate interest in black baseball during the age of accommodation.
REFERENCE LIST


5. Organized Baseball, 19-20; Seymour, Baseball, 80-81; Voigt, American Baseball, 63-65.


9. Ibid., 76-79.

10. Ibid.


12. For accounts on the life of Moses Fleetwood Walker see the following works: David W. Zang, Fleet Walker's Divided Heart: The Life of Baseball's First Black Major


14. "Notes From The Baseball Field," *Columbus Dispatch* April 24 1883, 4; throughout the 1883 season, the Toledo Blade constantly praised Walker for his gentlemanly character. Evidently the Blade editors were impressed with his educational background. His every move was highlighted even to the point of justifying his short comings on the field. See any issue entitled "Baseball Notes," or "Diamond Dust."


16. Zang cites a racial encounter Walker had in 1881. As a member of the White Sewing Machine Company, an independent club, the Louiville Eclipse, an American Association club, objected to Walker's presence. Though Walker was their regular catcher, the Cleveland based club conceded to the Eclipse' demands and play without him. Ironically, Eclipse second baseman Fritz Pfeffer was also a member of the White Stockings during the Anson incident. See Zang, *Fleet Walker's*, 27-28, 38-39; "Ball And Bat," *Toledo Blade* August 11 1883, 3.

17. "Ball And Bat," 3.

18. For an account on both Organized Baseball's war against the Union Association and the origin of the gentlemen's agreement see Seymour, *Baseball*, 148-161.


22. During this period, Spalding exhibited his uncanny ability to establish a coalition to influence Organized Baseball policy. He threw his support behind Henry V. Lucas as a means of both landing an National League franchise in the St. Louis market, while at the same time, placed the American Association in a dilemma regarding the violation of the waiver rule. Although the transaction fell through, Spalding attempted to ship Chicago pitcher Jim McCormick out of the National League to Cincinnati, by carefully arranging gentlemen's agreements with other clubs in both leagues. For a detailed account of the internal struggle between the National League and American Association see Seymour, Baseball, 162-171.


26. "THE COLORED LEAGUE," Sporting Life February 9 1887, 1. The Pythians of 1887 should not be confused with the ones of the late 1860s. They are two different clubs.


28. Voigt, American Baseball, 215-218; for Spalding gaining a hegemony on the sporting goods industry see Levine, 71-96.


38. Since the inception of the National Agreement in 1864, both the National League and the American Association still experience constant franchise shifting. However both the major leagues compensated this weakness somewhat by exhibiting stability in their large market territories. New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and St. Louis were the most consistent franchises from 1884 to 1890. Despite the presence of weak franchises, like Indianapolis and Columbus, what made both the National League and the
American Association "major league," was their ability to finished their seasons consistently throughout this period. Neither league had a franchise shift during the season, a circumstance that was virtually impossible for minor leagues to evade. Until the Brotherhood War of 1890 would shake Organized Baseball at its foundation, this fact more than anything else made the National League and the American Association head and shoulders above any minor league at this time. Analysis based on data derived from Hy Turkin and S.C. Thompson, eds., The Official Encyclopedia of Baseball, 10th ed. (New York: Doubleday Dolphin, 1978), 53-54. For scholars critical of baseball's autocratic nature, see Seymour, Baseball; Voigt, American Baseball; Burk, Never.

39. For a detailed discussion on the plight of the nineteenth century umpire, see Voigt, American Baseball, 183-192.


46. For the Gorhams relocating to Easton see "Diamond Points," York Gazette August 20 1889, 1; for the Gorhams pulling out of the Middle States League see "Diamond
Points," York Gazette August 23 1889, 1. For the comments of the Harrisburg media see "Let the League Disband Now," Patriot June 29 1889, 1; "Whisperings from the Diamond," Patriot July 19 1889, 1.


49. Wright, "From Giants to Monarchs," 250-251. According to the New York Sun, the Cuban Giants were declared the pennant winner with a .772 winning percentage, over Harrisburg's .771. The Sun argued that Harrisburg was given two victories it was not entitled to. In addition, the Cuban Giants should have one less defeat than it had. See "The Game and Those Who Play It," Patriot September 29 1889, 1.


52. "HARRISBURG MENTION," Sporting Life October 30 1889, 1; "TWO RIVAL BASEBALL CLUBS," Patriot November 22 1889, 1.


55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.
57. There is evidence that suggests that the old club was instrumental in the Inter-State League not receiving protection. On January 2, 1890, Fred Ebel told the Harrisburg Patriot that the Inter-State league was not under Agreement protection. If part of the old club's strategy was to block the Inter-State League from Agreement protection, they were successful. The Inter-State League did not receive protection under the terms of the National Agreement. See "HARRISBURG GOSSIP," 1; "It Will Be Protected," Patriot December 4 1889, 1; "Base Ball Notes," Patriot January 3 1890, 1.

58. Jerry Jaye Wright argued that both the Cuban Giants and the Harrisburg Ponies were guilty of cancelling league games in favor of games that proved to be economically rewarding. See Wright, "From Giants to Monarchs," 250-251.


61. Delegates from the York club had problems paying the $500 guarantee. In an effort to relieve this burden, William Voltz waived the guarantee. See "BASE BALL," York Gazette February 25 1890, 4; "THE INTERSTATE," Sporting Life March 5 1890, 1; "Interstate Affairs," Sporting Life March 19 1890, 1.


63. Wright, "From Giants to Monarchs," 253; White, History, 16-17; "Base Ball," York Gazette March 29 1890, 1; "York Base Ball Club," York Gazette April 4 1890, 4; "Diamond Dust," York Gazette 22 April 1890, 1; "'Cuban Giants' No Longer," Cleveland Gazette 5 April 1890, 1; "Base Ball Tips," York Gazette April 8 1890, 1.

64. "Notes on the Game," Patriot April 19 1890, 1; "Doings of the Race," Cleveland Gazette May 3 1890, 1; May 10 1890, 1; September 6 1890, 1.

65. "Diamond Dust," York Gazette April 21 1890, 1; April 28 1890, 1; "Little Items on the Game," Patriot May 9 1890, 1; "OTHER BASE BALL NEWS," Patriot May 9 1890, 1; "The Grant Case," Patriot May 13 1890, 1; "The Grant Case," Patriot May 15 1890, 1; "THE PONIES DID IT," Patriot May 16 1890, 1; "BASE BALL NEWS," Patriot May 20 1890, 1; "The Injunction Case Settled," Patriot June 9 1890, 1.
66. "Diamond Dust," York Gazette 15 May 1890, 1; May 27 1890, 1; July 21 1890, 1; "AS IT WAS PLAYED," Patriot June 4 1890, 1; "GOING INTO FASTER COMPANY," Patriot July 21 1890, 1.


70. For light-skinned Cubans playing in the minor leagues in the 1890s see Ocaná Chalk, Pioneers Of Black Sport (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1975), 15-16.

71. The merger between Harrisburg Inc. and the York baseball club provided a perfect example of the need to establish business relationships outside the baseball business. York's business community put up the money to renovate the stadium, while a local street car company provided extra cars to and from the park to accommodate the fans. See "Diamond Dust," York Gazette April 23 1890, 1; April 24 1890, 1.
PART TWO
BLACK BASEBALL IN THE AGE OF BOOKER T.
INTRODUCTION

From 1890 to 1915, professional black baseball experienced a dramatic change. The growth and development of northern black communities coincided with a fundamental shift in the character of both black business and the African American class structure. While the forces had a dramatic impact upon the development of black professional baseball, this change varied from city to city. In addition, with the Cuban Giants as their model, prospective black baseball entrepreneurs would attempt to master the Cubans' barnstorming pattern.

The growth and development of northern black communities led to several attempts to organize black professional leagues. Many prospective black middle class entrepreneurs gravitated towards baseball because of its small investment required to begin the enterprise. Professional baseball reflected the increase in business activity among African Americans in the early twentieth century. Moreover, African American entrepreneurs who pursued baseball as a business enterprise were the expressed image of the economic philosophy commonly attributed to
Booker T. Washington. Several clubs in the East, Midwest, and South emerged at least to the level of a traveling team.

At the same time, white semiprofessional clubs began forming leagues and associations. It led to the creation of a symbiotic business relationship between black and white clubs. While large associations emerged in both New York and Chicago prior to 1910, this trend was more gradual in Philadelphia.

Tracing both the rise of black professional clubs, and the emergence of white semiprofessional leagues and associations is the aim of this section. Chapter four examines the forces that led to the transformation of northern black communities, which impacted upon black professional baseball. It also examines the forces that led to the severing of business ties between Organized Baseball and black independent clubs, from the late 1880s until the turn of the century. Additionally, the emergence of Chicago as the black baseball capital will also be explored. Chapter five analyzes the continuing impact business had upon white semiprofessional baseball, and how it evolved in New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago. It also traces the emergence of professional black baseball in Harlem and Philadelphia, and explores how African American entrepreneurs facilitated entrepreneurship. Chapter six discusses the continuing efforts of Chicago's
black middle class to create a commercialized amusement, in order to gain a hegemony over their black community. It also investigates the rise of Andrew "Rube" Foster as the most dominant African American entrepreneur in the early twentieth century.
CHAPTER IV

BLACK BASEBALL, BLACK MIGRATION
AND GhettoIZATION 1890-1915

With the decline of the black independents of the 1880s, black baseball underwent a dramatic transformation. The growth and development of northern black communities created a new market for the prospective black baseball entrepreneur. A fundamental shift in the character of both black business and the African American class structure resulted in black baseball entrepreneurs relying less upon the support of white customers, and catering to a growing black market. While this painful restructuring process retarded black baseball's growth and development, the successful entrepreneur would master the barnstorming pattern devised by the Cuban Giants.

The process of ghettoization occurred because increased racial hostility coincided with a dramatic change in the patterns of urban life. The growing population alone was staggering as the total number of urban dwellers expanded from 6,200,000 in 1860 to almost 42,000,000 a half century
later. Even more significant was the reorganization of the black community that accompanied this growth in numbers. In large urban areas, the "walking city" of the mid-nineteenth century, with its random arrangement of stores, businesses, and residential areas, were being replaced by a much more systematized urban structure.¹

Technological innovations and industrial expansion also contributed to this era of dramatic change. New modes of transportation made possible the emerging exodus to the suburbs or to outlying areas of the city, permitting urban populations to arrange themselves by racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group. Furthermore, the expansion and diversification of large industries resulted in a more rigid system of zoning regulations than had existed before. These factors were instrumental in the emergence of huge urban centers linked together by an interconnection of economic relationships, but divided into numerous commercial, industrial, and residential districts.

It was within this context of dramatic urban change that the black populations of New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago expanded in size while simultaneously becoming more restricted to certain parts of the city. Migration from other states was the primary source of most of this growth of these city's black communities. The declining or unstable economic conditions, particularly in the South, influenced many to move. The potential migrant had little
trouble making a decision when they were confronted with the stagnating economy of the South, and the booming factories of the North. But as sociologist George Edmund Haynes noted, the beginnings of black migration to the cities was more the product of "unconscious social factors" than reasonable alternatives. Blacks who migrated sought "better opportunities," but they did not necessarily define opportunity in economic terms. The desire for better schools, recreational facilities, and the need to escape the "hard humdrum conditions and poor accommodations on plantation and farm" undoubtedly played an important role in motivating these early migrants. 2

New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago's black population grew continuously between 1880 and 1915. Although the influx of migrants fluctuated, each decade saw an increase over the previous ten year period. In the decade of the 1880s, New York and Philadelphia witnessed a less spectacular growth in their black populations. New York's black population increased 30.6 percent from 19,663 in 1880 to 25,664 in 1890; Philadelphia's increased 27.5 percent from 31,699 in 1880 to 40,374 in 1890. Chicago, on the other hand, increased 129.0 percent from 6,486 in 1880 to 14,852 in 1890. Between 1890 and 1900, each city experienced a dramatic increase in their black populations, as New York rose to 60,666 an increase of 136.2 percent. Philadelphia's leaped to 62,613 an increase of 55.1 percent,
while Chicago's rose to 30,150 an increase of 103.0 percent. From 1900 to 1910, while each city's black population continued to climb steadily, their percentage of increase declined, as New York dropped to 51.2 percent (91,709), Philadelphia's to 34.9 percent (84,459), and Chicago's to 46.3 percent (44,103). 3

The majority of these migrants originated in the southern border states. Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida were the major southern sources of both New York and Philadelphia's migrant population. In Pennsylvania alone, Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina accounted for two-thirds of the black residents born outside the state in 1900. Kentucky and Missouri had sent large groups of blacks to Chicago, while the states of the Deep South constituted a secondary source for the Windy City's black population. Moreover, states located directly south of Illinois supplied a larger segment of the population than the southeastern states, although there were substantial groups born in Virginia and Georgia. 4

Black migration to New York City was not limited to residents of the United States. After 1900, blacks from Puerto Rico and other Caribbean Islands came to New York in large numbers. Between 1900 and 1920, approximately 28,000 foreign-born blacks, primarily from the West Indies, left their homeland due to the impoverished living conditions, limited educational facilities, disenchantment
with British rule, and the opportunities they believed New York offered. In 1917, the *New York Times* estimated that these newcomers accounted for one-quarter of Harlem's black population. 5

Black migration had a dramatic impact on the growth and the development of black baseball. The expansion of northern black communities created the consumer market necessary for a commercialized amusement to function. The recent opening of industrial employment -- a direct result of war -- made it possible for blacks to leave the South and the agricultural economy that had once promised fulfillment. However, black community settlement patterns impacted on a black entrepreneurs' ability to control a prospective market.

**GHETTOIZATION: BLACK COMMUNITY SETTLEMENT NEW YORK**

From 1880 to 1915, New York's black population was in a constant state of movement. Yet internal migration was not limited to blacks. All elements of New York's population, young and old, foreign and native, white and black, were moving during this period. Prior to 1880, blacks had begun deserting the old black settlement in Greenwich Village. The following decades witnessed some change in blacks' place of residence, whether they were moving northward into the Tenderloin district, the San Juan Hill area, or Harlem.
As Gotham's black community increased in numbers, many blacks were obliged to find homes in areas previously limited to whites. Black movement into new areas was facilitated by real estate depression, technological changes, and the influx of immigrants from Europe. White people left houses that were in fairly habitable condition for the model apartment houses, thus making available to blacks the older buildings.

Throughout the 1890s, blacks continued to move further uptown. By 1900, only 10.2 percent of Manhattan's black citizens lived below Fourteenth Street. While the black population of Greenwich Village declined the area from Fourteenth to Eighty-sixth Streets saw a dramatic increase in its black population. In 1870, this area had contained 36.2 percent of Manhattan's black residents; but by 1890 its share soared to 62 percent and 65.5 percent in 1900. But the greatest increases in the opening decade of the twentieth century were in the neighborhoods north of Eighty-sixth Street. In this area, the black population increased from 4.8 percent in 1870 to 24.3 percent in 1900.6

Three districts attracted a large majority of the black population. The Tenderloin district -- which extended from the west Twenties to the west Fifties -- lured a large number of blacks, but it was now experiencing competition from the San Juan Hill area of the west Sixties and the Harlem of the One-hundreds. From 1900 to 1910, San Juan
Hill grew so rapidly that it became the largest black community in Manhattan. Blacks continued to crowd into the Tenderloin district, especially southern and West Indians newcomers, but not at the same rate as the San Juan Hill area. As soon as the black community in San Juan Hill emerged as the leading black district in the city, Harlem began to show signs that it was to become the future home of Manhattan's blacks.

The black population in the Tenderloin had declined, and the growth of the San Juan Hill area was no match to the growth taking place in Harlem. Blacks had began moving in small sections of Harlem as far back as the late 1880s. Better living facilities were available to them on 122nd Street, between Fifth and Lenox Avenue, and from 124th to 126th Streets, extending between Eighth and Tenth Avenue. In the following years other blocks in Harlem were slowly filled by blacks. With the end of a Harlem real estate boom in 1902, black movement to Harlem advanced from a trickle to a flood. Attempts by white property owners to restrict this influx of blacks ended in failure. Because of their prejudice against blacks, many whites fled areas inhabitant by the race. With 135th Street and Lenox Avenue as the central point, this black community expanded in all directions. The growth of black Harlem was so tremendous, that 60 percent of all blacks living in Manhattan in 1915 resided between 118th and 144th Streets,
from the Harlem to the Hudson rivers. This increase is evidenced by the fact that in 1910, only 50 percent of Manhattan's blacks resided in the entire area north of 86th Street. The greatest concentration of blacks in Harlem was between 130th and 144th Streets, extending from Park Avenue on the east to Eighth Avenue on the west.  

Much like black migration during this period, no single generalization can explain the variety of residential situations in which blacks lived. But a series of interrelated factors contributed to this constant movement by blacks. First, many of the more prosperous blacks would not leave Manhattan. To avoid the high incidence of congestion and poor housing in black neighborhoods, they would move, in some instances, to areas within the city that offered better living conditions. When whites abandoned neighborhoods, because of racial prejudice, a general influx of blacks followed. As a result, affluent blacks again found themselves living among all classes of their people, rich and indigent, the refined and vulgar, and the honest and criminal.  

Dilapidated conditions were not the only reason blacks moved into new areas. In the 1880s, blacks discovered new immigrant groups were moving into or around their community. In 1892, Jacob Riis reported that Italians had taken possession of the poor housing facilities of Greenwich Village blacks. In addition, over three-quarters
of Gotham's residents were either foreign born themselves, or were the children of immigrants. Germany and Ireland contributed the largest number of immigrants during this period. By 1910, the ethnic composition of New Yorkers was shifting toward eastern and southern Europeans. Russians, the majority of them Jews, ranked first, followed in close succession by Germans, Irish, and Italians. Blacks in New York were clearly a minority in such a huge population. It is somewhat problematic to suggest that blacks were driven from their old homes by immigrants, or they left on their own accord. However, black leaders complained that European immigrants competed with their people for homes. Moreover, it appeared that many blacks avoided European immigrants whenever possible. 10

Finally, transportation developments also made sections of the city available for black settlement. When elevated lines were constructed on certain streets, whites deserted these areas due to the resultant noise and loss of sunlight. For example, white residents on Fifty-third Street left after the Sixth and Ninth Avenue Railroad Companies constructed an elevated railway on that street to connect uptown and downtown roads. Blacks entry into Harlem was facilitated by the surface railways that transversed their neighborhood. In the 1890s, the construction of the Pennsylvania Station compelled many blacks to leave the
west Thirties. Such innovations would both facilitate movement into new areas and also forced blacks out of old neighborhoods. 11

Black migration, immigration, and technological innovations had a dramatic impact on New York's black community settlement in the prewar years. The growing population increased the necessity for expansion. More affluent blacks were constantly in the vanguard of the movement, constantly looking for better places to live. Whenever possible, blacks tended to avoid non-English speaking immigrants. And as technological advances changed the face of New York city, blacks moved to new and were forced out of old neighborhoods.

GHETTOIZATION: BLACK COMMUNITY SETTLEMENT PHILADELPHIA

Unlike New York's black population -- which became more concentrated -- there were never one monolithic group geographically consolidated in Philadelphia. Blacks tended to cluster in small settlements dispersed throughout the city. Working class Philadelphians at the turn of century still tended to live within walking distance of their place of employment. The concentration of blacks in domestic service positions, along with the decentralization of the Philadelphia base industries, resulted in blacks living in all but two wards of the city.
W.E.B. DuBois described black Philadelphia as a "city within a city." Philadelphia's blacks were centered in four adjoining wards immediately south of the central city. Over 47 percent of the city's blacks resided in the nine South Philadelphia wards, south of Spruce Street and east of the Schykill River in 1910. In the years following DuBois' study of the Seventh Ward in the 1890s, Jewish immigrants pushed blacks from the Fifth, Sixth, and Third wards to the south and west. Both the expansion of the downtown area and Mayor Rudolph Blankenburg's campaign against black vice drove members of the race south from the Eighth Ward. The heart of black Philadelphia lay along the Lombard Street corridor; it was here that the densest concentration of blacks lived between Lombard and South, from Seventh to Twenty-third Street. The influx of blacks into the Seventh Ward stimulated the movement of affluent blacks and the respectable working-class further south and west across Broad Street into the Irish neighborhoods of the Thirteenth, Thirty-sixth, and Twenty-sixth wards of Rittenhouse Square. The Thirteenth ward's black population increased over five times in the opening decade of the twentieth century. By 1910, 21,552 blacks -- 25.5 percent of the city's black population -- resided in the Seventh and Thirteenth wards. 12
Outside of South Philadelphia, blacks tended to consolidate into small colonies dispersed throughout the city. The typical residential pattern saw affluent whites living on the main thoroughfares. Black resided in small houses and tenement apartments on small streets and alleys behind the white section. Black domestic workers and their families lived scattered throughout the city in small row houses on back streets close to their employers. In this way, Philadelphia exemplified the most typical southern than northern city. Large black settlements were also located in Germantown, Northern Liberties, west and north central Philadelphia. After the turn of the century, blacks were also moving in large numbers into neighborhoods in North Philadelphia's Fourteenth, Fifteenth, Twentieth, Forty-seventh, and Thirty-second wards. Others lived settlements and shanty towns on the city's outskirts and in satellite industrial communities, like Elmwood in South Philadelphia.¹³

Black migration constituted a large number of the black population moving into the northern and western sections of the city. Initially, middle-class blacks moved into a new settlement. After they had broken the residential color bar, less wealthy black urban dwellers found it possible to follow them. White property owners and real estate agents recognized that large profits could be made from buying up houses owned by whites who wished
to flee the area. They then would sell or rent those houses at inflated prices to black people. This practice facilitated resentment among the more established blacks towards the city's new arrivals. They surmised that it was the migrants who fueled the intense hostility of white neighbors as they sought to live outside the worst areas of the ghetto. 14

Within all the wards in which blacks resided, they did not constitute a majority. South Philadelphia may have been by far the largest and most significant black settlement, but it was surrounded by a series of self contained and independent urban black villagers, each with its own unique identity. For example, Germantown was home to one of the larger and by reputation elite of the city's black urban settlements. Similar black communities -- ranging in size from several hundred blacks to a small cluster of houses -- lived in harmony with their white neighbors in areas like Elmwood, LaMott, and Frankford. In Philadelphia, at least, the black community appeared to be fulfilling the American ideal of upward mobility, enabling certain members to move into more prosperous areas of the city. By the eve of World War I, Philadelphia's black community did not seem to be an especially "demographically vulnerable community." 15
GHETTOIZATION: BLACK COMMUNITY SETTLEMENT
CHICAGO

Although blacks were still a minor element in Chicago's population during the pre-World War I years, they were far more conspicuous than a generation earlier. The increase in population was accompanied by blacks being concentrated into more constricted sections of the city. In the late nineteenth century, while most blacks lived in certain sections of the South Side, they lived in what might be loosely called an integrated setting. However by 1915, the process of ghettoization had taken shape, as an almost all black enclave on the South Side, and a similar branch on the West Side, contained the majority of Chicago's African Americans.

From the beginning of Chicago's history, the majority of blacks resided on the South Side. As early as 1850, 82 percent of the black population lived in an area bordered by the Chicago river on the north, Sixteenth Street on the south, the South Branch of the river on the west, and Lake Michigan on the east. The South Side black belt was an emerging narrow strip of land, lodged between the railroad yards and industrial plants just west of Wentworth Avenue and the stylish homes east of Wabash Avenue. By 1900, the black belt extended from the downtown business district as far south as Thirty-ninth Street. There were also an assortment of black colonies -- generally a few square blocks each -- in several other sections of the
city. In the Thirteenth Ward, a black community extended among West Lake Street from Ashland to Western. Blacks also lived in the Eighteenth Ward, an old immigrant neighborhood on the Near West Side near Hull House. On the near North Side, blacks had begun to settle in the Italian Seventeenth Ward. In addition, on the South Side beyond the black belt communities, the presence of upper- and middle-class blacks had appeared in Hyde Park, Woodlawn, Englewood, and Morgan Park. 16

By the late 1890s, several significant changes in the population patterns of blacks in Chicago emerged. Only slightly more than one-fourth of Chicago's black residents lived in wards in which blacks constituted a majority. More than 30 percent of the inhabited precincts were at least 95 percent white. Yet ward statistics understates this concentration of the black population. This pattern of consolidation accelerated along with black migration. Few white neighborhoods had ever accepted, with any degree of equality, the purchase of property by even an affluent black family. As the black population increased, whites became less likely to tolerate a black neighbor and actively began to resist black settlement in their neighborhoods. 17

Roughly eight or nine neighborhoods that had been distinguishable as black community settlements in 1900, remained the core of Chicago's black community in 1910.
The South Side black belt was slowly expanding to accommodate the growing population. Not only did blacks move steadily southward, but the black belt began to widen as blacks moved into the comfortable homes east of State Street. By the end of the decade, blacks were as far east as Cottage Grove Avenue. 18

The development of Chicago's black institutions contributed to the growing vitality and self-consciousness of the emerging black neighborhoods. These institutions made the black community more attractive to African Americans who preferred to avoid white people and their prejudice. What historian David Katzman has called the "push of discrimination" and "the pull of ethnocentrism" combined to impel black migrants to the ghetto. At the same time, many migrants sought their first homes in areas populated by other blacks where they could feel more comfortable. This dynamic of choice and constraint, influenced heavily by economic forces, exemplified the experience of European immigrants to Chicago during this period. However, there were some significant differences. The unfamiliarity with the English language made the ethnic neighborhood a necessity for many Europeans. Blacks had no comparable imperative. Much like Philadelphia, white immigrants tended to live near work places; blacks, dispersed in service occupations, could not. When blacks obtained industrial employment, they were excluded from
neighborhoods adjacent to Chicago's major industries. European immigrants lived near others of their own origin, but usually in an ethnically diverse neighborhood that hardly resembled a ghetto. Whether they were middle- or working-class, blacks were less likely than members of other groups to share public space across ethnic but within class boundaries. Blacks, more than any other group, shared neighborhoods defined by permanent characteristics. As historian James Grossman stated, "Neither cultural assimilation nor economic mobility promised significantly wider choices." ¹⁹

GHettoIZATION
BLACK BASEBALL AND BLACK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The shift in the market and character of black enterprises accompanied the rapid growth of the black population in northern cities. At the turn of the century, the black economies of New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago were in the midst of a profound and painful restructuring. While this transition was more profound in some northern cities, it was more gradual in others.

Early twentieth century African Americans attempted to carve a niche for themselves in American society through business. The black American gospel of work and wealth argued that through thrift, education, economic development, and the acquisition of property, black Americans would be integrated into the mainstream of American society. This ideology of separate racial development and salvation
through business, commonly associated with Booker T. Washington, clashed in northern cities with a pre-existing philosophy of integration. The integrationist ideology's continuance and revival, commonly referred to as the "New Negro," would eventually be attributed to W.E.B. DuBois. These two approaches co-existed in northern cities throughout the early twentieth century. But prior to World War I, Washington's program of self-help and racial solidarity had a tremendous appeal and was readily accepted by blacks in both the North and South. Moreover, it also provided a compelling explanation of the developments taking place in northern cities.

The paternalistic business relationship established by the mulatto elite continued in the East throughout black baseball's history. Many of the African American players of the 1880s became the entrepreneurs of the early twentieth century. Seeking to create a black independent on the same level as those during the "money period," black entrepreneurs sought out wealthy whites to finance the enterprise. While some of these prospective black entrepreneurs continued to pursue white patronage, others recognized and began to cater to the growing black market.

At the same time, there were African Americans who concluded, that after the Civil War, private enterprise was the only means to achieve economic advancement. Advocates of this philosophy combined self-help and racial
solidarity with an economic ideology that emphasized the acquisition of middle-class virtues and African American support of black businesses. They insisted upon the necessity of African Americans "buying black" if black businesses were to develop in the face of the declining white support for barbers, artisans, and black independent teams. In addition, if African Americans acquired wealth and middle-class respectability, the race would earn acceptance into the mainstream of American society, and prejudice would be eliminated. This compilation of ideologies functioned as an accommodation to the system of segregation and discrimination. In contrast with the antebellum period when this perspective was held by militant protest leaders, like Frederick Douglass, it now became explicitly associated with a program of conciliation and accommodation. This viewpoint also operated as a means of inculcating group pride and self-respect. 20

Several factors led this compilation of ideologies becoming the dominant philosophy. The first was both the declining status of African Americans in American society, and a fundamental shift in the character of black business and the black class structure. During the late nineteenth century, the black community's entrepreneurial class continued to depend upon white patronage to survive. As before the Civil War, this group was composed primarily of barbers, skilled artisans, hackmen, and draymen. The
more successful among these entrepreneurs, along with the better educated ministers, still formed an important part of the black middle-class. But the inclusion of civil servants, postal workers, college trained teachers, Pullman porters with good family background, and the growing number of physicians, illustrated the occupational diversification that had taken place. By the end of century the domestic servants in wealthy families, the headwaiters -- a crucial figure in the black baseball business -- in restaurants and fashionable hotels began to decline in social status. 21

A second and decisive factor contributing to this ideological shift was white racism. This was a period of increased racism and competition from white immigrants for many of the occupations -- including the limited ones in Organized Baseball -- that had contributed to the growth of the old black elite, particularly in the North. For example, in the late 1880s and early 1890s, Organized Baseball experienced its bitterest trade wars in its young history. These baseball wars contributed to the absorption of four clubs from the American Association into the National League -- the exclusion of African Americans from Organized Baseball's labor force -- and severing the business ties between Organized Baseball and the black independents. It clearly illustrated -- as the Negro
Leagues would experience in the 1920s -- how devastating player raiding could be, and how it also spread like a contagious disease. 22

At the same time, the minor leagues became the chief victims of player raiding. By 1900, the National League was experiencing its most serious challenge to its operational autonomy -- the rise of the American League. In response to losing its property, the minor leagues, as the plight of the Cuban Giants attested, began raiding other minor league clubs and independent teams as a means of survival. Since the American League did not adhere to the terms of the National Agreement, they were expected to raid the minors. But the National League, the primary advocate of "baseball law," were expected to abide by the terms of the Tripartite Pact. Instead, it renounced the Agreement and left the minors without protection. 23

Renouncing the National Agreement culminated years of the minor leagues' dissatisfaction with the way the majors treated them. Since the early 1880s, the minors became members of the National Agreement under the "Articles of Qualified Admission." Under this agreement, they got some benefits, but not the protection of the reserve clause. Therefore, when minor league player contracts expired, they could be taken by the majors at the end of each season. With their property rights unprotected, the minor leagues' existence were precarious at best; each year many leagues
went out of business. It was not until 1887 that the minors succeeded in winning the right to reserve players, paying a $250 protection fee per club. While the reform helped the minors, casualties among them remained high. Player salaries were primarily blamed, but when minor league owners tried to cut expenses by instituting salary caps, these same owners broke their agreements as fast as they made them. And because of the breakup of the black independents, a direct result of player raiding, the exhibition games, which constituted the business arrangement with Organized Baseball, ceased. 24

In 1892, a compromise was reached with the formulation of a new National Agreement. National League owners offered cooperating minor league security from player raiding in exchange for the right to draft minor league players at artificially low prices between seasons. At the end of each minor league season, National League clubs could draft players at fixed prices contingent upon their classification, either "A" or "B." The compromise resulted in the creation of a National League baseball cartel in the 1890s. 25

Establishing the minor leagues as a cheap labor pool, the National League magnates felt no pressure to broaden the player force's racial base. The National League owners sought a stable, profitable equilibrium, in this case an ethnocultural and socioeconomic profile for the player
force that catered to the ethnic middle class's growing spectatorship. At the same time, League owners also attempted to maintain a wasplike respectability in the players' image and conduct expected by the Victorian fan. While fifty-five blacks managed to play in twenty different white leagues between 1884 and 1898, none reached the majors in the 1890s. With the collapse of the talent demand after the brotherhood war, from 1891 to 1898 only four white minor leagues employed a total of three different African American players. 26

By 1900, while these economic, social, and structural changes were under way, these forces were more gradual in Philadelphia than any other northern city. Despite its tremendous growth in population, Philadelphia did not have a boom town image at the turn of the century. It had significantly fewer "new" immigrants from eastern and southern Europe than many other cities. Having a reputation as a skilled workers town, unskilled immigrants, and no doubt black southerners, tended to bypass Philadelphia altogether or pass through it for the anthracite mines of northeastern Pennsylvania. They could have also headed for the steel mills of Pittsburgh or head further west to industrial centers, like Cleveland or Chicago. The City of Brotherly Love was even slow to adopt the technological advances that was changing the face of urban cities. As early as 1874, Chicago had acquired commuter
railroads with low rates and convenient schedules; Philadelphia waited until 1890 for comparable service. White Philadelphian's resistance to national changes in fashion enabled the old black service sector economy to hang on longer than anywhere else. White Philadelphians continued to employ black service workers and use black caterers after they had fallen out of favor in other northern cities. Because of the old black sector managed to maintain their paternalistic bond with wealthy whites, Philadelphia became the late bloomer in black baseball development. No black owner, who controlled both the proprietorship and management of an independent team, would rise to national prominence until after World War I. 27

The impact of the new business approach and the expansion of both the black entrepreneurial and professional group were evident in the changing nature of the African American class structure. Between 1890 and 1920, segregation and discrimination were pivotal in the creation of a petite bourgeoisie of professionals and businessmen relying primarily for their livelihood on the black masses. They were primarily self-made men, of humble origins, the majority of them darker-skinned than the older upper class. They were also less likely to be descendants of antebellum house slaves or from free people of color. The new black elite formed an ambitious and aggressive middle-class, and the more successful among them achieved upper-class
status before the First World War. As Philadelphia illustrated, the process occurred at different rates and at different times. It was from within the ranks of the new black middle-class, and also the members of the old upper-class who turned from serving white customers to serving the black community, the main thrust for the philosophy of African American support for black business evolved. 28

In order for the ideology and practice of black capitalism to become a national phenomena, political organizations were required. The leading advocate for this effort was Booker T. Washington. His influence in the Afro-American council in the late 1890s marked the beginning of the infrastructure which later became the Tuskegee Machine. The chief organization of Washington's power from 1900 to 1915 was the National Negro Business League. Ironically, the original concept for the League came from the sociological studies of DuBois, who at that time was a professor at Atlanta University. At a 1894 conference, DuBois proposed "the organization in every town and hamlet where the colored people dwell, of Negro Business Men's Leagues." He also urged blacks to spend consumer dollars solely with black entrepreneurs. Washington opportunistically embraced DuBois's concept and within a year had created the organization. From Washington's perspective, the development of the League
would provide the foundation for a gradual end to racial oppression and segregation. Furthermore, in Washington's view, the road to eventual civil rights was clearly one of private capital accumulation. 29

Much of this sudden growth of black business could not have occurred without the assistance of the black press. Between 1865 and 1900, over 1,200 black-owned newspapers were established; approximately 70 percent of them resided in the South. Without adequate advertising support, the majority of them went out of business within ten years. However in the age of black business growth after 1900, a series of black entrepreneurs succeeded in creating a number of politically influential newspapers. 30

The black press's survival was contingent upon the support of black businesses. Therefore, it was upon the shoulders of black businesses to support the black press. The growth of black baseball coincided with the growth of the black press. Black baseball entrepreneurs recognized the need of the black press to stimulate community interest and promote their enterprise. Black owners utilized the press as a means of both scheduling games with the top independents throughout the country, and forming public opinion in their favor. The successful black owner became a valuable patron in terms of generating advertising revenue. In addition, covering baseball enabled some sportswriters to achieve celebrity status. Frank Young
of the Chicago Defender, William Clark of the New York Age, and Dave Wyatt of the Indianapolis Freeman, were essential in promoting the National Game in the black community. Moreover, these sportswriters were pivotal figures in the formation of the Negro Leagues.

THE BIRTH OF THE BLACK BASEBALL CAPITAL

No other city in the prewar years illustrated the efforts of the new black middle-class to create a successful enterprise in baseball than black Chicago. They made repeated efforts to gain a hegemony over Chicago's growing black market. Chicago's black businessmen exemplified the effort to create an institution, based on a profit motive, that would become a source of race pride and racial solidarity. Black businessmen from the Windy City would also be pivotal in establishing the world's colored championship on a regional level.

The emergence of Chicago as the black baseball capital also highlighted the obstacles entrepreneurs confronted in creating a successful enterprise. Black baseball entrepreneurs, in the age of Booker T., entered into the baseball business when player raiding was a standard operating procedure, as opposed to being viewed as a destructive force. Black businessmen failed to recognized the peculiar characteristics of the baseball business - the need to respect both the property rights and territorial regions of their fellow competitors. The new
black entrepreneur would gain controlling interest over both the franchise and players under contract, but their failure to gain controlling interest over the final asset, the playing facility, became the primary obstacle that plagued black baseball's development. When peace was restored in Organized Baseball in 1903, owners in both the major and minor leagues created for themselves an additional revenue source by leasing their parks to black teams.

In the 1890s, while J.M. Bright managed to stay in business with his Cuban Giants, the ballplayers from the original club found an owner to their liking. Edward B. Lamar of Brooklyn became both the proprietor and manager of the Cuban X Giants. The X apparently referred to the ballplayers being the former members of that great team in the 1880s. In an effort to avoid confusion, Bright referred to his team as either the Original Cuban Giants or the Genuine Cuban Giants. In any event, the Cuban X Giants were the eastern power in the late 1890s and early 1900s. In 1897, the Cuban X Giants embarked on the longest barnstorming tour at that time, playing clubs in Chicago, St. Louis, Louisville, and Cincinnati.

Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, two independents rose to prominence in the Chicago area. The Chicago Unions were formed in 1881 as an amateur club by Henry "Teenan" Jones. Jones would later make his fortune in the saloon
and gambling business, supporting black cultural and athletic enterprises, while using his influence and financial resources to help aspiring African American politicians. By 1886, Jones would make the Unions the leading amateur club in the West. The Unions played on the prairie until 1891, when Jones leased a small playing facility on Sixty-Seventh and Langley on the outskirts of the black belt. Three years later, the Unions leased a ground that was more centrally located in the black belt on Thirty-Seventh and Butler Streets. 31

In 1896, the Unions were transformed into an independent club under the management of William S. Peters and Frank Leland. Leland was emblematic of the new black leadership that became actively involved in the ownership of black teams. Born in 1869, he was on the roster of the Washington Capital City team of the National Colored League. In addition to his business interests, Leland was a member of the Republican Party and was elected Cook County Commissioner. Leland and Peters transformed the Chicago Unions into a stay-at-home, playing local teams on Sunday and touring Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Iowa during the week. 32

The second club that eventually competed against the Unions for both patronage and supremacy evolved from Adrian, Michigan. Although the club was not a financial success, for several reasons the Page Fence Giants was significant
to black baseball's development. First, they redefined the image of black baseball clubs. Unlike the earlier black independents, who were hired primarily to represent a city, the Page Fence Giants was a corporate sponsored club. Not only were the players expected to project a lofty moral image, the Giants were cast in the role as advertisers, promoting the products of their sponsors. Being a corporate sponsored club enabled them to be the first black club to travel in their own private Pullman car. This specially outfitted railroad car provided both lodging and board for the players. In addition, both a full-time porter and cook were also employed. Finally, the club's management structure became the model for black clubs in the West to emulate. With the exception of the corporate sponsorship, traveling on the road by Pullman car, projecting an acceptable image, and the club's management structure became the mode of operation for black clubs in the West.

The visionary for such an enterprise would again originate from the mind of Bud Fowler. In 1894, playing for a club in Findlay, Ohio, Fowler had aspirations of forming his own team and naming it the Findlay Colored Western Giants. He enlisted Grant "Home Run" Johnson as a partner and began searching for both top notch players and a sponsor. That same year, Fowler notified the press that he was willing to relocate the club to Adrian if
substantial financial backing was provided. Evidently, Fowler must have received a positive response. On September 21, 1894, the Adrian Daily Times announced the formation of the Page Fence Giants. 33

Fowler and two white businessmen, L.W. Hock and Rollie L. Taylor, entered into an agreement with the Page Wire Fence Company and an unidentified Massachusetts bicycle company. In exchange for advertising opportunities, both firms provided the capital to organize a ball club. The club would operate under the structure in which the Cuban Giants operated -- the separation of management from ownership. Fowler served as a player-manager while Johnson became the team captain. Augustus "Gus" Parsons, a clerk at the Hotel Emory in Adrian, was hired as the club's traveling business manager. As a means of appealing to the white middle-class spectator, and no doubt reflecting a positive corporate image, Fowler boasted that only two of his players used tobacco and not one of them drank alcohol. These players were also highly educated with five of the original twelve graduated from college. 34

The combination of pure athletic talent, and a crude form of commercial advertising, reflected the pattern each game the Page Fence Giants played. Arriving in town at the train station, the Giants would parade down the streets on the bicycles provided by the Massachusetts sponsor. Considering the bicycle craze occurring at that time, this
was clearly a marketing campaign to sell products, as well as a means generating interest for the afternoon contest. The game was an athletic contest; but when the occasion call for it, the Page Fence Giants engaged in vaudevillian baseball. 35

The watershed of the Page Fence Giants’ brief history was their challenge series with the Cuban X Giants. In the early autumn of 1896, both clubs agreed to a fifteen game series, the team winning eight games declared the winner. The Page club lost the first game badly 20-14, but came back and won the second game. With the series tied at one game each, the Page club won the third game 5-2 at Lansing, Michigan and proceeded to win the next three games. After eight games, the Page club led the Cubans five games to three. The rest of the series was anticlimactic. The Page club won additional games in Allegan, Buchanan, Adrian, Grand Rapids, and Montpelier, and on October 2, won the series nine games to six. In addition to the money, each team received a commemorative silver medal, engraved with the sentiment that made their series worthwhile: "1896 Page Fence Giants. Champions." 36

While it was not apparent at the time, the Page Fence Giants’ victory over the Cuban X Giants established the precedent for an East-West rivalry. According to the informal agreement, the Cuban X Giants were not the colored champions of the East. They had not faced J.M. Bright's
Genuine Cuban Giants on the field. That would however be rectified in the fall of 1897, when both clubs agreed to a three game series. With the games played on three successive Sundays, the Cuban X Giants were the undisputed eastern champion, winning two out of three games. The stage was now set for the first championship contest between an eastern and western champion. 37

In 1899, the first regional colored championship occurred. The Cuban X Giants agreed to a series of fifteen games with the Unions. Leland’s club was no match for the eastern power, as the Cubans won nine out of fourteen games. 38

While it was not evident at the time, the Unions’ loss to the Cuban X Giants marked the start of black entrepreneurs making concerted efforts to gain a hegemony over Chicago’s growing black market. Despite losing the series, Leland had exhibited an ability to attract a top black independent team from the East to the Windy City. Clearly either the gate receipts or the guarantee was substantial enough to make it economically feasible for the Cubans to travel to Chicago. Evidently the series caught the eye of other prospective black entrepreneurs, who recognized the market potential and sought to organize a club to challenge the Cubans.

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In 1900, under the direction of John W. Patterson, a group known as the Columbia Club, organized the Columbia Giants. Patterson signed former members of the Page Fence Giants, and also signed Chicago Unions pitcher Harry Buckner. The Buckner signing undoubtedly led to bitter resentment between the two clubs. Patterson then entered into an agreement with Chicago White Sox owner Charles Comiskey, leasing his park on Thirty-ninth and Wentworth, an area within walking distance of the emerging black belt. With the Unions located a few blocks away on Thirty-seventh and Butler, both clubs now competed for the same patronage. This was an obvious conflict of interest for both clubs if they happened to schedule home games on the same Sunday afternoon. Chicago's black community was not large enough to support two teams. 39

The Columbia club issued a challenge to the Unions for local supremacy, with the aspirations of meeting the Cuban X Giants for a championship series, but Leland avoided the upstarts. He was apparently outraged by its territorial invasion and signing away his top pitcher. However Sol White asserted that out of consideration to the public the Unions agreed to a five game series. The Unions were completely outclassed by the Columbias, losing the series in five straight games. The Giants now turned their
attention to the Cuban X Giants. A series of games were scheduled in Chicago and towns in Michigan, with the Cubans defeating the Columbia club seven games to four. 40

The championship series illustrated what was about to take place in the Chicago area. The increase in the Windy City's black population in the late 1890s was substantial enough to support a baseball enterprise, primarily on the weekends. Leland's ability to lure the Cuban X Giants to Chicago resulted in both a territorial invasion and raiding player rosters in an effort to compete for patronage. Such business practices proved catastrophic for the early black independent teams, leading to a club either being destroyed or an oversaturation of a territorial market. It was evident that two clubs could not develop a lucrative operation within such a close proximity of each other. In 1902, Leland split with Peters and formed the Chicago Union Giants, signing away several players away from both the Unions and the Columbia Giants. While the raid crippled the Columbia club, Peters survived the raid and his club continued to operate as a local team, playing primarily on the weekends. Leland leased a park on Sixty-first and St. Lawrence, on the outskirts of the black belt. Despite this movement, both clubs still competed for the same patronage.

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Black migration, community settlement, and the fundamental shift in both the character of black business and the black class structure facilitated the dramatic transformation of the black baseball business. Black baseball entrepreneurs began to rely less upon on white support and began catering to the growing black market. They also began to take more control of the principal assets that constitute a baseball franchise. The compilation of ideologies, which combined an economic philosophy with the doctrine of self-help and racial solidarity, led to black entrepreneurs encouraging the black masses to "buy black" in an effort to enhance the development of black businesses. In regards to black baseball that meant supporting the black independent teams.

The factors that hindered black baseball's development were also evident during this transformation. The bitter trade wars in Organized Baseball of the late 1880s marked the start of terminating the business relationship the black independents had with them. When peace was restored in 1903, white owners seized the opportunity to create for themselves an additional revenue source -- leasing their parks to black independent teams. Because the early black entrepreneurs lacked adequate capital to build their own playing facilities, black owners became reliant upon whites to secure places to play. The inability to secure their own playing facilities impacted on black baseball's
development in several ways. First, many of the black independents could not develop a fan constituency. With no permanent place to call "home," made it difficult for a black owner to develop any continuity in fan support within a particular community. In the following years, the lack of a playing facility would also result in many black clubs playing games outside of the black community.

A second distinctive factor was the configuration of the black community settlement patterns. Even if a black owner managed to secure a home playing facility, they still found it difficult to control a prospective consumer market. No other city illustrated this more than Philadelphia. Throughout the prewar years, black baseball's development in the Quaker City were as scattered as the settlement patterns themselves. Blacks did not constitute a majority in any of the wards they resided in. Even more significant was the Quaker City's diverse African American class structure. Old Philadelphians and the southern newcomers formed two overlapping but distinctive worlds, divided symbolically and often in fact by occupation, place of origin, culture, color, and ideology. Charles Hardy states the differences between the new predominantly southern born and older northern black elite were probably greater and more enduring in Philadelphia than anywhere else. Their prolonged and sometimes contentious division undermined the solidarity needed to fight the rising tide
of segregation and discrimination, and impeded both black economic development and political advancement for at least the next twenty years. Moreover, as we shall see later, black baseball would emerge as an aggregate of sandlot teams content upon passing the hat to meet expenses.  

Next, was the oversaturation of teams in a particular territorial region. As the growing black market in Chicago illustrated, many northern black communities in the prewar years were not large enough to support more than one professional team. This was one reason why black baseball began primarily as a weekend enterprise among the members of the new black middle-class. Frank Leland's success in luring the Cuban X Giants to Chicago led to aspiring entrepreneurs to organized a ball club to compete against the Unions. Throughout the prewar years Chicago's black middle-class would make repeated efforts to gain a hegemony over the growing black market. Moreover, the pattern established in Chicago would also be consistent in New York and Philadelphia during the age of Booker T -- an underbelly of weekend warriors passing the hat to meet expenses.

Yet throughout this transformation of northern black communities, there emerged an under current that would restrict business development. As we shall also see later, business activity among African Americans increased dramatically. But few, if any, significant or large
commercial and industrial enterprises were organized. Basic industry, essential for raw materials, natural resources, transportation, and communication continued to be owned and controlled by white capitalists. This absence of large commercial and industrial undertakings in the black business world restricted the development of a black capitalist class, and impacted upon the investment and earning power of African Americans. 42

Despite these obstacles, the growth and development of northern black communities still contributed immensely to the development of black baseball. While some black owners embraced Booker T. Washington's doctrine of self-help, and would also attempt to create an enterprise that served the black community, they still recognized the need to maintain business contacts with whites. The successful black owner would both schedule games with the top white semiprofessional teams, and enter into business arrangements to secure a permanent home playing facility. This enabled the black owner to transform their independent team from a weekend enterprise to a full time one. During the winter months, black owners would either travel West and play in winter leagues in California, or headed for Cuba and play in the Cuban leagues. Thus the year around pattern of barnstorming was established in the age of accommodation.
While black owners in the West were able to master the pattern of year round baseball, black owners in the East faced other obstacles that hindered their success.
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CHAPTER V

WHITE SEMIPROFESSIONALS ORGANIZE
BLACK BASEBALL IN NEW YORK AND PHILADELPHIA

The growth and development of black baseball in New York led to several attempts to organize black professional leagues. At the same time, white semiprofessional clubs began forming leagues and associations, leading to the creation of a symbiotic business relationship between black and white clubs. Because it required lower start up capital than other large enterprises, many prospective black middle-class entrepreneurs began to organize black professional teams. Unlike the major league owners of the late nineteenth century, who recognized the need to cooperate with each other in the protection of both territorial rights and players under contract, both black and white semipros operated on a learn as you go basis. Throughout the prewar era, the New York market would resemble a Civil War battleground as both black and white owners attempted to gain a hegemony over this growing consumer black market.
In Philadelphia, one of the most prominent teams in black baseball history emerged -- the Philadelphia Giants. But their emergence was not indicative of the Quaker City's black baseball market. Unlike New York, Philadelphia did not become a war zone. Urbanization, white semipros organizing into small leagues, and the configuration of black Philadelphia's community settlement patterns, contributed to and impacted on the growth and development of black baseball. A myriad of stay-at-homes and traveling teams evolved there, who played primarily on open lots, as opposed to enclosed grounds. All of these clubs aspired to be the next Philadelphia Giants.

The rise of white semiprofessional leagues and associations further illustrated the impact of the changing attitude business had toward baseball. Industrial supervisors responded to their workers' need to improve the quality of their lives not by altering the industrial system, but through the direction of workers' leisure through approved channels outside the workplace or in conjunction with it. Business did this through what became known as "welfare capitalism," an effort to improve morale and increase productivity by adding recreation and other programs and services to the work day. As a result, both industrial and business baseball grew as part of a paternalistic and manipulative system of recreation designed as a means of social control by businesses. Their motives
were to further their self-interests, such as increased production, less employee turnover, and above all, the elimination of unions and strikes. ¹

Another aspect that concerned businessmen was the shorter work week, and the increased leisure time in the late nineteenth century. This transition among the working class was accomplished primarily through the efforts of reformers and unions. Work hours had decrease from sixty-six hours a week in mid-century to more like sixty in 1890. Fearing the consequences of the shorter work week, businessmen sought to control workers' time off the job, transforming it from "leisure" time to "controlled" time. Both business and industrial baseball grew in this environment. ²

In the 1890s, baseball play among workers transformed from self-generated play to company sponsored teams. At the same time factories and neighborhoods replaced the extended families as the centers of allegiance, which could have also served as a basis of forming a worker's social life. That meant the possibility of organizing factory or neighborhood baseball teams. By 1900, department stores, hotels, insurance companies, newspapers, railroads, mills, and other small business establishments began sponsoring baseball teams and leagues with games often scheduled during lunch time or nonwork hours. ³
Two other factors contributed to the rise of semipro leagues and associations. The first was the impact of technology that was changing the face of urban cities. Newly built trolley lines linking towns and neighborhoods heightened league formation in both the city and the suburbs. For example, Delaware County, an area west of Philadelphia, formed its own league in 1908; by 1911 other suburban leagues, including Montgomery County, Main Line, and Interborough were intact and prospering. A northern influence was the impact of the playground movement. Throughout the Progressive Era, municipal support for baseball became more prevalent. City governments began to view organized recreation and sports as an effective means of curbing juvenile delinquency and "Americanizing" immigrant children. The increase in public parks and playgrounds available for ball playing compensated for rapidly declining sandlots victimized by subdivision. 4

In 1906, approximately 100 clubs in New York and New Jersey formed the Intercity Association. The formation of this Association illustrated the importance of Sunday ball for semipro clubs. Before this Blue Law was abolished in 1919, professional ballclubs were forbidden to schedule games on Sunday. To circumvent this law, it was customary for both professional and semiprofessional clubs not to sell tickets of admission to games. Instead, they admitted fans free if they purchased programs or magazines for fifty
or seventy-five cents, or if they volunteered a "donation." Baseball magnates generally received cooperation from the police who rarely made arrests for violations, and from magistrates who rarely convicted anyone tried in their courts. F.D. Baldwin, the Association's first president, indicated that because semipro ball had deteriorated to such a state of chaos that "playing would entirely cease on Sundays." In essence, the primary objective of the Intercity Association was to make the semipro game respectable for Sunday ball to continue. To accomplish this, Baldwin stated three objectives: (1) secure better playing facilities; (2) induce Park Commissioners to lay out diamonds in various parks; and (3) develop better relations with police authorities regarding Sunday games. In order for a club to become eligible for entry into the Association a club had to be "regularly organized, officered, and uniformed." 5

The formation of the Intercity Association gave rise to a prospective entrepreneur to seize an opportunity to create a lucrative enterprise -- booking semiprofessional games. The key to a booking agent's autonomy was their ability to gain control of several ballparks. This control enabled him to schedule clubs he deemed most attractive to the public and could also generate the most revenue. The booking agent could also determined which clubs got the better dates -- primarily Sundays and holidays -- and
charged a ten percent fee for his services. Because of his control over several parks, a booking agent could virtually make or break a semipro club by either keeping a club very busy or very idle. More important, because of this autonomy over several parks, both black and white semipro clubs were relegated to traveling status, making it virtually impossible for a local owner to compete on equal terms against the booking agent.

In New York, Nathaniel (Nat) Strong saw the opportunity to create this lucrative enterprise, booking semipro games. Strong was born on January 4, 1874, in New York City. A sporting goods salesman by trade, he got his start in baseball as a manager of a team in Manhattan at the age of sixteen. Strong became involved in the booking and promoting business in the late 1890s with the Cuban X Giants and the Genuine Cuban Giants. He owned the Ridgewoods Baseball Club and later became part owner of the Bushwick Baseball club, the latter played its games at Dexter Park in Brooklyn. An active member of the New York Athletic Club, Strong established his business office in the Pulitzer Building in 1900. In March of 1907, Strong succeeded F.D. Baldwin as President of the Intercity Association, marking the beginning of his thirty year reign as the booking power in New York.
Both scholars and contemporaries of black baseball recognized Nat Strong as the booking power of New York. But what is often not addressed is how did this relatively small time operator gain so much autonomy. Part of the answer lies in the connection between professional baseball and New York politics in the early twentieth century. No such control over several parks in Gotham could have possibly occurred without some political affiliation with Tammany Hall. This city-wide political machine was intimately involved in the affairs of local baseball since the late 1860s. Andrew Freedman -- who owned the National League New York Giants from 1895 to 1901, and a rising young realtor -- had been a Tammanynite since 1881. He was also a close friend of Richard Croker, the machine's political boss. Throughout the 1900s, Freedman controlled most of the suitable locations for baseball fields through leases or options. If a ball club had managed to secure a good lot, Freedman would use his political clout to get streets through their property or disrupt their transit facilities. Clearly Strong could not have operated in New York without some kind of alliance with Freedman and the Tammany machine. Moreover, if American League President Ban Johnson, in an effort to place a league club in New York, had to make concessions by placing a Tammanynite as head of that club, it is difficult to suggest that Strong didn't make some compromises also.
A second factor connecting Strong to Tammany Hall was linked to the American League New York Highlanders (i.e. the Yankees). Throughout the prewar era, Strong booked several black baseball games in the Highlanders' home park. At that time, the Highlanders were owned by Frank J. Farrell, a leading gambler, and William Devery, a former police chief; both had strong Tammany Hall connections. It was evident that Nat Strong had no control over this American League park. But it does suggest that Strong had created for himself several political alliances with the Tammany machine, thus enabling him to gain his autonomy over several key parks in New York in the prewar era. No such autonomy could have possibly been attained without such alliances. More important, both black and white semiprofessional clubs would have to deal with Nat Strong for games scheduled at the best parks, and to secure the best dates to maintain some semblance of profitability. 8

Semiprofessional clubs in Chicago also began forming leagues and associations. In the early 1900s, the Chicago City League featured some of the top semipro clubs of the era. Two clubs -- Cap Anson's Colts, and Mike Donlin's All-Stars -- were formed by former major league players. The other clubs that constituted this league included the Logan Squares, the Gunthers, Donahue's Red Sox, the West Ends, the Spaldings, and Rogers Park.
Unlike New York, Chicago's semipro market did not become a booking agent's paradise in the prewar era. Several factors contributed to local promoter's inability to gain total control over the Chicago market. The first factor was the nature of Chicago's sophisticated park system. The Chicago system was stimulated primarily by the playground movement. In 1901, the Illinois legislature appropriated a $7.7 million bond for the construction of thirty-one small parks and playgrounds equipped with outdoor gymnasiums, athletic fields, swimming pools, and spacious fieldhouses which became community centers. Parks with baseball diamonds were leased by many of the top semipro clubs, thus establishing both a home base and fan constituency. These clubs were able to promote, schedule, and book their own games, thus alleviating the need for a booking agent over the entire territory.  

Finally, Chicago City League Clubs, in conjunction with semipro clubs without home grounds, were members of the Parks Owners Association (POA). The POA was a governing body that sanctioned league membership, and scheduled games for both black and white semipro teams throughout Chicago's park system. It had twenty-two teams in the City League in 1910, eight of which had their own parks. While the POA was a loose association, it was in the early years, not a promoter, but a booking agent primarily for teams that did not possess their own grounds.  

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Unlike New York and Chicago, Philadelphia continued its role as the late bloomer. No large associations would emerge until after World War I. Yet many of the top semipro clubs and leagues that constituted those associations had their roots in the prewar era. The Knights of Columbus, the Philadelphia Suburban League, and the West Philadelphia League were but a few of the many organizations founded and some, like the Philadelphia Suburban, lasted until the 1930s. The majority of these leagues consisted of four to eight teams, played from May to October, on weekends and holidays, and were generally semipro or amateur. Some leagues, like the Defiance County League, hired ringers for crucial games.  

But the majority of Philadelphia's semipro clubs had no league affiliation. They normally played on a casual basis, scheduling games with clubs of equal caliber, while at the same time, sought to build a local reputation and following. Several of the strongest semipros before the war were company sponsored. In 1913, the Stetson Hat Company built a $100,000 baseball field with a seating capacity of 4,000. The Philadelphia based Strawbridge and Clothier Department Store featured an extensive athletic program and a highly competitive baseball team. With an attractive ball park at 63rd and Walnut Streets, the store
had its own baseball league with various department stores, such as Credit, Retail, Clover, and White Sale represented.\textsuperscript{12}

The organization of semiprofessional clubs became the means of creating the symbiotic business relationship between black and white clubs. While this relationship was a turbulent one at times, the top black clubs of the era were much in demand as they proved their worth. The emergence of two black clubs in New York and Philadelphia would clearly reinforced this assertion.

\textbf{SOL WHITE AND JOHN W. CONNOR}

Black baseball entreprenuership in the early twentieth century reflected both a corporate management structure and individual private ownership. Some African Americans continued the paternalistic business approach established in the late nineteenth century; others began as one man operations. One African American club, as we shall see later, began as a humble one man operation, but would eventually evolve into a race based enterprise in terms of its ownership, management, and labor force. While these early African American entrepreneurs' background were as diverse as their business approach to the sport, they reflected the characteristics of the new black leadership that emerged at the turn of the century.
Solomon (Sol) White typified the black professional that emerged in the early nineteenth century, contributing to the diversification of the black middle-class. Born in Bellaire, Ohio on June 12, 1868, White was on the roster of the Capital Citys of Washington, and later the Keystones of Pittsburgh of the National League of Colored Base Ball Players. After the Colored League collapsed, he joined the Wheeling, West Virginia team in the Ohio State League. For four years, White attended Wilberforce University in the winter and played ball in the summer. White epitomized the contemporary that was in the right place at the right time. From 1889 to 1901, White played for the Gorhams of New York, York Colored Monarchs, Page Fence Giants, and both the Genuine Cuban Giants and the Cuban X Giants. In addition to baseball, White would also own a series of pool rooms and serve as a sportswriter for several black newspapers. White's History of Colored Baseball was a valuable, although slightly flawed, source in examining the early development of professional black baseball.\textsuperscript{13}

In his book Blackball Stars: Negro League Pioneers, author John Holway indicated that after 1895 White had an "odd career." According to Holway, "Almost every team he played on claimed the black championship, and each time they won the title, the loser promptly stole[d] White and won the flag itself the following year." The Philadelphia Tribune probably provided a more accurate description of
White's career. According to the Tribune, White, after managing his third club in as many years, had organized a club known as the Brooklyn Giants. It led to the sportswriter of the Tribune to speculate, "Everybody is saying in and around New York, 'What team will lose most of its players now that Sol White is in the swim?" As will be discussed later in this chapter, from 1902 to 1912, clubs managed by White were marked with both players dissensions and management disputes. While White more than proved his ability to locate and develop player talent, his ambition to own his own team lead to his downfall.¹⁴

White's crowning achievement as a black baseball manager would be the formation of the Philadelphia Giants. In 1901, after watching a heavily attended game between the Cuban X Giants and the Philadelphia Athletics at Columbia Park, H. Walter Schlichter sensed the possibility of a strong black club representing the Quaker City. The white sportswriter of the Philadelphia Item in conjunction with White and Harry Smith, a sports editor for the Philadelphia Tribune, organized the Philadelphia Giants in 1902. The Philadelphia Giants were promoted along the same lines as black independents of the money period -- a talented black club catering to a white clientele. While both Schlichter and Smith served as the club's promoters and booking agents, White managed the team on the field. The Philadelphians were a traveling team, developing a
close knit schedule, playing white semipros from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. Seizing the opportunity to create an additional revenue source, A's owner Benjamin Shibe rented his park at Twenty-ninth and Columbia to the Giants. In April 1902, the Item proudly noted, "for the first time in the history of baseball in this city a star team of colored ball players will wear a Philadelphia uniform. The Philadelphia Giants . . . is composed of some of the best players in America to-day, and were it not for the fact that their skin is black, some of them would to-day be drawing fancy salaries in one or other of the big leagues." At the end of their inaugural season, the Giants lost a hard fought two game series to the American League champion Athletics. 15

From 1905 to 1907, the Philadelphia Giants were the colored champions of the East. The club featured several legendary stars who, in later years, would also become entrepreneurs or managers of the black game: Andrew "Rube" Foster, Danny McClellan, John Henry Lloyd, and Grant "Home Run" Johnson, formerly of the Page Fence Giants. Even more significant was the challenge issued by Schlichter to John McGraw's National League champion New York Giants. While White down played the economic consideration of such a series, it was evident that Schlichter sought a big pay day, considering that both clubs were considered strong "gate attractions." Schlichter sought to play a best three
out of five game series to determine "who can play the best -- the white or black American. Schlichter's challenge was never answered. From that point on, while some black clubs would managed to play Organized Baseball clubs, the majority of these contest consisted of an aggregate of black and white all-stars barnstorming the nation. 16

John W. Connor exemplified the African American who began as an one man operation. Connor was born in 1878 in Portsmouth, Virginia. After spending a short time in school, he ran off and joined the U.S. navy and served in the Spanish-American war. Unlike White, Connor was not a former ballplayer. He migrated to Harlem after the war and entered into the restaurant business. Connor was one of the first African Americans to own and operate a night club in Harlem, the Connors Inn. In addition, he also owned a restaurant known as the Royal Cafe. He was affiliated with several fraternal lodges including the Brooklyn lodge of Elks, Kapaganda lodge of Masons, and the Odd Fellows. Connor also had a reputation for being an eccentric; he had a strong aversion to caps. According to Connor, a cap was a badge of a thug or a gunman, and he felt no "respectable" man would such head gear. He even went so far as asking men to remove their caps when coming near his office. 17

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In 1904, Connor organized the Brooklyn Royal Giants. The Royal Giants began as a stay-at-home who possessed no home facility; as a result, Connor sought Nat Strong's booking agency for games. The club was race based in terms of its ownership, management, and labor force. Connor secured the services of Grant "Home Run" Johnson to manage the club on the field.

From the start, Connor's business acumen was evident. His Royal Giants, and the establishment of both a night club and a restaurant, reflected the effort of a small black businessman attempting to diversify his income through the proprietorship and management of more than one business. Connor would become the first African American owner from the East to attempt to transform the Royal Giants from a stay-at-home to a touring team. In essence, Connor attempted to emulate the business approach created by the Cuban Giants of the late 1880s, but internal division within the ballclub, and Nat Strong's booking autonomy thwarted his aspirations.

LEAGUE FORMATION AND INCREASED BLACK ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The proliferation of African American teams in the East led to an effort to form a black professional league. This proliferation coincided with an increase in entrepreneurship among African Americans in the early twentieth century. At the same time, Nat Strong was making
concerted efforts to expand his booking autonomy by forming an alliance with both black and white teams in the Chicago market.

No other business illustrated the increase in entrepreneurship in the early twentieth century than black baseball. Vishnu V. Oak's careful analysis of black business revealed a gradual progression in the growth of black business firms: 1890 - 31,127; 1900 - 40,445; 1910 - 56,592; and 1920 - 74,424. In the opening decades of the twentieth century a virtual black baseball explosion occurred. Throughout the United States, several black independents were at least operating at a traveling status. From the South, clubs like the Louisville Giants, Birmingham Giants and the New Orleans Black Pelicans began making Chicago, St. Louis, and Indianapolis their annual stops on their barnstorming tours. In the Midwest, the Leland Giants, St. Louis Giants, Topeka Giants, St. Paul Gophers, and the Kansas City, Kansas Giants were but a handful of black clubs that had emerged. 18

It was no coincidence that black entrepreneurs would be attractive to the black baseball business. Black radical political economist Abram L. Harris found that African American business fell primarily within four main categories: (1) amusement and recreational enterprises; (2) real estate; (3) retail trade; and (4) personal service. One reason why recreation and amusement enterprises were
attractive was the funds demanded to start such an endeavor were both short and long term in character. In other words, they did not require a substantial financial investment, and if they were successfully managed could yield a high return. But by the same token, as black baseball illustrated, their rate of failure was high. Because of discrimination the ability to secure credit from white banking institutions was virtually nonexistent. African American banks, due primarily by their financially unstable condition, were reluctant to invest in such enterprises. But as John Connor's entry into the black baseball business showed, the ownership and management of more than one business was one way to facilitate entrepreneurship. 19

In 1906, a virtual baseball explosion of black independents occurred within a hundred mile radius of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Nine black clubs emerged that included the Philadelphia Giants, Cuban X Giants, Genuine Cuban Giants, Brooklyn Royal Giants, Quaker Giants of New York, Wilmington Giants, New York Giants, Baltimore Giants of Newark, and the Keystone Giants of Philadelphia. Black migration from the Caribbean was also making its presence felt as several clubs from Cuba traveled to America and barnstormed the nation for gate receipts. The most prominent club from the island was the Cuban Stars. The Stars were managed by Manuel Camp and relied heavily on Nat Strong for games in the New York area. They were
relegated to traveling status and were underpaid by the standards of other black teams. These clubs became the catalyst for the formation of the International League of Baseball Clubs in America and Cuba (ILBCAC). 20

Despite the efforts of African Americans to organize black clubs, the majority of the top black independents in the East were still white owned. E.B. Lamar maintained controlling interests of the Cuban X Giants, Walter Schlichter ran the Philadelphia Giants, and J.M. Bright owned the Genuine Cuban Giants. Only John Connor's Brooklyn Royal Giants could be classified as a top black independent that was black owned and operated.

The baseball explosion in the East did facilitate the formation of the ILBCAC. Six clubs constituted the ILBCAC: Cuban X Giants; Quaker Giants of New York; Cuban Stars; Havana Stars of Cuba; Philadelphia Professional; and Riverton Palmyra. Both the Quaker Giants and the Havana Stars disbanded in July and were replaced by the Philadelphia Giants and Wilmington Giants. One year later, both Connor's Royal Giants and Bright's Genuine Cuban Giants joined the league. Nat Strong was secretary and business manager, while Walter Schlichter was elected president; John Connor, vice-president; and J.M. Bright, treasurer. The ILBCAC was one of the first efforts by owners in black baseball attempted to utilize collusive business practices.
This white dominated league sought to tighten control over black players by imposing salary limits, and denying bookings to uncooperative teams or managers. 21

The formation of the ILBCAC was also instrumental in creating a business alliance with the Chicago City League. The formation the National Association of Colored Professional Base Ball Clubs (NACPBB) served as a means for eastern black clubs to play City League clubs. In essence, the NACPBB serve as a means of formalizing scheduling commitments between eastern and western black clubs, while at the same time, curb the destructive practice of player raiding. At the same time, the NACPBBB became the vehicle in which the top white semipro clubs from Chicago traveled East and play black clubs in New York. 22

By 1909, Nat Strong had emerged as the booking power of the New York market. His election as president of the Intercity Association, becoming the business manager of the ILBCAC, and establishing the NACPBB, placed Strong in an advantageous position. Clearly the establishment of such a network, albeit a weak an ineffectual one, could not have become possible without some political alliance with Tammany Hall. But in the following years several attempts would be made in an effort to challenge Strong's autonomy.

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INTERNAL DIVISION: BLACK BASEBALL'S DIVIDED HOUSE

Despite the efforts to challenge Nat Strong's autonomy, black baseball clubs were never a serious threat. Internal division within the ranks of the Philadelphia Giants' management and labor force led to the club's collapse. Sol White's break with the Philadelphians resulted in him attempting to organize black baseball managers of the East, in an effort to make a break from Strong's booking control. His effort was doomed to fail from the beginning. Yet White's attempt to lead an open rebellion among the black baseball managers, and the demise of the Philadelphia Giants resulted in John Connor's Brooklyn Royal Giants becoming the prominent black club in the East.

By 1909, Nat Strong's booking pattern suggested a clear case of discrimination was present. White semipros, like the Ridgewoods from Brooklyn, were permitted to play regularly at a certain park, thus enabling them to develop a fan base. Strong also made it a practice to pay black clubs a fixed guarantee -- normally $100 -- and refused to share gate receipts. Because the majority of the black clubs were traveling teams, they were placed in a take it or leave it situation. 23

Throughout the prewar era black clubs played in several parks in New York and Brooklyn. Three of these parks were located in Harlem: Olympic Field, located at 136th and Fifth Avenue; McNulty Field, located at 149th and Eighth
Avenue; and Lenox Oval, located at 145th and Lenox Avenue. They also played at two parks located in Brooklyn, Meyerrose Park and the Bronx Oval. In addition, colored championship series could be staged at either the New York Highlanders' American League Park, or the National League Giants' Polo Grounds. With the exception of the major league parks, virtually all of these parks were under Strong's control.24

While the Philadelphia Giants enjoyed tremendous success on the field, the ballplayers were not a happy group. Playing under the co-op plan had resulted in the players being inadequately compensated for their exploits on the field. Following the 1906 season, eight players, led by Andrew "Rube" Foster, jumped the Philadelphians and headed West for Chicago. Even more significant, the plight of the Philadelphia Giants illustrated the system of extortion under which they were subjected to. As the Philadelphians were both white owned and a traveling team, they did not rely solely on the black community for patronage. Any profitability a traveling team could obtain was based solely on the number of bookings they could acquire, but because they were placed in a position to only receive a fixed guarantee, most black clubs operated at a loss. According to Foster, the highest fixed guarantee the Giants received was $150. Moreover, while Schlichter was president of the ILBCAC, he was a mere figurehead in the organization.25
To further complicate matters, Sol White had become disgruntled as the Philadelphia Giants' manager. Clearly the player revolt and the club's inability to generate revenue led to a split between Schlichter and White. On April 8, 1909, the *New York Age* reported that White had officially broke with Schlichter and formed the Quaker Giants. But, according to the *Age*, the ILBCAC had agreed not to schedule games with White's new club. ²⁶

In response to this exclusion, White attempted to persuade John Connor to withdraw from the ILBCAC. At first, Connor was reluctant to withdraw from the league, but by July 1909, the *Age* reported that Connor believed his team was not given the proper consideration in regards to booking dates. As a result, White attempted to get Connor, John "Pop" Watkins of the Brooklyn Giants, and J.M. Bright of the Genuine Cuban Giants to form a new association. Bright was also at odds with Strong, leading to the Genuine Cuban Giants magnate to book his own games. Despite the effort to break away from Strong's booking control the effort to form a new alliance failed, primarily because most of these clubs did not possess their own grounds. Moreover, black independents still relied on scheduling games with white semipros. In order to schedule the top white clubs, that meant dealing with Strong. The failed uprising resulted in both Sol White and Pop Watkins' clubs disbanding at the end of the 1909 season. ²⁷
While the uprising marked the start of the demise of the ILBCAC, John Connor's Royal Giants enjoyed their best season in its young history. In September 1909, the Royal Giants won a hard fought three game series from the Cuban Stars and were crowned the colored champions of the East. The victory over the Cubans marked the beginning of Connor's effort to make a break from Strong's booking control, and transform his club from a stay-at-home to a touring team. Connor would make the only serious challenge to Strong's autonomy. 28

With the ILBCAC in a state of collapse, John Connor made the initial steps to transform his club into a year round enterprise. He took his team on a barnstorming tour of the South, and had even managed to secure a lease on a ball park in Harlem. But internal division within the Royal's management, incidents of player raiding, and Nat Strong's booking control blocked Connor's aspirations.

At first, 1910 appeared to be a banner year for clubs that were black owned and operated in New York. A contingent of African American entrepreneurs that included Edward Warren, Percy Brown, and Baron Wilkins formed the New York Black Sox. Wilkins owned both the Cafe Wilkins and the Exclusive Club cabaret; he had also had a reputation as a notorious underworld figure. In later years he would form a partnership with Connor in the black baseball business. The formation of the Black Sox enabled
sportswriter Lester Walton to engage in the race rhetoric of the era, extolling blacks in business. Walton stated that "With J.W. Connor owning the Royal Giants, present champions, and Baron Wilkins, Edward Warren, and Percy Brown controlling the Black Sox, New York City will have two first class clubs in the colored baseball league managed by Negroes." In spite of this epitaph of race pride, the New York Black Sox collapsed in August. Simply put, this African American contingent failed to put together a club that was competitive on the field. 29

Connor also faced some internal problems. Club manager Grant "Home Run" Johnson sought a partnership with the Royal Cafe owner, but was refused. As a result, he jumped the club and signed with the Leland Giants. According to the Age, Connor charged Johnson with encouraging other players on the club to leave also, but was unsuccessful. Johnson was replaced by Sol White. Moreover, Johnson's break with the Royals marked the start of the contagious disease known as player raiding. 30

In spite of Johnson's efforts to wreck the Royals, Connor began the process of transformation. First, beginning in January 20, 1910, the Royal Giants were hired to represent the Breakers in the Hotel League in Palm Beach, Florida. With the Leland Giants representing the Royal Poinciana, both clubs battled each other until the close of the season in March. Next, the Royal Giants barnstormed
the South and West from April to mid-May. Connor had booked games in Jacksonville, New Orleans, Mobile, Birmingham, Pensacola, Memphis, and Hot Springs, Arkansas. In Jacksonville, the Royal Giants defeated Rube Foster's Chicago American Giants. Connor's tour culminated in cities of the North, booking games in West Baden and French Lick, Indiana; Detroit; and Buffalo, New York. The Royals had also defeated another prominent club that emerged in the West, Charles Mills' St. Louis Giants. At the end of the tour, the Brooklyn Royal Giants had played a total of forty-six games, winning forty-three and losing three. 31

Finally, on July 20, 1911, Connor secured a lease on the Harlem Oval, located at 142nd Street and Lenox Avenue. Securing a five year lease, Connor began renovations by covering the grandstand and expanding the seating capacity to handle 2,600 people. In addition to booking games, Connor envisioned sponsoring athletic events "conducted under the auspices of colored athletic organizations." According to the Age, the deal marked the first time in the history of New York City a Negro had complete possession of an "up-to-date ball grounds." More important, Connor's ability to book games outside the New York area, and possessing his own park made him a serious challenge to Strong's booking control. 32

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While Connor had made dramatic strides in transforming his club into a touring team, his venture ended in failure. Several factors led to this result. First, Connor was continually plagued by internal division with both his manager, Sol White, and the players. On August 18, 1910, the *Age* reported that several players entertained overtures to jump their contracts and sign with a "certain New York baseball fan, who is also interested in theatricals." By the end of the year, White broke with Connor and along with Roderick "Jess" McMahon, a white sports promoter, formed the Lincoln Giants. Along with his brother Ed, the McMahons had also secured the lease on Olympic Field. With both McMahon and Connor securing leases on their own grounds, and booking their own games placed the final nail in the ILBCAC's coffin. More important, to make the Lincoln Giants a competitive club, White raided the Royals' roster taking several of Connor's top players.33

By 1912, player raiding had once again become a destructive force among black baseball clubs. On May 2, 1912, the *New York Age* reported that Dick Cogan, a former major league pitcher, made plans to organize a black team to represent Patterson, New Jersey, called Cogan's Smart Set. With "a nice bit of money" in his hands, Cogan made overtures to various players on both the Lincoln Giants
and the Royal Giants. He was successful in securing Danny McClellan and Joe Gans, who had both played for the Lincoln Giants the previous year. 34

By August 12, 1912, Lester Walton had observed a high degree of "kidnapping" occurring among black clubs. In May, Spotswood Poles, one of the top black players of the era, had become disgruntled with the McMahons and jumped to the Royal Giants. By late July the Royals were set to meet the Lincoln Giants at American League Park. The following day Poles returned to the Lincoln Giants. A week later, the Lincolns played a doubleheader with Cogan's Smart Set and the St. Louis Giants at Olympic Field. When the Lincolns played St. Louis, Joe Gans was returned to McMahon's club. Player raiding had also taken its toll on the black pioneer clubs; Schlichter's Philadelphia Giants, Bright's Genuine Cuban Giants, and Lamar's Cuban X Giants had disbanded by the end of the season. 35

This constant player raiding placed the owners of black clubs at odds with each other. By fighting among themselves over players, both Connor and McMahon had lost sight of their primary objective -- breaking away from Nat Strong's booking control. They failed to recognize the need to cooperate in respecting each other's players under contract. Because Connor, McMahon, and later Dick
Cogan had engaged in this destructive business practice, black baseball entrepreneurs were never a serious threat to Strong's booking autonomy.

By 1913, Nat Strong's booking control had become glaringly evident. Despite the high incidence of player raiding, Connor's Royal Giants had made a second barnstorming tour of the South and Midwest. When the Royals returned to New York in May, Connor found bookings hard to come by. According to the Age, an effort was made to give the Royal Giants inferior dates. Even more significant was the stance the Age took regarding Connor's plight. Lester Walton asserted that "The Age does not believe that colored baseball fans should loyally support teams because they are managed by colored men[.] But when a good colored team is owned by one of the race and a movement is on foot to put the colored manager out of business, then the colored fans should have something to say." Connor had not established good press relations during the transformation of the Royal Giants, and this was no doubt instrumental in why the Age took such an ambivalent stance. Moreover, considering that black clubs still relied heavily on games with white semipro clubs, Connor still had to deal with Strong if he sought to schedule the top white clubs. This meant accepting a fixed guarantee instead of sharing in gate receipts. Since Connor had gone to great expense to renovate the Harlem Oval, running a ball club
under these conditions placed the Royal Cafe owner in a deficit situation. On July 19, 1913, the Age reported a transfer in the ownership of the Brooklyn Royal Giants to Nat Strong. Temporarily, John W. Connor was out of the black baseball business. 36

Connor was also hindered by the fact only three western black clubs -- the Leland Giants, Chicago American Giants, and St. Louis Giants -- made barnstorming tours to the East in the prewar years. But because of the player revolt led by Foster at the end of the 1906 season, Strong had made repeated efforts to ban Foster's from the New York area. In addition, these western clubs were reluctant to travel East due to the high incidences of player raiding. But with McMahon and Connor possessing their own parks, they undermined Strong's efforts to keep Foster out of Gotham. Even if Connor and McMahon had engaged in collusive practices and respected each other's players under contract, while at the same time established some continuity in booking games, they probably would have not driven Strong out of the black baseball business. But from Strong's view, crushing the opposition ensured his booking autonomy. Even Strong failed to recognize that cooperating with these owners in the protection of territorial rights and players under contract would serve to increase profits. This was a major reason why the NACPBB was established in the first place. 37
Jess McMahon also experienced some internal problems of his own. At the end of the 1911 season, Sol White had once again left another club in discord. Additionally, the McMahons had over extended themselves with business ventures that did not pan out. Revenue generated by the Lincolns were used to cover the McMahons' debts in their other ventures. By the end of the 1912 season, they had lost their lease on Olympic Field. In September 1913, Nat Strong announced he would book no more games with the Lincoln Giants until he got the money owed him from previous games. 38

The McMahon's bad debts combined with losing the lease on Olympic Field resulted in a transition of ownership of the Lincoln Giants baseball club. James J. Keenan, a white sports promoter, along with Charles Harvey secured controlling interest of the Lincoln Giants and Olympic Field. In an effort to remain in business, the McMahons had organized a traveling team called the Lincoln Stars. Throughout the remainder of the Progressive Era, black independent clubs in New York remained under white control. Along with the McMahons and James J. Keenan, Nat Strong secured controlling interest in both the Brooklyn Royal Giants and the Cuban Stars. Black clubs would remain under white control until the collapse of the Negro Leagues in 1930. 39
BLACK PHILADELPHIA'S "OTHER" BASEBALL WORLD

Black Philadelphia did not become the cutthroat market that New York had evolved into. However, the Quaker City did experience a proliferation of black teams, many of which aspired to become the next Philadelphia Giants. The majority of these clubs were primarily local wonders not showing the desire to take extended barnstorming tours like Gotham's black clubs. Both urbanization and the organizational efforts of white semipros also contributed to Philadelphia's black clubs remaining local wonders. Although it would not occur until after World War I, one African American entrepreneur began the process of transforming his club from a small sandlot team to a black independent.

Four factors were responsible for the different business practices in Philadelphia. The first was the gradual process of urbanization occurring in the City of Brotherly Love. Because of this slow transition both black and white semipros played primarily on sandlot fields, as opposed to enclosed grounds. In 1913, only four out of the fifteen leading black clubs in Philadelphia possessed their own grounds. Therefore playing fields that were available to blacks were usually inferior. For example, one park, located at Twenty-sixth and Allegheny, was located in the midst of a "veritable forest of trees," featuring "wooden blocks for bases." It would not be until after
World War I that a flurry of park construction would occur due essentially to white semipros forming large associations. 40

A second factor was the organizational efforts of white semipros into small leagues. Forming into small leagues and associations resulted in white semipros scheduling fewer games with local black clubs. This led to many black clubs remaining idle for two to three weeks at a time. Moreover, because local businesses in the Quaker City were the primary stimulus for league formation, no monolithic booking agency evolved to dominate the market. Black Philadelphia had no Nat Strong to at least schedule games for black clubs on a weekly basis. 41

Another influence was the configuration of black Philadelphia's community settlement patterns. Migration facilitated blacks being concentrated to certain sections of the city. But blacks did not constitute a majority within these regions. This scattered population was a central reason that no large concentrated black consumer market evolved, making it problematic for a local promoter to gain a hegemony. Combined with only a handful of teams possessing their own grounds, black clubs were reliant on a number of games with whites in order to survive.

The final factor was the type of African American clubs that emerged in the prewar years. These black clubs were an aggregate of stay-at-homes and traveling teams,
which at times, was very difficult to distinguish one from the other. They generally played in the Philadelphia area, with the traveling teams scheduling games in New Jersey and Delaware. By 1914, Philadelphia was represented by the North Philadelphia Giants, West Philadelphia, and the East End Germantown Giants. Black clubs located outside the city in nearby communities included Norristown, Ambler, LaMott, Chester, and Camden, New Jersey; and Wilmington, Delaware; most were similarly named. Other strong teams in Philadelphia included the Ideal Travellers, Evergreen Hall of Southern New Jersey, Blue Ribbon Club of Germantown, Anchor Giants, Philadelphia Defiance, Bon Ton Field Club of Germantown, Ardmore Tigers, and Chester Stars.

It was within this context that Austin Devere Thompson, a nineteen year-old from Darby, Pennsylvania, placed an add in the *Philadelphia Sunday Item* on May 29, 1910. Under the column entitled "Amateur Base Ball Notes" the following notice appeared:

Hilldale A.C. would like to arrange games with all 14 and 15 year old traveling teams. Pay half expenses. Address Manager A.D. Thompson No 329 Marks Avenue, Darby Pa.

Darby was an African American "community satellite" located southwest of Philadelphia in Delaware County, just across the city line. It was incorporated in 1853 as originally part of Darby Township in Delaware County. Darby was one of several communities partitioned from the original land area that included Upper Darby, Sharon Hill, Collingdale,
Alden, Colway, Yeadon, Glenolden, and Folcroft. As a means of escaping the congestion, a handful of black families had moved to Darby. By 1910, nearly 700 African Americans lived in the conveniently located borough, approximately a forty-five minute ride from downtown Philadelphia by trolley. Blacks comprised 10 percent of the population and were restricted to living "upon the Hill." White realtors refused to make housing available in other sections of the borough. 42

Along with his younger brother Lloyd, the team's fourteen year-old second baseman, the elder Thompson organized a black club composed of 14 to 17 year old players, the majority of them from Darby and nearby communities. Little is known about Hilldale's inaugural season. Neil Lanctot states that the earliest documented game was on June 17, 1910, as the "Hilldale Field Club" lost 10-5 to Lansdowne. Before Hilldale's first season ended A.D. Thompson left the club and was replaced by Ed Bolden. 43

Ed Bolden was born on January 17, 1881, in Concordsville, Pennsylvania, fifteen miles from Darby. Like John Connor of New York, Bolden was not a former baseball player, but a Philadelphia postal clerk, emblematic of the black professional that emerged in the age of accommodation. Bolden was asked to keep score at one of Hilldale's games and eventually assumed control of the
young team. At 29, he was more firmly established than his young upstarts, holding a prestigious job, a wife, Nellie, and a three year old daughter, Hilda. The 5-7 and 145 pound Bolden was a baseball fan and was also intrigued about the prospect of managing a club. He had been employed in the Central Post Office in Philadelphia since 1904; prior to that he had been a butler for three years. Lanctot pointed out that Bolden was said to possess "an efficiency record for case examination and floor-work unsurpassed and seldom equaled" at the post office. Quiet yet ambitious, Bolden began the initial steps to transform the Hilldale A.C. into a top notched black professional club. 44

In 1911, Bolden's club amassed a 23-6 record. But Hilldale was indistinguishable from the dozens of clubs in the Delaware County and Philadelphia area. Self-promotion was essential for stimulating interest in the Hilldale Club, while at the same time, develop a fan base. With the exception of Rube Foster, no other black baseball entrepreneur utilized the black press better than Ed Bolden. Beginning in 1912, Bolden began bombarding the Philadelphia Tribune with constant press releases from March to October. In addition, He also recognized the need of developing an acceptable moral image as a means of promoting his club. He declared that "we have good
grounds, and give a good guarantee for a good attraction." He advocated "clean baseball" and required his players to be "gentlemen in uniform as well as off the ballfield." 45

Next, Bolden gained control of Hilldale Park in Delaware County. Unlike the New York clubs, who were relegated to traveling status and under the control of a booking agent, Bolden was in an unique position to develop his own booking pattern with both black and white clubs. Hilldale became even more attractive to white semipros who lacked their own grounds. In 1914, Bolden scheduled three games against white clubs, including a game which featured a minor league pitcher owned by Connie Mack's Philadelphia Athletics. That same year, Bolden's club defeated Three Links, champions of the Interborough League, for the championship of Darby. 46

Finally, Bolden began recruiting sandlot players from other teams. Like many of the black clubs in the Quaker City, Bolden utilized the sports page of the Philadelphia Tribune to encourage players to join his club. He acquired several players in this fashion, transforming Hilldale from a club of "small boys" to a prospective black professional club. In the following years, he would obtain players from the Morton Republican Club, Evergreen Hall team, the Ardmore Tigers, and clubs in Camden and Philadelphia. 47
In 1915, Bolden's Hilldale Club enjoyed another successful season, winning twenty, losing eight, and tying two. His team continued to prosper and receive preferential treatment on the sports pages of the Tribune. That same year marked the start of annual practice by Bolden, publishing Hilldale's record in the Tribune. The process of transformation was still in its initial stages during the prewar years. It would not be until the Great Migration years that Bolden would make his big push into the world of professional black baseball.

Throughout the opening decades of the twentieth century, black clubs in New York were primarily under white control. This occurred primarily because black baseball entrepreneurs continued utilizing the paternalistic business relationship established in the 1880s. But with the rise of a monolithic booking agency, combined with the destructive practice of player raiding, the business relationship between whites and blacks transcended from paternalism to subordination. Blacks were relegated to managing the game on the field. They were not involved in scheduling games, promoting the club, or generating revenue. As a result, no professional black club in Gotham would emerge as a source of race pride and racial solidarity through self-help. Moreover, throughout the remainder of the Progressive Era and the 1920s, black baseball clubs
under white control in New York would serve as mere stepping stones for these local promoter's other business ventures exclusively in the white world.

In Philadelphia, Ed Bolden began the process of transforming the Hilldale A.C. into the most prominent black club in the Quaker City market. He had secured control of Hilldale Park, while at the same time, began weeding out the "young boys" on the club replacing them with high caliber players. But by 1915, Bolden's soon to be chief rival, Andrew "Rube" Foster, was also making his move by both establishing the most prominent touring team, and also becoming the booking power of the Midwest.
REFERENCE LIST


2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.


7. For professional baseball connections to Tammany Hall in New York see Reiss, Touching Base, 66-75.


12. Ibid.


19. While Harris focused primarily on amusement enterprise like theaters, dance hall, pool rooms, and cabaret, baseball also fell within this category. See Abram L. Harris, The Negro As Capitalist: A Study Of Banking And Business Among American Negroes (Philadelphia: The American Academy Of Political And Social Science, 1936), 53-56; for an account on blacks being discriminated against

20. White, History, 33; Holway, Blackball Stars, 6-7.


24. Locating where black teams played was derived from examining several issues of the New York Age from 1909 to 1915.


30. Lester A. Walton, "'Home Run Johnson' Jumps Royal Giants," New York Age March 31 1910, 6; idem., "Trouble in Colored Baseball League - Two Teams on Blacklist," New York Age April 14 1910, 6; "RADICAL CHANGE IN BASEBALL SCHEDULE," Broad Ax April 23 1910, 2. Because of the internal strife within the ranks of the ILBCAC, some of the black stars of the East traveled to Chicago primarily to play for Rube Foster's Leland Giants and later the Chicago American Giants. This marked the beginning of bitter resentment between Foster and Nat Strong. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter six.


37. Foster managed to play McMahon's Lincoln Giants for the World's Colored Championship in New York. The series will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

38. Lester A. Walton, "Lloyd Succeeds White as Manager," New York Age September 11 1911, 6. Although the evidence is limited, it appeared that Sol White had undermined the McMahons when they lost their lease on Olympic Field. According to the Age, White's new team, the Brooklyn Giants, would make Olympic Field their home grounds. Despite this assertion, there was no record of White's team playing their. See idem., "McMahons Lose Olympic Field," New York Age March 28 1912, 6. In April, the Age reported that Jess McMahon had made negotiations in which his club would play the 1912 season at Olympic Field. See idem., "Lincoln Giants News," New York Age April 11 1912, 6. For Lincoln Giants Financial woes see idem., "Lincoln Giants in Financial Straits," New York Age August 21 1913, 6; idem., "BASEBALL GOSSIP," New York Age September 4 1913, 6.


40. For a description of the inferior park see "To the Sporting Editor of the Tribune," Philadelphia Tribune February 21 1914, 7.

42. In order to provide a sketch of Hilldale's origins in order to trace the transformation of this club from a local sandlot team to a professional black independent, I am drawing primarily from Neil Lanctot's work. See Fair Dealing, 16-26.

43. Ibid., 16-17.

44. Ibid., 17; "A SHORT HISTORY OF HILLDALE," Philadelphia Tribune April 8 1916, 7.


CHAPTER VI

THE RISE OF ANDREW "RUBE" FOSTER

Much like the New York market, the proliferation of black clubs from the Midwest and South led to two attempts to organize professional leagues. However unlike Gotham's market, African Americans in Chicago had more operational autonomy in the organizational process. Chicago's black baseball entrepreneurs sought to create a Negro National League through a concept referred to as cooperative business enterprises. But a lack of commitment on the part of African Americans to organizing the league, led to both efforts ending in failure. In addition, internal division within the ranks of Chicago's black baseball entrepreneurs resulted in a battle over controlling the Windy City's growing black market. When the war ended, Andrew "Rube" Foster emerged as the booking power of the Midwest.
THE LELAND GIANTS BASEBALL AND AMUSEMENT ASSOCIATION

Frank Leland's split with W.S. Peters in 1902 brought the East-West colored championship to an abrupt halt, and another twelve years passed before another series of this nature took place. The competition among the two clubs for the patronage of black Chicago hindered their respective ability to generate revenue. Neither club could insure the substantial guarantee necessary to induce a top black club from the East to travel West. In an effort to remedy this situation, in 1904 Leland moved his club to Auburn Park on 79th and Wentworth Avenue, renamed his club the Leland Giants, and sought alliances with black Chicago's emerging new leadership. Leland's alliance with new black leadership resulted in both an effort by these "Race" men to gain control of Chicago's growing consumer market and establish a black professional league on a national scale. The creation of a commercial amusement enterprise, under the auspices of economic cooperation, became the means of achieving these goals.

Leland's formation of a new team coincided with efforts made by Chicago's new black leadership making their imprint on community development. These African American entrepreneurs typified the business leaders who deemphasized the fight for integration, and dealt with discrimination by creating black institutions. The widening discrimination in Chicago and other northern cities resulted in the
emergence of the physical ghetto. It forced African Americans to make decisions confined by their exclusion from a host of social and economic institutions. Increased separation opened new opportunities for entrepreneurship. Between 1890 and 1915, Chicago's African Americans established a bank, a hospital, a YMCA, and professional baseball teams.

Many of Chicago's new black leadership embraced a business concept known as cooperative business enterprises. This notion of cooperative enterprises had its roots in the black community in the late eighteenth century. Early black entrepreneurs recognized that if they were to attain any success in developing black business to an appreciable level in the black community, it would come only through economic cooperation. It was evident to them that no concrete help in obtaining capital and credit could be expected from white America. But by the early twentieth century, cooperative business enterprises were more an outgrowth of the ideology of self-help and racial solidarity. These ventures were the result of white discrimination. Throughout the age of accommodation, blacks were excluded from many commercialized amusements owned by whites. In response, Chicago's black leaders sought to counter this discrimination by organizing their own commercial amusements. Although organized on a profit motive, Chicago's black leaders not only adopted the
rhetoric of race advancement through self-help, but they were genuinely motivated by a desire to provide services and facilities that were otherwise unavailable to blacks.\footnote{1}

Both Robert R. Jackson and Beauregard Moseley were prominent in the consolidation of Leland's ballclub into a commercial amusement and recreation enterprise. Jackson, born in 1870, was a Chicago native. He left school in the eighth grade to successfully work as a newsboy, bootblack, postal employee, and finally he established his own printing and publishing business. Moseley was active in politics at an early age. Born in Georgia, he came to Chicago just after 1890. Moseley was a lawyer and businessman and a strong advocate of cooperative business ventures. He lived in a predominantly white section of town, but his law practice drew heavily on the black community and he was chief counsel of the Olivet Baptist Church, Chicago's largest African American congregation.\footnote{2}

Leland, Moseley, and Jackson combined to form the Leland Giants Baseball and Amusement Association (LGBBA). Incorporated in 1907, the LGBBA was more than just a baseball team, it was also a summer resort, skating rink, and restaurant, and the venture exemplified the black response to white discrimination in amusement venues and public accommodations. In 1908, the black owned newspaper, \textit{Broad Ax}, carried an advertisement offering stock options

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to the public. The objective of the ad was to raise funds for the club's new ballpark, located on Sixty-ninth and Halstead, and the language employed typified the race rhetoric and racial solidarity that black Chicagoans advocated during the Progressive Era. It asked, "Are You In Favor Of The Race Owning and Operating This Immense And Well Paying Plant, Where More Than 1,100 Persons Will Be Employed, between May and October each year, where you can come without fear and Enjoy The Life and Freedom of a citizen unmolested or annoyed? The Answer can only be effectively given by subscribing for stock in this Corporation."  

These "Race" men sought to establish an enterprise that would become a means of race pride through self-help. The Association also made inroads in other institutions in the black community. It contributed annually to Provident Hospital, founded by Daniel Hale Williams, the country's best known African American physician and one of the outstanding surgeons of his day. On August 26, 1910, the Leland Giants played a benefit game for the hospital at Comiskey Park. Although a profit motive enterprise, the LGBBA became a venture that offered jobs to the black community, as Moseley, Leland, and Jackson attempted to corner the black market in the commercial industry.  

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At the same time these African American entrepreneurs began to make civic ties in Chicago's black community, Frank Leland made his only attempt to organize a black professional league. On November 9, 1907, the Indianapolis Freeman reported that a movement was put forth to form the National Colored League of Professional Ball Clubs. The effort to form this league was a clear exposition of the cooperative business philosophy. Under the direction of Leland; Elwood C. Knox, editor of the Freeman; and Ran Butler, the owner of the Indianapolis ABC's, these promoters encouraged Race men in the leading midwestern and southern cities to form a stock company as a means of consolidation. The circuit was to be an eight team league with prospective cities to include: Cincinnati, Cleveland, Louisville, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Toledo, Detroit, Milwaukee, Memphis, Nashville, and Columbus, Ohio. From December 28, 1907, to January 25, 1908, the league directors elected officers and established guide lines for league entry. Leland was elected president and was the driving force behind the movement. For a club to be considered for admission it had to: (1) be represented by a stock company fully organized and incorporated under state law; (2) secure a bond (the amount was not specified) determined by the league's board of directors; (3) pay $50 into the league treasury to cover the expenses for league operations; and (4) secure a suitable ball park
and have full support of the press. In addition, a small percentage of the gate receipts from each city would be placed in the treasury, and the season would run from May to September.  

Despite these organizers' efforts, the league died without throwing a pitch. Essentially, three factors led to its downfall. First and foremost, there was a total lack of commitment by black baseball entrepreneurs in the aforementioned cities. According to the Freeman, only Chicago and Indianapolis made commitments to the enterprise. The Freeman also indicated that several black baseball magnates were totally against league formation, fearing it would damage their business. Much like the National League of Colored Base Ball Clubs of the late 1880s, it appeared that these black baseball entrepreneurs were reluctant to travel outside the regional format they had created for themselves. Prior to 1907, only the Cuban Giants had ever made an extended barnstorming tour -- and they were under white control. If, for example, clubs from Pittsburgh and Nashville were members of the league, it would increase the overhead expenses of the midwestern club to travel their. It would also create an unworkable format since the majority of the prospective cities were in the Midwest.  

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Finally, there was no clear cut plan on how this league would operate. In other words, there was no attempt to create a business system that would place the black game on a sound economic footing. Many of the proposals, including conditions for league entry, by these league organizers were only suggestions. Nothing was agreed upon that indicated that this was the way in which the league would function. More importantly, the failed league injured Frank Leland's credibility with the LGBBA's leadership. Throughout the remainder of the LGBBA's brief history, Leland would operate primarily as a figurehead within the organization. His effort to regain control of his ball club would result in a schism that would cause the LGBBA to crumble at its foundation.

**THE GREAT SCHISM AND A SECOND FAILED LEAGUE**

The great schism occurred because the multiple enterprises of the LGBBA diverted the attention of these aspiring black entrepreneurs, in terms of sustaining the cooperative business approach. Internal division among the Association's organizers was the direct result of several interacting influences: the Leland Giants emerging as the top touring team of the Midwest; Frank Leland's attempt to wrestle control of the ball club away from Beauregard Moseley; and a formal band on black traveling teams by Chicago's Park Owners Association. While this
schism placed black baseball in Chicago on shaky ground, it was instrumental in forming the structure of the black game in the Windy City in the Progressive Era.

The emergence of the Leland Giants as one of the country's top touring teams was primarily the result of one man, Andrew "Rube" Foster. His emergence as both their manager and booking agent marked the beginning of his dominance of black baseball in the Midwest. Foster was born in Calvert, Texas in 1879, the son of a presiding elder of Calvert's Methodist Church. Devoutly religious, Foster neither drank nor allowed anyone to consume spirits in his household, but he did tolerate it from others. Foster exhibited his organizational skills at a young age, operating a baseball team while in grade school. He left school in the eighth grade to pursue a career in baseball. By 1897, Foster was pitching for the Waco Yellow Jackets, a traveling team that toured Texas and the bordering states. In the spring of 1902, W.S. Peters invited him to join his team, but as he sent no travel money the pitcher remained in Texas. Simultaneously, Leland organized the Chicago Union Giants. He invited Foster to join his club, initiating a stormy relationship between the two men. By mid-spring, Foster quit the Union Giants to join a white semipro team in Michigan. When its season ended, he headed east to play for the Cuban X Giants. 7
From 1903 to 1906, Foster played for the Philadelphia Giants. The player revolt Foster led in 1906 coincided with Leland's efforts to persuade the African American flame thrower to manage the Lelands. Foster accepted; his first move was to release the players of the previous year despite Leland's opposition. It was evident that Foster wanted his own players and he had just brought seven of them from the greatest team ever assembled. Next, due to Leland's failing health and his responsibilities as the newly elected Cook County Commissioner, Foster assumed the responsibilities of booking the team's games. From that time on, Foster established a business arrangement whereby gate receipts would be either divided in half, or he would insure a substantial guarantee to attract the top teams.  

The Giants' revised managerial structure was integrated into the LGBBA's corporate configuration. On January 21, 1909, the Association elected the following members to hold office: Frank Leland, President; Robert Jackson, Vice-President; Beauregard Moseley, Secretary and Treasurer; and Rube Foster, Manager and Captain of the team. But Moseley was the driving force. With Moseley, Leland, and Jackson supervising the LGBBA's other businesses and Foster booking the baseball games enough capital was
generated to run an adequate operation. The new organization lifted the Leland Giants from the ranks of a stay at home to the Midwest's top touring team. 9

From 1907 to 1910, Foster perfected the barnstorming schedule that would be his trademark for the next decade. On February 20, 1907, the Indianapolis Freeman reported that the Leland Giants would embark on a spring training tour. It marked the first time that a semiprofessional club that was both black owned and operated had accomplished this feat. Two years later, the Freeman reported that the Leland Giants had traveled 4,465 miles playing both black and white teams in Memphis, Birmingham, Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio, Prairie View State, and Houston. Like the predecessors the Page Fence Giants, the American Giants traveled in their own private Pullman car, as a means of illustrating their reputation as an elite black independent club. In October 1910, after winning twenty straight games in the East and West, the Leland Giants made their first trip to Cuba. More important, the Leland's trip to the Cuban island served as a means of promoting the LGBBA. Along with the American League Detroit Tigers, the Lelands played the top Cuban clubs including the Havannas -- an aggregate of black stars that included John Henry Lloyd, and Grant "Home Run" Johnson -- and the Alemendares. While the Lelands won the majority of their games, they lost a tough series to the Alemendares. 10

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In addition to the barnstorming tour, the LGBBA utilized a promotional slogan that described the caliber of play on the field -- "inside baseball." Unlike the black clubs of the money period, who resorted to vaudevillian ball when necessary, the Lelands were strictly a competitive club. Through good pitching and defense, timely hitting, and base running, the Leland Giants played the "scientific" ball advocated by white clubs in Organized Baseball. 11

By 1909, the Leland Giants' success produced a conflict of interest among the team's management. With Moseley supervising the LGBBA's other businesses and Foster managing the ballclub, Leland recognized his diminished role within the organization. As a result, he attempted to regain control of the Giants; but the Association's investors felt it was in the corporation's best interests to retain Foster as manager. As a result, in a hostile takeover, Moseley and Foster united to force Leland out. Foster's alliance with Moseley made the split inevitable. In 1910, Leland went to court to prevent Foster and Moseley using the name Leland Giants, but he was unsuccessful. Not only did Leland lose his team, but he lost interests in the LGBBA's other businesses as well. 12

In response to being forced out, Leland created in 1910 the Chicago Giants in partnership with Robert Jackson and A.H. Garrett. His goal was to make his Giants a top
touring team to compete against the Leland Giants and he also sought to have them play the top semipro clubs in the area. To accomplish this, Leland raided his old club for players. Unfortunately for him the POA thwarted his aspiration when it prohibited the scheduling of games between black traveling teams from outside the Chicago area. Evidently, the agreement between Nat Strong's NACBBBC and the City League had created a conflict of interest. The reason the POA gave for this ban was that local patrons complained about the lack of contests being scheduled between local teams. The New York Age speculated that the prohibition could have emerged from some of the top Cuban teams invading the area for the past two years. In addition, the Philadelphia Giants had also made a couple barnstorming tours, playing both the top black and white semipro clubs in the Windy City. Race was assuredly an issue in the POA's decision. However more important was that it no doubt envisioned that the rise of both the Leland and Chicago Giants to the status of touring teams, coupled with the arrival of Cuban clubs and the Philadelphia Giants, as a threat to its autonomy. Since the majority of the traveling teams had their own booking agents, there was no need for the POA. In addition, scheduling those traveling teams meant a big payday for both black and white semipro squads, but only clubs that had their own parks
could enjoy such a luxury. Consequently, both the POA and local teams with no parks had a vested interest in keeping the black traveling teams out.\textsuperscript{13}

The color ban on traveling teams appears to have directly impacted the Chicago Giants. To remain in the City League, the Giants' management had to refrain from scheduling games with both black touring and traveling teams. The conservative Leland yielded to the demand. In 1911, his Giants did not tour South, playing only a local schedule, but the following year, it dropped out the Chicago City League. Three factors were instrumental in the Giants' departure. First, Jackson left the club to pursue a successful career in politics. He was a significant investor of the enterprise and his loss crippled the club. Second, the absence of this capital made it difficult for Leland to compete against the Leland Giants, and the court settlement forced him to vacate Auburn Park. Finally, Leland's failing health became a serious concern and within two years he died at the age of forty-five. Joe Green, the Giants' shortstop, reorganized the team and from 1913 until the formation of the Negro National League they were the top stay at home in the Chicago area.\textsuperscript{14}

Moseley had higher aspirations in mind, and neither the POA's ban nor Leland's efforts to put his former club out of business hindered them. As early as 1909, the young
black lawyer advocated the need for blacks to organized their own professional league. He also recognized that the continual territorial invasion and the raiding of player rosters were destructive forces and had to be eliminated. In addition, Moseley recognized that the color line drawn by the POA would also adversely impact the LGBBA's ability to generate revenue. But the proliferation of black teams from the South and Midwest made it feasible, in Moseley's view, to form a black professional league.\textsuperscript{15}

In 1910, Moseley called together a group of black baseball men from throughout the Midwest and the South. The proposed league was more than just response to the color line, it was another exposition of the doctrine of self-help. In his statement of purpose, Moseley indicated that blacks "are already forced out of the game from a national standpoint" and find it increasingly difficult to play white semiprofessional teams at the local level. This "presages the day when there will be [no opportunities for black baseball players], except the Negro comes to his own rescue by organizing and patronizing the game successfully, which would of itself force recognition from minor white leagues to play us and share in the receipts." Moseley added, "let those who would serve the Race assist it in holding its back up . . . organizing an effort to secure . . . the best club of ball players possible."\textsuperscript{16}
The prospective owners first met on December 30, 1910. Moseley was elected temporary chairman and Felix H. Payne of Kansas City temporary secretary. Eight cities were represented: Chicago, New Orleans, Mobile, Louisville, St. Louis, Columbus (Oh.), Kansas City (Mo.), and Kansas City (Kan.). Unlike Leland, Moseley had devised a twenty point plan, explaining how the league should operate. Utilizing the cooperative business philosophy, Moseley suggested that eight race men in each city pool their resources and form a stock company. The league projected an operating capital of $2,500 with each club paying roughly $300. Half the league's umpires would be black and paid five dollars per game. A reserve list would be developed and players who jumped their contracts would be banned from the league. Finally, an effort would be made to limit the league to one franchise per city. 17

The league generated a lot of enthusiasm the following year and rumors persisted of other cities joining the loop, but it died stillborn. Like the previous organizational effort, there was an unwillingness of investors to come forth. At its inaugural meeting only Chicago, New Orleans, and Kansas City (Kan.) were represented by investors, with the remaining five being represented by fans and no evidence to indicate that possible financiers existed in these cities. Second, these entrepreneurs were not willing to follow the Leland Giants' lead in embarking on extended
barnstorming tours. The majority of these clubs would not venture too far outside their established regions. Finally, migration had significantly expanded the black populations in midwestern cities, but it was still insufficient to create a market to sustain a league. This would have made it difficult to establish both territorial regions and set population requirements for a prospective city for league entry. More importantly, there was no evidence that the teams in these proposed cities had gained a hegemony over their local regions. Even in Chicago, no such autonomy existed. Its black community was not large enough to support three teams -- the Lelands, Chicago Giants, and the Union Giants -- not to mention becoming a viable territory in a league. It would have required maintaining the symbiotic business relationship with white semipro clubs and the POA's ban on traveling teams made this problematic.

In 1911, Foster split with Moseley and formed the Chicago American Giants. It was not clear what led Foster to make a break with the LGBBA, but what was evident that both the color ban and two attempts to form a league ending in failure were instrumental in him making this decision. Yet Leland's attempt to drive Foster out of the black baseball business had left a lasting, albeit a negative, imprint on him. Combine with Moseley's upcoming challenge to compete against him, Foster would in later years resort
to heavy handed tactics against any African American entrepreneur who dared to challenge him. But at this juncture, the oversaturation of Chicago's black market still impacted upon a prospective entrepreneur to maintain a successful operation. So instead of having three teams tapping into Chicago's black community, now there were four: the American Giants, the Leland Giants, the Chicago Giants, and the Union Giants.

FOSTER'S RISE AS UNCHALLENGED MASTER

The great schism made Rube Foster an unpopular man in black Chicago. The combination of Leland organizing the Chicago Giants and Moseley forming a coalition of black business professionals were efforts to both compete against Foster and put him out of business. The black press also took jabs at Foster, providing poor coverage and turning public opinion against him. In an effort to win over both the press and the black community, Foster made a series of moves that included forming a partnership with John Schorling, a white tavern owner -- expanding his barnstorming tour both during the winter and the local season -- reviving the East-West colored championship -- and developing good press and community relations as a means of changing his public image.

Following the break with Foster, Moseley organized a booster coalition from the black community. The Leland Giant Booster Club (LGBC) was an aggregate of black middle
class businessmen and professionals. For example, LGBC president, Jesse Bolling, was a restaurant owner and donated his Burlington Buffet as the club's official headquarters. T.W. Allen, the club secretary, was a city inspector. Also members of the coalition were the editors of Chicago's two leading black newspapers, Robert Abbott of the Chicago Defender and Julius Taylor of the Broad Ax. ¹⁸

The formation of the LGBC exemplified the cooperative business philosophy prevalent among the new leadership. This venture could serve as a means of promoting each other businesses through advertising and stimulating community interest. One of the booster's club function was to organize activities surrounding the Leland Giants' local season that had become ritual in the prewar years. For example, at the opening of each season, the Giants had what was known as "Flag Raising Day." It was equivalent to throwing out the first ball on opening day of the Major League Baseball season. Another event the LGBC staged consisted of a touring car, known as the Red Devil, that paraded through the streets to the ballpark. But the booster club's main objective was to provide a united front against both Leland's Chicago Giants and Foster's American Giants. ¹⁹

Despite the LGBC's enthusiasm, the venture failed as it lacked the financial and political resources to be effective. Instead of revealing a willingness to be risk
takers, this was a rather conservative coalition, lacking in allies in local government. While a political machine was being organized at this time, it did not become instrumental in black community affairs until after World War I. By 1912, the LGBC ceased to exist. 20

Moseley had other obstacles confronting him. He was engaged in several business ventures at once: organizing a baseball league and booking games for the Lelands, and he probably did not delegate authority to booster club members or have an adequate enough management team to supervise his many operations. While Moseley attempted to corner the black market, the facilities of his enterprise were located outside the black belt, where increased white hostility made venturing usually an unpleasant one for Chicago's African Americans. The African American working class could not enjoy these amusements and the middle class was not large enough to sustain them. To make matters worse, Moseley had just moved into and renovated the ballpark on Sixty-ninth and Halstead, no doubt at a large expense. The obstacles were more than the LGBBA could bear. By 1912, the skating rink closed for good and the Leland Giants were relegated to a stay at home. 21

While the LGBBA was in a state of decline, Foster still faced opposition from the black press. Julius Taylor was disgusted by the baseball situation. He expressed in a 1912 editorial his disenchantment with the
unwillingness of blacks to organize themselves, as well as commit to this venture. The Broad Ax editor further noted that the Leland Giants’ success proved to be its misfortune. Rivalry and a desire to control led to fragmentation in an effort to "compete for patronage and prowess of the Leland Giants." The issue that most upset Taylor was that the revenues baseball now generated went into the coffers of white men. The same year, the Defender began to take jabs at Foster as it was also upset over the revenue "going over to the other race." The black newspaper insisted that this is "why so many are pulling against Rube." In addition, it was critical of the lack of support the American Giants gave black institutions in the community, primarily the Chicago Defender.  

Despite this opposition, Foster made a series of moves that ensured his rise as unchallenged master. First he entered into a partnership with John M. Schorling, brother-in-law of Chicago White Sox owner Charles Comiskey. Schorling had operated a sandlot club in Chicago for several years. He leased the grounds of the old White Sox park on Thirty-ninth and Shields after the American League team moved into their new stadium. The White Sox had torn down the old grandstand and Schorling built a new one with a seating capacity of 9,000. He approached Foster with an offer of a partnership. Foster now had a ballpark to operate in and Schorling had the best booking agent and
field manager outside of Organized Baseball. For the next fifteen years they became the best management team at the semipro level. 23

Several aspects led to Foster's success. Compared to the LGGBA, whose facilities were outside the black belt, the Chicago American Giants' park was accessible to the majority of the black population. The better location facilitated gate receipts instrumental to the attraction of both the top touring and traveling teams to the Midwest. More significantly, the relocation allowed Foster to accomplish what Moseley failed to achieve, corner the black market. Foster also focused his promotion solely on baseball, and he knew the game better than anyone outside the structure of Organized Baseball. His objective was to present the best product available to Chicago's black community, which meant securing the best talent available and developing a winning reputation. To achieve such standards, a management team committed to baseball had to be in place. Schorling had prior baseball experience and shared Foster's objectives. This was an unpopular decision as it required that Foster go outside the black community to achieve his goals.

Even more significant, Foster exhibited a business approach that was emblematic among the successful black entrepreneurs in baseball. He was a businessman first and a "Race" man second. At no time did Foster show any
indications of severing any business relations with white semipros; in fact he attempted to strengthen them. While these business connections were primarily to increase his profits, Foster would help serve Chicago's black community by conducting several benefit games to raise funds for civic institutions. In essence, Foster had achieved the objections spelled out in the compilation of ideologies commonly attributed to Booker T. Washington -- building a segregated economy within the framework of a national economy. In other words, the segregated economy -- the Chicago American Giants -- through the creation of annual booking arrangements with both black and white semipros in and around Chicago and California -- operated successfully within the framework of the national economy -- semiprofessional baseball.

From 1912 to 1915, Foster established both a barnstorming tour in the West Coast during the winter months, and became the first black semipro team to play games during the week in the local season on a regular basis. The American Giants played in the California Winter League, an aggregate of teams comprised of former and current major and minor league players and teams from the Pacific Coast, Southern, and Northwest leagues. The American Giants won the California League Championship in its first season. On July 5, 1913, the Defender reported that the American Giants celebrated winning the championship
with a parade, by unfurling a banner and by displaying their new uniforms. At the same time, Foster's alliance with Schorling enabled him to schedule games with white semipro teams during the week. Foster had now established the structure that ensured a successful operation of a black semiprofessional team. 24

But an effort to revive the East-West Colored Championship put Foster over the top. On July 5, 1913, the Defender reported an upcoming championship series between the Chicago American Giants and the Lincoln Giants of New York. A series of thirteen games were scheduled both in Chicago and New York. After nine games the series was tied at four victories a piece and one tie. But the Lincoln Giants won the final four games in New York earning the right to be crown "World's Colored Champion." While Foster's American Giants had lost the series, he had won the hearts and the minds of Chicago's black community. 25

Yet the revival of the East-West Colored Championship would be short lived. Three of the games in New York resulted in Lincoln's manager Jess McMahon engaging in that controversial business practice known as revolving. On July 24, 1913, the New York Age reported that McMahon had secured the services of Frank Wickware of the Mohawk Giants to pitch against the Chicagoans, paying the righthander $100. By game time McMahon had noticed that Wickware was wearing an American Giants uniform. McMahon
protested to Foster indicating that he had already paid Wickware $100 to pitch for the Lincolns. Foster stated that Wickware would play for his club. As a result, the game was canceled. A second game was canceled in Gotham when Foster protested McMahon's use of Charles Earle, captain of the Brooklyn Royal Giants, in place of regular outfielder Joe Gans. Combined with the McMahons' financial problems, the colored championship between the American Giants and the Lincolns would be the last informal East-West confrontation. By 1917, the McMahons would be out of the black baseball business. 26

Finally, Foster and Schorling had learned their lesson well regarding both press and community relations. In the prewar years they started a precedent that became a constant throughout the war years. In addition to raising funds for civic institutions, Schorling donated the use of the ballpark for local community activities, like the Chicago Church League championship game. Foster also developed positive press relations. He began first by granting an interview with the Defender providing readers with insights about his early career in baseball. Throughout the war years, he granted many interviews and become a local patron as well. 27

Yet both the California Winter League championship and the East-West colored championship were instrumental in Foster receiving accolades from both a prominent member
of Chicago's black middle class, and on the sport pages of the Defender. Julius Avendorph, the "Ward McAllister of the South Side," was an assistant to the president of the Pullman company. He became "personally acquainted with more millionaires than any other colored man in Chicago." From 1886 up until 1910, Avendorph was considered "Chicago's undisputed social leader . . ." Writing in the Defender on April 5, 1913, Avendorph extolled the American Giants for both "their high class baseball playing . . . [and] for their gentlemanly conduct on the ball field." Avendorph also added that the American Giants were "an example that lots of white clubs can take pattern from . . ." When some of Chicago's black patrons berated Foster for raising his ticket prices, the Defender came to his defense for the first time. Chicago's black fans would "have to pay for quality and they [the fans] have certainly got their money's worth lately, referring to the colored championship." Moreover, the Defender reminded its readers that many of the Windy City's black fans had "never knew what it was to see a game among those of their race unless forced to go to 79th Street." "Now it is a stone's throw from their homes." 28

BLACK BASEBALL ON THE EVE OF THE GREAT MIGRATION

Black baseball would continue to operate within the framework of a segregated enterprise, while at the same time, maintain a symbiotic business relationship with white
semiprofessional teams. The successful entrepreneur maintained a booking pattern with the top black and white semipros on a consistent basis. Black baseball clubs would continue to operate either within the context of either corporate management or as one man enterprises. In spite of the obstacles that confronted him, Rube Foster had managed to integrate his operation both with a segregated market and a national one, through the creation of his barnstorming tours in the prewar years. This pattern served to create a sense of permanence and stability in an otherwise unstructured consumer market. Because of the press relations he created -- not only in Chicago, but in Indianapolis also -- Foster's American Giants had become a source of race pride and racial solidarity among African American people in the Midwest.

In New York, black baseball clubs were absorbed into Nat Strong's monolithic booking agency. Strong, in conjunction with James J. Keenan, resorted to collusive practices in an effort to keep black clubs under white control. Under their control, black clubs were not promoted along the lines of being a civic institution in the black community. There was no evidence that either the Brooklyn Royal Giants or the Lincoln Giants played benefit games or made any charitable donations to black institutions. Press relations served only to report game scores and not to promote these clubs to Gotham's growing black market.
Both the Brooklyn Royal Giants and the Lincoln Giants had primarily become a means of supplementing the businesses both Strong and Keenan had in white society -- white semipro baseball, and sports promotions.

But the black baseball scene was emblematic of what was occurring in Harlem's business community. While migration increased black business opportunities, African Americans remained a small element of New York's business community. For example, like the baseball clubs, the most flourishing stores in Harlem were owned by whites. This situation prompted the Age to conduct an investigation of black business enterprises there. Generally speaking, it not only found a sparsity of black shops in Harlem, but that blacks were denied the better locations. On Fifth Avenue, between 131st and 138th Streets, which was also the same locale Olympic Field resided, blacks constituted 98 percent of the consumers, but they owned only 12 percent of the stores. Most blacks of this section patronized stores owned by whites. Where African Americans accounted for almost all of the shoppers, black shopkeepers received only 15 and 20 percent of the black trade. Blacks were restricted to the least desirable location, which in part, was explained by their late entrance into Harlem's business world. 29
Chicago experienced a similar dilemma. Like Harlem, whites maintained total control over most retail business on the South Side. A 1918 survey of State Street businesses revealed that out of five hundred stores and shops, 340 were run by whites. Only in the restaurant, hairdressing, real estate, and undertaking businesses were blacks competing successfully. Whites retained a virtual monopoly of the grocery, clothing, furniture, hardware, and department stores. Moreover, both Harlem and Chicago's business dilemma highlighted a fundamental dilemma that would plague professional black baseball throughout its history. Because black entrepreneurs were unable to build or purchase their own ballparks, this impacted on their ability to gain total control of their enterprise.30

Philadelphia was still in its developmental phase. Local businesses in the Quaker City facilitated the organization of white semipros into small leagues and associations. At the same time, Ed Bolden began his initial steps to bigger and better things in the black baseball world. Through the process of transforming Hilldale on the field and developing good press relations, Bolden was establishing roots within both Darby and Philadelphia's black communities. Moreover, an integral part of this transformation was Bolden's development of business contacts with white semipros.
Despite Foster's rise as unchallenged master, Chicago's market was still a saturated one. Joe Green continued to operate the Chicago Giants, while W.S. Peters' son, Frank, inherited the Unions. In the 1920s, Robert Gilkerson, a former ballplayer, assumed control of the Unions and renamed them Gilkerson's Union Giants. But Green, Peters, and Gilkerson were not as ambitious as Foster, choosing to remain weekend operators, passing the hat to cover expenses. But during the years of the Great Migration, Foster would absorb these clubs under his booking control, marking the start of his expansion of his booking autonomy outside the Windy City.
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30. Similar surveys were conducted on black businesses in 1901 and 1913. They found that blacks were concentrated in the following service trade enterprises: barber shops, beauty salons, saloons, restaurants, and pool rooms. The significance of the 1918 survey was that little had changed since the earlier surveys. Survey findings in Spear, Black Chicago, 112, 183-184.
PART THREE
THE RISE AND FALL OF THE
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INTRODUCTION

By 1915, the Great Migration contributed immensely to the expansion of black baseball's consumer market. At the same time, the emergence of several African American entrepreneurs, and the ways they facilitated entrepreneurship, would be instrumental in both the formation and direction of the black leagues in the 1920s. Yet migration did not remove the inherent obstacles that restricted black business development.

By 1920, there emerged eight leading cities with substantial black populations that formed the nucleus of the Negro National and Eastern Colored Leagues: Baltimore, Chicago, Detroit, Indianapolis, Kansas City, New York, Philadelphia, and St. Louis. Through the establishment of good press relations, and sustaining the symbiotic business relationship with white semipros, black baseball entrepreneurs attempted to gain control of their respective consumer markets. Collectively, these entrepreneurs endeavored to operate a segregated league within the fabric of the white semipro scene.
But in the middle of the decade, the seeds of decline became more increasingly evident. The economic downswing of the nation's economy affected blacks adversely. The underdevelopment of the black community invited economic catastrophe. Organized Baseball entered its "Golden Age," and the impact of better urban transportation resulted in the black leagues losing a portion of its white clientele. Black baseball, like other African American businesses, became increasingly more reliant upon black patronage for its economic survival.

Investigating the emergence of these black baseball entrepreneurs who were instrumental in the formation of the Negro National and Eastern Colored Leagues, and showing how these men sought to create an enterprise in their own image is the aim of this section. Chapter seven discusses the impact of the Great Migration upon black baseball's consumer market. It also traces the rise of several black baseball entrepreneurs -- outside of New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago -- who were instrumental in league formation. Chapter eight examines the obstacles that plague the black leagues throughout its history, and the formation of the Negro National League. Chapter nine explores the forces that led to black baseball's war over players, and the formation of the Eastern Colored League. Chapter ten outlines both the internal and external forces that led to the decline of the black leagues. Chapter eleven
examines the ways in which these black baseball entrepreneurs attempted to respond to these forces, and the collapse of the Eastern Colored League. Chapter twelve discusses the rise and fall of the American Negro League, the collapse of the Negro National League, and the rise of a new breed of player and owner.
CHAPTER VII

BLACK BASEBALL AND THE GREAT MIGRATION
1915-1920

The Great Migration contributed immensely to the expansion of black baseball's consumer market. At the same time, the leading African American entrepreneurs, who would be instrumental in the formation of both the Negro National and Eastern Colored Leagues, rose to prominence. Their emergence, combined with market expansion, enabled Rube Foster to take initial steps to expand his booking autonomy throughout the Midwest. In addition, the rise of Ed Bolden's Hilldale Athletic Club and the return of John Connor to black baseball were instrumental in re-establishing the East-West business connection between black independents.

After 1915, the migration of African Americans from the rural South to the urban North had become a mass movement. While the earlier movement had received little attention outside the black community, the new migration was charted and graphed, denounced and defended in the
newspapers, on public platforms, and in legislative committees. Migration also renewed impetus to the drive for black business development. While migration vastly expanded the market for black business, it did not remove the barriers that had previously curtailed efforts to form a black professional league: the virtual strangle hold whites had in the New York market, a lack of commitment, and securing a suitable playing facility. But African American entrepreneurs would take counter measures to combat these obstacles.

The Great Migration contributed to expanding black baseball's consumer market in several ways. First, several cities outside of New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago emerged to facilitate the formation of a league that catered primarily to a black consumer market. By 1920, five cities, with black populations of 30,000 or more, emerged to form the nucleus of both the Negro National and Eastern Colored Leagues: Baltimore, Detroit, Indianapolis, Kansas City, and St. Louis. These cities could be divided into both large and small market cities. Baltimore, Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia constituted the large market cities; Detroit, Indianapolis, Kansas City, and St. Louis were the smaller markets.

Migration also created an opportunity for a prospective entrepreneur to gain control of these growing markets. The successful black baseball entrepreneur would maintain
good relations with the black press, primarily through patronage -- maintain a symbiotic business relationship with white semipros -- and secured a playing facility to maintain a local following. Sustaining a segregated economy within the framework of the national economy would remain the standard operating procedure for the black baseball business. The ability of blacks to secure a playing facility in the Midwest was even more important. Even if it meant leasing parks from whites, which in most cases it did, maintaining a fan base was vital to an entrepreneur's survival. It was even a bigger plus if the ball park was within a close proximity of the black community. ¹

While the origins of three black baseball entrepreneurs could be traced to the prewar era, they emerged to challenge Rube Foster's American Giants for supremacy during the Great Migration. Charles Isham (C.I.) Taylor was born on January 20, 1875, in Anderson, South Carolina. He attended Biddell and Clark universities, and served in the Spanish-American war. In 1904, Taylor along with his brothers -- Ben, "Candy" Jim, and "Steel Arm" John -- organized the Birmingham Giants. In 1910, Taylor moved the club to West Baden, Indiana, merged his team with the Sprudels, took control of the team's management, and built the club into a solid organization. Four years later, Taylor transferred the club to Indianapolis, where the
club was sponsored by the American Brewing Company and called the ABC's. Taylor had become part owner with Ted Bowser, who owned the lease on Washington Park, the ABC's home facility. By 1915, Taylor ousted Bowser and gained full control of the park and the lease.  

Taylor became a prominent member of Indianapolis' black community. He was a member of the Bethel A.M.E. Church, the Persian Temple of the Mystic Shrines, and other branches of the Masons. Indianapolis Freeman sportswriter Billy Lewis indicated that Taylor exemplified a deacon in a church, as opposed to one of the country's leading baseball men. Taylor was also a shrewd psychologist who was one of the first managers to have clubhouse meetings, before and after games, to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the opposition. In addition to baseball, Taylor also owned and managed a pool room, beginning with three tables and eventually ending up with ten. His pool room was described as one of the most modern facility of the era, complete with a plethora of cue racks, stationary chairs, and a long row of chandeliers of marble and alabaster. A bulletin board kept up-to-date coverage of games during the season on the ABC's and other black clubs. Throughout the Progressive Era, Taylor would become Rube Foster's chief rival for midwestern supremacy in the black baseball world.  

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Another African American entrepreneur emerged in St. Louis. The St. Louis Giants began as a sandlot team which would eventually evolved into a black independent. They were managed by Charles Mills, a local saloon keeper, who organized a club composed primarily of youngsters who wore cheap unmatching uniforms, earning less than sixty cents a game. In 1907, the Giants leased Kuebler's Park at 6100 North Broadway in St. Louis, and played primarily against white semipros on the weekends. The Giants soon became a gate attraction, out drawing the local white trolley league, and attracting a crowd of 3,000 fans in a 1910 game against the Chicago Giants. In 1911, Mills entered into a partnership with local black businessmen and formed the St. Louis Giants and Amusement Association. The management team consisted of Mills, manager; Noah Warrington, president; Ollie Jackson, treasurer; and Felix Wallace, team captain. The Giants embarked on their first tour of the South and by 1913, had played the top black clubs in the New York area.

While both Taylor and Mills established themselves in Indianapolis and St. Louis respectively, one white owner emerged who would be a pivotal figure in the Negro National League. James Leslie (J.L.) Wilkinson was born in 1874 in Perry, Iowa. Known to his close friends as Wilkie, he was the son of the president of Algona Normal College. Wilkinson attended Highland Park College in Des Moines.
Iowa, and pitched for a variety of semipro teams under the assumed name of Joe Green. He later signed on a team sponsored by the Hopkins Brothers Sporting Goods Store in Des Moines. When the manager of that team left, the club voted Wilkinson to assume his responsibilities. 5

In 1912, Wilkinson, along with J.E. Gall, organized the All Nations team. The All Nations was a clear expression of multiculturalism in the Progressive Era. The club had on its roster a compilation of whites, blacks, Indians, Mexicans, Cubans, and Asians. In addition, Wilkinson hired a woman, whom he advertised as "Carrie Nation," to play second base. The All Nations were a traveling team, who rode in a specially built Pullman car, along with a cast of other entertainers. From 1915 to 1917, the All Nations gained notoriety by defeating the Chicago American Giants twice and the Indianapolis ABC's. 6

In 1915, Wilkinson moved the club to Kansas City, Missouri. Bruce states that with its meat packing plants and railroad connections, Kansas City had both the black population and the access to other larger cities that Des Moines lacked. Kansas City also had a rich baseball tradition, dating back to the 1890s. While the club fell on hard times during World War I, Wilkinson reorganized the All Nations in 1919 for a local season. 7
While the Great Migration contributed to the expansion of black baseball's consumer market, midwestern black clubs were still primarily weekend enterprises. Each club possessed their own booking agent, who scheduled the majority of its games, with both black and white semipros, from Thursday to Monday. Sunday became the biggest payday for black clubs, and doubleheaders were usually scheduled, sometimes with different clubs. The players were usually paid on the co-op plan, making it problematic for clubs outside of Chicago and New York to attract top stars.

Poor weather, particularly on Sunday, could be the difference for black clubs either making a profit, or operating at a loss. For example, using an average attendance of 3,500 for a doubleheader, with ticket prices sold at 35 cents, a club could generate $1,225 in total revenue. Forty percent ($490) of the total revenue would be given to the visiting team, leaving the home club with $735 in gross revenues. Over the course of the season, Sunday doubleheaders could net a black club approximately $17,640 in gross revenues. This estimated amount was contingent upon a booking agent's ability to scheduled both the top black and white independents on a consistent basis. If a club either scheduled weaker clubs on Sunday,
or experienced poor weather, like the cancellation of three Sundays in a row, could result in a club losing money for that particular season.\textsuperscript{8}

This was a central reason why Sunday games in Chicago became a hot item for black independents outside of the Windy City area. Because of the prominence of the American Giants, Foster's access to a ballpark within walking distance of the black community, and for the fact that Chicago was the largest midwestern city, an average crowd at Schorling Park for a Sunday game was 7,000 fans. Forty percent of the total revenue ($980) was more than most midwestern black independents could generate at home. It was because of these advantages that Rube Foster dominated the midwestern region of the country. And as we shall see later, these advantages were also instrumental in the way Foster ran the Negro National League.\textsuperscript{9}

The emergence of C.I. Taylor, Charles Mills, and J.L. Wilkinson was instrumental in establishing the nucleus of the Negro National League. They became viable, although at times antagonistic, allies in aiding Foster's efforts to organize a league. Other clubs would also emerged during the Great Migration that would be charter members of the black league; but they would emerge under the guidance of Rube Foster.
RUBE FOSTER'S MIDWESTERN ALLIANCE

During the Great Migration years, Rube Foster established a booking alliance throughout the Midwest. As a result of being shut out of the eastern market, Foster continued his barnstorming tours of the West and Southwest, he established in the prewar era. The success of these tours enacted a sort of healing process among prominent members, particularly politicians, of Chicago's black middle class. To Foster, the migrants represented a vastly expanded black market; to the politicians, they represented a greatly large black electorate. Baseball became a means for these politicians to lobby for votes, while at the same time, an alliance with these elected officials served as a means of middle class respectability for Foster's American Giants. Moreover, Foster began making moves to establish his booking control within the Windy City and throughout the Midwest.

From 1914 to 1919, the Chicago American Giants made few tours East during the local season. Nat Strong's control over black teams in Gotham, combined with his collusive practices with James J. Keenan and other white owners were effective in keeping Foster out of New York. Additionally, there were no other top black clubs outside of New York who could make such a tour economically feasible. In response, Foster continued his western tour
in conjunction with the rise of the Indianapolis ABC's, St. Louis Giants, and the All Nations team, the Midwest had become a somewhat more stable market.

The 1915-16 barnstorming tour was undoubtedly the American Giants' greatest. They won the California Winter League for an unprecedented second time in four years. When the winter league season ended, the American Giants jumped from Los Angeles to Cuba, playing in the Cuban Winter League, winning seven and losing eight games. From Cuba, the American Giants traveled back to Sacramento barnstormed the West and Southwest, winning 57 games and losing 15. When the local season began in May, the American Giants had traveled over 20,000 miles. It was during this tour, that sportswriter Frank Young, at one time one of Foster's biggest critics, acknowledged that "the Rube" had brought Chicago more promotion than all the other city enterprises combined. 10

The popularity of the American Giants was not lost upon local politicians who sought to created a political machine to address the needs of the black community. It was at the beginning of the 1916 local season that a ritual emerged that remained a constant at American Giants' home openers. A battery, consisting of Windy City politicians or businessmen, would throw out the first ball at the opening game of the local season. The first battery consisted of Alderman Oscar DePriest (pitcher), who was
later elected to the House of Representatives, and former Leland Giants secretary Beauregard Moseley (catcher), the mayor of Idlewood, a local satellite community. Both Frank Young's acknowledgment and Moseley's presence at the 1916 home opener, illustrated that wounds brought on by the great schism were healing. It also showed that Foster recognized the importance of middle class support, in conjunction with Schorling Park becoming a platform where local politicians could be seen as well as heard.  

Foster made other concessions to black politicians, as well as exhibit his ability to promote the black game in the Windy City. In 1917, Foster reserved a special box for Chicago's black elite. At the opening of this local season, Alderman Louie Anderson and Chicago Defender editor Robert Abbott served as the ceremonial battery. The event enabled the Defender's sportswriter, writing under the pseudonym Mr. Fan, to poke fun at his employer. While Abbott dropped the pitch thrown by Anderson, in "nifty fashion [Abbott] set himself for a throw to second base while the crowd applauded." Along with Abbott and Anderson, Julius Avendorph, Alderman Edward H. Wright, and local businessmen George Holt and Harry Basken watched Foster's American Giants defeat Jake Stahl's Chicago City League club, 5-3. Prior to the game, the Chicago's faithful was also entertained by a New Orleans jazz band. Clearly in Chicago, Rube Foster's American Giants served as a means
of unifying the Windy City's African Americans across class lines, and also served as a source of race pride and racial solidarity. 12

While the winter league championship and middle class support solidified Foster's position in Chicago's black community, the American Giant magnate began making steps to expand his booking control throughout the Midwest. First, Foster began booking other black clubs to play at Schorling Park, while the American Giants were on tour. Scheduling the Havannas of Cuba, and at times, Joe Green's Chicago Giants, Foster created an additional revenue source whereby he would collect a ten percent fee for booking their games. He also booked two white clubs under the same agreement, the Logan Squares and the Duffy Florals. 13

Second, Foster established a business arrangement with major league owners in Cincinnati and Detroit to rent their ballparks. On August 18, 1917, the Defender announced a series of games were scheduled between the Havannas and the American Giants at Redland Field in Cincinnati. Two weeks later, Foster booked games with C.I. Taylor's Indianapolis ABC's at Navin Field in Detroit. Establishing business agreements with these major league owners, in addition to scheduling games at Schorling Park during the American Giants' absence, served as a means of solidifying Foster's booking control in the Midwest. 14
Finally, the formation of the Detroit Stars also contributed to stabilizing Foster's autonomy in the Midwest. Foster installed John "Tenny" Blount as the Stars' business manager. Little is known about Blount's early background. The Defender reported that Blount was renowned for managing the Keystone Hotel and buffet of Chicago, at a time when it was the most popular "Colored sporting resort in the country." He was also involved in gambling enterprises in Detroit and was one of several vice leaders that began to emerge in the promotion of black baseball. In addition to Blount, former American Giant outfielder Pete Hill was selected to manage the Stars on the field, and Foster transferred several of his players to the club. As a means of maintaining controlling interest of the Stars, Foster held the contracts of the ballplayers. 15

While the Stars were a race based enterprise, they played their home games outside of Detroit's black community. The Stars played their home games at Mack Park, located at Mack and Fairview Avenues in the middle of a white working class neighborhood, about four miles east of downtown. Many of the families who resided there were of German descent. Despite this logistical obstacle, the Stars attracted large crowds and had a successful inaugural season. 16
By 1919, Rube Foster had become the booking power of the Midwest. His alliances with leading black political figures insured his place as a prominent member of Chicago's black middle class. Developing business arrangements with major league club owners in Cincinnati and Detroit, booking games at Schorling Park while the American Giants were on tour, and organizing the Detroit Stars placed Foster in an advantageous and lucrative position. Even more important was the American Giants' ability to turn a profit. By July, Foster expressed to a friend that "colored baseball has at last come to the front -- you would be surprised at the way the western clubs are doing, and from what I gleam [sic] from the East, they are also doing nicely." At Schorling Park, Foster indicated that "we are drawing double of any year here, even adding 2300 Boxes, cannot accommodate the people." By the end of the season, Foster had reportedly amassed a profit of nearly $15,000, a far cry from his $1,000 earnings in 1907. With the rise of Ed Bolden and the return of John Connor, Foster would now turn his attention East. 17

THE HILDALE BASEBALL AND EXHIBITION COMPANY

From December 1916 to 1920, Ed Bolden completed the transformation of the Hilldale A.C. into a full time business enterprise. Utilizing his motto, "clean baseball," as his foundation, Bolden began signing professional players. He also renovated Hilldale Park, as well as secured
a lease on a park in Camden, New Jersey, developed business relations with local traction magnates, and booked both the top black and white independent clubs. By 1918, Hilldale's success attracted the attention of Rube Foster, as the American Giants made their first appearance to Hilldale Park. Moreover, the rise of the Hilldale A.C. was, without question, the most successful business enterprise that utilized the cooperative business philosophy.

No other African American entrepreneur recognized the importance of an acceptable moral image for the baseball business than Bolden. In many ways, he reflected the character of Byron Bancroft "Ban" Johnson, President of the American League. Not only were the players expected to portray this image, but so were the fans who came to Hilldale Park. On January 13, 1917, the Philadelphia Tribune reported that the Hilldale management had issued five warrants against five men for rowdy behavior at a game. They were successful in having four of them pay fines and costs. Bolden summed up his actions this way:

Hilldale is out for right and will have a force of efficient uniformed policemen and three special clothes men at the park this year. Pleasure and comfort is [our] first consideration. Infusion of new blood will cause the club to set the high water mark in the baseball world.
Not only did Bolden's comments reflect the importance he placed on moral respectability, it also illustrated how he would transform Hilldale into top independent. 18

On March 10, 1917, the Tribune reported that Thomas Mackens, a local Darbyite and physical instructor, was signed as Hilldale's first uniformed officer. The Tribune described Mackens as a man of "gentlemanly demeanor, neat appearance, and [his] robust physique would add prestige and dignity to the Hilldale machine." In addition to Mackens, James Byrd, William Watson, and other "interested men" were sworn in as special officers. These officers would also be augmented by both the Darby and Yeadon borough police on holidays. While the swearing of these officers was primarily for maintaining order, it also served as a means of stimulating community involvement in the club. 19

Like his midwestern predecessor Rube Foster, Bolden recognized the importance of establishing community relations among both Darby and Philadelphia's black citizenry. He participated in several black fraternal organizations as an Elk, a thirty-second-degree Mason, and a Shriner, and was also a member of the Citizen's Republican Club, a local black business and professional group. Moreover, like the American Giants magnate, Bolden also shared the same business philosophy; he was a businessman first and a race man second. In 1925, Bolden summed up his philosophy this way: "Close analysis will
prove that only where the color line fades and co-operation instituted are our business advances gratified."
"Segregation in any form, including self-imposed is not the solution." 20

In addition to signing peace officers and establishing community relations, Bolden also inked Hilldale's first professional player. On March 17, 1917, the Tribune announced the signing of Otto Briggs, a native of Kings Mountain, North Carolina. Briggs had migrated North with C.I. Taylor in 1914 and played for several leading midwestern clubs. He was named the team's captain and would remain with Hilldale for most of the next 13 years. 21

Other professional signings soon followed. Frank "Doc" Sykes, a pitcher, had played previously with the Lincoln Giants, Lincoln Stars, and the Brooklyn Royal Giants. By late July 1917, Bolden had signed McKinley "Bunny" Downs, outfielder; Spotswood Poles, outfielder; and catcher-first baseman Bill Petus. Since Hilldale continued to play primarily on the weekends, Bolden utilized a modified version of revolving. Many of the newly signed professionals played for Hilldale on the weekends, while playing with other clubs during the week. 22

Both the signing of uniformed officers and professional players, resulted in transforming Hilldale's corporate structure. By 1918, the former ballplayers had, in a sense, been "kicked upstairs," and no local player remained.
Referred to as the "old fellows," Lloyd Thompson, Charles Freeman, Thomas Jenkins, Mark Studevan, George Kemp, William Anderson, and James Byrd became corporate members of the Hilldale Baseball and Exhibition Company (HBEC). It was unclear what other occupations outside of baseball these race men were engaged in. Every indication suggests that they were a part of Darby's black middle class. The Tribune stated that Thompson had architectural experience, and he would play a pivotal role in renovating Hilldale Park.23

Even more significant was that the HBEC had successfully utilized the cooperative business approach to establish a striving business. Bolden alone could not have invested enough capital to transform this club on his postal salary. Neither were the initial profits substantial enough to finance this ambitious undertaking. Lanctot found that in 1914 gate receipts from the grandstand ranged from $20 to $40 a game, with a high of $57.59 on July 4. Collections yielded another $3 to $6, and concessions contributed $5 to $15. With overhead expenses such as uniforms ($3.75 each), a steamroller for the field ($12), baseballs (two for $1.68), an umpire ($50 per season), park rent ($50 semiannually), and the visiting team's share of the receipts, Hilldale's profits were not overwhelming. Bolden did utilize his promotional skills to raise additional revenue. He held a raffle, offering a ton a coal as first prize, $5 in gold for second prize,
and $2.50 in gold for third. His fund raising efforts paid off; at the end of the 1914 season Hilldale showed a profit of $217.89. The following year the HBEC amassed a profit of $620.32. Moreover, the promotional efforts, profits accrued from games, and the old fellows investing in the HBEC resulted in enough capital to complete the transformation. 24

From 1916 to 1920, the HBEC began renovating Hilldale Park, secured a lease on a ballpark in Camden, New Jersey, and established business relations with local traction magnates. They removed trees from left and center field, and erected a new grandstand. By 1920, the HBEC extended the grandstand and built a roof upon it to protect the its patrons. That same year, Bolden secured a lease on Camden ballpark, located at Third and Erie Streets. Much like the Cuban Giants in the 1880s, Bolden could now expand his hegemony in the Philadelphia area through the control of two ball parks. Bolden then made arrangements with the P.R.T Company to have all trolley lines on Walnut to run straight to Hilldale Park. The P.R.T. Co. also indicated they would run extra cars from 1:15 P.M. to 6:15 P.M., making it more convenient for fans coming to and from the ballpark. 25

Next, Bolden began scheduling some of the top black independents from the East. On June 30, 1917, Bolden scheduled Nat Strong's Cuban Stars at Hilldale Park. Doc
Sykes pitched and lost against the hard hitting Stars 7-2. Their first win against a top black club was against Strong's Brooklyn Royal Giants. This time Sykes was in top form as he scattered five hits in nine innings, coasting to a 9-1 victory. By the end of the 1917 season, Hilldale had played six games against black independents of the East, winning two and losing four. 

By 1918, Hilldale had caught the eye of Rube Foster. On August 3, the American Giants invaded Hilldale Park for a doubleheader. The Darbyites squeaked past the "Windy City Crew," 9-8, as Louis Santop hit a two run homer in the bottom of the tenth inning to the delight of the home town crowd. In the second game, Hilldale was no match for the midwesterners, as the American Giants won easily 9-2.

Hilldale's success was not lost upon the local white semipros. The HBEC had already developed a rivalry with the R.G. Dunn Club of the Philadelphia Main Line League. Bolden had also scheduled games with clubs for the Delaware County League on a consistent basis. But the most noteworthy series was a three game tilt against Connie Mack's All Stars, playing under the name All-Americans. In the first game, Cyclone Joe Williams held the major leaguers to seven hits, as Hilldale coasted to a 6-2 win. The All-Americans evened the series with an 11-5 victory; rain canceled the rubber game between the two clubs.
By 1920, Hilldale became the cream of the black Philadelphia market. More important was the HBEC's ability to turn a profit. Lanctot points out in 1918 the corporation abandoned the cooperative plan and paid salaries for the first time. The HBEC paid $6,699.05 in player salaries, approximately 35 percent of its total expenses of $19,056.79. Yet the corporation realized a profit of $1,576.22 for a 48-game season. Furthermore, the HBEC had increased its profits by 254 percent in four years! In 1916, the HBEC played 30 games during the local season, winning 19 losing 9 and tying 2. By 1920, they had played 140 games during the local season winning 104 losing 30 and tying 6. The HBEC had created a successful cooperative business enterprise, and by hiring local Darbyites, attempted to stimulate both community involvement and both race pride and racial solidarity. Like Foster in Chicago, Bolden had developed an enterprise that catered to the Quaker City's black market, and integrated his team within the structure of white semipro baseball. More important, the HBEC was a successful cooperative business enterprise in a city that would have a losing track record utilizing this business approach in the early twentieth century. Because of the contentious division between the Old Philadelphians and the southern newcomers, the majority of cooperative business in the Quaker City ended in failure.
In any event, with both Foster and Bolden entrenched within their respective markets, another challenge to Nat Strong's booking control was about to occur. 29

THE RESURRECTION OF JOHN CONNOR

The return of John Connor to black baseball resulted in a serious threat to Nat Strong's booking control in New York. Through the development of a corporate structure, and gaining control of two parks in Harlem and Atlantic City, New Jersey, Connor made the Bacharach Giants into a profitable enterprise. In addition, Connor's business relationship with Brooklyn Dodger owner Charles Ebbets, combined with the rise of the black independents of the Midwest, also contributed to putting a chink in Strong's proverbial armor. Moreover, Connor's return also opened the eastern market to midwestern black clubs for the first time since the prewar years.

While the Great Migration contributed immensely to expanding economic opportunities for black clubs in the Midwest, New York had remained a stagnant market. From 1914 to 1919, no black clubs from the Midwest played in Gotham. With black clubs in New York under the control of Strong's monolithic booking agency, and the collusive practices of white owners of semipro clubs, combined to exclude midwestern clubs out of black baseball's most potentially lucrative market. Furthermore, midwestern clubs were reluctant to travel East, giving to, as Lester
Walton described it, the white owner's penchant for kidnaping players. In many ways, Strong's management of black baseball typified how Tammany hacks controlled the park system throughout New York. These politically connected individuals made no efforts to make internal improvements of parks under their control, and they saw these places of recreation as a means of adding revenue to their coffers. Permits for athletic fields went to individuals or groups with political clout, and park buildings were leased for nominal fees to politically connected commercial enterprises. 30

In regards to black baseball, Strong did not seek to establish community relations, nor did he attempt to cater to Harlem's black middle class citizenry. Strong did not develop good press relations as a means of promoting the black independents within the black community. By maintaining controlling interest over several ball parks, both Strong and Keenan were successful in keeping black clubs under white control. Additionally, maintaining collusive agreements with white owners of the top semipro clubs in Gotham also insured Strong's virtual strangle hold.

The plight of the Grand Terminal Baseball Club illustrated Strong's control over the New York market. On April 6, 1918, the New York Age reported that James H. Williams, an African American railroad employee, had
organized this club, known as the Red Caps. In an effort to make his club competitive, Williams had signed several players from the Brooklyn Royal Giants, including team captain Charles Earle. By June 8, Williams had complained to the Age that Strong was doing everything he could to keep the Red Caps from securing dates. Williams' accusation was emblematic of the one Connor had made in the prewar era. And given the fact that Williams had practically raided Strong's Royals for players, the response was predictable. 31

What was significant was the Age's response regarding Williams' plight. Walton responded by stating that "As for Strong's desire to get as many colored players as he can or his ambition to have the best colored team and secure the best playing dates we have nothing to say." "It is an honorable position." But Walton did indicate that objections were made to any attempt of Strong's or any white manager to discriminate against a black manager and then expect the loyal support from black fans. Harlem's African Americans had not been "as keen for patronizing their own as in Chicago and other cities." In addition to not promoting black clubs among Harlem's African American citizenry, Walton failed to recognize that Strong's Royal Giants were a traveling team, who were not in position to maintain a local following. Furthermore according to Walton, "There [was] no objection to white managers
separating colored fans from their dimes if they show a willingness to let some colored manager or managers in on the deal, but invariably they [white managers] seemed to be actuated by a spirit of selfishness." Their mode of operation appeared to be, "Get the colored public's money but keep out the colored managers." Clearly the failure to promote the black game by both black and white owners, not to mention making no effort to get involved in community affairs, was the root cause of such apathy towards baseball in Harlem. 32

On June 29, 1918, the Age carried Strong's response to Williams' accusation. According to Strong, several of his players asked him for letters of recommendation to seek employment at the New York Central railroad station. After writing these letters, the players had apparently decided to play for the Red Caps. Strong indicated that Williams declared there would be no Royal Giants in 1918, and the players' employment was contingent upon them playing ball. Because they had no playing facility, both Williams and Earle offered Strong the opportunity to book the club; Strong refused. After being shot down by the Royals owner, Williams had apparently sent several letters to white managers to schedule games with no response. 33

While the evidence was limited, Strong had undoubtedly worked behind the scenes to insure Williams would receive no responses. If a white owner had defied Strong, the
Royals owner would have utilized his Tammany connections to revoke that operator's privilege to secure a park. Williams and other contemporaries of the era failed to recognized that a suitable playing facility was just as essential as securing top notched players to run a ballclub. Because Strong had control of the best playing facilities, combined with his collusive agreements with white owners, the Royal Giants owner was successful in thwarting Williams' challenge.

While it was not evident at first, a black club from the South making its way North would have an impact on Nat Strong's booking control. In 1916, the Duval Giants of Jacksonville, Florida had barnstormed its way to Atlantic City, New Jersey. Tom Jackson and Henry Tucker -- politicians from Atlantic City -- brought the Duval Giants North on behalf of the city's mayor, Harry Bacharach, and renamed the club the Bacharach Giants. 34

In 1919, after two dismal seasons, Tucker entered into a business alliance with John Connor and Baron Wilkins. With Connor and Wilkins as the club's financial backers, and Tucker serving as the booking agent, the Bacharach Giants now had a corporate structure that insured the team's profitability. Connor achieved what S.K. Govern of the Cuban Giants accomplished in the 1880s -- gaining controlling interest of two parks in New Jersey and New York. Connor's alliance with Tucker insured a home grounds,
named after the mayor, in Atlantic City -- Bacharach Park. At the same time, Connor secured the lease of Dyckman Oval, located a few blocks from Olympic Field, the Lincoln Giants' home field in Harlem. To complete this transformation, Connor signed several players from both the Lincoln Giants and Brooklyn Royal Giants, including pitchers "Cannonball" Dick Redding and Bill Gatewood.  

Connor's unexpected return to black baseball shocked both Nat Strong and James J. Keenan. According to the Defender, secret meetings were held that included Strong, Keenan's partner Charles Harvey, pitcher Joe Williams and field manager John Henry Lloyd, in an effort to exclude Connor from the New York market. The Bacharach owner reiterated James H. Williams' claim of not securing suitable playing dates. "You see," Connor added, "that is the reason we have leased our own grounds and, by the way, I might state that a contract had been given for the building of a new grandstand . . ."  

Despite Connor's aspirations, Strong made every attempt to block the Atlantic City deal. He began by refusing to allow the Royal Giants, the Cuban Stars, or the Lincoln Giants to play in Atlantic City. Strong even tried to create a rift between the Bacharach management team. On May 17, 1917, the Defender reported that Strong accused both Connor and Wilkins of owing him money, as a means of injuring their credibility. Strong indicated that Ed
Warren, Wilkins' former business associate, made a sworn statement that the allegation was true. Both Connor and Wilkins categorically denied the allegations, and later Warren declared that he had not made any statements supporting Strong's accusation. In response to Strong's tactic, Wilkins filed a suit in civil court, resulting in the first chink in the Royals owner's armor. Faced with possible litigation, Strong backed down. 37

If Strong could not create dissension between Connor and Wilkins, he could utilize the one resource he had under his control -- colluding with the white owners in not scheduling games with the Bacharachs. In response, Connor entered into a business agreement with Brooklyn Dodger owner Charles Ebbets to rent his ballpark. This alliance came through New York Giants first baseman Hal Chase, who had a reputation as a notorious gambler. No doubt both Wilkins and Chase's paths intersected, given the night club owner's reputation as both a gambler and a bootlegger, and for the fact that Chase was a member of the National League New York Giants. In any event, Connor had gained access to three ballparks to schedule games, thus freeing the Bacharachs from relying on Strong's booking agency for games in Gotham. Connor had pulled the coup de tat of both the 1919 and 1920 season! It resulted in Strong conceding defeat -- temporarily. 38
For the first time, the *New York Age* championed the cause of an African American owner in Harlem. Connor also made the first community gesture by donating the Bacharach's old uniforms to a local YMCA after obtaining new ones. The *Age* admonished the white owners for attempting to exclude Connor and Wilkins from the baseball business. The black newspaper also pointed out that whites had allowed the Lincoln Giants' home field -- Olympic Field -- slip away without attempting to buy it, marking the start of ballparks in Harlem being lost due to subdivision. More important, the *Age* stated that black club's very existence was due to African Americans patronizing their games. In addition, Harlem was large enough to support two black independents, and a rivalry between the Bacharach and Lincoln Giants served to stimulate community interest. Moreover, serving as Harlem's spokesman, the *Age* listed four demands Gotham's black citizens' wanted: (1) a series of games between all semipro teams; (2) no secret meetings as a means of "freezing" black owners out of baseball; (3) an end to player raiding; and (4) a legitimate claim to the Colored Champion of the East meeting a recognized champion of the West.  

From May 22 to September 11, 1920, Connor scheduled six games between black clubs at Ebbets Field. According to the *Age*, the Bacharachs were the first black club to play in Ebbets Field, as the Giants took both games of
a doubleheader from Guy Empey's Treat' Em Roughs, a local black club. On July 17, 16,000 fans watched the Bacharachs play the Lincoln Giants for the eastern Colored Championship. The first game matched pitching legends Dick Redding against Joe Williams, as the Cannonball out dueled the Cyclone 5-0; the Lincolns won the second game 7-5. There was no reference of whether a third and deciding game was ever played. In August and September, the Chicago Giants and the Indianapolis ABC's invaded Ebbets Field. In the four games with the midwestern clubs, the Bacharachs had won three. 40

But the high water mark of Connor's successful 1920 season would not occur until October. Foster's American Giants invaded Gotham for a four game series with the Bacharachs; three of these games were scheduled in Ebbets Field. Connor's Bacharachs manhandled the Windy City crew, winning three out of four games. On October 15, the Defender reported that 15,000 fans watched Bacharachs hurlers Dick Redding and Red Ryan defeat the American Giants by scores of 5-3 and 7-3. No other time in the early twentieth century did Harlem's black community embraced a ball club that was both black owned and operated. While his success was short lived, John Connor was sitting on top of the black baseball world in New York. 41
The Great Migration served as a catalyst for both economic expansion and business development in baseball. Six clubs emerged in the Midwest that would form the nucleus of the Negro National League, with further aspirations of forming a national association of midwestern and eastern clubs. These midwestern clubs resided in cities with black populations of at least 30,000 or more. More important was the ways in which these black baseball magnates would facilitate entrepreneurship, as a means of maintaining some sense of stability. These black baseball magnates would facilitate entrepreneurship through establishing alliances with black middle class professionals through either political affiliation or fraternal membership, and developing business ties outside the black community. But while the nucleus of league formation began to take root, the pitfalls of black baseball, that would hinder the Negro Leagues throughout their history, also became glaringly evident.
REFERENCE LIST

1. I am using the business practices devised by the National League as a means for analyzing the emergence of the Negro National League. As we shall see in the following chapters, club owners in neither the Negro National League nor the Eastern Colored League did not utilize population considerations as a condition for league entry. But population size did determine the league schedule for both leagues. In other words, the larger cities, like New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Chicago were insured to have more weekend games at their home grounds than the other League clubs. See chapter three for the business practices devised by the National League.


3. Arthur Williams, "C.I. Taylor, Veteran Manager And Baseball Club Owner, Dead," Defender March 4 1922, 10; Billy Lewis, "C.I. Taylor, One Of The Foremost Men Of Baseball," (Indianapolis) Freeman December 22 1917, 7; Peterson, Only, 251.


5. Background on Wilkinson and the All Nations team drawn primarily from Janet Bruce, Kansas City Monarchs: Champions of Black Baseball (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1985), 14-18; see also Peterson, Only, 70-72; Riley, Negro, 842-43; Dixon and Hannigan, Negro Baseball, 116-20.

6. Bruce, Kansas City, 16-17.

7. Ibid.

8. I am drawing from the newspaper accounts of several black newspapers, as a means of deriving numbers for analysis.
9. For reported accounts of American Giants home games, see for example Mr. Fan, "LEDGER'S PETS LOSE TWO GAMES TO WORLD'S CHAMPIONS," Defender August 25 1917, 7. The Defender provides a picture of an overflow crowd at Schorling Park between the American Giants and the Indianapolis ABCS. See "Fourteen Thousand Baseball Fans See the American Giants," Defender June 15 1918, 12; see also "GIANTS' SEATING CAPACITY ENLARGED," Defender June 7 1919, 11.


12. Mr. Fan, "American Giants Begin Local Season," Defender April 21 1917, 7; Mr. Fan, "American Giants Take Opening Game 5 to 3," Defender April 28 1917, 7; "GUEST OF ALDERMAN," Defender April 28 1917, 7.

13. Peterson, Only, 82; "HAVANA CUBANS A NEW CHICAGO NINE," Defender March 29 1917, 7.

14. "Rube Foster Leads His Team To Indianapolis," Defender August 18 1917, 7; "AMERICAN GIANTS IN DETROIT FOR SUNDAY AND LABOR DAY GAMES," Defender September 1 1917, 7.


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18. Ban Johnson recognized the need for cleaning up Organized Baseball's image after the industry's tumultuous decade of the 1890s. He was one of the first officials to make it league policy to provide police protection at ballparks and giving umpires his complete backing to maintain order on the field. For a detailed discussion on Ban Johnson see Eugene Murdock, Ban Johnson: Czar Of Baseball (Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 1982), 67-107; "HILLDALE MAKES CLEAN UP OF RIOTERS," Philadelphia Tribune January 13 1917, 7.


25. "NOTHING TO IT BUT HILLDALE," Philadelphia Tribune March 18 1916, 7; "HILLDALE GETS BUSY," Philadelphia Tribune February 3 1917, 7; "HILLDALE CLUB," Philadelphia Tribune March 2 1918, 7; "Hilldale Successful in Securing Improved Trolley Service on Walnut Street," Philadelphia Tribune June 29 1918, 7. For Bolden securing a lease on a ball park in Camden see "Camden Park Improved," Philadelphia Tribune April 17 1920, 7; "Will Open Camden Park on

26. For games against black independents see "HILLDALE WINS FROM POTTSTOWN AND LOSE TO CUBAN STARS IN DOUBLEHEADER," Philadelphia Tribune July 7 1917, 7; "HILLDALE LOSES TO LINCOLN GIANTS AND THEN WALLOPS NORRISTOWN GIANTS," Philadelphia Tribune August 18 1917, 7; "HILLDALE DEFEATS BROOKLYN ROYAL GIANTS 9 TO 1; ALSO CAMDEN CITY, 8 TO 2," Philadelphia Tribune August 25 1917, 7; HILLDALE BEATS CUBAN STARS, SCORE 12 TO 5," Philadelphia Tribune September 22 1917, 7.


28. For games against local white semipros in Philadelphia see any issue of the Philadelphia Tribune from May to October, from 1916 to 1921. For the series against Connie Mack's All-Stars see "HILLDALE DOWNS ALL AMERICANS TEAM, SCORE 6 TO 2," Philadelphia Tribune October 13 1917, 7; "MAJOR LEAGUE STARS TAK[ES] SECOND GAME FROM HILLDALE," Philadelphia Tribune October 20 1917, 7.

29. Lanctot, Fair Dealing, 51. For Hilldale's season ending records see "HILLDALE CLUB'S RECORD WON 19; LOST 9; TIED 2," Philadelphia Tribune October 21 1916, 7; "HILLDALE CLOSES SUCCESSFUL SEASON," Philadelphia Tribune October 27 1917, 7; "HILLDALE RECORD SEASON OF 1918," Philadelphia Tribune September 28 1918, 7; "BOLDEN TAKES CONTROL," 9. There were no season ending records printed in the Tribune for the 1919 season.


34. Peterson, Only, 66-67.


CHAPTER VIII

PITFALLS OF BLACK BASEBALL
THE FORMATION OF THE NEGRO NATIONAL LEAGUE
1920-1922

While both the Great Migration and the ways in which black baseball owners facilitated entrepreneurship contributed immensely to the game's development, they did not eliminate the obstacles that would plague the Negro Leagues for the next 30 years. Previous scholars had cited rowdyism, umpiring, financially unstable franchises, inadequate press coverage, player raiding, and scheduling as the primary obstacles that hindered the Negro League's development. While these obstacles were valid ones, they do not explain in detail why these forces hindered black baseball's development nor what were their root causes. Despite these setbacks, league formation did make black baseball a potentially profitable enterprise. ¹

In 1920, Rube Foster became the first African American entrepreneur to successfully organize a black professional league. Foster stressed the need for economic cooperation,
moral respectability, and an end to destructive business practices -- like player raiding -- as a means of sustaining black baseball's future. Such merits would place the game on a sound economic footing, and enable black baseball owners to acquire assets -- like playing facilities -- needed for the prosperity of the league. However, Foster was unwilling to make a break from the booking system he mastered during the Progressive Era. He had also alienated African American entrepreneurs who could have helped him achieve economic cooperation.

From the outset, rowdyism undermined the efforts of African American owners to create an enterprise as a source of race pride and racial solidarity. While baseball teams were based on a profit motive, black owners like Bolden, Foster, and Taylor sought to establish a civic institution that African Americans could take pride in. Although the majority of their fan patronage was drawn from the growing working class, these race men recognized the need for middle-class support as a means civic respectability. More than just a winning record was needed to acquire this desired status and recognition. The HBECS, the American Giants, and the ABC's had to exemplify the values of respectability, thrift, and gentlemanly conduct in order to win over the black middle class spectator. Despite their aspirations, these black owners found it increasingly difficult to maintain order on the field and in the stands.²

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Umpiring was a central reason why maintaining order was problematic on the field. The men in blue were usually hired by the home team, and they lacked the authority to punish disruptive players or enforce unpopular decisions. Violence against umpires was common, and they required police protection. Most owners insisted on using one or two white umpires, believing that black players were more likely to accept the decision of an impartial white arbiter without dispute. Few black umpires were available, and the continued reliance on whites hindered African Americans from gaining experience. When white umpires proved no more successful in controlling excessive rowdiness, both black fans and sportswriters began to call for black umpires. The umpire debate would highlight the gnawing dilemma that plagued black owners -- a race men versus a businessmen. Sportswriter J.M. Batchman accurately summed up this dilemma when he stated: "An 'ump' is a Czar of the field, and it is not any too pleasing a spectacle to the average fan to have to witness this authority vested in white men -- and this is said without an iota [sic] of prejudice -- when capable colored men are denied so many opportunities." 3

The majority of black teams remained underfinanced and inadequately supported by small communities with limited resources. As Lanctot accurately states, weaker teams often lost their players to the wealthier American Giants
and eastern based clubs, who traveled by train, were well equipped, and were paid monthly salaries. Local clubs still relied upon the co-op plan, and passing the hat to meet expenses. Yet what was often overlooked was the constant territorial saturation that plagued black clubs.4

The plight of black clubs reinforced baseball historian Harold Seymour’s thesis regarding the unique characteristics that constitute the baseball business. Owners were both competitors and partners, and they had to possess a product of high caliber to maintain a repeat business. Therefore, owners had to cooperate in both the marketing and promotion of the baseball business. To ensure success, they must respect each other’s players under contract and territorial rights. Through league affiliation, major league club owners had exhibited an ability to control consumer markets through the restrictive practices and collusive agreements. Without such cooperation, territorial saturation usually resulted leading to cutthroat competition. 5

In 1917-18, the MBEC withstood two such challenges. On February 3, 1917, the Philadelphia Tribune reported that Frank Robinson, a local promoter, had moved his Anchor Giants to Delaware County. The Giants were backed by the Delaware Athletic Union League Association, and would play its games across the street from Hilldale Park on 9th and Cedar Avenues. While scheduling home games on the same
Saturday would lead to a conflict of interest, the Anchor Giants were never a serious challenge to the HBEC. Within a year, the club folded. 6

The following year Nat Strong had his jealous eye on the HBEC. Strong attempted to absorb the Darbyites into his monolithic booking agency, thus making inroads into the Philadelphia market. The New York magnate indicated that if he could not amalgamate the HBEC, he would put a club in the park vacated by the Anchor Giants. In addition, Strong would resurrect his former business associate, H. Walter Schlichter, to manage the club. 7

In response, Bolden published a letter in the papers of the Tribune that exemplified the race rhetoric in the age of Booker T. Washington. He stated that, "The race people of Philadelphia and vicinity are proud to proclaim Hilldale the biggest thing in the baseball world owned, fostered, and controlled by race men . . . " The Hilldale leader added that the HBEC was "proud to be in a position to give [Darby's citizens] the most beautiful park in Delaware County, a team that is second to none and playing the best attractions obtainable." Moreover, it was not the HBEC's concern that other factions attempted to invade their territory. Bolden concluded by stating, "To affiliate ourselves with other than race men would be a mark against
our name that could never be eradicated." The HBEC was "personally responsible for the fame and success of Hilldale, to place it in jeopardy would be absurd." 8

Several factors were present to show why neither the Anchor Giants nor Nat Strong were a serious challenge to the HBEC. First, both challenges occurred at a time when Hilldale was being transformed into a top notched black independent. The club was in the process of signing several professional players. A second factor was that Bolden had begun scheduling the top black clubs of the east at Hilldale Park. Clearly the fans would be more willing to patronize games that included to Cuban Stars, Lincoln Giants, or the Bacharach Giants, than local semipros. The HBEC had also developed strong ties with the black community. Hilldale had become a business enterprise that could at least offer seasonal employment to Darby's African Americans. Finally, establishing themselves as a winning club, the HBEC were a strong gate attractions for some of the top white clubs in the Quaker City. The HBEC was firmly established in the Philadelphia area.

While Bolden thwarted two minor challenges in Philadelphia, C.I. Taylor was not so lucky in Indianapolis. The plight of the ABCs illustrated how the combination of territorial saturation and rowdyism impacted on the success of a black independent. Taylor's dilemma also
highlighted the structural flaw that has plagued black clubs since the 1880s -- the inability to attract top clubs on a regular basis to maintain fan interest.

In 1916, Taylor's break with Bowser resulted in the ABC's being split into two teams. While Bowser's club, renamed Jewell's ABCs, played its home games at Northwestern Park, within close proximity of the black community, Taylor had secured the lease on Washington Park, home of the minor league affiliate in the American Association. While two clubs called the ABCs was a confusing proposition for sportswriter Billy Lewis, he accurately indicated that it would be a conflict of interest if both clubs scheduled home games on the same Sunday. For the next three years, these clubs competed for both the same patronage and territorial control. 9

By 1918, the Freeman reported that Taylor had contemplated moving his club to another city. Like his predecessor Rube Foster in the prewar era, Taylor had become an unpopular man in Indianapolis. However, what upset Taylor the most was that the fans began to root for the visiting team, especially the Cuban Stars. Taylor viewed this behavior as a repudiation of his club and the work he tried to do in Indianapolis's black community. 10

On July 20, 1918, Taylor wrote an article in the Freeman, stating why he contemplated moving his club. He began by stating that he sought to create an enterprise
that black people in Indianapolis could take pride in. He added that, "There [was] no club in the country that has made a more enviable reputation for clean sport and good conduct on and off the ball field." Taylor then indicted the fans for their disreputable behavior at ABC games. The ABC magnate had never played in a city where the fans rooted more for the visitors than the home team. According to Taylor, these actions resulted in disruptive behavior from unruly fans and from certain ball clubs. He was extremely critical of the Cuban Stars, whose rowdy behavior was a direct result of the crowd pulling for them. The Cubans had become especially astute of disputing every decision the umpire made to arouse the fans.

Even more significant was the scheduling problem Taylor confronted. While maintaining a segregated enterprise within the framework of the white semiprofessional structure had been a successful formula for Bolden and Foster, it did not pan out for Taylor. The ABC magnate indicated that the fans would ask him when either the Cuban Stars or the American Giants were coming to town. It was a clear indication that they would only patronize the ABC's when these clubs were scheduled. But as Taylor pointed out, the ABCs could only play the Cuban Stars three Sundays out of the season, and the American Giants once. That left eight Sundays out of the season in which the ABCs had to play other clubs. What resulted was the haunting
legacy of the Cuban Giants' early years in Trenton, New Jersey. The fans showed little interest in patronizing games in which either the Cubans or the American Giants were not the opponent. In 1919, C.I. Taylor failed to organize the ABCs for a local season. 12

A final obstacle was both the increased residential segregation and structural inequality northern black communities faced in the early twentieth century. Although segregation was never formalized, the baseball diamond became one of the few places for the two races to meet in a neutral setting. Racial tension did occur on occasion, usually the result of an unseemingly minor disagreement. What was more problematic was that, except for Chicago, virtually all the playing facilities in the other midwestern cities were located outside the black community. As open hostility towards blacks -- a direct result of migration -- increased, venturing outside the informal boundaries of the black community was not a safe proposition. This, without question, had dramatic impact on attendance at black baseball games.

Much like other black businessmen, the inability to secure credit continued to plague black baseball owner's effort to build a solid organization. Even black owners who possessed other assets besides their ball clubs, the fact that their other businesses fell under the category of recreational enterprise eliminated them from
consideration. Black banks were not financially stable enough to invest in such a risky proposition. And as historian August Meier pointed out: "The difficulties involved in obtaining credit from white banks, the discrimination practiced by white insurance companies and real estate firms, exclusion from white restaurants, hotels, and places of amusement, [and] the gradual elimination of skilled workers from employment" combined to place black baseball owners on a unlevel playing field. 13

Yet the Great Migration era did create an environment whereby league formation could occur. Even Foster, despite his prosperous season of 1919, recognized that to have the best club and no one to compete with would lose money on the season than those evenly matched. It was during this time that Foster used the power of the pen, in an effort to create a national enterprise.

RUBE'S LEAGUE
THE FORMATION OF THE NEGRO NATIONAL LEAGUE

From late November 1919 to January 1920, Rube Foster wrote a series of articles entitled "Pitfalls of Baseball." Foster stressed the need for economic cooperation, an end to destructive business practices, and a truce among owners from past disputes. He also called for both the eastern and western magnates to form an association patterned after the white major leagues. While eastern owners rejected Foster's plan, a group of midwestern magnates formed the Negro National League (NNL). Also, while league formation
proved profitable for the midwestern owners, it did not eliminate the obstacles black teams confronted. Moreover, league formation marked the start of an ongoing feud between Foster and Bolden that would shatter the Chicago magnate's aspiration of an East-West association.

Foster opening article exemplified a presidential state of the union address. According to Foster, with the exception of one club -- the American Giants -- black baseball was still a weekend enterprise. There was not one club that could show a profit of $1,000 per season, and not one team knew that it would play ten games the next season. To further complicate matters, an increase in overhead expenses -- like travel, hotel accommodations, and equipment -- gnawed away at revenues. This occurred primarily because ticket prices had remained the same. If rain canceled three Sundays in a row, an owner operated the remainder of the season at a loss. Based on these circumstances, Foster advocated the need for economic cooperation.  

In Foster's view, economic cooperation would involve the following factors. Strong leadership was needed among African American magnates. In order for this leader to be successful, he needed able lieutenants who had the confidence of the public. Foster advocated the need for an acceptable moral image among both players and owners. Moral respectability was vital to ensure both the support
and patronage of the middle class spectator. Finally, an end to the destructive practices of player raiding and inducing players to jump their contracts was essential for a cooperative enterprise to function.

Foster saw contract jumping as the root cause of all the trouble in black baseball. He indicted the players for accepting advance salaries and then leaving their old club. This usually resulted in owners retaliating with costly player raids and boycotts that constantly plagued the progress of black baseball. Foster also criticized the poor management and selfishness of owners, particularly those who offered higher salaries than they were able to pay. He argued for a cooperative organization "open to all" that respected contracts to ensure financial stability.

Foster outlined his plan to organize a national association. He would attempt to have all the owners of the East and West meet, select an arbitration board from experienced men, and draw up a working agreement for owners to abide by. The association would be composed of two circuits: the west to include Chicago, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Detroit, St. Louis, and Kansas City; the east to include Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York. The winners of each league would meet in a world championship series. Foster believed this could possibly pave the way for the black champion to play the winner among the whites. He also stated that
such an organization would amass thousands of dollars. Even more important, Foster recognized that this money "naturally would come from whites." Yet at the same time, Foster had also recognized the impact the Great Migration had upon northern black communities. He added that "a better circuit could not be outlined even if it were solely supported by black patronage."

What is often overlooked by black baseball scholars was Foster's rhetoric was consistent with the ideology commonly attributed to Booker T. Washington. Black businessmen were not to isolate themselves from the larger society, selling only to blacks, nor were black fans to patronize black baseball games only because they were black. African Americans were to advance themselves by free competition on the open market. Foster's economic philosophy was essentially a laissez faire formula for black advancement through individual commitment by individual blacks to the gospel of work and wealth. Much like Washington, Foster's ultimate goal was not to build a black counterculture. Even in the nineteenth century, Frederick Douglass recognized that "a nation within a nation is an anomaly." The purpose of self-help and racial solidarity was to encourage black unity and self-assertion on a political level, while encouraging cultural and economic assimilation. This would, theoretically, result
in the integration of blacks into mainstream American society. In the case for black baseball, this meant white Organized Baseball. 15

Both eastern and western owners were wary of Foster's proposal. Eastern clubs were hardly receptive to a national association controlled by Foster. Midwestern magnates feared that a league would solidify Foster's booking autonomy of the region. Some observers noted that a true "cooperative" organization could not exist, citing Foster's need for self-aggrandizement and his competitive and often condescending attitude toward his fellow owners.

In the January and February issues of The Competitor, both C.I. Taylor and Dave Wyatt offered cautious support for Foster's proposal. Taylor recognized that the black baseball business was in a "chaotic condition" and revealed that the ABCs had barely broke even during their three successful seasons (1915-1917). The ABC owner agreed that a contract respecting organization was necessary "if we are to make anything out of baseball for the black Americans." What Taylor found ironic was that "the very men who . . . stood in the way of such an organization" were now its staunchest supporters. Taylor pointed out that Foster had declined his suggestion to form a league as early as 1916. He cited Foster's pessimistic view that black players "as a whole are a lot of ingrates . . . [and]
are enemies to their best friends and will do anything to defeat the honest efforts of those who are rightly the leaders and promoters of their best interests." 16

Wyatt argued that the disproportionate financial strength and patronage of blacks teams would undermine the effectiveness of the reserve clause. He added that "to induce first-class players to remain in Kansas City, Indianapolis, or even St. Louis is a difficult assignment for any baseball manager so long as there remains a possibility of the player securing a berth in Chicago or in the East." Moreover, Wyatt believed that with the "demand for first-class players . . . greater than the supply," black baseball lacked the talent necessary to support an eight team league. 17

Despite the mixed reactions, Foster made his initial steps to form a western circuit. He held two secret sessions in Detroit and Chicago, making peace with C.I. Taylor who agreed to reorganize the Indianapolis ABCs. Foster then attempted to find a suitable backer for a new Kansas City franchise. After considering several proposals, he turned to J.L. Wilkinson. At first, Foster attempted to work without Wilkinson, authorizing Dr. Howard Smith, superintendent of Kansas City's black hospital, to form a team. However, Smith had no baseball experience and reportedly lacked the finance to support a team. Smith
also lacked the lease for the only suitable stadium in town, the American Association Park. Since Wilkinson held the lease, Foster compromised. 18

Unlike his white counterpart in the East, Nat Strong, Wilkinson had several important links with the black community. He maintained civic ties with Smith and Quincy J. Gilmore, a well-known small businessman. Bruce states that Gilmore may have played a role in negotiating the initial differences between Wilkinson, Foster, and Smith. Gilmore would serve as the traveling secretary for the Kansas City Monarchs. More important, Wilkinson received a nod of approval from the Freeman for being an owner who believed in playing clean ball. 19

On February 13-14, 1920, the midwestern owners met at the YMCA and the Street's Hotel in Kansas City to form the Negro National League. The following magnates were present: Tenny Blount, Detroit Stars; Lorenzo S. Cobb, St. Louis Giants; John Matthews, Dayton Marcos; Joe Green, Chicago Giants; C.I. Taylor, Indianapolis ABCs; J.L. Wilkinson, Kansas City Monarchs; and Rube Foster, Chicago American Giants. Foster also held the proxy for Abe Molina's Cuban Stars. The American Giants magnate indicated that he had a charter incorporated for a Negro National League, a move that stunned the owners. Clearly Foster was sending a message that the NNL was his league. Foster then announced that he would leave it to the newspapermen
to decide all questions, select players for the various teams, and write the by-laws and constitution for the circuit. 20

The constitution committee consisted of Dave Wyatt, of the Indianapolis Ledger; Elwood C. Knox, of the Freeman; Carey B. Lewis, of the Defender; and attorney Elisha Scott of Topeka, Kansas. After making several corrections, league owners agreed to pay a $500 deposit, respect each other's players under contract, and play a schedule of games to determine a league champion each season. In an effort to achieve competitive balance, several players were transferred throughout the new circuit. Foster sent Oscar Charleston back to the ABCs, Sam Crawford to Kansas City, and Dick Whitworth to Detroit. In addition, Kansas City also received Jose Mendez and John Donaldson from Detroit, while Jimmy Lyons was sent from St. Louis to Detroit. League play was not scheduled to begin until April 7, 1921, or until each club owned or leased a park. However, the NNL opened in May 1920, despite the presence of two traveling teams, the Cuban Stars and the Chicago Giants. With Foster running league affairs, the NNL had a successful opening season, the American Giants capturing the first pennant. 21

Throughout the inaugural season, Foster embarked on a goodwill tour of the East to stimulate support for league formation. What resulted was a feud between Foster and
Bolden, marking the beginning of the American Giants owner alienating the very owners who could have helped him achieve economic cooperation. Foster was outraged by Bolden's signing in 1919 of three American Giants -- Jess Barbour, outfield, Bill Francis, third baseman, and Dick Whitworth, pitcher -- and the near acquisition of Oscar Charleston. Throughout the tour, rumors persisted that Foster planned to raid the HBEC. In an effort to avoid open warfare, Foster instead offered support of the newly formed Madison Stars, while at the same time, attempted to injure the credibility of the Hilldale leader.  

Foster then traveled to New York and negotiated a settlement with John Connor. The Bacharach Giants became the first associate member of the NNL, paving the way for midwestern clubs to play at either Dyckman Oval or Ebbets Field. Labeling the HBEC as an outlaw, Foster also attempted to block Hilldale out of the New York market by encouraging Gotham's black clubs to boycott the HBEC. Connor, now protected by Foster, promptly grabbed catcher Yank Deas, shortstop Dick Lundy, and outfielder Jess Barbour.  

Incensed by Foster's actions, Bolden published a letter in the pages of the Philadelphia Tribune. He called for cooperation between the east and west, and claimed that Foster had a "belligerent attitude toward our club" and sought to injure the HBEC's reputation. The Hilldale leader
pointed out that the NNL's reserve clause was not in effect until February 1920. The players had been free agents when they signed in November 1919. Moreover, if the NNL chose to boycott Hilldale, the new league owners would only be hurting themselves financially. Herein was a central flaw in the NNL's early organizational effort. Hilldale, and other eastern clubs, could make more money in a single day in New York than they could in a week in Detroit. Traveling expenses alone made the jump to the midwest a losing proposition. 24

In addition to the start of the Foster/Bolden feud, league formation failed to resolve the inherent obstacles that would plague the Negro Leagues. The "top-heavy" aspects of black baseball was soon evident, despite attempts to strive for competitive balance. The American Giants ran away with the pennant winning 32 of their first 37 games. By July, Dave Wyatt admitted that the "fans are tiring of a one-team league." Weaker clubs, like the Dayton Marcos and Chicago Giants, were unable to maintain a fan base and became less desirable opponents for the stronger clubs. Scheduling was a constant problem as well. While leasing parks in the midwest was an advantage for owners during the independent era, it became a major draw back under league formation. Indianapolis and Kansas City could only play home games when the minor league affiliates were on the road. 25
The NNL's problem with scheduling illustrated the importance of a balanced schedule as a means of controlling consumer markets. Using the American League as an example, under the eight team format, the junior circuit played 154 games. That required each club to play each other 22 times -- 11 at home and 11 away. This guaranteed that a perennial weak club, like the St. Louis Browns, would play a powerhouse, like the New York Yankees, eleven times at home. In this way, fan interest could be maintained by watching either the top clubs, or the era's most prominent stars, Ty Cobb or Babe Ruth. As we shall see later, league owners would complain when Foster refused to play league clubs regularly in their home territory.

The fans were disappointed by the new league's lack of player statistics in creating fan and media interest, in the progress of their favorite teams or individuals. Club owners failed to recognize that status was based on records of performance, good or bad. In July 1920, the Competitor noted that several league teams failed to wire box scores for publication. The Competitor also pointed out that "with two full playing months past, not one box of official standing of the clubs has appeared in any of the papers published in league cities." NNL officials were also criticized for failing to hire umpires capable of maintaining order. 26
Finally, Foster's "czar-like" rule also came under harsh scrutiny. The Defender stated the president of the league should be someone other than an owner of a league club, indicating a one man czar-like rule was not going to succeed. C.I. Taylor and Charles Mills bitterly opposed the league's financial arrangements, allocating 10 percent of the gross receipts from each league game (five percent from each club) to Foster for financing league operations. Tenny Blount felt that with 20 percent of the gross reserved for park owners, the additional 10 percent required by Foster was especially destructive to league clubs attempting to make a profit. Despite these setbacks, league owners were optimistic that they could resolve these problems.27

At the 1920 winter meeting, NNL officials made the initial steps to solidify the organization. They revised the constitution, added eastern clubs to the association, and secured another working agreement to use a major league park. Ed Bolden's attitude towards the NNL began to change, as the new league showed some semblance of profitability. Yet the rosy optimism was dampened by a decline in the nation's economy, and the inability to obtain a balanced schedule, resulting in a frustrating second season for the new league.

NNL owners were determined to rectify the problems of their inaugural season. They re-elected Foster as president and secretary, ratified a new constitution, and
transferred one of its weak franchises. The new constitution called for: (1) club owners would be fined for ungentlemanly actions that would hurt the game; (2) it was impossible for a manager to take his team off the field during a game; (3) if they disagreed with the umpire's decision they could finish the game under protest, but the public was now protected from any unwarranted actions; (4) ball players must not only conduct themselves properly on the field, but when not in uniform; (5) infractions against the constitution could result in heavy fines; and (6) players could not accept advance money and not report, or refuse to pay a fine for conduct unbecoming a player. In addition, the Dayton Marcos were transferred to Columbus, Ohio where Sol White would manage the club, and the deposit was raised from $500 to $1,000. Also, as a means of establishing a home territory for one of the traveling teams, the Cuban Stars would use Cincinnati's Redland Field when the National League club was on the road. 28

The NNL's evidence of stability resulted in Bolden's change of attitude toward the circuit. The Freeman reported the league drew 616,000 fans in 1920 and all eight clubs finished with a profit. The Hilldale leader sought protection of the league, and along with the Bacharach Giants, Cleveland Tate Stars, and the Pittsburgh Keystones, became associate members. Associate membership in the NNL exemplified the League Alliance the National League
had with independents in the 1870s. Clubs that joined were required to file an agreement with the League president, paying a $1,000 deposit. Markets were protected by extending territorial rights to prohibit games in Associate cities between League clubs and outside clubs who were not associate members. In addition, League clubs agreed not to raid associate clubs for players. However, associate members did not have a voice in league affairs, nor did their games count in the standings. The HBEC lost no major players and was even allowed to retain Whitworth and Francis. Peace was also restored between Bolden and John Connor, as both magnates reportedly roomed together during the winter meeting. With the subsequent defection of John Henry Lloyd and several other Brooklyn Royal Giants, Foster's goal of an East-West association appeared to be going in the right direction. 29

However, the 1921 season became a year of frustration. It was a particularly bad year for Foster, as his club was embarrassed in a six game series with Hilldale, his arrest for allegedly not paying his players in Atlanta, Georgia, and the death of his daughter added to his league woes. The combination of the postwar recession, high travel expenses, and bad weather contributed to a disappointing second season. Gate receipts were reportedly 25 percent lower than the previous year, and Columbus, Detroit, St.
Louis, and Indianapolis fell way below the previous year's marks. Chicago was the only club that finished in good standing. 30

But the 1921 season clearly illustrated the importance of park ownership -- the third principle asset of a club -- in the baseball business. In a series of articles entitled "What Baseball Needs To Succeed," Foster highlighted the dilemma he confronted in schedule making. While his analysis was somewhat inaccurate, and the articles were primarily self serving, it did show the NNL's chief obstacle in achieving economic cooperation. According to Foster, the NNL had three parks the league could play in on a consistent basis -- Chicago, Detroit, and St. Louis. Columbus, Indianapolis, and Kansas City leased parks from the American Association, while the Cuban Stars played at Redland Field. This resulted in these clubs using these parks while their landlords were on the road. The Chicago Giants were a traveling team, and according to Foster, were required to play every Sunday. 31

In order to achieve a balanced schedule for a weekend series, the NNL had to have accessibility to at least four parks. This became problematic since four clubs leased major and minor league parks. When the white clubs were at home, Columbus, Kansas City, Indianapolis, and the Cubans were relegated to traveling status, resulting in an increase of their overhead expenses. To further complicate matters,
each club was required to pay one-fourth of their gross revenue for park rental. An unbalanced schedule also meant an unbalanced consumer market existed in black baseball. In other words, instead of having eight territorial regions, there were only five -- Chicago, Detroit, Indianapolis, Kansas City, and St. Louis. This, more than anything else, resulted in what Donn Rogosin referred to as the structural problem in black baseball. 32

Foster's response to this structural problem was to keep the turnstiles clicking at Schorling Park, the league's largest market. To justify his actions, he cited overhead expenses, like insurance and taxes, as a reason for keeping his American Giants home. Also, Foster felt that other clubs would benefit by playing in the Windy City when other league clubs could not play at home. While the Chicago magnate's reasoning sounded commendable in theory, his rationale undermined his goal of economic cooperation. If clubs were to share equally in the profits, they also had to share equally in the expenses. Any profit realized by other league clubs in Chicago would have been diminished by the increasing travel, park rental, and Foster's five percent fee. Foster had already admitted that overhead expenses had decreased revenues due to ticket prices remaining the same. What had once been an asset for midwestern clubs -- leasing major and minor league parks -- had become an albatross around the necks. It placed
them in a position where they had to work around their landlord's schedule, making it problematic to both maintain a local following, and control a prospective consumer market. Any revenues generated from home games was automatically diminished 20 percent due to park rental. Even more destructive was revenue generated from both parking and concessions from league games went into white coffers. Moreover, the anticipated increase in appearances from the American Giants to their home grounds failed to materialize. In addition, because the other league clubs had to make extended road trips, it was no coincidence that the American Giants were the only club that realized a profit in 1921. Rube Foster was unwilling to abandon the booking system that worked for him in the independent era. Moreover, the combination of the park dilemma, and Foster's unwillingness to leave home resulted in the NNL constantly engaging in franchise shifting.

1922: THE SEASON OF DISCONTENT

By 1922, the black baseball magnates had grown disenchanted with Foster's unquestioned leadership. The constant franchise shifting and scheduling controversy continued to shake the league at its foundation. In addition, the death of C.I. Taylor marked the start of the league losing one of its most stable franchises.
Combined with the break up of the Bacharach Giants, and the withdrawal of the HBEC, black baseball was at the brink of its first war over players.

One of the league magnates' most pressing concern was finding replacements for both the Columbus Buckeyes and the Chicago Giants. The Cleveland Tate Stars and the Pittsburgh Keystones were selected to replace the Buckeyes, with Joe Green's Chicago Giants being relegated to an associate member. The 1921 season was marred with personal tragedy for Green. Both the illness of his wife and the loss of their first baby, combined with the increased overhead expenses no doubt were instrumental in Green's decision to remain close to home. 33

Things had also not gone well for Charles Mills's St. Louis Giants. The club had lost a degree of credibility when the Giants failed to complete a series with the St. Louis Cardinals of the National League. Mills admitted the club was so far in debt that he could not see his way out of it. In response, Foster called for a business plan that was echoed by his former employer, Beauregard Moseley, a decade ago. The Chicago leader urged a group of men form a stock company to save the failing franchise. As a means of raising $10,000 for start up capital, Foster suggested that either ten men at $1,000 each, or twenty men at $500 each make the initial investment to obtain a franchise. 34

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A group of St. Louis businessmen responded to Foster's request. Led by Richard W. Kent and Sam Sheppard, this group formed a new organization and renamed the club the St. Louis Stars. The Stars' management team also announced a new park would be built at Compton Avenue and Market Street, a location which resided in the heart of St. Louis' black community. Since the park would not be ready at the beginning of the season, the Stars would start the year as a traveling team. 35

While Foster took steps to rectify the league's franchise dilemma, his czar-like rule irritated Bolden. While the HBEC was protected from player raids, the club lost lucrative bookings against the outlawed eastern clubs, like the Lincoln Giants and the Brooklyn Royal Giants. Early in 1922, Bolden had required the return of his $1,000 deposit and proposed to withdraw from the league with further aspirations to raid NNL clubs for players. When Foster threaten to retaliate by raiding the HBEC, Bolden capitulated and remained an associate member for a second season. Foster did take pitcher Dick Whitworth from Bolden before allowing the HBEC to return as "the league directors decided it would be best for the morale of the league not to return him to the Philadelphia team." 36

On March 1, 1922, C.I. Taylor died. The Defender described him as a man who lived a life that anyone should be proud of and strive to emulate. Taylor was fearless
and upright and had many friends, witnessed by the large turnout at his funeral. Moreover, his loss would add to the NNL's franchise woes, as the ABCs would be shrouded in a myriad of controversy among Taylor's surviving relatives. 37

In addition to Taylor's death, things did not go well for John Connor and Baron Wilkins in Harlem. Being an associate member proved to be a mixed blessing for the Bacharachs. Connor continued to exhibit his business acumen, and he now had Harlem to himself. In 1921, in addition to maintaining his working agreement with Charles Ebbets, the Bacharach magnate had also secured leases to play at Shibe Park in Philadelphia, and Federal Park in Harrison, New Jersey. The following year, Connor signed John Henry Lloyd to manage the club, and had also opened a new park, the New York Oval at 150th Street and River Avenue. But because the Bacharachs agreed not to play outlawed eastern clubs, the decision resulted in a division between Connor and his white business partners. It resulted in the club being split into two factions -- Connor's Bacharachs -- and the Original Bacharach Giants managed by Henry Tucker and Tom Jackson. By May 1922, Taylor and Jackson were making plans to form an eastern league composed of the Brooklyn Royal Giants, Lincoln Giants, and the Richmond Giants. It marked the end of black ownership
in New York in the 1920s. In 1923, Baron Wilkins was gunned down in front of his cabaret club; three years later, John Connor died. 38

With the eastern situation in a state of chaos, the NNL's scheduling dilemma reached its peak. The Kansas City Call illustrated how much of the league's scheduling woes were internal. The Call indicted Foster for his craftiness in keeping the American Giants at Schorling Park, thus alleviating the high traveling expenses. The Pittsburgh Keystones were a prime example of Foster manipulating the schedule to serve his own interest. The Keystones had an excellent opportunity to use Forbes Field, home of the Pittsburgh Pirates of the National League, in the last two weeks in June, while the club was on the road. Foster scheduled no home games for the Keystones during this time. On the fourth of July, both the Keystones and the Cleveland Tate Stars were idle. 39

By September, the St. Louis Stars' new management team had grown weary of Foster's schedule manipulation. With the American Giants staying at home, combined with the Stars beginning the season as a traveling team, the Mound City team had to rely on a large number of exhibition games when the park was opened, resulting in low fan turnout. Fans in St. Louis felt Foster should take more road trips around the circuit. After all, the American
Giants was the league's most prominent club. According to the Call, the American Giants did not play a single game in St. Louis. 40

A break was inevitable. Neither Connor nor Bolden had any authority in league affairs. Only four western clubs had visited Hilldale in 1921, while the HBEC had made a costly western trip during the 1922 season. Both clubs lost lucrative dates in New York, leading Bolden to reply "we have received more money for a twilight engagement in Philadelphia, where the players could walk to the park, than a Sunday game in the West, with over a thousand miles of railroad to cover." Clearly Foster's czar-like rule and his booking mentality had alienated the very men who could have helped him achieve economic cooperation. Moreover, Foster was blinded by the fact that the very men he sought to run baseball clubs, men with business savvy, was in his midst. 41

In December 1922, Bolden submitted his resignation and demanded the return of his $1,000 deposit. While Foster accepted the Hilldale leader's resignation, he refused to return his deposit, citing a recent amendment to the constitution forbidding the return. Bolden disavowed any knowledge of any recent amendment or when it had been implemented. The first shots of the black baseball war had been fired.
REFERENCE LIST


2. For examples of rowdyism in black baseball see "The Cuban Game," Defender July 26 1913, 7; "POLICE PREVENTED RIOT -- HAD TO USE CLUBS FREELY -- UMPIRE ASSAULTED -- TWO COLORED PLAYERS ARRESTED," Freeman October 30 1915, 7; "BASEBALL COLOR LINE IS DRAWN BY POLICE," Freeman December 11 1915, 7; "AMERICAN GIANTS IN FIERCE RIOT AT HOOSIER CITY," Defender July 17 1915, 7; "AMERICAN GIANTS BEAT CUBANS WHO START TROUBLE," Defender August 28 1915, 7.


5. See chapter three for a detailed discussion on the Seymour thesis.


8. Ibid.


18. As early as 1917, Foster had begun making indications that he wanted to start a league. See "FOSTER WANTS NORTHWESTERN PARK -- LOOKING FOR A LEAGUE," Freeman May 12 1917, 7; "FOSTER IN INDIANAPOLIS," Freeman May 19 1917, 7; "RUBE FOSTER WANTS 'GET-TOGETHER' MEET OF ALL BASEBALL OWNERS," Freeman January 17 1920, 3; "North May Get Together Soon," Freeman January 31 1920, 3; "Kansas City Selected for Meeting of Baseball Magnates," Defender February 7 1920, 11; Dave Wyatt, "WAY IS CLEARING FOR BASEBALL TO ENJOY ITS GREATEST BOOM," Freeman February 28 1920, 3; Bruce, Kansas City, 18.


27. "Demand for Umpire of Color Is Growing Among the Fans," Defender October 9 1920, 6; W.S. Ferance, "SAYS FOSTER GOT $17,000 OUT OF LEAGUE," Kansas City Call February 9 1923, 7.


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31. The following paragraphs are drawn from the following sources: Rube Foster, "Rube Foster Tells What Baseball Needs to Succeed," Defender December 10 1921, 10, Defender December 17 1921, 10, Defender December 24 1921, 10, Defender December 31 1921, 10.


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36. "WHITWORTH TO PITCH FOR AM. GIANTS AGAIN," Defender March 4 1922, 10.


CHAPTER IX

BLACK BASEBALL WAR
THE FORMATION OF THE EASTERN COLORED LEAGUE
1923–24

Ed Bolden's break with the Negro National League resulted in both the formation of the Eastern Colored League (ECL), and the first Colored World Series. Utilizing the cooperative business philosophy as a foundation, Bolden advocated the creation of a board of commissioners to promote the league and govern the game. While Hilldale became the financial backbone of the league, the commissioners system proved no more successful than Foster's czar-like rule. Eastern owners, the majority of them white, refused to adhere to the policies they created. Scheduling became the policy most violated, particularly by Nat Strong, when the owners felt it did not serve their economic interests.

In response to the formation of the "outlaw" league, Rube Foster mounted a propaganda war in the pages of the black press. The Chicago magnate recognized that the NNL
was in no financial condition to wage a bidding war for players. His unwillingness to break from the booking system, combined with the exodus of players to the East, resulted in the continual franchise shifting that plague the NNL from its inception. By taking a stance against the destructive practice of contract jumping, and hiring black umpires, Foster attempted to sway public opinion in his favor. At the same time, his refusal to negotiate with the ECL was based on the premise that the new league would be unable to maintain its salary structure, leading to its eventual demise. With both the public outcry for a Colored World Series, and the willingness of ECL owners to compromise, Foster seized the opportunity to get an agreement to resolve the black baseball war.

It should be noted that at no time did African American baseball entrepreneurs seek to sever their business ties with white semipro clubs. While interracial conflicts emerged from time to time, both black and white magnates recognized that playing each other on a regular basis was good business. In Philadelphia, the HBEC benefited from the flurry of park construction that occurred after World War I, and the efforts of white semipros to form a large association. However in New York, semipro ball stagnated and efforts were made to revive interest through the organization of a new association.
The flurry of park construction in Philadelphia increased interest in both amateur and semipro baseball. Park enclosure allowed admissions to be charged as opposed to passing the hat to cover expenses. Between 1920 and 1923, parks were either built or renovated throughout various locations throughout the Quaker City. Yet enclosed parks were a hot commodity in the city and were generally obtained after intense bidding or through the intervention of a local ward boss. 1

In February 1922, a group of clubs formed the Philadelphia Baseball Association (PBA). The PBA illustrated the effort to regulate the fast growing local baseball scene by organizing clubs into a single association. The aim of the PBA was to resolve the inevitable problems faced by semipro teams, including player jumping, poor umpiring, and lack of discipline. In an effort to curb jumping players were required to sign "contracts"; to regulate local owners' efforts to induce players to jump, a $100 fine was also implemented. The home umpiring system was abolished and replaced by a rotation system under PBA control. In addition, an elimination tournament was also planned with ten percent of the receipts allocated to the organization.

By May 1922, more than 60 clubs had joined the PBA, including the HBEC. As manager of one of the prestigious and profitable clubs, Bolden would serve a prominent role
in the PBA's administration and was elected to the board of governors. Other administrators included Eddie Gottlieb, who would later become Bolden's business partner in the 1930s, and Art Summers. While the PBA admitted other black teams, including at least 10 local sandlot teams, it was hardly an organization that promoted racial integration. Teams were classified into three classification for the proposed elimination tournament: A for white teams in Philadelphia, B for white teams outside of Philadelphia, and C for all area "colored" clubs.

While the PBA was a weak and ineffectual organization, it was significant to the success of Hilldale in several ways. Given black Philadelphia's scattered population, white semipros forming a large association provided the environment for a segregated ball club to work within the fabric of the local baseball organization. Being a member of the PBA's board of directors reinforced Bolden's business philosophy of being a businessman first and a race man second. By creating a successful enterprise, the Hilldale Baseball and Exhibition Company, this group of African American entrepreneurs were able to integrated their club within the ranks of Philadelphia's white semipro scene.

While Philadelphia experienced a semiprofessional boom after World War I, New York's semipro scene stagnated. Even more significant was the declining interest in the national pastime among Gotham's black citizenry. With
the break up of John Connor's Bacharach Giants, and the
defection of the Lincoln Giants, no black independent
resided in Harlem. The Lincolns had been forced to vacate
their grounds at Olympic Field to make room for a parking
garage. Their new home, the Catholic Protectory Oval,
located at an orphanage in the Bronx near 180th, was miles
away from Harlem's black community. The new location was
inaccessible to the majority of black fans who supported
the club in the 1910s.

In an effort to revive interest in semipro ball, New
York City became a member of the National Baseball
Federation (NBF). The NBF's origins was in the Midwest,
where cities like Cleveland and Detroit became hotbeds
for "amateur" leagues that contained many semipros. New
York's affiliation with the NBF led to the formation of
the New York Baseball Association, of which the Lincoln
Giants became a member. Like the PBA, the New York Baseball
Association was weak and ineffective, but its formation
represented both the decline of Nat Strong's booking control
in New York, and the start of an ongoing feud between the
Royal Giants magnate and James J. Keenan.²

With both the rise and decline of semiprofessional
baseball in Philadelphia and New York respectively, eastern
owners met on December 16, 1922, at the YMCA in the Quaker
City to form the Eastern Colored League. Representatives
at the meeting included Nat Strong, Brooklyn Royal Giants;
James J. Keenan, Lincoln Giants; William Weeks, Thomas Jackson, and Henry Tucker, Bacharach Giants; Alex Pompez, Cuban Stars; and Ed Bolden and Lloyd Thompson, Hilldale. Six commissioners from each club composed the governing board, while both Bolden and Keenan were elected chairman and secretary-treasurer respectively.  

Much like Gotham's black clubs, the Baltimore Black Sox hoped that league affiliation would stimulate local interest through the regular appearance of strong gate attractions. Formed in 1910, the Black Sox, like Hilldale, began as a sandlot club and eventually rose to the ranks of an independent. Originally owned by Charles Spedden, a white clerk employed by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, the club was eventually sold to George Rossiter, a local white tavern owner. By 1920, the Black Sox eventually obtained their own playing field, Westport Park, and built a local following. Incorporated in 1921, the Black Sox moved to a new park, Maryland Park, and began paying salaries and attracting professional players. While the team had a significant white following in the early 1920s, the enthusiasm and support typical of Philadelphia and Chicago's black fans was lacking in the Monumental City.  

Much like the white magnates in New York, Baltimore's management team did not seek to establish civic ties with the black community. Additionally, their insensitive policies alienated the majority of their African American
patrons, who complained of the poor conditions of Maryland Park. The grandstand was unsafe, the seats dirty, the infield rough, and the outfield grass uncut were just some of the dilapidated conditions that existed at the Black Sox's home grounds. Even more disturbing was the lack of black employees Spedden and Rossiter hired outside of the players themselves. The Black Sox owners indicated that they had had a bad experience with African American employees due to not finding blacks "satisfactory in the rapid handling of change" and they were "most always short when the count up is made." More black employees were eventually hired by the Black Sox management, but Rossiter faced constant criticism from the black press for a variety of abuses, including offering "special reservations" for whites.  

Within months of the formation of the ECL, eastern owners began inducing NNL players to jump their contracts. Connor's Bacharach Giants was the first casualty of war. Eastern owners decimated the once great club, as Keenan grabbed Julio Rojo, Oliver Marcelle, Bob Hudspeth, and Charles Mason. Bolden snatched Bacharach player-manager John Henry Lloyd, while adding pitchers George Carr and Frank Warfield from the American Giants and the Detroit Stars respectively. Other signings followed. Ben Taylor, the brother of C.I., jumped to Washington, and along with local businessman George Robinson, formed the Potomacs

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in the nation's capital. Taylor had managed to induce catcher Mark Eggleston, third baseman Harry Jeffries, and shortstop Speco Clark to jump their contracts, marking the beginning of the end of the Indianapolis ABCs. 6

In response to both the predominance of white owners and player jumping, Foster mounted a war of words in the pages of the black press. Foster sought to diminish Bolden's role in the ECL's organizational effort and place the spotlight on Nat Strong as the real power behind the league. Additionally, Foster took a moral stance against player jumping, highlighting it as a dishonest practice, and attempting to establish himself as a man of principal. More important, the Chicago leader raised the issue of race, primarily in the ownership of eastern black teams, and indicted Bolden for race abandonment.

In an article published in several black newspapers, Foster launched his propaganda war. According to Foster, the ECL was an organization formed only to perpetuate Strong's booking agency. The Royal's owner had "taken 10 percent from the gross earnings of black clubs for 20 years, and has never built a fence for them to use and never will." In addition, Strong believed in the organization of white clubs, building a fine park for them to use, while relegating the Royal Giants to a traveling team. Clearly Foster was referring to Dexter Park, the new home of Strong's Bushwicks in Long Island. The Chicago
magnate indicted Bolden for initiating the exodus of NNL players to the East. While signing Lloyd away from the Bacharachs strengthened Bolden's ballclub, the Hilldale leader's alliance with Strong served to oust John Connor out of the New York market. Foster stated he would not attempt to stop the player exodus, but he would at the proper time "drive a blow that would not be easy to get rid of." 7

In response to Foster's attack, Bolden mounted a counter-offensive. He attacked the Chicago magnate for raising the issue of race in the ownership of black clubs. "Why," exclaimed Bolden, "does Mr. Foster not publish the fact that Schorling Park and the American Giants were the property of John Schorling." Bolden also stated that the secretary of the NNL was J.L. Wilkinson of the Kansas City Monarchs. The Hilldale leader was extremely critical of Foster's handling of the league's finances, charging the American Giant owner for "[pillaging] every club in the Western Association for [five] percent of their gross earnings." Paying this five percent fee for booking games was one of the primary reasons for the HBEC resigning from the NNL. 8

Bolden challenged Foster to a public debate, while at the same time, he continued his counter-offensive in the black press. Foster stated he would gladly debate either Strong or Bolden on the "merits and demerits of
the two leagues." Instead of choosing a neutral sight for the debate, Bolden suggested that Foster take part of the $1,000 deposit by Hilldale, rent the Academy of Music in Philadelphia, so that thousands of fans may attend, and give the balance to a fund to help disabled ballplayers. Bolden continued his verbal assault, indicating that the NNL was nothing more than a booking agency. For example, if the Bacharach Giants played Hilldale in Philadelphia, and the Bacharachs amassed a gross revenue of $1,000 and Hilldale $1,200, a five percent fee was affixed to the earnings. The Bacharachs would pay $50, while Hilldale would pay $60, placing $110 in Foster's coffer. While no public debate ever took place, Bolden had accurately illustrated why four clubs had failed in the NNL's first three years of existence. 9

Other league officials in both the NNL and the ECL also attacked Foster. W.S. Ferrance, former secretary of the St. Louis Giants, reinforced Bolden's accusation that the NNL was primarily a booking agency. At the same time, he also criticized the American Giants' owner's czar-like rule in handling league affairs. Ferrance accurately stated that clubs -- like St. Louis, Indianapolis, and Hilldale -- had been booking their own clubs for years, but league affiliation had placed these clubs under Foster's network. Since the Chicago magnate was in the region's largest market, black clubs in the
Midwest became reliant upon Sunday games in the Windy City. Ferrance also voiced his frustration in getting disputes settled in a democratic manner, particularly those against the American Giants. A manager filing a protest against the Chicago club would "have to file a complaint against Mr. Foster, mail it to secretary Foster, and then President Foster would have to decide." 10

Baltimore Black Sox manager Charles Spedden attacked Foster for indicating that the formation of the ECL was organized to make war against the Chicago leader. "When the men who head the new association met in Philadelphia," replied Spedden, "not once was Foster's name mentioned." According to Spedden, black baseball was too large an enterprise to be controlled by one man, and it would be in Foster's best interest to recognize this. The Black Sox manager cleverly suggested that eastern and western clubs play a series of interleague games, with the winner of both leagues to play in a World Series. In regards to player jumping, Spedden engaged in a little subterfuge. ECL owners had not induced players to jump, but if dissatisfied players in the NNL left on their own accord, Spedden saw no reason why the new league should turn them down. While it appeared that Foster lost the battle in the war of words, he had not totally lost the propaganda war. 11
Despite the war of words, eastern owners worked harmoniously to tighten the organization. Only fifty league games were scheduled per team, allowing flexibility for other bookings. Weekday games were kept to a minimum, and league officials returned to the traditional financial arrangement during the independent era. Visiting teams were assured a guarantee ranging from $150 to $300, or an option of 40 percent of the gross receipts. In an effort to maintain fan interest, the ECL compiled league statistics and standings and issued them at regular intervals throughout the season.

In spite of this cooperative effort, the ECL proved no more successful in obtaining a balanced schedule. Like the NNL, the presence of two traveling teams -- the Cuban Stars and the Brooklyn Royal Giants -- undermined any attempt in balancing the schedule. Strong came under scrutiny for not allowing the Royals to play at Dexter Park. Hilldale came the closet to completing the schedule, playing 49 out of 50 games. While the HBEC became the financial backbone of the league, the pattern in the ECL became clear in its inaugural season. The white owners were not willing to break from their independent ways of running a ballclub. This would undermine Ed Bolden's efforts to achieve economic cooperation through league affiliation.
While contract jumping threatened to decimate the NNL, the midwestern circuit confronted other internal obstacles. The league continued its practice of shifting franchises, as the remaining players of the John Connor's Bacharach Giants were transferred to Milwaukee. But, as in previous years, the unwillingness to strive for a balanced schedule would remain the root cause of franchise shifting.

In addition to franchise shifting, umpiring had reached such a sorry state that both the fans and the sportswriters advocated the hiring of black umpires. African American umpires would have a short and frustrating legacy in the NNL. But in 1923, black umpires would be instrumental in a small victory over a predominantly white umpires union, and sustain a business relationship between two semipro magnates that had lasted over ten years.

The Negro National League began the 1923 season with its most compact circuit in its brief history. Toledo was awarded a franchise, and players from both the disbanded Pittsburgh Keystones and other league clubs would make up its player roster. Combined with the transfer of the Bacharach's to Milwaukee, the NNL resided in the following cities: Chicago, Kansas City, St. Louis, Detroit, and Indianapolis. The Cuban Stars were the only traveling team in the revised circuit. Moreover, with associate
members in Cleveland and Chicago, it appeared that league officials had alleviated some of its overhead expenses by minimizing league club's travel distance.

However, by July the compact circuit began to crumble. Fans in Milwaukee did not provide adequate support, leading to a consolidation of both the Wisconsin franchise and Toledo. At first, a group of African American businessmen from Cleveland, led by George Tate, lobbied to replace the Milwaukee franchise. But Tate failed to come up with the $1,000 deposit to obtain a franchise. Two clubs from the South, the Birmingham Black Barons and the Memphis Red Sox, also made efforts to fill the final berth. But the midwestern circuit limped through the remainder of the 1923 season with only seven clubs.12

By mid-August, another league club complained about Foster's scheduling practices. On August 17, the Kansas City Call reported that the Monarchs would play no more games until early September. At the same time, both the American Giants and the Detroit Stars would continue playing league games during this time. According to the Call, league officials knew that the American Association Kansas City Blues would be home in the latter part of August. With this information at hand, it would have been an easy matter to switch the Monarchs to Detroit or Chicago, or any other league city. Foster still refused to schedule his American Giants in other league cities. His club had
been in Kansas City only two times during the season. Even more disturbing, was the erratic behavior of Detroit Stars owner Tenny Blount. Blount's Stars had been scheduled to play the Monarchs in Kansas City, but the Detroit owner refused to make the trip, citing high travel expenses. Blount was not reprimanded for failing to make the trip, but his actions marked the start of a rift between himself and the rest of the NNL owners.¹³

Why did Foster continue to run the NNL like a booking agency, especially in the midst of the circuit being decimated by players jumping their contracts? Several factors were instrumental in him not making a break from his booking mentality. Judging by his actions, Foster would have continued operating his club as an independent if he could have realized large profits. But through league formation, Foster's handling of the NNL reinforced sportswriter Al Monroe's assertion regarding the Chicago magnate's primary motive. Writing in Abbot's Monthly, Monroe argued that Foster's real goal was to enlarge his hegemony over black baseball in the Chicago area to a much greater range. He added that the Chicago leader was "determined to extend his booking agency as far west as Kansas City and as far south as Birmingham, and the only way to perform this was to form a Race baseball league." According to Monroe, the NNL constitution gave Foster the power to tell any club in the league where it should play.¹⁴
Monroe's argument was not without foundation. For over a decade, Foster had established business connections that would make this goal a reality. He had negotiated working agreements in major league cities, like Detroit and Cincinnati, and also held the lease of Mack Park, the Stars' home grounds. While Foster continued to stress that baseball needed "men with brains" to run ballclubs, in actuality the Chicago magnate sought individuals who would conform to his czar-like rule. Even more significant, Foster recognized the need to maintain his popularity among the African American populace. His barnstorming tours in the Progressive Era assured his legendary status in black communities throughout America. Moreover, he still maintained his political connections with Chicago's black politicians, and constantly bombarded the black press with articles, highlighting his contributions to the game, and the progress the Race made in the national pastime.

While both player jumping and franchise shifting continued to cripple the NNL, the league's umpiring situation had reached a catastrophic state. The hiring of African Americans exemplified the Washingtonian philosophy of racial advancement through self-help. It was response to the outcry from both the fans and the black press. At the same time, it was also an alternative
response to the predominantly white umpires union, who sent arbiters to Windy City parks to officiate semipro games.

On April 21, 1923, the Chicago Defender reported the NNL had signed seven black umpires for the upcoming season. It marked the end of a four year campaign by Defender sportswriter Frank Young, advocating the hiring of black umpires. Billy Donaldson from Los Angeles, California, was the first African American umpired hired by the NNL, and according to the Defender, came recommended by ball players, managers, and owners. Bert Gholston from Oakland, California, had worked with Donaldson on the West Coast was also highly recommended. Two umpires from New York -- Caesar Jamison and William Embry -- and two from New Orleans -- Leon Augustine and Lucian Snaer -- rounded out the umpiring crew who would work the 1923 season. Another umpire, Tom Johnson, a former American Giant, was held in reserve. 15

Prior to the signing of black umpires, semipro games in Chicago were officiated by members of the Umpires Official Association (UOA). Also referred as the Baseball Umpires Association, it was customary for park managers to inform this union when games were scheduled. The UOA would send two umpires to arbitrate the game, which usually turned out to be the same two men, at a particularly park. According to Young, park managers tolerated these umpires
and their poor officiating primarily because the union would threaten to boycott their games. A simple solution to this dilemma was for the league to hire its own umpires.  

The hiring of black umpires became a source of racial tension. In early August, the American Giants and the Cuban Stars transferred their league game from Schorling Park to Pyott's Park, located on the West Side. Black umpires officiated the game despite the protest of park manager William Niesen. Since Niesen did not stipulate what color the umpires were to be, and a rental agreement had been worked out, he conceded. When the white umpires arrived to the park, Foster had started the game five minutes early, stating he had not called for UOA umpires. Foster's actions marked the beginning of a feud between the Chicago leader and the UOA.  

In mid-October, the American Giants were scheduled to play Niesen's Pyotts at the same location. A near race riot occurred when American Giants catcher John Beckwith was accused of allowing an errant throw to hit the umpire behind home plate. Pyott outfielder, Ray Demmitt, a southerner, took a swing at the American Giants catcher. A fist fight took place resulting in both benches and the fans in the stands pouring out onto the field. When the police restored order, the game was called because of darkness.  

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On October 20, the Defender reported that the UOA had sent a letter to Foster, stating that the union would boycott American Giants games as long as Beckwith was on the roster. Prior to the letter, both Foster and Niesen had met with UOA officials in which the Chicago leader protested the game. At that time, the UOA had not made any objections regarding Beckwith. Instead, it sent a letter "at the eleventh hour" stating its intended action, allowing no time for Foster to respond.  

Foster phoned James J. Callahan, the owner of the Logan Squares, informing him that the American Giants would not play their scheduled game. At the same time, he sent a letter to UOA officials stating he would make no effort to protest the union's proposed actions. Foster reminded the UOA that at no time in the past did such an organization possess such authority to carry out their intended actions. The American Giant owner also indicated that there was no agreement that required him to accept umpires from the union to officiate semipro games. Foster was at his letter writing best, berating the UOA for not disciplining Demmitt for attacking Beckwith, the incident which led to the riot in the first place. As a result, Foster indicated he was canceling his game with the Logan Squares.  

The decision to cancel the game incensed James J. Callahan. He had sold a substantial amount of tickets, leading to the Logan Squares magnate to appeal to Foster
to reconsider. After all, both men had been doing business together for over a decade. Why make Callahan and the Logan Squares suffer to get back at the UOA, and at the same time ruin a good business relationship. To remedy the situation, both Foster and Callahan chose men from the respective squads to officiate the game, the Logans winning 1-0 in ten innings.

Later in October, the American Giants were scheduled to play the Detroit Tigers of the American League in an exhibition game. Frank Young asked Foster who would he get to arbitrate the game. Foster replied he would get Tom Johnson and another white umpire to officiate the game.

Throughout their inaugural season, black umpires received a generous reception from both the fans and the press. The Defender continued to sing their praises, holding the black arbiters up as a symbol of race pride and racial advancement. Moreover, Tom Johnson's opportunity to officiate the exhibition game between the American Giants and Detroit was a highwater mark in an otherwise bitter and frustrating legacy. 21

1924: THE WAR CONTINUES

Eastern owners continued their practice of inducing NNL players to jump their contracts. While Rube Foster still penned the war of words in the pages of the black press, contract jumping completely decimated the Indianapolis ABCs, leading to the continual practice of
franchise shifting. Despite the internal obstacles of their inaugural season, ECL owners were optimistic as they expanded both the league and playing schedule. While the eastern owners resumed operating in their maverick ways, their solidarity in threatening to oust Nat Strong clearly illustrated that Ed Bolden was the driving force behind the league.

At the ECL's winter meeting, the commissioner reelected Bolden as chairman, added two franchises, and expanded the playing schedule. While the other owners were optimistic about the upcoming season, Bolden was more conservative in his expectations. He continued to stress the need to cooperate as a means for the league to realize its greatest chance for success. The addition of two new franchises -- Harrisburg and Washington -- served to deemphasize the public perception that the ECL was a white dominated organization. Both clubs were financed by blacks. C.W. (Colonel) Strothers, a former city patrolman and local entrepreneur, operated the Harrisburg Giants, while George W. Robinson and Ben Taylor began their second season with the Washington Potomacs. The season was also extended from 50 to 70 games, each club play each other 10 times.22

In addition to reorganization, ECL owners resumed their raids on the West. The Indianapolis ABCs became another casualty of war, as the once proud club was relegated to associated status in late June, and eventually
disbanded. Poor weather conditions also compounded the ABCs plight. In early June, the ABCs were scheduled to play a white semipro club in Muncie when rain canceled the game, leaving the club from Indy idle for a week. By June 21, Memphis replaced the ABCs assuming Indy's 3-19 record.  

The biggest catch of the 1924 season was the signing of Oscar Charleston by Colonel Strothers. Charleston was the Babe Ruth of black baseball. Earlier in his career, his speedy, slashing style on the basepaths, and his aggressive manner earned him comparison with Ty Cobb. Charleston was depicted as a fearless, steely-eyed brawler who could not be intimidated and whose fights both on and off the field were as legendary as his playing skills. The seventh of eleven children, Charleston was a batboy for the ABCs, and at fifteen, he left home and served in the Army where he ran track and played baseball stationed in the Philippines. In 1915, Charleston began his professional career, playing for both C.I. Taylor in Indianapolis and Rube Foster in Chicago. Colonel Strothers signed Charleston as Harrisburg's player-manager, and the former ABCs star responded with a .411 batting average, and led the league in home runs with 14. While Charleston would be the biggest acquisition in 1924, he would soon become the league's most outspoken critic.  

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Foster continued his propaganda campaign as a response to the player raids. While stating the league was doing well in spite of the exodus of players to the East, the Chicago leader conceded that there was no peace in baseball. He persisted upon attacking Nat Strong, and maintaining his moral stance on contract jumping. Rumors began to circulate that the NNL would employ legal counsel to force players to respect their contracts, but given the league's financial conditions, the allegations was more a smoke screen than a plan of action. 

On February 27, 1924, an editorial by Carl Beckwith of the Kansas City Call offers a different perspective to the baseball war. Beckwith stated that the ECL's prime motive for raiding the NNL for players was to cripple the league to a point that it could not function. With the NNL out of the way, the eastern owners could drop the Eastern League cloak, have their choice of the best players in the country, and return to independent ball. Salaries would be reduced, due to the number of players far exceeding the demand. 

There was some validity in Beckwith's assessment, particularly when it involved Nat Strong. Much like Foster, Strong still maintained the booking mentality that had been standard operating procedure in the black game's early years. The New York magnate placed profits above any cooperative effort, an essential element for a league to
function. Also like Foster, if Strong could realized large profits operating solely as an independent, he would have continued to do so. But baseball in New York was undergoing a dramatic transformation in the 1920s, a change that impacted upon Strong's booking autonomy.

For the second straight season, the ECL's schedule was followed haphazardly, and Strong was the biggest offender. He followed the schedule when it suited his best interests, and often passed up league games for more lucrative dates with white semipro teams. The Royals owner was more than willing to sacrifice the league temporarily for a tour of New England. In mid-May, Strong wanted Keenan's Lincoln Giants to play Harrisburg in the opening game instead of the Royals. Instead, Keenan took the matter up to the commissioners, who by unanimous vote, expelled Strong from the league. When the New York magnate saw that the commissioners meant business, he wired Bolder in Philadelphia in an effort to get the board to reconsider. Strong's expulsion lasted only two days and his Royals participation in league games did increase somewhat. But the Royal Giants would only play 42 of the 70 games in 1924. 27

Why would Strong remain a member of the ECL if games with white semipros were more lucrative? Part of the answer lies in what was occurring in Organized Baseball. Major League Baseball was entering its golden age, and New York
possessed two of the most dominant clubs -- John McGraw's Giants and the Yankees. This was the era of the game's prominent star -- Babe Ruth. At the same time, Yankee owner Jacob Ruppert had just built Yankee Stadium, located just across the Harlem River in the Bronx. Clearly both the popularity of Ruth's Yankees and McGraw's Giants contributed to the declining interest in semipro ball in Gotham. 28

A second factor was Strong's underestimation of Bolden's influence and ambition. Bolden had built Hilldale into a solid organization that could not be ignored. His affiliation with both the PBA and the ECL made him a force to be reckoned with, a fact Strong found out when he failed to amalgamate Hilldale into his booking agency. The commissioners' willingness to expel Strong clearly illustrated they would support the Hilldale leader in sustaining the ECL. If Strong had any aspirations of using the ECL to revive his declining booking agency, they were soon thwarted with the commissioners' actions.

Finally, the political connections of baseball magnates began to decline in the 1920s. The older owners, some of which Strong had connections with, began to retire and sold out to a new cadre of independently wealthy men. These nouveau rich magnates saw baseball primarily as a diversion than a business. Baseball franchises seldom needed political clout since the sport was firmly
established, although like other urban businesses they still welcomed preferential treatment. The major cities all had expensive modern ballparks in place, and once Sunday baseball was obtained, few pressing political problems. Clearly Dexter Park was no match for the house that Ruth built! To further illustrate Strong's decline, he was only booking two black clubs -- his Royals and the Cuban Stars. Combined with the formation of the New York Baseball Association, who controlled several parks, Strong remaining with the ECL was business necessity. 29

Foster now recognized a compromise was necessary. His league could not stand another year of player raiding. Travel expenses had cut heavily into large profits, especially with the inclusion of the Birmingham and Memphis franchises. The Chicago leader also had another internal problem to address. Tenny Blount's erratic behavior was now became both destructive and an embarrassment to him. The once trusted lieutenant continued to skip league games when they didn't suit his economic interests. He also became a sore loser constantly berating his players for defeats. Failing to pay his players after September 15 became the straw that broke the camel's back. But before Foster could set his house in order, he needed an agreement with the ECL. 30
A SYMBOL OF RACE ADVANCEMENT
THE COLORED WORLD SERIES

The 1924 Colored World Series served both as a response to the outcry of the fans and the press, and also as a means to formalize a peace settlement between the two warring leagues. Rube Foster seized the opportunity to seek a compromise with the ECL commissioners, while at the same time, bolster his public appeal through the pages of the black press. While the Colored World Series did not realize large profits, the event was promoted as a symbol of racial advancement.

By August 1924, both the fans and the press clamored for a World Series between the pennant winners of the NNL and the ECL. Ollie Womack of the Kansas City Call urged black fans in league cities to call for a world championship series. Womack envisioned this series to parallel the white World Series in Organized Baseball. Despite the Black Sox scandal of 1919, the World Series had by the 1920s been viewed as an important annual event in the lives of Americans. The series was a glamorous culmination of the baseball season, with the entire nation preoccupied with the heroes of the diamond as they vied for the highest prize -- the "world's championship." "Why," argued Womack, "should not the black players enjoy the advantages as white players, in the majors do?" The Kansas City sportswriter envisioned large profits for both leagues and urged the league officials to settle their differences.31

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Several black newspapers stated that they were besieged by letters asking why there was no Colored World Series. The Defender suggested that because of the baseball war, many fans had become alienated and began seeking other commercialized amusements to spend their hard earned dollar. If black baseball entrepreneurs continued to ignore the fans wishes, then the magnates could not expect them to patronize the game. When Frank Young asked Rube Foster why there was no World Series, the Chicago leader cleverly answered that the East had not sought such a match up. Moreover, Foster seized this opportunity to state his terms for a compromise. He stated that no World Series could take place unless the East agreed to respect the player contracts of midwestern clubs. Next, Foster suggested a series format that was emblematic of the colored championships of the independent era: two games in Kansas City, two in Chicago, two in Philadelphia, and one in New York. 32

At the same time, rumors circulated that Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, the commissioner of Organized Baseball, had offered to arbitrate the two league's differences. The baseball commissioner offered to draw up an agreement that would garner a natural operation between the two circuits. Lloyd Thompson considered the idea far fetched. Even Nat Strong expressed a preference for Foster's judgment over Landis. 33
By September, both Ed Bolden and the rest of the commissioners stated their position regarding a Colored World Series. Bolden stated that, "If the proposed World Series between colored clubs of the East and West does not materialize in 1924, you may put it down that it will not be due to any obstacle placed in the way by me." After a league meeting in Philadelphia, the ECL commissioners issued a joint statement regarding the World Series. They also took the opportunity to offer their terms for a compromise. The ECL officials, like Foster, saw no reason why a World Series should not take place. But such a series was contingent upon establishing a method by which runner up clubs in each league would share in the profits. They also called for an end to the senseless propaganda, which served primarily to "rattle the time worn skeleton in the closet [that] would never bring the desired results." 34

On September 13, 1924, the New York Age reported that the ECL commissioners, Foster, and Tenny Blount met in New York and came to a tentative peace settlement. This temporary agreement would be ratified at a joint meeting between the leagues in December. Both leagues would respect each others' players under contract, and would refrain from any tampering in the future. According to the Age, the ECL commissioners were in a receptive mood to settle all differences, allowing Foster and Blount to take advantage of the opportunity to get a compromise. 35
With a tentative settlement out of the way, league officials began making plans for the Colored World Series. The Kansas City Monarchs, winners of the NNL, would face the ECL champion Hilldale in a best of nine series. A four-man commission -- consisting of Alex Pompez and Charles Spedden of the ECL, and Rube Foster and Tenny Blount of the NNL -- was organized to administrate the financial arrangements of the series. Ticket prices were set at major league levels of $1.00 to $1.65, much higher than the typical league levels of 35 to 85 cents. At first, the commission attempted to utilize the major league division of gate receipts, which allowed for the league to share in the receipts of only the first four games. But the idea was discarded as impractical, as neither league possessed the financial residuals to cover the series's expenses. The commission finally agreed upon an arrangement that allocated 10 percent of the profits to the National Commission -- five percent to each league -- and 35 percent to the players -- a split of 60 percent to the winner, and 40 to the loser. Also, 20 percent was allocated to the second place club -- 60 percent -- and third place clubs -- 40 percent -- of each league. 36

The schedule format became a source of controversy. Originally, the format called for the series to begin October 3-4 at Hilldale, October 5 at Baltimore, an open date on the sixth, October 7-8 at Chicago, and October
9-11 in Kansas City. If the series went nine games, the commission would decide upon a neutral sight for the final contest. Carl Beckwith of the Kansas City Call stated that while the series format may suit both Hilldale and Foster, it was not agreeable to the K.C. fans. The Call's argument illustrated the continued reliance upon Sunday baseball. Philadelphia fans got the only Sunday game, unless the series went the distance. Since the final game in Kansas City was on Saturday, the logical sight for the final game would be in Chicago, allowing the Windy City fans to see three games. The proposed format left Beckwith to speculate that the schedule was designed to suit Foster more than Monarch fans. Moreover, Foster knew that the Monarch management could not get any dates at their home grounds in October, due to a series of local events being held there. 37

Eventually, a compromise was reached. The new schedule assured a Sunday game in Kansas City. The series would begin in Philadelphia on October 3-4, and continue in Baltimore on October 5. October 6-9 were open dates in case of cancellations. The series would resume in Kansas City with games on October 11-13. If the series was not decided, then the remaining games would be played in Chicago.
On the field, both the Monarchs and Hilldale played a hard fought and exciting series. After nine games, both teams were tied at four games apiece, with one contest ending in a 6-6 tie. The deciding game was played on a cold afternoon in Chicago. For eight innings, Windy City fans watched Jose Mendez, Kansas City's aging and acting manager, duel Hosey "Skip" Lee, Hilldale's young submarine hurler. In the ninth inning, Kansas City scored five runs and claimed the "World's Colored Championship."

Despite the rosy forecast for the series, league officials were disappointed with the modest financial returns. While Bolden remained silent, Wilkinson was particularly disappointed. The 10 games drew 45,857 fans; but weekday attendance was weak, except in Philadelphia. Some observers also agreed the series was too long. 38

But both the black press and Rube Foster saw the Colored World Series as a symbol of race advancement. The Kansas City Call viewed it as a long step forward for organized baseball among blacks, while praising the Hilldale players for their gentlemanly conduct both on and off the field. Charles Starks of the Philadelphia Tribune saw the series as a symbol of race progress, and praised the efforts of C.I. Taylor and Foster for professionalizing the game. 39

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But the biggest promoter of the series was Andrew "Rube" Foster. The Chicago magnate noted that while he had seen most of the World Series during the last 20 years, "never did any of them have anything on are colored series . . ." Foster described the last eight games as "eight of the best played games of ball I have ever witnessed." More important, maintaining his moral stance against player jumping, obtaining a tentative peace settlement, and promoting the series as a symbol of race progress, served to heighten Foster's persona among the African American populace. It should be noted that, with the exception of the Kansas City Call, various league officials had criticize the Chicago leader within the pages of the black press. Newspapers, like the New York Age, praised Foster for his position against player jumping. By the series' conclusion, the black press would serve to bolster Foster's legendary status to even higher level. In what appeared to be a path of destruction for his Negro National League, Rube Foster emerged as the most popular African American entrepreneur in baseball. 40
REFERENCE LIST


5. Ibid.


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15. "LEAGUE SIGNS UP SIX UMPIRES FOR PLAYING SEASON," Defender April 21 1923, 10.


17. "UMPIRES HIRED TO WORK, NOT TO RUN BALL CLUB," Defender October 20 1923, 9.


20. Ibid.


23. "BLACK SOX GET NEW PLAYERS," Baltimore Afro American January 11 1924, 14; "LLOYD TO LEAD BACHARACH GIANTS," Baltimore Afro American January 18 1924, 15; "MANY NEW PLAYERS SIGNED FOR LINCOLN GIANTS UNDER GANS," New York Age March 15 1924, 6; "SMARTING UNDER TEN DEFEATS
MANAGEMENT TO INJECT NEW PLAYERS," Pittsburgh Courier May 31 1924, 6; "INDIANAPOLIS BOLSTERS UP LOSING CLUB," Defender June 7 1924, 11; "MEMPHIS NOW IN NATIONAL LEAGUE RACE," Defender June 21 1924, 11.


28. For a discussion regarding the 1920s as Organized Baseball's "Golden Age" see Harold Seymour, Baseball: The Golden Age (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); David Q. Voigt, American Baseball: From the Commissioners to Continental Expansion, v.2 (Penn State University Press, 1983); Voigt provides an excellent analysis on the New York Yankees in chapter 7. For an account on the New York Giants, see Charles Alexander, John McGraw (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988). There were other external forces that impacted upon black baseball in New York, as well as the other league cities. These will be discussed in detail in chapter ten.


32. Frank Young, "ENTIRELY UP TO EASTERN LEAGUE WHETHER WISHES OF FANS WILL BE IGNORED," Defender August 30 1924, 11; "HILLDALE AND KANSAS CITY MONARCHS WILL BE LOGICAL OPPONENTS," Pittsburgh Courier August 30 1924, 12.

33. "LANDIS OFFERS SERVICES TO BOTH LEAGUES," Baltimore Afro-American September 5 1924, 10; Lloyd Thompson, "QUICK ACTION NEEDED IF WORLD'S SERIES IS TO BE," Philadelphia Tribune September 13 1924, 8.


37. "Hillsdale and Chicago Get The World Series Apple; We Get The Core -- If There Is One!" Kansas City Call September 12 1924, 6; "CHANGE IN DATES MADE FOR FANDOM," Defender September 20 1924, 12.


CHAPTER X

THE SEEDS OF DECLINE
1925-26

With both leagues coming to an amicable peace settlement, it appeared that the Negro National and Eastern Colored Leagues would be in a position to solidify their organizations. However, the mid-1920s witnessed the emergence of several external and internal forces that contributed to the decline of Organized Black Baseball. Major League Baseball entering its "Golden Age," the influence of technology, and the decline of white semiprofessional baseball impacted dramatically upon both the NNL and the ECL. In addition, the economic downswing of the mid-1920s and the internal division among the club owners added to the demise. League officials continued to wrestle with unstable franchises, poor umpiring, and the unwillingness to develop a balanced schedule. Even more significant was the business practice that league owners continued to engage in that mortgaged the Negro Leagues' future away. The magnates continued to emphasize
booking games that yielded the highest possible personal return over creating a business system that would place their organizations on a sound economic footing.

While the NNL and ECL continued to struggle, Organized Baseball underwent a dramatic change from end of World War I to the Great Depression. Both the National and American Leagues attained new levels of prosperity. The average club attendance rose 50 percent over what it was in the previous decade. The poorest attendance figure was still almost a million and a half than that of 1909, the peak year of what was known as the "dead-ball" era. Attendance leaped above nine and half million in 1924, and except for a slight decline in 1928, maintained that level for the next five years. Organized Baseball's attendance boom coincided with the decline in attendance at black baseball games, a trend that several sportswriters had observed. Moreover, black urban historian James Grossman points out that as early as 1917 black southerners in Chicago patronized White Sox games. ¹

The automobile was a major contributor to Organized Baseball's attendance boom. The new mobility of Americans enabled fans in suburban areas, and no doubt the urban ghetto, to get to the games. Owners, particularly those in the minor leagues, complained that the male fan, who used to attend Sunday games, was now taking his wife and children for a family outing in the car instead. If minor
league owners noted a fall off in their attendance, the new mode of transportation had an obvious impact on semiprofessionals as well. ²

While club owners generally shunned this new technology at first, radio had served to stimulate interest in major league baseball. Baseball magnates and sportswriters were concerned over the possible effects broadcasting games would have on gate receipts, but the new media prevailed and had a more positive than negative effect upon stimulating fan interest. However, there were some complaints by minor league owners -- particularly in the South -- and possibly from some semipro magnates -- that fans were avoiding the heat at ball parks and listening to major league games in the comfort of their own homes.³

While Organized Baseball entered its "Golden Age," and with technological advances changing America's communal and leisure patterns, white semiprofessional baseball began a slow decline. Lanctot cited a lengthy recession in Philadelphia drastically reduced industrial sponsorship. By 1928, a number of once powerful industrial teams had disbanded or returned to amateur status. Even Frank Young in Chicago observed several white semipro clubs, many of which constituted the Chicago City League, started to disappear. Clubs considered to be powerful independents, like the Duffy Florals, Rogers Park, and Hammond, had all
disbanded or returned to amateur status. Moreover, many of the ball parks in the Windy City had been lost to subdivision.  

For all the new difficulties, a significant factor that had plagued black baseball since the 1880s continued to impact its economic stability. Neither black nor white fans would patronize semipro games unless both clubs exhibited some degree of competitive balance. This was where operating segregated clubs within the fabric of white semiprofessional baseball had broke down. By utilizing the booking system, black clubs still had to schedule a number of white clubs that were no match for their athletic prowess. While black clubs logged impressive season records, like Hilldale's 105 wins, 41 losses, and 3 ties in 1921, many of its victories were against white clubs of low caliber. Winning games by lopsided scores of 25-2 or 26-2 against white clubs was hardly conducive to stimulate fan interest.  

Another factor that impinged upon the NNL and ECL was the economic downswing of the mid-1920s. While black enterprises continued to increase after World War I, the proportion of blacks among all retail dealers tended to decrease. The success of black businesses depended peculiarly upon the income of the working class, who worked primarily for whites, and who traded with blacks. When
adverse circumstances in the economy caused a curtailment of employment or a reduction of wages, black businesses were affected immediately. 6

Contemporaries of the era downplayed the fact that the prosperity of the 1920s was unevenly distributed. The stock market soared to unprecedented heights. Urban land values increased, and people spoke of a new era of abundance. Only those who were immediately concerned, together with a few "doom and gloom" experts, complained that people working in industries, like agriculture, ship building, and coal mining, were not enjoying the prosperity of the "new economic era." When the first signs of recession appeared in the middle of the decade, thousands of blacks lost their jobs. When the stock market crashed in October 1929, many blacks were already suffering from economic depression. 7

The economic downswing highlighted a fundamental dilemma that undermined the efforts of black baseball entrepreneurs. Baseball historian Harold Seymour notes that by the late nineteenth century baseball became an asset to the business interests of the community. Business in turn would spread the cult of the game. The interaction between the two was cyclical in nature, making it problematic to detect where it began or ended. An example of this would be in the production and promotion of sporting goods. Steve Hardy found as early as the 1870s
manufacturers, like R.G. Dunn, began diversifying their business firms to include baseball products. Through the use of "guidebooks," sporting goods manufacturers could promote their products, stimulate fan interest through the publication of statistics, and promote activities in an effort to create consumers for their brand of finished products. 8

Herein lies the fundamental dilemma for black baseball entrepreneurs -- the underdevelopment of the black community. In the 1920s, New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago's black communities remained largely underdeveloped inviting financial catastrophe. As stated previously, black baseball entrepreneurs did not seek to cater to a black clientele exclusively, but they did rely heavily on the patronage of the black working class fan. The growth of business failed to keep pace with the increase in home ownership, churches, and fraternal organizations. While growth in these other sectors were important, they did not produce the revenue needed to underwrite development. 9

But two of the biggest factors that contributed to the decline of the Negro Leagues were both the internal division among the club owners, and intraracial tension brought on by the economic downswing. With the exception of J.L. Wilkinson, white owners in black baseball had no interest in black community affairs, and saw the game solely as a means of supplementing their other economic interests.
Yet black entrepreneurs began alienating the very people they had promoted the game to in the first place -- the middle class spectator. By neglecting the black middle class fan, baseball entrepreneurs also became less active in community affairs. Few, if any, benefit games were staged to raise funds for civic institutions in the 1920s. The unwillingness of club owners to govern themselves led to the game on the field falling into a catastrophic state. The very product these entrepreneurs were promoting, baseball, was marred by poor umpiring and rowdyism, which reached epidemic proportions by the middle of the decade. Black baseball entrepreneurs also made some decisions that further alienated both the fans and the very institution in the black community that had been its staunchest supporter, the black press. Clearly it was no mystery why many fans began to stay away from black baseball games.

1925: THE CZAR AND THE CORPORATE MOGUL

When peace was restored in 1925, the Negro National and Eastern Colored League reflected the business images of its leading entrepreneurs. Rube Foster's czar-like rule and Ed Bolden's cooperative business philosophies permeated league affairs. Foster began to set his league in order by ousting John Tenny Blount, continually juggling franchises, and once again addressing the issue of black umpires. Bolden also addressed the ECL's umpiring and
scheduling dilemmas. However, the decisions the Hilldale leader made became a source of racial tension, leading to injuring his credibility.

In December 1924, the club owners ratified a national agreement between the two leagues. A standard players contract and reserve clause was adopted. Territorial boundaries were established. The ECL territory would encompass the East Coast as far west as Buffalo, Pittsburgh, and Atlanta, the remaining western territory was granted to the NNL. In a gesture of solidarity, Ed Bolden nominated Rube Foster as the chairman of the joint session.

With the national agreement formalized, both the NNL and ECL exemplified the common business approaches by African Americans utilized in the early twentieth century -- the one main enterprise versus the cooperative business venture. Foster ran the NNL like he did his American Giants in the independent era. John Schorling had remained a silent partner enabling Foster to have total control over bookings, player development, and managing the game on the field. The Chicago magnate maintained his political alliances in the Windy City, and continued to utilize the black press to promote himself, the American Giants, and the NNL. By 1925, he had created a media network as far east as Baltimore, as far south as Birmingham, and as far west as Kansas City.
Bolden, on the other hand, sought to run the ECL as he had Hilldale since 1911, utilizing the cooperative business philosophy. He established the commissioners system to allow club owners the opportunity to share equally in league affairs. In Bolden's view, economic cooperation would not only make clubs financially successful, it would also break down racial barriers.

With the establishment of both circuits, Foster and Bolden attempted to operate segregated leagues within the framework of white semiprofessional baseball. They also attempted to establish successful clubs that would serve as a source of race pride and racial solidarity. Both men recognized the importance of black community support, and the need to become involved in community affairs. Like other business men in the black community, both Foster and Bolden were influential because of their social and political influence as well as for the economic strength they wielded. More important, both baseball men did not merely respond to forces, both internal and external, that impacted upon their business affairs. They attempted to create a successful business enterprise in their own image. By 1925, Foster had expanded his booking autonomy as far west as Kansas City and as far south as Birmingham. 10

In contrast, Bolden had not achieved total cooperation with the other ECL owners. His alliance with Nat Strong made this problematic. Strong continued to undermine any
effort by the ECL owners to achieve economic cooperation. While Foster had created a national media network through several black newspapers, the more conservative Bolden maintained his local support of the Philadelphia Tribune. While Foster was the consummate self promoter, Bolden shunned the national spotlight. The Hilldale leader epitomized the corporate mogul who preferred to remain in the background, and highlight the corporate success of the enterprise collectively. But, as we shall see later, Bolden would make several decisions that would make him the center of unwanted attention. 11

Foster now took steps to deal with his uncooperative owner from Detroit, Tenny Blount. Growing weary of the financial losses, and objecting to the long road trips required by the NNL clubs, Blount announced to his players he was terminating his involvement with the Stars. He granted the players permission to play on the co-op plan for the remainder of the season, booking several games with white semipro clubs. The players protested to Foster that Blount still owed them money, as league contracts ran until October 1. Foster gave the Detroit owner an ultimatum to pay the players, or present an affidavit signed by all his players that they agreed to his proposition.12

In response, Blount presented his case in the pages of the black press. According to Blount, the Stars were not scheduled to play any more league games after September
16, leading the Stars' owner to resign from the league. The players then agreed to play games, booked by Blount, in which the Detroit owner would not share in the gate receipts. Blount indicated that Foster had wrote the players and told them to send in their contracts, and he would collect the balance of their money. Next, the NNL president took steps to discredit Blount and force him out of the league. To validate his charges, Blount stipulated that if Foster could find one statement that was not true, he would deposit $500 with any newspaper that Foster chose. If the sportswriters found one statement that was inaccurate, the deposit could be donated to any charitable organization. 13

Foster made his move at the NNL's winter meeting. In a strategic ploy designed to garner support, Foster returned all franchise deposits, minus the indebtedness to him, and offered to open the league books for examination. He then vacated the president's chair and offered to resign. The league owners refused to accept his resignation. In a show of support for the league president, J.L. Wilkinson placed his $1,000 deposit on the table, telling the other owners that under no circumstances could the present conditions be improved upon. Blount was voted out of the league and was replaced.
by Steve Pierce, an African American entrepreneur from Oakland, California. Pierce had reportedly operated one of the best semipro clubs on the West Coast. 14

Blount had underestimated Foster's skillful use of the media to sway public opinion. Prior to the league meeting, Foster had wrote to the other club owners stating his desire to resign as league president, allowing this information to leak to the press. The NNL president also recognized by appearing to look out for the players' interest, he would sway public opinion his way. In addition, in a show of solidarity, the league owners signed a letter of support for the NNL leader and published it in the black press. Combine with Blount's alienating the owners by skipping league games, and for the fact that Foster still resided in the league's largest market, it was no coincidence when the owners exhibited solidarity behind the league president. 15

The Foster/Blount incident also highlighted the NNL president's popularity among the African American populace. Press reports emerged indicating that Foster had made black baseball what it was to that point. He had been forced at times to advance transportation money to weak franchises, and paid player salaries. When complaints emerged regarding the black umpires, Foster attempted to carry "them until the end of the season." Clearly without his benevolence,
the NNL would cease to function. Moreover, Foster's dispute with Blount illustrated how the Chicago leader could take a potentially negative event and heighten his popularity. 16

But the Foster/Blount incident also highlighted the economic instability of the league clubs. Wilkinson's Monarchs, one of the more stable franchises, reportedly lost money in 1924, and agreed with Blount that railroad mileage was too high. Franchise shuffling continued as Cleveland was replaced by a new Indianapolis club financed by C.I. Taylor's former competitor Warner Jewell. 17

If the league owners thought that Foster would seek to solidify the organization, they were sadly mistaken. Instead of making decisions to alleviate overhead expenses, Foster made moves to perpetuate them. To insure greater cooperation and prevent franchise withdrawals, the franchise fee was raised from $1,000 to $5,000 in 1925. As a means to stimulate fan interest, a split season was introduced. Fifty games would be played in each half, with the winners of each half playing for the league pennant. If the same club won both halves, they would represent the NNL in the Colored World Series. No effort was made to balance the schedule, further illustrating the desire to place bookings over a sound economic system. 18

Finally, the league's umpiring situation had deteriorated to such a state that Foster dismissed the black arbiters. Only Caesar Jamison and Billy Donaldson
survived the purge. When league owners and managers complained about the black umpires, Foster, at first, attempted the finish the season with them. In addition, both the ballplayers and the fans also began complaining about the umpires' poor officiating, leading Foster to invite the arbiters to Chicago to work under his watchful eye. After supervising their work, the NNL president made the change. The umpires poor mechanics in calling ball and strikes, and their inability to control games led to their dismissal. One arbiter told Carl Beckwith of the Kansas City Call that black umpires were fighting two battles on the diamond. They knew they would struggle for recognition from their white counterparts, but they did not expect to have to fight "for the respect of members of [their] own race and leagues from the President down to the bat-boy." The dismissal of the black umpires marked the end of a bitter and brief legacy in the NNL. 19

The ECL still faced a number of obstacles, umpiring and the scheduling dilemma being the primary ones. Two of the league's weaker franchises, the Bacharach Giants and the Washington Potomacs, made changes in their organizations. Hammond Daniels succeeded Tom Jackson as commissioner of the Bacharachs. Long recognized as one of the club's financial backers, Daniels assumed both the controlling interest and would vote on issues affecting the league. The partnership of Ben Taylor and George
Robinson had also dissolved. Given the poor patronage in the nation's capital, Robinson relocated his club to Wilmington, Delaware. 20

The commissioners also took steps to address their scheduling dilemma. The league adopted a seventy game schedule for the 1925 season. The published league schedule was deliberately left incomplete in an effort to allow league clubs to book lucrative games with white semipros, without forcing the cancellation of league games. Only the first 10 games between league clubs would count in the standings. Since some league clubs would play each other more than 10 times, additional contests would be classified as exhibitions. 21

The flexible schedule illustrated the commissioner's desire to place bookings over an attempt to balance the schedule. In defense of this decision, Lloyd Thompson, the league's publicity director, stated that "with practically only one day per week at the respective cities being a paying proposition, the owners can ill afford to pass up lucrative bookings with independent clubs in their adjacent vicinity." Additional parks were leased not for an effort to balance the schedule, but to schedule as many games the magnates could muster. 22

The ECL also abolished the home umpire system. The commissioners replaced it with a rotation system subject to league authority. Since the league's inception, Bolden
had advocated the rotating of umpires, but he had been unable to generate enough support for it. In Bolden's view, league controlled umpires would not be intimidated by reprisals from individual owners, and would provide more impartial decision making and enforce more discipline effectively. While the rotation system received a warm reception, it marked the start -- combined with the scheduling dilemma -- of a bitter controversy between Bolden, the black press, and Oscar Charleston. 23

In order for the rotation system to be effective, a supervisor was needed to operate it. To fill this position, Bolden announced the hiring of Bill Dallas, a local white semipro league official and a sportswriter with the Philadelphia Public Ledger. Based on his background, Dallas appeared to be a logical selection for this position. He had served as a supervisor for baseball and basketball leagues, and had also supervised umpires in the Pennsylvania-New Jersey league, a low level white minor league, in 1924. But Bolden had another agenda in the Dallas hiring. Through Dallas, the ECL would be able to get publicity in the white newspapers. 24

For black sportswriters, the hiring of Dallas was particularly a puzzling and offensive episode. The Baltimore Afro-American pointed out that the success of the league was due entirely to the publicity given them in Race journals. Roilo Wilson of the Pittsburgh Courier,
who was un成功ively nominated for the position, indicated that, "Yes, this is the Mutual Association of Eastern COLORED Clubs." John Howe of the Philadelphia Tribune ran a controversial cartoon depicting Bolden as an "Uncle Tom" attempting to grovel for the white man's favor. 25

Bolden reacted angrily to the Howe cartoon. In a letter to the Tribune, Bolden charged that the cartoon was untimely and unfair, and it undermined the efforts of the commissioners to provide the league with competent umpires. The Hilldale leader added the cartoon tended to inject "race feeling and prejudice into an organization fostered and made successful through cooperation of the two groups." Bolden was somewhat condescending, as he lectured to the Quaker City paper on the merits of ethical advertising. "Critical thought," added Bolden, "should precede action that may do untold harm . . ." The Tribune "[could] ill afford to publish that which will likely disorganize." 26

The Dallas hiring illustrated the continuity in Bolden's philosophy of being a businessman first and a Race man second. Much like Rube Foster, he did not seek to create a black counter culture, or cater to a black market exclusively. Bolden expressed race pride when he proudly boasted that the ECL had "gone further to break down race prejudice than any like organization." But the Dallas hiring also illuminates the intraracial tensions
black middle class entrepreneurs, who advocated the Booker T. Washington economic philosophy, confronted when making business decisions. Hiring the white supervisor occurred at a time when many African Americans began losing their jobs, and while the black community experienced the early signs of economic depression. For Bolden, hiring Dallas served as a business decision to recapture the white fans who increasingly abandoned semipro and black baseball games. But the Dallas incident also exemplified that black baseball entrepreneurs were becoming more increasingly reliant upon an underdeveloped black community.  

Bolden now became embroiled in an another controversy. This time with the league's premier player-manager, Oscar Charleston. In an article published in several black newspapers, Charleston declared that the ECL was a farce. "The fans," declared Charleston, "[were] being hoodwinked and fooled out of hard earned cash by a few men who are thinking of the present only and not the future." The new schedule format had become so confusing for the Harrisburg manager that he didn't know when his club was playing either a league game or an exhibition one. Clearly Charleston's confusion suggests that the ECL owners engaged in the same underhanded tactics Eastern Interstate League magnates utilized in 1889. If their club won the contest, it was a league game; if they lost, it was an exhibition. It resulted in several games being played under protest.
Charleston added that the rotating system of umpires served to perpetuate problems rather than eliminate them. According to the Harrisburg manager, the arbiters' decisions were so bad that it would ultimately lead to the death of the league if the situation wasn't rectified. On June 14, in a game between Harrisburg and Hilldale at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, the Giants led 6-2 after three innings. The game was delayed by rain which, according to Charleston, lasted no longer than fifteen minutes. After efforts were made to repair the field to continue play, the umpires postponed the game. Cancellations were rarely rescheduled and since, in Charleston's view, the field was in good condition, the decision angered the Harrisburg manager. Charleston concluded that the black press should denounce these evils through their columns and offer reactions.

On June 27, the Philadelphia Tribune responded to the Charleston article. In terms of the umpire situation, John Howe stated he did not believe that the umpires were sabotaging league games. But he did suggest in games that he had observed, that umpiring had deteriorated to a catastrophic state. The umpires exhibited too much uncertainty, and that they changed their decisions too frequently. Howe also stated the Tribune's position regarding umpire baiting and a bully tactic referred to as the "stall." The stall occurred when an umpire, after making a poor call, was encircled by the players, hurling
insults at him, and delaying the game for long periods of time. Howe pointed out that the sooner this behavior was eliminated, league games would become more orderly. In terms of the scheduling dilemma, Howe was as confused as Charleston was. 29

Charleston continued his attack in the black press. He criticize the league's umpiring and schedule dilemma, and also speculated whether each club was getting a "square deal." He indicated that Wilimington would drop out of the league because club owner George Robinson was utterly disgusted with the league schedule. He also indicted Nat Strong, stating the Royals owner had little or no interest in the welfare of the league. 30

In response, Bolden charged Charleston for spreading "uncalled for lies in an attempt to spread propaganda against the ECL and Hilldale." According to Bolden, some of the charges were so absurd that they did not warrant a response. But the Bolden/Charleston feud illustrated the catastrophic effects poor umpiring and the scheduling dilemma was having on the game on the field. Clearly these factors, combined with the economic downswing, was pivotal in the declining attendance at black baseball games. 31

The efforts to improve both the league's umpiring woes and its scheduling dilemma ended in failure. One reason the rotation system flopped was Dallas' indifferent performance as a supervisor. He was accused by the black
press of replacing black arbiters with white officials, and they noted that the league's umpires were frequently as poor as those the respective teams previously employed. Also, the anticipated increase in white press coverage failed to materialize. The schedule was disrupted by the collapse of the Wilmington Potomacs. A number of games did not count in the standings simply because they were not originally on the schedule.32

Bolden had now become an increasingly popular target for criticism. Players, fans, and sportswriters blasted the Hilldale leader for his inability to solve both the various dilemmas. The Dallas hiring served to alienate Bolden's staunchest ally in the past -- the black press. For the first time, observers advocated the election of a league official with no ties to league clubs to run the ECL.

1926: THE SEEDS BEGIN TO GROW

While the league owners attempted to rectify the obstacles of the 1925 season, their decisions served to perpetuate rather than eliminate them. The scheduling dilemma, poor umpiring, and rowdyism reached its nadir in the ECL. While the NNL continued to engage in franchise shuffling, the nervous breakdown of Andrew Rube Foster marked the end of an era in black baseball. The Colored World Series, once promoted as a symbol of race advancement,
now became a source of frustration. For the first time, black sportswriters and other contemporaries pondered the future of Organized Black Baseball.

The club owners enacted several changes as means of addressing their diminishing returns. The magnates adopted a salary cap, whereby all clubs' monthly payroll would not exceed $3,000. Both leagues agreed that a player jumping their contract would result in a five year suspension from Organized Black Baseball. The ECL commissioners attempted to censure managers, players, and "those not financially interested in the ECL from writing [positions] for the press detrimental to the league." Clearly this ruling was directed at Oscar Charleston for his outspokenness in 1925. 33

Efforts to bar contract jumpers was a response to the emergence of an African American entrepreneur from Homestead, Pennsylvania -- Cumberland "Cum" Posey. Born on June 20, 1890, Posey's Homestead Grays were the equal of any organized club East or West. Along with Foster and Bolden, Posey was among the most successful black baseball entrepreneurs of the 1920s. He had gained a reputation as a basketball player, starring at Duquesne and Penn State University. In 1912, he joined the Homestead Grays as an outfielder, and four years later he became the club's manager. By the mid-1920s, Posey had strengthened his team gradually by importing professional
players, and exerted considerable influence in the local booking scene of the Steel City. Short tempered, argumentative, and considered by many as a poor loser, Posey's relentless raiding tendencies alarmed numerous observers. 34

Posey was invited by Charles Spedden to the joint meeting in January 1926, in an effort to obtain an agreement to respect each other's players under contract. Spedden sent a copy of his letter to Posey to Bolden and Foster. While Bolden favored the proposition, Foster rejected it, unless the Grays would become an NNL associate member. Posey had no intentions of doing so, citing failures in both Pittsburgh and Cleveland. The Grays continued to operate as an independent club.35

The ECL's continued scheduling difficulties had reached an impasse during the 1926 season. Poor weather conditions and a continued decline in attendance at most weekday league games resulted in several cancellations. The schedule was also disrupted by another midseason franchise failure. The Newark franchise was a disaster from the start, compiling a 1-10 record, and the club disbanded in mid-July. The commissioners agreed that games against the disbanded club would count in the league's standings. The decision became a source of conflict since some of the league clubs had not played the defunct franchise. Both Nat Strong's unwillingness to follow the schedule,
combined with Hilldale joining another integrated league led to a conflict of interest. Moreover, Bolden paid a large price for not disciplining the Royals' owner for his indiscretions. The growing public opinion against the Hilldale leader, in conjunction with the increased internal dissension among the commissioners, intensified the call for an official, not connected with any league club, to govern the ECL.

Prior to the start of the season, the Baltimore Afro-American reported the formation of the Interstate League. The Pennsylvania league consisted of three white and black clubs; Harrisburg, Hilldale, and the Bacharach Giants comprised the black clubs. Bolden's decision to join the new league was evidently a response to the collapse of the PBA in 1924. It also further illustrated the continued effort to operate a segregated club within the framework of the white semipro scene. A clear indication of this mode of operation was that games played between the black clubs counted in both league standings. It also revealed the continued Bolden-Dallas connection, as the white sportswriter was the new league's secretary-treasurer.

By August, Bolden's affiliation with the Interstate League and Strong's unwillingness to keep his scheduling commitments, intensified the internal dissension among the club owners. The Royal Giants had only played 14 league games and would finish the season playing 27.
objected to both the Royals and the Cuban Stars for their failure to secure home grounds. As an effort to soothe the troubled waters, Bacharach owner Hammond Daniels suggested that the Cubans play at Bacharach Park when the seaside club was on the road. Keenan also refused to list either the Cubans or the Royals in the standings, and canceled scheduled games with both clubs.  

In response, Strong criticized the Lincoln's owner as well as the overall management of the league. The New York booking agent stated that the reason he wasn't playing the Lincoln's was that Keenan announced at the beginning of the season he would not play the Royals due to a previous misunderstanding. As a result, Strong booked the Royals for several tours through New York state. He also took shots at Bolden for his poor leadership. Strong declared the league schedule as a "phoney," and charged that the Interstate League had taken the best dates for games. In Strong's view, these dates should have gone to the ECL. The Royals owner's comments was indicative of the booking mentality that still permeated scheduling. To further complicate matters, the Interstate League disbanded in August. 

Why did Bolden continue to tolerate Strong's unwillingness to cooperate. A primary reason was the market Strong resided in. Despite his declining booking autonomy in New York, Strong still wielded considerable influence
in Gotham's semipro scene. He owned two of the best parks outside of Organized Baseball, Dexter Park and Farmer's Oval. Even more significant, the commissioners utilized the same rationale that Foster employed in booking games in the NNL. Since Baltimore, New York, and Philadelphia constituted the league's larger markets, the ECL benefited from having their ball parks busy on the weekends. While Harrisburg, the Bacharachs, and the Cuban Stars did not have to make extended jumps that clubs in the NNL had to endure, they still had to shoulder higher travel expenses than their other league counterparts. Because of the Strong-Bolden alliance, these clubs became reliant upon weekend games in the league's two largest markets, New York and Philadelphia. Bolden had also acknowledged the economic benefits of playing in New York when Hilldale was an associate member of the NNL. In addition to playing the Royal Giants, Strong could keep Hilldale busy in Gotham by booking the HBCF against the top white semipros. Since the owners emphasized bookings over a balanced schedule, Bolden was willing to look the other way in order to tap into New York's semipro market, but this viewpoint came at the expense of increased internal dissension among the club owners, and public opinion turning against him.

Strong had accurately pointed out that poor umpiring had resulted in increased rowdyism at league games. Umpiring had become further exacerbated by one of the most
notorious umpire baiters in black baseball, Walter "Rev" Cannady. A good defensive second baseman and a bad ball hitter, Cannady was characterized as quiet, but moody and "mean." Other players left him alone because of his unpredictability. On July 3, the *Baltimore Afro-American* reported that Cannady, playing for Harrisburg, had assaulted an umpire in a game against the Lincoln Giants. In the fourth inning, Cannady tried to stretch a single into a double and was caught in a run down. When he attempted to slide back into first base, he was called out. Cannady retaliated by punching the umpire in the jaw, and was about to hit him again when Lincoln manager John Henry Lloyd intervened. A special policeman ran onto the field, resulting in the entire Harrisburg club pouring out onto the field. The players thought the officer was about to attack Cannady. Only the coolness of Lloyd averted a near riot. In early August, Cannady was involved in another incident. This time the second baseman attacked an umpire outside of Hilldale Park after a tough 3-0 loss to the Darbyites. Cannady had reportedly thrust a bat through the window of the arbiter's car shattering the glass.  

But rowdyism was not enough to undermine the efforts of the umpires to maintain order. In a doubleheader between the Bacharach Giants and the Lincoln Giants, minor arguments over the decisions made by the arbiters marred the second contest. Abusive remarks by Lincoln Giant third baseman
Oliver Marcelle resulted in him being ejected from the game. In addition, Bacharach catcher William "Fox" Jones was also ordered off the field. When Marcelle refused to leave the field, the umpire threatened to forfeit the game. But Lincoln owner James Keenan exercised his right as a league commissioner and would not permit this. 41

In response, Bolden attempted to set an example for the other club owners to follow. Bolden fined and suspended pitching ace Phil Cockrell for attacking an umpire in a game against the Bacharach Giants. Declaring the incident unwarranted, the Hilldale leader fined Cockrell $700 and suspended him for five days. The Hilldale hurler disputed a call by the second base umpire, leading the pitcher to deck the arbiter with a right hook. 42

The Eastern Colored League was in a state of chaos. Poor umpiring and placing bookings over a balanced schedule undermined any effort for economic cooperation. Poor weather and low fan turnout also frustrated the magnates' efforts. But in the West, fans in the NNL was witnessing the czar's last hurrah.

For the second time in its brief history, the NNL began the circuit with an aggregate of midwestern clubs. It was a response to the high traveling expenses the league endured, making extended jumps to the Deep South. The eight team league consisted of Chicago, Cleveland, the Cuban Stars, Dayton, Detroit, Indianapolis, Kansas City,
and St. Louis. Birmingham and Memphis were dropped from the league and became members of the Southern League. By August, both Dayton and Cleveland disbanded leaving the NNL to finish the season with six clubs. 43

But the biggest loss of the 1926 season was the nervous breakdown of Rube Foster. The American Giants owner had been showing signs of poor health for several months, and many of his friends had suggested he take a long rest. The previous year, Foster had been severely gassed in a hotel room in Indianapolis, due to a leak in a gas pipe of a hot water heater. While the cause of his illness was unclear, several contemporaries suggested that the experience in Indianapolis, combined with operating both his ballclub and the league contributed to his condition. In mid-August, Foster finally went to Michigan for a two week vacation before urgent business of the league brought him back to Chicago. The collapse came within a month of his return to the Windy City. 44

The black press hailed Foster for his achievement in Organized Black Baseball. They highlighted his brilliant career as a pitcher, manager, and owner of the most prominent black club of the early twentieth century. He was credited for doing "much to make the national pastime a paying business among his race . . . " According to the New York Age, "Foster [had] in the past twenty years been able to amass one of the largest fortunes of any member
of his race through his ability to make baseball pay." While his heavy handedness and czar-like rule alienated his fellow owners, Foster was clearly an American hero among African Americans in the world of sports.  

Foster's collapse resulted in Kansas City Monarch's secretary Quincy Gilmore to lobby for the league's presidency. On September 11, the Defender reported that the Monarch's secretary had several suggestions regarding league operations, one of which would be a source of intraracial tension. In an effort to obtain more publicity, Gilmore suggested that the NNL should "play more to the white papers." This was where "you've got to center your activities for publicity." He indicated that the Kansas City Star gave the Monarchs a good deal of publicity.  

Predictably, the Defender took exception to Gilmore's comments. Its sportswriter Frank Young compared and contrast the type of sporting activities reported on in Chicago and Kansas City. The American Association Blues and the Monarchs were the only teams the Kansas City press had to report on. By contrast, the American Giants would never receive a substantial amount of press coverage in Chicago due to the presence of both the Cubs and the White Sox. Also, there were plenty of other sporting activities to report on including horse racing, golf, tennis, boxing, and auto racing. In addition, the white press in neither Detroit nor St. Louis gave much press coverage in their
cities. Young accurately stated that Race newspapers had supported the league for six years, providing box scores, batting averages, and pictures when they could obtain them. Moreover, white attendance had fallen off at Monarch's games despite the supposed publicity of white papers. 47

Gilmore took exception to the Defender's article. In a letter, published on the pages of the black press, written to Defender editor Robert Abbot, Gilmore categorically denied the charges offered. The Monarch's secretary reminded Abbot of a meeting both men had in which Gilmore hoped for the continued friendly relations with the Defender; he added that he was aware of the value "of the Defender and other Race papers throughout the country," and that the NNLL could not have existed without them. 48

John Howe of the Philadelphia Tribune assessed the Gilmore/Defender conflict. He indicated that if Gilmore was misquoted, Abbot owed the Monarch's secretary an apology. But Howe added that the desire to seek publicity in the white press illustrated "that many men of color whose weakness for persons and things white is the last word in slave psychology." Despite the controversy, Howe indicated that the black press would continue to boost black sports, and give them publicity and space. But the Race papers would also continue to criticize "those weaknesses that were the results of the efforts of selfish individuals . . ." 49
Whether Gilmore had suggested the NNL seek publicity from the white press or not, the damage had been done. Combined with the Bolden-Dallas affair, club owners had alienated its most staunchest ally within the black community. To further compound their problems, the Colored World Series, once a source of race pride, would once again yield diminishing returns.

It was promoted as a potentially lucrative gold mine; but the Colored World Series had deteriorated into a financial morass. From 1925 to 1927, the series would be hampered by poor weather conditions, reduced press coverage, and declining attendance. In response, club owners attempted to reduce both umpiring and publicity expenses, and eventually eliminated the second and third place clubs from sharing in the net profits. With the exception of the series' first year, the players received less than $100 for their participation. This was far less than what a postseason barnstorming tour could have amassed for them.

During this period, the leagues' two leading entrepreneurs, Foster and Bolden, reigned supreme on the diamond. In 1925, Hilldale ascended to the top of the black baseball ladder, as they defeated the Kansas City Monarchs, five games to one. In 1926 and 1927, both the
Bacharach Giants and the Chicago American Giants were the cream of the black baseball crop. Both years the American Giants defeated the Bacharachs five games to three.

The plight of the Colored World Series reflected the steady downward spiral Organized Black Baseball was experiencing. Lanctot accurately states the series also reflected the gradually deteriorating economic conditions of the national African American community. Yet another factor contributing to the Series' decline was the conflict of interest by owners whose clubs were not in the fall event. On October 9, 1926, the Defender reported that Bolden had scheduled Hilldale to play an aggregate of major league all-stars in Wilmington, Delaware, approximately 38 miles from Atlantic City, New Jersey. The contest was scheduled on the opening day of the Bacharach-American Giants series. According to Frank Young, many fans who would have come to the World Series, were lured away by the more attractive exhibition contest. To further complicate matters, the first game ended in a tie, resulting in both clubs playing an additional game on Saturday. The series' officials had anticipated this and they made Saturday an open date. But Bolden had scheduled another exhibition game at Hilldale Park, further illustrating the club owners unwillingness to break from their booking mentality. 51
Such ill-advised decision making placed the owners in a position for public scrutiny. Throughout the 1926 season, several black sportswriters began to question the way the magnates ran the black leagues. New York Age sportswriter William Clark stated that the fans were alienated by the continued domination of the professional game by Rube Foster and Nat Strong. The practices of both men clearly revealed that they placed their own economic interests prior to any effort to form a solid organization. Clark was also critical of Bolden's "narrow partisan role" as chairman, and he indicated that the other commissioners had allied themselves to depose the Hilldale leader. When Strong heard of their intentions, he threaten to boycott any club who voted against the league chairman. The Baltimore Afro American was also critical of the Strong-Bolden alliance. Sportswriter Bill Gibson stated that the ECL needed "unbiased leadership." Gibson also indicted Bolden as a "prejudiced party and not interested in the welfare of the entire league." In Gibson's view, this alone was enough to move for a president who had no club affiliation.  

The NNL was not without its critics. Frank Young stated that there had been entirely too much internal dissension between the club owners, and he was also critical of the unbalanced schedule. He added it was time for the owners to "lay their petty ambition and jealousy aside.
and get down to business." To remedy the situation, Young outlined an organizational effort in which the NNL owners would attempt to emulate in the following years. It resembled the structure in Organized Baseball in which clubs in the West, East, and South, would established working agreements and territorial boundaries. The organization would exist of clubs like the Homestead Grays, Dayton Marcos, Gilkerson's Union Giants, and the entire Southern League. 53

The most stinging criticism and the most constructive assessment came from Cum Posey. The Grays's owner denounced Foster's tendency to blame the league's numerous franchise failures on lack of business acumen. He accurately indicated that Foster had no intentions of creating an organization in which owners were both competitors and partners. Posey had also objected to the Bolden-Strong alliance disproportionate control over league affairs, at the expense of the other owners. The Homestead owner chastised Bolden for lacking the guts to enforce league rules, resulting in the utter chaos occurring on the diamond. He indicated that he would rather schedule his Grays against a white team in the South, than to play on the "Battle Ground" in the ECL. Posey did make a valid assessment regarding the league achieving economic stability. Nat Strong could make the ECL more stable if he would cut his percentage for booking games in half -- provide a home grounds for
either the Cuban Stars or the Royal Giants -- and allow the visiting clubs to play at either Dexter Park or Farmer's Oval. 54

The critical assessments of both leagues were hardly debatable. Both leagues recognized that overall reorganization was needed if they were to survive. As the league owners became more aware of the deteriorating economic conditions of blacks, an effort was made to save their struggling leagues.
REFERENCE LIST


7. Ibid.


10. For a perspective regarding the social and political influence of black entrepreneurs see Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom*, 357-60.

11. For an article praising Bolden's accomplishments see C.M. Brumbach, "BOLDEN TYPE OF MANAGER WHO INSPIRES PLAYERS BY HIS FIRM FAITH IN THEM," *Philadelphia Tribune* February 7 1925, 10.


35. "'Cum' Posey, Manager of Homestead Grays, And League Bosses, Agree To Disagree As Sequel To Hard Fought Battle Of Wits," Pittsburgh Courier January 16 1926, 12.


42. "COCKRELL FINED AND SUSPENDED FOR 5 DAYS," Pittsburgh Courier August 14 1926, 15.

43. "LEAGUE MAGNATES IN CLOSED SESSION," Kansas City Call March 19 1926, 6; "EIGHT CLUB SOUTHERN BASEBALL LEAGUE," Pittsburgh Courier April 3 1926, 14. The Southern Baseball League will be discussed in detail in chapter eleven.


46. "GILMORE SEeks TO BE HEAD OF NATIONAL LEAGUE; TAKES RAP AT WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS," Defender September 11 1926, I, 8.

47. Ibid.


49. Ibid.

50. For the efforts of the league owners to address the World Series dilemma, see "HILLDALE MEETS WINNER OF KANSAS CITY-ST. LOUIS SERIES; NEW YORK GETS 1 GAME," Defender September 19 1925, II, 7; "WORLD SERIES DOPE," Defender September 26 1925, II, 5.
51. Lanctot, Fair Dealing, 140-41; Frank Young, "SELFISH MR. BOLDEN," Defender October 9 1926, I, 8.


CHAPTER XI

1927-28 REORGANIZATION
THE EASTERN COLORED LEAGUE DISBANDS

As a means to insure their survival, club owners in both the Negro National and Eastern Colored Leagues realized the need for sweeping administrative and financial changes. Both circuits would elect presidents who were not affiliated with any league club, revised the salary cap, and maintained the ban on players who jumped their contracts. Negro National League owners would also make an effort to change their negative image by, once again, becoming involved in community affairs. But the continued ban on contract jumpers would become a controversial decision, and would be instrumental in the collapse of the ECL.

ECL publicity director Lloyd Thompson stated that the commissioners would address the constructive criticism given by several newspapers at the annual winter meeting. The league officials agreed that the newly elected president should have the power of absolute decision to decide questions submitted to him by the various commissioners.
Several candidates were considered, including local park politician Ed Henry, and former Pennsylvania Boxing Commissioner Charles Fred White. The league eventually chose Isaac Nutter, an attorney from Atlantic City, who had once been counsel for John Connor and Baron Wilkins.¹

The NNL quickly followed suit and elected William C. Hueston, a black municipal judge from Gary, Indiana. Hueston epitomized the black professional that emerged in the early twentieth century. Originally from Kansas City, Missouri, Hueston was a District Grand Master of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows. This fraternal society had a history for providing benefits to individuals suffering from illness, subsidizing some modest relief to widows, and donating to other charities. Hueston was also the head of the New Educational Committee formed by the Elks, and a prominent member in the A.M.E. church circles. In his five-year reign as NNL president, Hueston would make concerted efforts to re-establish professional baseball's involvement in community affairs. One of his first acts in his inaugural year, was to have each club play one benefit game on their home grounds for flood sufferers.²

In addition to the election of a league president, the NNL would establish a working agreement with the reorganized Negro Southern League (NSL). The NSL was organized one month after the NNL, and would operate
sporadically throughout the 1920s. It originally began with clubs in eight cities: Birmingham, Nashville, Knoxville, Atlanta, Pensacola, Montgomery, New Orleans, and Jacksonville. According to the Defender, as early as 1921 Rube Foster had aspirations that NSL would become associate members of the NNL. On April 10, 1926, the Pittsburgh Courier reported that the NSL had reorganized, with Chattanooga and Albany, Georgia, replacing Pensacola and Knoxville.  

The driving force behind the NSL was league president Bert Roddy. Roddy attended the NNL winter meetings to help formulate a working agreement between the two leagues. It was a response to the occasional raiding of the southern circuit's player rosters by NNL clubs. A plan was adopted whereby the NSL would become associate members of the NNL; Birmingham and Memphis would also become members of the senior circuit. The agreement also specified that there would be no raid for players, and that both a minimum and maximum price would be established regarding the purchase of players. Trades or transfer of players between owners had to be ratified by the league officials, with disputes being settled by the NNL president. Exhibition games in southern league territory must be played with NSL clubs. While the NSL attempted to protect its players under contract, the agreement also served as a means of alleviating the travel expenses incurred by NNL clubs.  

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While both leagues elected new presidents, and the NNL formulated a working agreement with the NSL, an effort was made to secure tighter restrictions on players. Both leagues recognized the deteriorating economic climate of blacks, and made concerted efforts to reduce operating expenses. The salary cap was reduced from $3,000 to $2,700. The ECL cut its minimum guarantee for weekday games from $150 to $125, while the NNL eliminated the 10 percent fee for booking games. Predictably, the salary reduction impacted negatively upon player morale. Realizing that players might be persuaded by contract offers from independent teams, particularly Posey's Homestead Grays, both leagues agreed to continue their five year ban on contract jumpers. 5

At first, it appears that the ban was effective. In January, the Pittsburgh Courier announced that Oscar Charleston had signed with the Homestead Grays. By March, the Baltimore Afro-American announced that Charleston would remain with Harrisburg. Initially, Charleston was traded to Baltimore for Jud "Babe Ruth" Wilson. When he informed Baltimore Black Sox owner George Rossiter that he would not report, Harrisburg owner Colonel Strother called off the deal, allowing Charleston to remain with the Giants. The Harrisburg manager changed his mind due to his belief
that there was a future in Organized Black Baseball, and for the fact that Mrs. Charleston did not like the idea of going to Baltimore.  

While Charleston decided to remain in the ECL, five highly recognized players attempted to test the five year ban by failing to report to their clubs. Raleigh "Bizz" Mackey of Hilldale, Herbert "Rap" Dixon of Harrisburg, Frank Duncan of Kansas City, and Andy Cooper of Detroit embarked on a barnstorming tour of Hawaii and Japan with Lonnie Goodwin's Philadelphia Royal Giants of the California Winter League. Mackey was an incredibly talented catcher who gained a reputation for being cool under pressure, and his defensive skills were unsurpassed in the history of black baseball. Dixon was considered one of the better power hitters of the 1920s. His nickname was derived from the Rappahannock River in Virginia. Duncan was also one of the top receivers in black baseball. He was a master of handling pop flies, and could cut down would-be base stealers with one of the best throwing arms in the league. Cooper was the Stars' pitching ace, who had superb control and an exceptional and effective array of breaking pitches, including a great curveball, change-up, and slider.  

From the outset, the ban became a source of controversy. ECL president Nutter opposed the suspension, stating that the ruling was too drastic and he would make
an effort to reduce it. Nutter added that the owners as well as the players were responsible for the previous conditions, and it was unjust to bar a repenting player.8

Kansas City Call sportswriter Carl Beckwith was suspicious of the way the club owners, particularly the ECL magnates, sought to tighten restriction on players. According to the Beckwith, Ed Bolden had written a letter to NNL secretary Quincy Gilmore asking what the West were going to do about their contract jumpers. Gilmore indicated that the NNL would adhere to the agreement, and as far as the West was concern the issue was settled. Bolden was looking for a loop hole, since the players were not subject to suspension until the season started. Another way the ECL attempted to undermine the ban, was a statement which indicated that the men were "really not subject to suspension because they were not playing with an outlaw club." It prompted Beckwith to ask if the Homestead Grays were not outlaws then what were they? Since the players were not with the clubs at the start of the season, they were suspended, and Bolden had no reason to ask what had been done by the NNL.9

Two eastern sportswriters were also suspicious of the way the ECL was attempting to undermine the ban. According to the Baltimore Afro-American sportswriter Walter Reeves, Bolden had discussed the matter with some of the officials and they were willing to let Mackey return.
This prompted Reeves to argue that the suspended players should be kept out of the game regardless of their ability. "In order to make the league a permanent, stable, and well thought of organization," Reeves added, "the rules and laws must be respected regardless of any individual." As a means of compromise, Judge Hueston recommended a 30 day suspension as an alternative to the five year ban. John Howe of the Philadelphia Tribune surmised that a 30 day suspension would mean nothing to a player who was offered even a modest sum of cash to continue playing winter baseball. The Tribune sportswriter added a much stiffer penalty was advisable. In the end, Nutter suspended Mackey and Dixon for less than two weeks upon their return in July. Judge Hueston suspended Duncan and Cooper for 30 days and tacked on a $200 fine. 10

Both Hueston and Nutter were confronted with an interleague dispute involving Alonzo Montalvo of the Lincoln Giants. Possessing a reputation as a home run hitter, Montalvo was a star attraction for Abe Molina's Cuban Stars. He once hit three homers against the American Giants and also hit for high average, posting batting averages of .337, .308, and .346 from 1923 to 1925. Montalvo sat out the 1926 season after being denied a pay raise, and subsequently signed with the Lincoln Giants in 1927. The NNL claimed Montalvo was still the property of the western Cubans, citing the reserve clause enacted by both leagues.
that bound players to their club, unless officially released. Keenan refused to return Montalvo, pointing out that his name was omitted from the Cubans reserve list. In essence, Montalvo was a free agent. ¹¹

NNL secretary Quincy Gilmore realized that Montalvo's omission from the reserve list was an oversight, and that the league was reserving him. Bolden refused to play the Lincoln Giants unless Montalvo was removed from the lineup. Keenan yielded to the Hilldale leader's request. But the Lincoln owner also advocated that Judge Landis arbitrate this interleague dispute, illustrating Keenan's lack of faith in the authority of each league. Keenan eventually agreed not to play Montalvo until the two league presidents reached a decision. ¹²

On May 14, the *Baltimore Afro-American* reported that Keenan presented his case to Isaac Nutter. The ECL president decided that since Montalvo's name was not on the reserve list, he was a free agent. One week later, Judge Hueston indicated that Montalvo was still a member of the western Cubans. If any team attempted to play Montalvo, it would be considered "by the NNL as an unfriendly act and would be dealt with accordingly." ¹³

No other incident highlighted the internal dissension among ECL owners than the Montalvo incident. It also illustrated that Nutter was a mere figurehead as league president. According to the *New York Age*, at least two
commissioners would oppose Nutter's ruling. Cuban Stars' owner Alex Pompez objected to Keenan signing Montalvo. While the Cubans' owner would not openly admit it, Pompez's objection was based on racial grounds. He felt there were enough American players for the other teams to select without signing Cubans. Apparently, Pompez had a gentlemen's agreement with the other commissioners that they would not sign Cuban players. The Cuban owner was especially incensed by Julio Rojo's willingness to play with teams other than the Cubans. Bolden was also opposed to the Lincolns having Montalvo. The Hilldale magnate feared reprisals by the NNL, leading to another black baseball war. While the NNL was in no position to fight a war over players, Bolden did not want to take any chances. 14

The league commissioners urged Keenan to return Montalvo to the West. The Lincoln owner refused and abruptly resigned from the league. Keenan alleged that both Strong and Pompez engineered the decision. Moreover, the Montalvo incident provided Keenan an excuse to withdraw from the league. In addition, to the Cuban star, Keenan had also signed Floyd "Jelly" Gardner from the American Giants. 15

While the withdrawal of the Lincoln Giants wreak havoc upon the ECL playing schedule, two other clubs in both leagues were also experiencing internal problems. With
Rube Foster incapacitated, the former NNL president's widow, Sarah, and his not so silent partner, John Schorling, struggled to gain control of the Windy City club. Peterson states that Foster's failure to make a written contract with Schorling would cost his wife dearly. While Mrs. Foster was in possession of the player contracts, Schorling still owned the ballpark. She was completely ignorant of her husband's business arrangement, and without a written agreement, would realize nothing from the club Foster built. Schorling would run the club until the spring of 1928, when he would sell the club to William E. Trimble, a white florist from Princeton, Illinois. 16

In the East, the Baltimore Black Sox was also embroiled in an internal dispute. Black Sox business manager Charles Spedden was ousted by George Rossiter after the ECL's World Series share of $385 was reported missing. In August, the Black Sox suffered another mishap when several players were injured in a car accident near Aberdeen, Maryland. Local support dwindled for the club during the 1927 season, leading to one observer to ask "What's the matter with the fans? They don't turn out like they use to!" 17

Hilldale was also hampered by a series of disturbing developments. Declining fan support and the league's inability to resolve both the scheduling dilemma and umpiring finally took their toll on Ed Bolden. He still maintained his full-time job at the post office, and had
been force to take several periods of unpaid leave to attend to league matters. In late September, Bolden finally succumbed to the pressure and suffered a nervous breakdown, 13 months after his old adversary Rube Foster's mental collapse. Bolden would remain out of both team and league affairs for several months. The HBEC chose Charles Freeman to replace Bolden as president. 18

Bolden's collapse culminated a disastrous season for both leagues. Both circuits still struggled with their usual obstacles: player discipline, poor umpiring, and an unbalanced schedule. While NNL owners would struggle to stay together as an organization, several ECL owners contemplated going their separate ways.

1928

While the commissioners held their winter meeting as usual, the breakup of the ECL was inevitable. Colonel Strothers's resignation from the league began a domino effect of club owners leaving the circuit. Ed Bolden recovered from his illness and assumed control of the Hilldale corporation. His first official act was to withdraw from the ECL, while at the same time, take pot shots at some of the former commissioners in the press. While Isaac Nutter attempted to hold the league together, the ECL commissioners returned to independent ball. When the majority of the eastern clubs experienced a dismal year financially, a call was made to organize a new league.
In the West, Judge Hueston continued to make efforts to change the NNL's negative image. He made an attempt to provide stronger leadership, while also attempting to improve the league's community relations. Yet his sincere efforts were constantly marred by the deteriorating economic climate.

On January 21, 1928, in the pages of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, Cum Posey offered another critical analysis of the eastern situation in black baseball. The Homestead magnate predicted there would be no eastern league within the next two years, and offered suggestions to respond to the ECL's current plight. First, the commissioners must insist upon Nat Strong providing a home grounds for either the Brooklyn Royal Giants or the Cuban Stars, or drop them from the league. If it was necessary to drop the Royal Giants, then the club should be classified as an "outlaw." Posey cited that each club, with the exception of the Lincoln Giants and Baltimore Black Sox, would lose one or two good dates in and around New York. He concluded that the amount of revenue loss should be minimal, when the clubs realize the money lost by playing the Royals. While Posey recognized the significance in achieving a balanced schedule as means of stabilizing territorial markets, his analysis still reflected the booking mentality that governed scheduling decisions. 19
Strong's involvement in the ECL resulted in the circuit becoming a cutthroat market. In many ways, the ECL resembled the International League of Baseball Clubs in America and Cuba of the early 1900s. While Bolden held the position as league chairman, Strong influenced league decisions behind the scenes. Throughout his career, Strong had an uncanny ability to make alliances that insured his autonomy in the New York market. It was unclear why Strong was adamant in not securing a home grounds for the Brooklyn Royal Giants. His obsession in forcing John Connor out of the baseball business does suggest that racial prejudice was one motive, but this obsession would cost Strong and the ECL its most potentially lucrative market, Harlem. In the 1910s, Harlem more than demonstrated its ability to be the black baseball capital of the East. But because Strong focused so much energy in ousting Connor, and for the fact that neither the Royals' owner or James Keenan had the business acumen to purchase Olympic Field, Harlem became a neglected market.

A second factor Posey advocated was an assessment of the financial status of the Bacharach Giants. The Atlantic City Bacharachs were haunted by the ghost of John Connor. Tom Jackson and Hammond Daniels' break with the New York cafe owner had proved to be an ill-advised decision. The break resulted in being ousted out of Harlem and becoming solely reliant on the ECL's smallest city,
Atlantic City, New Jersey. The seaside resort city had a total population of a mere 102,024 in the 1920s. In an effort to make ends meet, the Bacharachs' owners looked to Nat Strong to book games for them in New York. The constant transition in the club's ownership further illustrated the Bacharach's financial instability. At the beginning of the 1927 season, Isaac Washington, owner of the Blue Kitten cafe in Atlantic City, bought out the other owners and retained Jackson as his booking agent.²⁰

Next, Posey suggested that the Lincoln Giants should be brought back into the league. Along with the Baltimore Black Sox, the Lincolns should play more games away from their home grounds on Sundays. Posey recognized that both the Harrisburg Giants and the Bacharachs needed some home games on the weekends, further illustrating the need to balanced the playing the schedule. Both Rossiter and Keenan were proponents of league ball, and according to Posey, were willing to adhere to the business practices necessary to sustain a circuit. However, Keenan's constant war with Strong, and Rossiter's poor relations with Baltimore's African American populace were constant obstacles both magnates confronted during the ECL's brief existence.

Posey's final suggestion was directed at both the NNL and the ECL. The Homestead owner pointed out that rowdyism was ruining the game on the field. Players should be fined and suspended for constantly holding up games,
utilizing "the stall." League owners should provide an expense account for the league presidents to visit cities where crucial series were being played. After observing games as an unbiased spectator, the presidents could identify the perpetrators who engage in destructive behavior on the field. To ensure their authority, the owners should stick by their selected official or sell their franchise.

Finally, Posey offered some qualifications that would constitute a good president. The president did not have to be a well known judge or leading attorney to be president. The leagues needed a fighter who would make a decision and stand by it. Black baseball fans, and apparently neither the players or owners, had no respect for diplomacy. In Posey's view, "our good black professional men are too diplomatic to cause the best clubs to be without the services of their best player for two weeks in the middle of the season." He suggested that both Frank Young in the West and Rollo Wilson in the East "would put more fear in the average club owner and player than all the black attorneys and judges in the U.S."

The ECL's annual joint session was highlighted by the return of James Keenan, and the conspicuous absence of Colonel Strother. After agreeing to return Alonzo Montalvo to the Cuban Stars, Keenan was invited back into the league. At the Lincoln owner's request, the league's waiver rules were clarified and amended to prevent similar
confusion in the future. On the other hand, Colonel Strother had withdrawn his Harrisburg Giants prior to the joint session. Like the Bacharach Giants, Harrisburg represented one of the league's smaller markets, with a total population of 161,672. This was one reason why Strong, Bolden, Keenan, and Rossiter refused to schedule weekend games in the Pennsylvania capital. Strother's was also plagued by having one of the league's largest payrolls, with players like Oscar Charleston and John Beckwith on his roster. In addition, Harrisburg's disputed second place finish in the second half of the 1927 season added to the Giants's owner decision to leave. 21

In early March, the ECL received another blow when Nat Strong withdrew his Brooklyn Royal Giants. Evidently, ECL president Isaac Nutter had heeded Cum Posey's advice, regarding Strong providing a home grounds for the Royals. When informed of this decision, Strong chose to withdraw. Additionally, Strong was also opposed to the new way in which teams would share the gate receipts on a percentage basis. 22

At the same time, Ed Bolden had fully recovered from his physical and mental difficulties, and had gradually become active in league affairs. In February, Bolden was re-elected secretary-treasurer of the ECL and later attended the joint session in Philadelphia. He issued a statement to the Tribune, blaming the league's problems on the "narrow
minds and selfish motives of some of the commissioners." Bolden also suggested that both the press and the players be allowed to attend league meetings to "curb the underhand work" of the owners. By March, Bolden had regained the confidence and support of the other corporate members, and made his move to regain control. On March 8, 1928, George Freeman and his ally, Lloyd Thompson, were voted out at a corporate meeting. Bolden regained the presidency with George Mayo, becoming vice-president; Mark Studevan, treasurer; and Thomas Jenkins, secretary. One week later, Hilldale withdrew from the ECL. 23

Responding to why the HBEC withdrew, Bolden indicated that Hilldale was "through losing money in an impossible league," and would return to independent ball where the team once realized "plenty of money." Bolden continued his attack on the ECL commissioners for rejecting his plan for rotating umpires, and the profound lack of cooperation among league owners. He remarked in disgust that "when one man quits and then comes back a few weeks later and when one teams plays forty home games and another tour, then it is time for a halt." Clearly Bolden's remark were directed at both James Keenan and Nat Strong. Bolden issued another evasive charge at Strong, complaining that "some
clubs come to a park and during the season, take away thousands of dollars, yet they never have a park to give anything in return." 24

While Harrisburg, Brooklyn, and Hilldale withdrew from the league, Isaac Nutter attempted to hold the circuit together. Baltimore, the Lincoln Giants, and the Bacharachs agreed to remain in the league. Nutter had also managed to lure the Cuban Stars, with a promise of receiving 40 percent of the leagues gate receipts instead of the usual 35 percent. The league began negotiations with the Eastern League All-Stars, a recently organized Philadelphia area team owned by gambler Smithie Lucas. In a bold, though naive, move Nutter declared that the players of both Hilldale and Brooklyn were the property of the league. The ECL president added, that "The best thing that happen to the league was Strong's dropping out," and further complained that Strong was satisfied as long as he "could have his way about everything." From this point, Nutter declared the ECL would function as an organization and not as a "one or two man operation." 25

By April, the Eastern League All-Stars, renamed the Philadelphia Tigers, had joined the ECL. Lucas attempted to secure Elk Park, located at 48th and Spruce Streets in Philadelphia as the team's home grounds, but Bolden, still well connected with white park owners, blocked the move and secured the park for Hilldale. With the Tigers
unable to acquire a playing facility, and a last minute effort to lure Bolden back into the league ending in failure, the ECL appeared all but finish. 26

On April 13, the league was apparently disbanded in a meeting attended by Bolden, Rossiter, Pompeo, and Washington. But once again, the league refused to die. The Philadelphia Tigers had managed to obtain a playing facility at Penncoyd Park, a less accessible park at Ridge Avenue and Lincoln Drive. The ECL began its season on April 29 with five clubs: Baltimore, Lincoln, Bacharachs, Philadelphia, and the Cuban Stars. Within three weeks, Pompeo withdrew his Stars and were soon followed by the Lincoln Giants. Nutter insisted the league would continue and attempted to fine replacements. But in June 1928, less than five and a half years after its formation, the ECL collapsed. 27

The ECL's disbandment had little effect on Ed Bolden, Nat Strong, or Cum Posey. The HBEC had little trouble luring former league clubs as gate attractions for Hilldale Park. In New York, Strong continued to book black clubs to face the Bushwicks nearly every Sunday at Dexter Park. His $600 flat guarantee for a Sunday doubleheader continued to entice black clubs in the East to play in Gotham. Yet Strong invested little interest or money in the Brooklyn Royal Giants. Posey's Homestead Grays had become exceptionally popular. The Grays had successfully debut
against the Lincoln Giants in New York and Philadelphia in 1927. In mid-September 1928, Posey and Bolden arranged two four-game series in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Columbus. Hilldale won the first series three games to one in Philadelphia, with the Grays returning the favor in Pittsburgh and Columbus.  

While both Hilldale and Homestead realized profits in 1928, the other eastern clubs fared poorly. Both the Black Sox and Lincolns were compelled by the late season to schedule white teams or weaker black clubs as opponents for Sunday games. The Bacharakhs did poorly as well. The Cuban Stars barnstormed through New England, while the Royal Giants toured upstate New York. Despite realizing profits, attendance at Hilldale continued to decline. The average attendance for weekend games at Hilldale was less than 900 a game. Bolden had been forced to transfer Thursday games to Elk Park in June after attendance had fallen to barely 300 per game.  

The decline in attendance led to a call by several black sportswriters for the formation of a new league. Led by Rollo Wilson, Bill Gibson, and John Howe, eastern sportswriters suggested that a new league would revitalize sagging interest in black baseball in the East. In August 1928, the Eastern Sportswriters Association, an organization formed a year earlier, proposed the formation of a new league and appealed to Ed Bolden to organize it. Despite
their criticism of the Hilldale leader in the past, most sportswriters respected Bolden's 18 years of baseball experience with Hilldale, and his involvement with the NNL, ECL, and PBA. In addition, Rollo Wilson appealed to Judge Hueston to encourage the eastern magnates to organize. Wilson wanted Hueston to indicate that he would both welcome and cooperate with them. 30

Cum Posey also seemed receptive to the idea of a new league. The Grays' successful swing through the East, with victories over Hilldale, Lincoln, and Baltimore, facilitated this positive response. The possibility of a new league featuring Hilldale and Homestead was enthusiastically promoted in the black press. By December, Bolden was now receptive to the reorganization of the ECL.

Judge Hueston's second year as NNL president began with a transfer in ownership of the Detroit Stars. Steve Pierce sold his interest of the club to a contingent headed by Mose L. Walker and John Roesink. Walker had served in the United States Custom Service for twenty-three years, and had been located in Detroit since 1915. Roesink, a forty-five year old clothier, became the third white owner in the NNL. He already owned Mack Park, the Stars' home grounds, and had made a fortune during Detroit's boom decade to operate three successful downtown stores. Although Roesink would later inspire the wrath of many black
Detroiters, the players generally considered the haberdasher a first-class owner. The Stars would be well paid and continued to travel by train under Roesink's regime. 31

At the NNL's winter meeting, Hueston attempted to exhibit stronger leadership, a characteristic the circuit desperately needed. He delivered a fiery speech that stunned the older members of the league. Hueston indicated that he had not been so "dumb" in baseball matters as some had thought. He had assessed the NNL's plight and recommended that players be fined for rowdy behavior on the field, club owners reduce their player rosters, raising the entry fee, and improve upon the league's umpiring. The player roster was reduced to 14, including the manager, and as a means to reduce travel expenses, exhibition games would be played to and from league cities whenever possible. According to the Defender, Hueston's speech was met with a five-minute applause. 32

As a means of improving the league's image, Hueston promoted the NNL in the spirit of Booker T. Washington. When asked "what does baseball mean to the American Negro as played in the National League," Hueston replied:

First, American life so far as spirit is concerned is based on competition. To pit ones self against another is the thrill which enables the average American to carry on. Second, civilization has demonstrated that sports, in the form of games, are a necessary essential in nation building. Third, baseball is the national game of this great country. Fourth, and since art and athletics furnish the greatest opportunity for the American Negro, to demonstrate, that he acts and re-acts, to all human
activities, just the same as all other people. Baseball gives a great opportunity for the Negro to demonstrate the above rule, and in our league, I state without hesitation, we are showing that we can and are carrying our end.

In a response to the economic downswing, Hueston pointed out with great pride that the NNL furnished employment to 500 people, 97 1/2 percent of whom are black, at a cost of nearly $400,000. Moreover, much like Ed Bolden, Hueston argued that baseball had done more to break down racial barriers than any other institution in American society.\textsuperscript{33}

For the second straight season, Hueston engaged league clubs in black community affairs. On August 11, the \textit{Defender} reported that Detroit would play Chicago at Comiskey Park, as part of Elks Field Day. The league game was part of the field day activities of the Elks, who would be in their annual convention. Preceding the game, a band contest for prizes totaling $1,000 would also be held. This event featured a band from New York, called the Mighty Monarchs, who had previously won the event three times. Unfortunately for the league president, rain canceled the game with the score tied 1-1 in the third inning.\textsuperscript{34}

The cancellation of the Elk Field Day activities was emblematic of the dark clouds that hovered over the NNL. Club owners were still unwilling to break from the booking system to achieve a balanced schedule. While the owners complained about the high travel expenses, they would still maintain Birmingham as a league club, resulting in the
continued extended jumps to the Deep South. Moreover, the deteriorating economic climate still made its impact upon league attendance, and like the East, NNL clubs played fewer games with white semipros. As the 1929 season approached, the NNL would experience its worst season.
REFERENCE LIST


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19. Cum Posey, "THE SPORTIVE REALM," Pittsburgh Courier January 21 1928, II, 5. In addition, utilizing Posey's analysis as a frame, I attempt to bring into context the forces that impacted upon the eastern black clubs in the following paragraphs.


24. "Bolden Tells," II.


27. "IS EASTERN LEAGUE DEAD OR FOOLING?" Baltimore Afro-American April 28 1928, II.


29. Ibid.


CHAPTER XII

DECLINE AND FALL
1929-30

By 1929, Organized Black Baseball reflected an air of uncertainty. Despite Judge Hueston's efforts to promote the Negro National League as a symbol of race pride and racial solidarity, league owners did not respond positively to the league president's diplomatic leadership. In the East, the former Eastern Colored League clubs would reorganize as the American Negro League (ANL). While the ANL owners would exhibit a willingness to cooperate within the framework of a league structure, they still could not overcome the previous obstacles of the ECL.

On January 25, 1930, the Pittsburgh Courier reported that since the NNL's inception, "there had always been an uncertain air to the league's make up at each winter meeting." No statement could better describe the NNL's existence in the 1920s. League formation was based on the premise that eight clubs operated in the circuit, irregardless of territorial considerations, or whether
the club had a playing facility. While Foster envisioned a black league patterned after the white major leagues, there was no effort to restrict cities for league entry to a certain size, or require them to have a park to play in. Foster's constant franchise shifting resulted in the NNL being top heavy, with only Kansas City, St. Louis, Chicago, and Detroit being the only stable franchises.

Essentially, three factors contributed to these clubs remaining somewhat stable. First, each club either leased or owned their playing facility. This enabled these teams to maintain a local following; this fan base was contingent upon these clubs sustaining a winning record. Being a winning club also made them a strong gate attraction on the road. A second factor was that each club possessed a strong management team. In spite of a shaky beginning, the St. Louis Stars became a more stable franchise under the direction of Dr. Bernard Key. While the club still maintained a cooperative business structure, advocated by Foster during the Stars' lean years, Key was the driving force. He also served as the league's interim president after the collapse of Rube Foster. The Stars were the only club in the league that owned their home grounds. Finally, each club owner had successfully operated their segregated enterprise within the framework of their white semipro scene.
But Foster's constant franchise shifting also resulted in both the league's market instability and high travel expenses. As early as 1927, sportswriter A.D. Williams had pointed out how the presence of traveling teams undermined any effort to control consumer markets. Because they had no home grounds, and for the fact the league would have a club in Toledo one year and Milwaukee the next, the NNL sustained itself in only four markets, as opposed to eight. The presence of southern clubs, primarily Birmingham and Memphis, resulted in high travel expenses for the northern franchises. Despite the owners' constant complaining about these extended jumps, the NNL still maintained Birmingham, Memphis, and at other times Nashville, in the circuit.  

Although the evidence is limited, several factors contributed to these southern franchises remaining in the NNL. According to the Defender, Birmingham was considered the best team in the league in regards to attendance. Census figures indicate that Birmingham had a total population of 382,792, with a black population of 157,001, making it the second largest market in the league. Like the Kansas City Monarchs, the Black Barons rented a Southern League park, playing their home games there when their landlord was on the road. Memphis, on the other hand, drew poorly at home, but was a good gate attraction on the road.  

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A final factor dealt with players. It appeared that southern clubs did not have a good marriage with the northern ones. While an agreement between the NNL and the NSL was formalized, southern teams were still vulnerable to player raids by the senior circuit. What NNL clubs could not gain in profits was subsidize by acquiring a blue chip prospect in their tours of the South. According to the Pittsburgh Courier, player raiding had almost decimated both the Birmingham and Memphis franchises. This could explain why one year these clubs would be in the league, and absent in another. 4

However in 1929, two of the NNL's more stable franchises began to crumble at their foundations. The Chicago American Giants had fell on hard times since the collapse of Rube Foster. In addition to the power struggle between John Schorling and Mrs. Foster, player morale sank to an all time low since William Trimble purchased the club. On March 16, the Defender reported that five players would not play for the Windy City club. Four of these players, Pythias Russ, George Hamey, George Sweat, and Willie Himes were employed by the post office, and they did not want to relinquish their full-time jobs to play baseball. The players did indicate that they would join the Quincy Street station in the post office league, and play on the weekends. 5
The fifth American Giant to call it quits was player-manager Dave Malarcher. A smooth fielding third baseman who did his best hitting in the clutch, Malarcher was a speedy switch-hitter who could bunt and run in the Rube Foster style of baseball. He began his career with the Indianapolis ABCs in 1916, playing for C.I. Taylor. After serving in World War I, he joined the American Giants. Malarcher assumed the managerial duties after Foster's collapse, and led the club to the World Series championship in 1926 and 1927. Malarcher told Defender sportswriter Frank Young that he had been engaged in insurance and real estate during the winter months, and had contemplated devoting all his energy in that direction. More important, he was also displeased in being a manager in "name only." Combined with a salary dispute with Trimble, Malarcher left the club and would eventually form the Columbia Giants, an independent club he would manage for the next three years. 6

In addition to the breakup of the American Giants, black baseball in Detroit had reached its nadir. Fans began turning out in smaller numbers, due primarily to the behavior of the Stars' white owner, John Roesink. Allowing Mack Park to deteriorate, and his racial slurs had all but alienated black Detroiterers. For example, Roesink attempted to have Stars' manager Bingo DeMoss arrested, when DeMoss admonished the park owner for using
abusive language, due to some fans inquiring for a drinking fountain. For years, former owners Tenny Blount and Steve Pierce had pleaded with Roesink to renovate the park, as a means of justifying the increase in ticket prices. The presence of white umpires, white concessionaires, and white ticket vendors -- particularly at a time when blacks were losing their jobs -- further incensed African American fans. 7

Several other incidents Roesink engaged in that turned off black Detroiters. Dislike for the haberdasher escalated when Roesink began greeting black fans with pet remarks, like "shines" and "coons." In 1923, Roesink attempted to segregate blacks in certain boxes, while reserving others for whites. Only Tenny Blount's intervention prevented the move. It was only after a heated argument that Blount convinced Roesink that attendance would decline, if he constituted racial discrimination at the park. Roesink's behavior had become so obnoxious that Blount had to bar him from the park for a month. 8

But on July 7, 1929, a tragic event occurred that intensified the hostility between Roesink and Detroit's black fans. The Stars were scheduled to play a doubleheader with the Kansas City Monarchs. When both teams arrived at Mack Park, they discovered that rain, which canceled Saturday's game, had made the field a soggy mess. It was customary for club officials to dry out the infield and

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base paths by pouring gasoline over the dirt then lighting it. After spreading two five-gallon cans of gas over the infield, a sudden commotion took place under the right field stands, where several hundred early arrivals were sitting out a brief rain shower. Apparently, a cigarette had ignited the debris beneath the grandstand. Fire investigators concluded that park employees had left a trail of flammable liquid, while carrying the cans of gas onto the field. ⁹

Reportedly, many were injured in the Mack Park fire. While some spectators leaped from the back of the stands, others, making a hurried exit below the stands, were struck by those who leaped from above. The fire had spread so rapidly that the roof of the stands fell in and collapsed, injuring many who were still attempting to escape through the exits below. According to investigators, it was remarkable that no one was killed. ¹⁰

While approximately 220 people were injured, the fire resulted in the permanent damage of Roesink's reputation. All but one of the casualties were black. Injuries ranged from severe skull and spinal fractures to broken limbs and serious burns. While the fire was declared an accident, many black Detroiters blamed Roesink for the tragedy, who they suspected was lying when the park owner insisted that no cans of gas had been carelessly stowed away under the stands. Fueling the anger, was an incident that occurred
shortly before the fire. Convinced that the intermittent rain would cancel the game, many of the fans had descended on the box office to demand refunds. Roesink refused, and then put in a riot call to the police. 11

The damage had been done. The following year, Roesink built a new stadium in the ethnic enclave of Hamtramck. This 2.1 square mile village, located completely within Detroit's city limits, was the home to more than 56,000 Poles, most of them foreign born. Undoubtedly, Roesink envisioned attracting both spectators and factory teams from Dodge Main's huge work force. What Roesink overlooked was by the late 1920s, white semipros had begin playing fewer games with black clubs. He also neglected the fact that black clubs were becoming more reliant upon the patronage of black fans for economic survival. This fact became crystal clear for the Stars' white owner during the 1930 season. On August 9, 1930, the Baltimore Afro-American reported that the fans had organized to boycott Hamtramck Stadium. The boycott proved successful; less than 500 fans witness a doubleheader between Louisville and Detroit. 12

The Mack Park fire culminated what was reportedly the NNL's worst season. Clearly Roesink's behavior subverted Hueston's effort to change the league's negative image. It also exemplified that the economic downswing alone was not the sole reason attendance began to decline
at black games. While the Kansas City Monarchs won both halves of the split season, J.L. Wilkinson was already contemplating pulling his club out of the NNL. Both the economic climate and scheduling fewer games with white semipros, made league affiliation less attractive each year. While Judge Hueston attempted to hold the league together with optimistic race rhetoric, the NNL was hanging on by a thread.\footnote{13}

On January 15, 1929, former ECL owners, along with Cum Posey and a representative of the Washington Black Sox, met at the Citizens Republican Club and formed the American Negro League. Six clubs constituted the new league: Hilldale, Baltimore, Lincoln, Cubans, Homestead, and Atlantic City. Ed Bolden was elected as the league's first president, along with James Keenan as vice-president, Rollo Wilson, secretary, and George Rossiter, treasurer. Wilson would also handle the league's statistics, publicity, and other various administrative functions. Nat Strong was invited to the league meeting, but declined to attend. While Strong was in favor of a mutual association, he would not provide a home grounds for the Brooklyn Royal Giants.\footnote{14}

The ANL appeared to be little more than a renovated version of the ECL. An 80 game split season was adopted, along with a reserve clause, a system of fines and suspensions, and plan for rotating umpires. Scheduling was hampered by the presence of two traveling teams,
Homestead and the Cuban Stars. The Grays arranged to continue their occasional use of Forbes Field and also leased Hooper Field at Cleveland. The Cuban Stars would use Baltimore, Darby, and Lincoln when their parks were available, or neutral grounds like Dexter Park in Brooklyn or Island Park in Harrisburg. 15

There was no evidence to suggest that a national agreement between the ANL and the NNL was sought. According to the Pittsburgh Courier, Judge Hueston ordered his club owners to "lay off" signing players from the East. Reportedly, Hueston had received several letters from ballplayers who wanted to go West. 16

There were some characteristics that distinguished the ANL from the ECL. The new league had the presence of only two white owners, Rossiter and Keenan. Bolden's powers as president exceeded his authority as ECL chairman, allowing him to implement several progressive policies. The ANL attempted to hold down salaries by setting the roster limit to 14 until June 15, with an expansion to 16 by July. Even more significant was the increased cooperation among the club owners to adhere to league policy. This was due primarily because of the absence of Nat Strong. Baltimore, Lincoln, and Hilldale were more willing to play weekend games away from the home grounds.
As a result, five of the six league clubs played at least 60 of the 80 games scheduled. Only the Cuban Stars fell short with 54. 17

While the ANL represented a step above the ECL, it still fell victim to the problems that plagued the former league. Club owners were still unwilling to enforce their policies to the letter -- especially when it involved players. This could have been due primarily because the ANL's failure to secure an agreement with the NNL. For a second time, Bizz Mackey, George Carr, Ping Gardner, and Connie Day failed to report to Hilldale at the start of the season. The policy regarding players' failing to report resulted in a suspension of one day for each day the player was late. But because these players were stars, they were back in action within weeks of their return. As Cum Posey had suggested previously, club owners were unwilling to depart with their star players during the season, especially if a crucial series was played. 18

In mid-July, Posey was at the center of controversy which could have resulted in a war between the ANL and NNL. The senior circuit was already incensed over the Homestead owner leasing Hooper Field in Cleveland. On July 13, the Defender reported that Grays pitchers Sam Streeter was in the stands at American Giant Park, watching a doubleheader between the Windy City club and the Birmingham Black Barons. Reportedly, Streeter was there
to induce Black Barons pitcher Leroy "Satchel" Paige to go East. The rumor intensified when Paige left the pitcher's mound in the six inning. However, the rumor was squelched the following day when Paige appeared in the Black Barons lineup, playing right field. As Posey pointed out, there was no agreement between both leagues protecting players under contract. Therefore, the Homestead magnate had no qualms strengthening his ball club "at the other fellow's expense." 19

Once again, Bolden became the target of criticism for the league's woes. In August, Syd Pollack, a white owner of the independent Havanna Red Sox, claimed that Bolden had not "upheld the league rules, nor enforced 50 percent of them this season." Pollack had classified the league as a "joke," and pointed out that several players had jumped Alex Pompez's Cuban Stars. These contract jumpers joined the newly organized Stars of Cuba, only to be allowed to return to the ANL without penalty. While Bolden remained silent, Posey denied the charges and defended the ANL president's leadership. The Homestead magnate characterized Pollack as an exploitive owner who underpaid his players, accepted any guarantee offered, and deceived fans with deceptive advertising. 20

But Bolden was not the only club owner targeted for criticism. Organized Black Baseball as a whole was coming under constant scrutiny. The Baltimore Afro-American stated
that the game was due for a "house cleaning and through renovation." Frank Young echoed similar sentiments from the sports desk of the Chicago Defender. Young, who was once black baseball's staunchest supporter, had now become one of its biggest critics. Interestingly enough, one of the biggest complaints both sportswriters and fans had was the failure of the owners to release statistics on a consistent basis. 21

As 1930 approached, black baseball appeared to be at a crossroads. Rube Foster's vision of increased salaries and profits failed to materialize. His American Giants had been paid salaries totaling $4,000 a month in 1920. By 1929, NNL teams were limited to a salary cap of $2,700. The stagnation of the two leagues left many sports commentators "fed up on colored baseball."

1930: TOWARD THE ERA OF JOSH AND SATCHEL

The 1930 season proved to be cataclysmic for much of black baseball. Most eastern clubs experienced their poorest seasons, as Hilldale would once again experience a hostile takeover. The Negro National League would be a circuit in name only; the withdrawal of J.L. Wilkinson marked the start of an exodus of league officials from the senior circuit. Yet the 1930 season would also experience some positive highlights, as the advent of night
baseball, a benefit game at Yankee Stadium, and the emergence of a new breed of player and owner salvage a disastrous season.

The majority of clubs that constituted the Eastern Colored League would disband in 1930. In February, the American Negro League collapsed, leading Ed Bolden to quietly begin to dissolve Hilldale. Bolden did not renew the lease of Hilldale Park and began shipping the team's property to Passion Field at 48th and Spruce Street in Philadelphia. The Atlantic City Bacharachs disbanded after a series of financially disastrous seasons. Alex Pompez's Cuban Stars failed to reorganize and were replaced by Pelayo Chacon's Stars of Cuba. Despite their dominance on the field, Homestead, Baltimore, and Lincoln struggled financially. In September, a much promoted 10 game series for eastern supremacy between Homestead and Lincoln -- played at Yankee Stadium, Forbes Field, and Biglar Field -- was a financial flop for James Keenan. Within six months, the Lincoln Giants would disband after losing their grounds at the Catholic Protectory Oval.

In Philadelphia, although Bolden attempted to dissolve the HBEC, corporate officials defeated his effort and at the annual stockholders meeting demanded an election of new officers. Former corporate members Charles Freeman, James Byrd, and Lloyd Thompson formed a coalition to oust Bolden and his supporters. The old fellows had garnered
enough support to depose the Hilldale leader and elect Lloyd Thompson as the new president, with Charles Freeman as secretary, and James Byrd, treasurer. Like the other eastern clubs, Hilldale limped through a disastrous season, while Bolden formed "Ed Bolden's Hillsdale Club." 22

In the West, the NNL would managed to struggle through a short season. The St. Louis Stars won the first half of the split season, with Detroit winning the second half. St. Louis defeated Detroit in the playoff in what proved to be the final pennant of Rube Foster's NNL. By the end of the summer, J.L. Wilkinson withdrew his Kansas City Monarchs, which became the league's most prominent club, out of the senior circuit. By 1931, Quincy Gillmore resigned the league to become president of the Texas-Oklahoma-Louisiana League, a recently organized black circuit. Dr. G. Bernard Key sold his interest in the St. Louis Stars, and also sold the club's home grounds to the city. By the end of 1931, after twelve years in operation, the Negro National League disbanded. 23

No other contemporary assessed the plight of the Negro National League more accurately than C.I. Taylor's brother, "Candy Jim." As a player, Taylor played for the St. Paul Gophers in 1909, the American Giants in 1912, and the Indianapolis ABCs in 1916. As a manager, Taylor piloted several of the franchises that slipped in and out of the NNL. He guided the Dayton Marcos in the senior circuit's
inaugural season, and by 1922, signed to manage the Cleveland Tate Stars. The following year, Taylor skippered the Toledo Tigers, but the club disbanded at mid-season. Finally in 1923, Taylor signed on with the St. Louis Stars, and led the club to the 1928 NNL pennant. Taylor indicted the players for not caring enough about the game to stay in physical condition. In regards to the owners, Taylor replied:

The club owners failed to co-operate in the establishment of ball clubs in each city. Limiting the number of men a team can carry to 14 [was] bad. Umpires who do not give fair decisions and who were paid by the club instead of by the league; dirty parks and uniforms and the failure of the clubs to give their teams good publicity, all these are bad.

Another contemporary, James Newton, echoed Taylor's sentiments. Newton, however, focused on how roddyyism was ruining the game on the field. He added his voiced with Taylor's and J.L. Wilkinson's by stating that such unruly players were alienating the fans and reinforcing the league's negative image. But what is often overlooked in these contemporary accounts were the role of the owners played. Taylor accurately stated that the owners were unwilling to cooperate, and since the magnates paid the umpires, many of the arbitrers' decisions were adversely impacted by this situation. In other words, it was in the umpire's best interest to make close calls in favor of the home team to insure steady employment. But it is problematic to expect the players to discipline themselves
if the owners would not do the same. Like the East, NNL owners would not allow a star player to be suspended for a long period of time, especially if a crucial series was being played. While the evidence is limited, one reason league policy regarding players was not enforced because of the club owners raiding tendencies of southern clubs. In addition, since there was no agreement with the ANL in 1929, an NNL player had the option to jump their contracts and travel East. Moreover, the unwillingness of owners to enforce league policy tended to devalue the black leagues as both a financial and civic institution.²⁴

On August 23, the Defender described a doubleheader between the American Giants and the Birmingham Black Barons that exemplified black baseball's cataclysmic state. According to the report, the players virtually had no fans but their immediate families. Rowdyism had become the norm, as opposed to the exception. An umpire called Rap Dixon, of the American Giants, out at the plate and then reversed his decision. Predictably, the American Giants averted to utilizing "the stall," holding up the game for nearly ten minutes. The Black Barons threatened to walk off the field, and according to the Defender, there were more white fans in the stands than blacks. Most of the fans informed Frank Young that they would not return. In the second game, American Giants players were incensed at Satchel Paige throwing at hitters. Twice American Giants

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shortstop Eddie "Buck" Miller avoided being hit. When Paige threw at him again, Miller charged the mound and attacked Paige. The Black Baron hurler ran and Miller began chasing him, resulting in more fans leaving the game. Finally, the players intervened and two or three more fights were narrowly avoided. 25

While the American Giants-Black Barons doubleheader represented black baseball's nadir, the 1930 season was salvaged by some positive events. The advent of night games would have a profound and revitalizing impact upon baseball. J.L. Wilkinson was a keen observer of the sports scene, as he witnessed the onset of nighttime activities in the Midwest. Cities and colleges began adapting electric lights to their recreational facilities and playing fields. In the fall of 1929, Wilkinson took his Monarchs to Lawrence, Kansas where they practiced under the newly installed lights at Haskell Institute for Indians. He along with the team recognized that playing under artificial lights was a workable situation. 26

That same year, Wilkinson commissioned the Giant Manufacturing Company of Omaha, Nebraska to build the portable lighting system. The lighting system consisted of telescoping poles, which elevated forty-five to fifty feet above the playing field. Each pole supported six floodlights measuring four feet across. The poles were
fastened on a pivot to truck beds and were raised by means of a derrick. The whole system took approximately two hours to assemble. 27

On April 23, the portable lights were erected for their initial test at Union Pacific Park in Kansas City. After the game, Wilkinson pronounced his experiment ready for implementation. Wilkinson intended to play his first night game on April 26 in Arkansas City, but fierce thunderstorms canceled the game. Two days later, the Monarchs would play their first night game in Enid, Oklahoma with an exhibition game against Philips University. 28

Night baseball also debut in the Negro National League. On May 12, the Monarchs defeated the Memphis Red Sox in both the league's and the state of Tennesse's first night game. Next, the Monarchs traveled to St. Louis to play a five game series with the Stars. Two of the games were played at night, and once again the Monarchs made history with the first night baseball games in Missouri. 29

Several teams began to obtain lighting arrangements, including Nat Strong's Bushwicks. At first, the Bushwicks' owner was opposed to the idea. But eventually a permanent lighting system was installed at Dexter Park with night baseball debuting on July 23, 1930. The New York Times indicated that both players and fans approved of the innovation, despite the outfield light's sporadic operation. Like J.L. Wilkinson in Kansas City, night baseball would
be Nat Strong's safety net during the Depression years, and the Bushwicks would continue to prosper until his death in 1935. 30

In addition to night baseball, a benefit game was played at Yankee Stadium to raise funds for the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. The brotherhood represented a significant step towards the unionization of African Americans. It was organized by A. Philip Randolph, co-publisher of the Messenger. An attempt was made to secure better conditions of work and higher wages from the Pullman Company. When Pullman would have nothing to do with the brotherhood, it attacked the union as a dangerous radical organization, and Randolph was condemned as a professional agitator. Considerable opposition towards the brotherhood arose from both black and white groups. But the brotherhood's endorsement by the American Federation of Labor, the NAACP, and the National Urban League bolstered its fight considerably. 31

On July 5, 1930, the Lincoln Giants and the Baltimore Black Sox played a doubleheader at Yankee Stadium in support of the brotherhood. The event was organized by Roy Lancaster, secretary of the brotherhood, and James Keenan. In addition to the game, a special half mile race featuring Phil Edwards, an intercollegiate half mile champion, against the best runners in the New York area was also staged. Reportedly, Eddie Tolan, an Olympic champion, also competed
in the race. Entertainment was also provided by Bill Robinson, who commonly went by his stage name, "Bojangles." Eighteen thousand fans witnessed the Lincolns split a doubleheader with the Black Sox. Bill Riggins and Charlie "Chino" Smith led a 13 hit attack with three hits each, as the Giants scored six runs in the seventh inning in route to a 13-4 victory. In the second game, Norman Yokely scattered nine hits and Rap Dixon hit two home runs, as the Black Sox won the night cap 5-3. Pittsburgh Courier sportswriter William Nunn sang the highest praises for both Lancaster and Keenan for staging the event, and proclaimed the affair as a "red letter day." 32

The 1930 season was also noteworthy for the emergence of a new breed of owner and player. The Pittsburgh Crawfords became a professional club under the control of numbers boss William "Gus" Greenlee. The Crawfords began challenging the Homestead Grays for supremacy in western Pennsylvania. The emergence of both Abe Manley of the Camden Leafs and Syd Pollack of the Cuban House of David would soon become major powers in Organized Black Baseball. The Homestead Grays featured a young slugging catcher named Josh Gibson. Nicknamed the "black Babe Ruth," Gibson would become the measuring stick against whom other hitters were compared. His indomitable presence in the batter's box personified power and electrified a crowd. Leroy "Satchel" Paige also began to attract nationwide
attention in 1930. Paige would become synonymous with barnstorming exhibitions played between traveling black teams and their white counterparts. He would heighten his legendary status with a blazing fastball, nimble wit, and a colorful personality. 33

Yet the two most prominent black baseball entrepreneurs, Ed Bolden and Rube Foster, remained inactive in 1930. In August, Bolden received another blow with news of a possible demotion. He was still reeling from his failed attempt to dissolve Hilldale. Bolden's annual efficiency rating at the post office dropped from 100 percent in 1926 to 91.9 percent in 1930. This was below the necessary 95 percent to retain his position as special clerk. Bolden cited his prior excellent record in a letter to the Philadelphia postmaster, and asked for a chance to redeem himself. In addition, Congressman James Wolfenden of Bolden's voting district wrote a letter on his behalf. The congressman characterized Bolden as an "outstanding man in the community in which he lives and, in fact, a leader in civic affairs among his people." Bolden was placed on probationary status at the post office for six months. Yet he would eventually be allowed to retain his position with no loss of pay. Bolden would also remain in black baseball throughout the 1930s. But he would never ascend to the prominence he had in the 1920s. 34
Finally, on December 9, 1930, Andrew Rube Foster died. Despite early optimism, Foster never fully recovered from his mental collapse in 1926. The Chicago Defender declared Foster as a national celebrity, second only in the sporting world to Babe Ruth, and his death was mourned by thousands. Two automobiles filled with flowers preceded the hearse, which was followed by the funeral procession a half mile long. Floral arrangements included a huge baseball made up of small white chrysanthemums with roses for the seams, weighing over 200 pounds. The baseball was sent by the NNL club owners. Also, a large piece of white and yellow chrysanthemums, that covered the coffin, was donated by American Giants owner, William Trimble. 35

Foster's death underscored the leadership void in black baseball since his collapse in 1926. He provided both vision and a sense of purpose that neither eastern or western owner had been able to duplicate. Foster also represented the efforts of the black middle class entrepreneur, who advocated the economic philosophy of Booker T. Washington, to create an institution -- Organized Black Baseball -- as a symbol of race pride and racial solidarity. He successfully created both a segregated enterprise -- the Chicago American Giants -- and league -- the Negro National League -- and operated them within the fabric of white semiprofessional baseball. In many
ways, his death was a fitting conclusion to the end of an era of black professional baseball in the age of Booker T. Washington, and the roaring 1920s.
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2. A.D. Williams, "Behind the Curtain of Negro Baseball," Kansas City Call December 23 1927, 7.


10. Ibid., 185-87.

11. Ibid., 187.

12. Ibid., 188; "Baseball At Low Ebb," 15.

13. For the 1929 season reportedly as the NNL's worst see Russell J. Cowans, "OWNERS UNITE IN PLEA FOR BETTER BALL," Defender January 25 1930, 16.


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29. Ibid., 82.


33. For secondary accounts on Greenlee and Manley see Rob Ruck, *Sandlot Seasons: Sport in Black Pittsburgh* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); James Bankes,

34. Lanctot, Fair Deal ing, 209-11.

35. "Baseball's Greatest Figure Dead," Defender December 13 1930, 1, 14; "Thousands Attend Last Rites for Rube Foster," Defender December 20 1930, 1, 8.
CONCLUSION

Professional black baseball represented the efforts of African Americans to establish as much independence as possible, and stake a claim to equal citizenship through economic advancement. Blacks affiliated with baseball embraced what one historian calls the Great Tradition, an affirmation of Americanism that insisted that blacks formed an integral part of the nation and were entitled to the same rights and opportunities white citizens enjoyed. The role baseball played in black community development was contingent upon the city a black club resided. Moreover, the black baseball business highlighted the fundamental dilemma African Americans confronted in the early twentieth century.1

Before beginning my discussion, I want to emphasize that professional black baseball did not emerge as a community-based enterprise. Like other aspects of the African American experience, professional baseball evolved within the framework of institutional racism and structural inequality. Blacks were a minor element throughout the majority of northern cities, and were not in a position
to facilitate economic support. In addition, in the North where businesses were better developed, requiring more efficiency and capital than in smaller urban communities of the South, blacks figured marginally in the business world.

It was within this context that aspiring African American entrepreneurs sought the philanthropy of wealthy whites to establish professional ball clubs. This paternalistic business relationship enabled these entrepreneurs to capitalize on the novelty of an all black club playing at a "major league" level. While blacks ran the day-to-day operations of the enterprise, the early black independent clubs of the 1880s were essentially white enterprises marketed exclusively to a white clientele.

By the 1890s, northern black communities underwent a dramatic transformation. With the expansion of racial segregation -- the old black middle class, the catalyst behind the early black teams -- began to disappear. The new African American entrepreneur was a by product of racial segregation, developing goods and services for black consumers, embracing Booker T. Washington's rhetoric of self help and racial upliftment. A conservative black nationalist ideology was promoted aggressively by black bankers, insurance agents, and small merchants due primarily because of their reliance upon the black community for support. It was here that black baseball entrepreneurs
differed somewhat from other black businessmen. Baseball
teams produces nothing of value beyond the entertainment
derivable from watching it compete with other teams. While
 interracial tension did erupt from time to time, it was
because of this entertainment by-product the game produced
that the diamond served as a "neutral ground" for both
blacks and whites to ease their racial tension. Moreover,
because of the nature of the baseball business, the need
to market the game both as competitors and partners, and
that whites became a permanent fixture in the late
nineteenth century, black owners were not as reliant as
other black businessmen upon the black community for their
economic survival.

The central role black baseball played in community
development was its ability to generate revenue for civic
institutions. But this was contingent upon the city in
which a black club resided in. For example in New York,
black baseball played virtually no role in communal
development, despite the undaunting patronage of black
fans in Harlem in the 1910s. This was due primarily because
black entrepreneurs, like Sol White and John Connor, did
not seek alliances with either black politicians and
businessmen. Instead, they affiliated themselves with
Nat Strong's booking agency. Considering Strong's influence
over several parks in the greater New York area, such a
business alliance was inevitable. There was no evidence
to indicate that Connor, White, and later Baron Wilkins attempted to provide community support through the staging of benefit games or any other charitable acts. Because of their affiliation with Strong, combined with the fact that black owners did not own or lease their own ballparks, black entrepreneurs found it difficult to operate ball clubs in Harlem.

In Philadelphia, no ball club more exemplified a race enterprise that reflected Booker T. Washington's economic philosophy than the Hilldale Baseball and Exhibition Company. It was clearly one of the most successful cooperative enterprises in the early twentieth century. Ed Bolden possessed an uncanny ability to establish business connections with white park owners and traction magnates. He transformed a sandlot team into one of the most prominent black clubs of the 1920s. Bolden created a race enterprise operated exclusively by African Americans and utilize the black press to promote the ballclub, which served as a bridge to Philadelphia's black community. The HBEC provided, albeit seasonal, employment for Darby's black citizenry.

Throughout Hilldale's existence, black baseball in the Quaker City was as scattered as its black populace. There remained an underbelly of black clubs who were content to pass the hat to meet expenses. Hilldale's success reflected a beacon of light in a darkened room, at a time
when the majority of black businesses ended in failure. More important, Bolden recognized both the scattered nature of Philadelphia's black population, and the importance of maintaining business contacts with whites. This recognition was instrumental in the Hilldale leader enjoying a great deal of operational autonomy.

But no other place did baseball become embedded within both the political and economic fabric of the black community than in Chicago. As early as the 1880s, local black businessmen and politicians took an active role in promoting the game. Baseball reflected the efforts of the new black leadership who began catering more to a growing black populace. They utilized the Washingtonian race rhetoric to promote black baseball as a symbol of economic advancement. As a means of patronizing the black community, black baseball owners would stage benefit games to raise funds for civic institutions. While the efforts of Frank Leland, W.S. Peters, and Beauregard Moseley would end in failure, they laid the ground work for Rube Foster to succeed. Foster would continue staging benefit games, and establish press relations -- primarily through the Defender -- to promote the American Giants and later the Negro National League. In turn, the Defender would point to the American Giants as a symbol of race advancement, while also promoting black Chicago as the race business capital of the North.
But Foster, like Ed Bolden, also possessed an uncanny ability to establish business connections with local white businessmen. This was essential for him in obtaining a ballpark in the black community. Combined with the unprecedented success of the American Giants, along with Foster's affiliation with prominent black politicians, Foster enjoyed more operational autonomy than any black entrepreneur in the early twentieth century. This was clearly illustrated when the Chicago magnate began booking white clubs at Schorling Park. Like Philadelphia, Chicago would also experience an underbelly of weekend warriors; but Foster managed to absorb some of them into his booking agency. In this way he maintained his territorial autonomy in the Windy City. By 1919, Foster had created business alliances outside of Chicago in cities, like Detroit and Cincinnati, and established controlling interest in black clubs, like the Detroit Stars and the Cuban Stars.

Previous scholars have argued that black businessmen failed to comprehend their role as a necessary social force for basic change. Black businessmen were the linchpin of underdevelopment and capital accumulation within the black community. They were the personification of legitimizing the rational character of capitalism. For white corporations, black entrepreneurs served to perpetuate the illusion that anyone could "make it" within the existing
socioeconomic order, if only they worked hard at it. Furthermore, the black business person accepts and lives by the rules of the game. 3

The aforementioned assertion does apply to the early black baseball owners. Emphasizing the booking system over a balanced schedule, and owners of clubs in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Chicago's refusal to schedule a number of weekend games away from their home grounds resulted in the underdevelopment of both the Negro National and Eastern Colored Leagues. While league affiliation curbed player raiding among owners, it did not eliminate it altogether. By the mid-1920s, black baseball owners began alienating both the black press and fans, essential elements to their economic survival.

But the plight of the black baseball owner revealed two fundamental dilemmas that impacted upon both their decisions and actions. The first was the dichotomous existence of being either a race man or business man. While it was not their original intention, black baseball owners' economic survival was still reliant upon the growing black market. This became increasingly evident during the economic downswing of the mid-1920s. The black baseball magnates' efforts were further undermined by the economic underdevelopment of the black community. Blacks did not control any major transportation system, leading many club owners to complain that a good deal of their profits landed
in the hands of railroad magnates. Even more significant, blacks did not manufacture sporting goods equipment, and the types of black businesses that emerged did not possess the resources to produce them. These circumstances made it necessary to establish and maintain business connections with whites.

It should also be noted that black baseball entrepreneurs did not seek to sever their business ties with whites. In fact, the black press applauded these connections despite incidents of interracial tensions. White teams, particularly in Chicago, became opponents in benefit games staged by either Leland or Foster. But the timing in which some business decisions were made resulted in intraracial tensions. Nothing illuminated this more than the constant umpiring debacle both Foster and Bolden dealt with. Foster's hiring of black umpires was both a response to the outcry of the black press and fans. It also illustrated that the Chicago leader recognized that black fans patronized his games more than whites. But the decision proved to be both ill-advised and a economic strain. In contrast, Bolden's hiring of Bill Dallas occurred at a time when northern black communities were experiencing the early signs of economic depression. The timing of the move became a source of intraracial tension.
A final factor was the inability of black entrepreneurs to gain total control of their enterprise. While blacks gained control over two of the principle assets -- the franchise and the players under contract -- the third asset -- the ball park -- became the central asset in the underdevelopment of black baseball. Essentially, two factors contributed to this underdevelopment: segregation and the configuration of black community settlement patterns. Prior to 1890, neither New York, Philadelphia, or Chicago's black population constituted a majority in any of the wards they resided in. While migration expanded these black communities, and whites began fleeing to other sections of the city or suburb, it did not necessarily mean that white businesses left with them. It also did not mean that whites relinquished control of the property they vacated. Even Rube Foster had to enter into a lease agreement with a white partner, and Bolden also leased Hilldale Park. Even more problematic was that some of the parks in Detroit, Indianapolis, Kansas City, and later New York, were located outside the black community. Park rental did impact upon the black baseball owners' ability to achieve a balanced schedule. But the real detriment for blacks was that rental agreements dramatically impacted upon their ability to accumulate capital. No doubt any revenue generated from concessions or parking went into
white coffers. Moreover, the inability to acquire their own ball parks made it problematic to gain control over a particular consumer market.

But despite these circumstances, the early black owners were viewed as heroes within their communities. Former ballplayer and later sportswriter William "Dizzy" Dismukes praised both Rube Foster and C.I. Taylor for "blazing the trail and perpetuating baseball among our group." Rollo Wilson lauded Ed Bolden's unprecedented success, calling Hilldale one of the most successful corporations among African Americans. Black baseball owners were heroes to many African Americans at a time when discrimination, segregation, and white hostility undermined most efforts for blacks to gain acceptance into American society. Moreover, these black entrepreneurs did not merely respond to the obstacles that impacted upon their efforts, they sought to create a race enterprise in their own image.⁴
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2. It is no doubt that both the American Giants and the *Defender* benefited from their business relationship. While Foster was developing his barnstorming tours throughout the South and West, Robert Abbott created a vast promotion and distribution network. The *Defender’s* circulation had reached 33,000 by early 1916, and skyrocketed during the Great Migration. By 1919, the *Defender’s* circulation had rose to 180,000. James Grossman provides an excellent analysis on the growth and development of the *Defender* in *Land Of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 74-97. The notion of Chicago as the race capital in the North in J.H. Harmon, Jr., Arnett G. Lindsey, & Carter G. Woodson, *The Negro As A Business Man* (College Park, MD: McGrath Publishing Co., 1929), 36.


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