

# The Courier

A Publication of SABR's Negro Leagues Committee

*"We are the Ship, All Else the Sea"*

Editor, Larry Lester

December, 2009

## In the News

### 2010 Jerry Malloy Negro League Conference is going to B'Ham

On July 15-17, 2010, the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Jerry Malloy Negro League Conference will make its next whistle stop in Birmingham, Alabama, home of Rickwood Field and the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.

We are tentatively scheduled to have a **"Greet & Meet"** at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute on Thursday to welcome all our guests, presenters and players attending the conference. This function will immediately follow our **Educational forum** for teachers that day.



As always, we will have presentations on Friday and Saturday. If you are interested in presenting, the **"Call for Papers,"** can be found at: <http://www.larrylester42.com/assets/Images/Events/Call-for-PapersBirmingham2010.pdf>  
Submission deadline is **March 8, 2010**. We have already received several abstracts, so put this charge on your priority list, as presentation slots fill up quickly.

Please note, the Negro Leagues Committee will announce at the conference the winners of the two **\$2,500 Essay Writing Contest** winners, along with the recipients of the two **\$1,000 Library Grants**.

Applications for the Essay-Scholarships and the Library Grants can be found at: <http://www.larrylester42.com/assets/Images/Events/Scholarship-form-LL.pdf> and <http://www.larrylester42.com/assets/NLC-library-Grant.pdf>. Note on your calendar the deadlines are **February 19, 2010** with notifications to the winners by Jackie Robinson Day, April 15, 2010.

Conference Registration forms will be provided in the next newsletter, along with details for reserving rooms at the Sheraton-Birmingham Hotel.

We are hoping to squeeze in a tour of Rickwood Field, built in 1910, the oldest ball park on the planet and the only park today that can claim **29 Cooperstown Hall of Famers** played on their field such as: Andy Cooper, Babe Ruth, Ben Taylor, Biz Mackey, Buck Leonard, Bullet Rogan, Christy Mathewson, Cool Papa Bell, Cristobal Torriente, Dizzy Dean, Hilton Smith, Honus Wagner, Jackie Robinson, Jose Mendez, Josh Gibson, Jud Wilson, Monte Irvin, Mule Suttles, Pete Hill, Ray Brown, Reggie Jackson, Satchel Paige, Stan Musial, Turkey Stearnes, Ty Cobb, Willard Brown, Willie Foster, Willie Mays, and Willie Wells.

*If you know of other Rickwood players, let us know.*



## Welcome . . . . .

Dick Clark and I would like to welcome **19** new members to the Negro Leagues Committee:

**John Banks**, Victoria, BC, Canada; **Dan Berger**, Bronx, NY; **Matt Casertano**, Los Angeles, CA; **Jeanie Cooke**, Danville, IL; **Jennifer Flatt**, Marinette, WI; **George Fleet**, Hermitage, PA; **John Ingham**, San Diego, CA; **John Katricak**, Sheffield Village, OH; **Don LoCrao**, Santé Fe, NM; **David Moon**, St. Cloud, MN; **Michael O'Hara**, Hagerstown, MD; **Joe Pulizotto**, Staten Island, NY; **John Richards**, Albuquerque, NM; **Josh Rosen**, Tarrytown, NY; **David Spenard**, Washington, DC; **Aaron Stille**, Kansas City, MO; **Ken Winter**, La Crosse, WI; **Glenn Lautzenhiser**, Columbus, MS, and **Anthony Kissel**, Cortland, NY.

## Turkey Stearnes into another the Hall of Fame

Rogue reporter, Bryan Stevenson reports with great pleasure the selection of Norman "Turkey" Stearnes to the **Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame (TSHF)**, Class of 2010. Mr. Stearnes was born in Nashville, and attended Pearl High School in the "Music City" and went on to baseball stardom with the Detroit Stars, Chicago American Giants and other teams.



Joining "Turkey" will be barrier breaking golfer, **Ted Rhodes** (1948 US Open champion) and two-time All-American and NBA All-Star basketball player, three-point specialist **Dale Ellis**, as well as others.

The TSHF is located in the heart of the Music District in downtown Nashville. Good food and lively music abound. One block away is the **Country Music Hall of Fame** where the melodic voice of former Negro League pitcher and outfielder, **Charley Pride** can be heard singing. "*Kiss An Angel Good Morning.*"

Of the 289 members elected to our Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY, he may rightly be called, "*The Volunteer State's Greatest Baseball Player.*" Mr. Stearnes was elected to our National Baseball Hall of Fame, Class of 2000. Thanks Bryan!

Earlier, on June 6<sup>th</sup> Stearnes, along with Bobby Marlow, Max Kelley, Jerry Wayne Christopher and Jimmy Beasley were inducted into the **Limestone County Hall of Fame** in Athens, Alabama. The ceremony took place on the campus of Athens State University.



In 2007, Turkey Stearnes was inducted into the **Michigan Sports Hall of Fame**. The Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame induction makes #4 for Stearnes. At press time, we have been unable to confirm his entry into the **Toledo Mud Hens Hall of Fame** in Ohio.

For more information about the Negro Leagues' all-time leader in several offensive categories, read Richard Bak's "**Turkey Stearnes and the Detroit Stars: The Negro Leagues in Detroit, 1919-1933**" published in 1994 by Wayne State University Press.

## Judy Johnson goes into the Phila. Sports Hall of Fame.

At the **Delaware Sports Museum and Hall of Fame** in Wilmington, Delaware, there is a life-size sculpture of one of the black leagues' greatest third basemen, William "Judy" Johnson. He was honored in Wilmington in 1994 and earlier in 1975, when inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown.

In July the *Philadelphia Tribune* announced that Johnson joined Larry Bowa, John Cappelletti, Eddie Collins, Bill Conlin, Joey Giardello, Charlie Jenkins, Neil Johnston, Betty Shellenberger, Emlen Tunnell, Merrill Reese and the 1974-75 Stanley Cup champion Philadelphia Flyers. The induction ceremony was held on November 12<sup>th</sup> at the Hyatt Regency Penn's Landing. This was the sixth induction class of the PSHOF.

Johnson was an all-star third baseman and shortstop, from 1918-38, for the Hilldale Club, Homestead Grays, Darby (PA) Daisies, and Pittsburgh Crawfords. He also served as a scout for the 1954 Philadelphia Athletics. For more information about Johnson, read Ellen Randle's "**Judy Johnson: Delaware's Invisible Hero**" published in 1994 by The Cedar Tree Press.

According to a *Wilmington News Journal* article by Jonathan Marshall, **Joe Mitchell** credits Johnson for his current passion as a Negro League historian. He is thankful that Johnson's legacy has not been forgotten.

He recalls taking his two sons to an autograph signing in 1976 where then-Phillies catcher **Bob Boone** was the feature attraction. While thousands of fans waited to meet Boone, Johnson sat by himself. Mitchell was aware of Johnson, then a scout for the Phillies, but was amazed that nobody recognized him. Their chance meeting started a friendship that lasted for the rest of Johnson's life.



Fourteen years ago, Mitchell started the **Judy Johnson Memorial Foundation** "**to educate the general public on the interesting forgotten history of Negro League Baseball.**" Recently while attending the Jerry Malloy Conference, in Pittsburgh, Joe Mitchell was awarded the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual **Fay Vincent Most Valuable Partner (MVP)** plaque for his stellar contributions to the conference and the promotion of black baseball history.

### Show Me the Money!

Over the past five years, the **Yoseloff-SABR Baseball Research Grant Program** has awarded nearly \$44,000 to 29 individuals for a total of 32 grant projects. Their research has been published in the *Baseball Research Journal*, *The National Pastime*, SABR's minor league database, as part of the BioProject, in committee newsletters and presented at SABR conventions and conferences. If you have a baseball research project that you have not pursued due to lack of funds for travel, library fees, or other expenses, why not apply? Perhaps SABR will publish your research next.

More information is available on the SABR website at <http://www.sabr.org/sabr.cfm?a=cms.c.2057>  
If you are ready to apply go here for an application: <http://www.sabr.org/cmsFiles/Files/2009%20application%20form1.pdf>

Remember the deadline to apply is **May 14, 2010**. Previous grant winners from the Negro League Committee have included **Byron Motley, Roberta Newman, Greg Bond, Michael Hauptert, Todd Peterson, Martha Ackmann, Brian Carroll and Geri Strecker. Go for it!**

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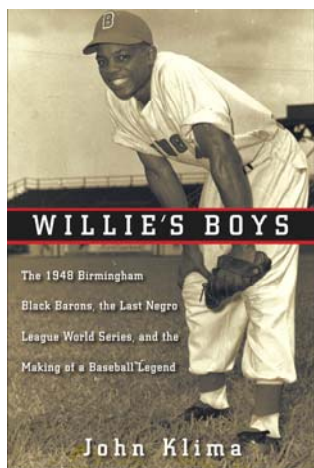
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### Dugout Reading . . . . .

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In *Willie's Boys*, award-winning baseball writer John Klima sheds new light on the amazing, little-known story of Willie Mays's 1948 rookie season with the Birmingham Black Barons. This quintessential American tale leads you down the long, dusty road of black baseball. Drawing on in-depth research and interviews with surviving players, it illuminates the league's last days, and introduces such legendary players as **Artie Wilson, Bill Greason, Alonzo Perry** and most importantly his manager and mentor **Lorenzo "Piper" Davis**.



Davis is the real hero of the book. It was Davis who made sure that his affable and awesomely talented protégé had the skills, knowledge, and visibility he needed to get his shot at the Majors and make the most of it.

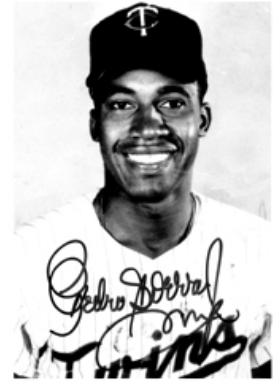
For more information visit Klima's website: [www.klimaink.com](http://www.klimaink.com)

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### My Greatest Day

"With great difficulty I have toyed around for a few days trying to determine my greatest day in baseball. I had pitched a no-hitter for T. Hood Tankers while in the US Army in 1961, drove in seven runs in one game hitting two home runs, one a grand slam in the Northern League in 1963. After thoroughly thinking I have to say in 1989 after 30 years, I stepped again on the mound of Estadio Latino Americano in Havana, formerly known as Estadio del Cerro, invited by the Cuban Government I.N.D.E.R. (Instituto Nacional de Educacion y Deportes) to conduct a weekend baseball clinic. I had pitched batting practice there for Havana Red Lions 1956-57, Cienfuegos Elephants, 1957-58 and Marianao Tigers 1958-59 during the Cuban Winter Baseball League. I am hoping to repeat the same scene again this year for the 20 year anniversary."



**Pedro Pastor Sierra**, --1954-58--p, Indianapolis Clowns, Detroit Stars; and Consultant for the Washington Senators

**This is a NEW feature to *The Courier*. Each quarter we will hear from a former Negro League player.**

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### Dugout Viewing . . . . .

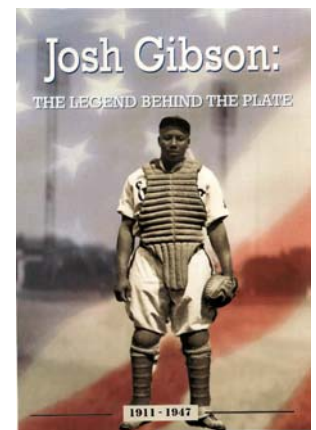
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The documentary production class of assistant Duquesne University professor **Dr. Dennis Woytek** produced a 50-minute documentary of black baseball's most prolific slugger, Josh Gibson. The students with the help of Mike Clark, an adjunct instructor who shadows as an ABC news anchor produced "**The Legend Behind the Plate: The Josh Gibson Story**."

Eleven students drove to Buena Vista, GA, Gibson's birthplace, Kansas City, MO, Cooperstown, NY and Washington, DC, for interviews with family members, historians, and fans.

**Albert C. Labriola**, acting dean of Duquesne University's McAnulty College provided funding for the documentary. Unfortunately, he died March 11 at age 69, before the film's debut.



Purchasing information can be found at: <http://www.joshgibson.org/>

## Research Requests

**Daryl Grigsby** is writing a book on the African-American baseball fan; utilizing both research and interviews. Grigsby is interested in contacting black fans who regularly attended Negro League games. If you fit that category or know of others, please contact him at: [darylleslie@comcast.net](mailto:darylleslie@comcast.net) or 425.765.1789.

**Who is this Guy?** The committee is looking for identification of this **1908 Chicago Union Giants** player. The first correct answer will win a trip to the White House.



### **The 1908 Roster included:**

Charles "Joe" Green, of  
? Haines, p  
William Prime, c  
Wesley Pryor, 3b  
Mack Ramsey, of  
Bob Robinson, 1b  
James Shawler, of  
James Smith, 2b  
Frank Talbott, p  
George H. Taylor, p  
Albert Toney, ss  
Tom Washington, c  
Big Bill West, p  
Frank "Si" Young, 2b

In 1901, Frank Leland organized the Union Giants, combining players from the Columbia Giants and the Chicago Unions. Andrew "Rube" Foster and Walter "Georgia Rabbit" Ball were some of their top performers.

In 1905, the original Union Giants became the Leland Giants.

However, a new Union Giants team emerged in Chicago with such stars as Haywood "Kissing Bug" Rose, Clarence Lytle, Will Jones and Fred "Pop" Roberts. The semi-pro team continued to play for several more years, eventually fading from the baseball scene by 1919.

Photo courtesy of  
Brian Campf.

## **Box Scores Wanted:**

**The committee is looking for the following Playoff and World Series box scores. Any help would be appreciated in locating these rare gems.**

September 29, 1926, Game 9, Chicago American Giants, and the Kansas City Monarchs, 5-0, in Chicago, IL.

October 2, 1928, Game 7, Chicago American Giants and the St. Louis Stars, 9-7, in Chicago, IL

October 4, 1928, Game 8, Chicago American Giants and the St. Louis Stars, 19-4, in Chicago, IL

September 26, 1930, Game 6, Lincoln Giants and the Homestead Grays, 6-4, Pittsburgh, PA.

September 16, 1934, Game 3, Chicago American Giants and the Philadelphia Stars, 5-3, Philadelphia, PA.

September 17, 1934, Game 4, Chicago American Giants and the Philadelphia Stars, 2-1, Philadelphia, PA.

September 14, 1937, Game 4, Chicago American Giants and the Kansas City Monarchs, 4-1, in Milwaukee, WI.

September 15, 1937, Game 5, Chicago American Giants and the Kansas City Monarchs, 6-3, in Indianapolis, IN.

September 19, 1941, Games 1 and 2, Homestead Grays and the New York Cubans, 5-4 and 6-0, in Cincinnati, OH.

September 20, 1941, Game 3, Homestead Grays and the New York Cubans, 5-4, in New York, NY.

September 21, 1943, Game 2, Birmingham Black Barons and the Homestead Grays 5-5. in Maryland Park, Baltimore, MD, a 12 inning tie.

September 28, 1943, Game 5, Birmingham Black Barons and the Homestead Grays 11-10, at Red Bird Stadium in Columbus, OH.

September 26 or 27, 1947, Game 5, New York Cubans and the Cleveland Buckeyes 9-2, at Comiskey Park in Chicago, IL.

September 30, 1948, Game 3, Birmingham Black Barons and the Homestead Grays 4-3, at Rickwood Field in Birmingham, AL

October 3, 1948, Game 4, Birmingham Black Barons and the Homestead Grays 14-1, in New Orleans, LA

October 5, 1948, Game 5, Birmingham Black Barons and the Homestead Grays 10-6, at Rickwood Field, in Birmingham, AL.

## The Krock Watch . . .

**We are currently soliciting funds for the following grave sites:**

- **Bruce Petway** - Burr Oak Cemetery, Alsip, IL - 1941
- **Walter Ball** - Lincoln Cemetery, Blue Island, IL - 1946
- **Billy Francis** - Lincoln Cemetery, Blue Island, IL - 1942
- **William Binga** - Crystal Lake Cemetery, Minneapolis, MN - 1950
- **Pete Hill** - burial site unknown at this time. - 1951
- **Gus Brooks** - Oakwood Cemetery, Adrian, MI - 1895
- **James "Sapp" Ivory** - Elmwood Cemetery, Birmingham, AL - 2008
- **James "Lefty" LaMarque** - Forest Hills Cemetery, Kansas City, MO - 2000
- **Carroll Ray "Dink" Mothell** - Mount Hope Cemetery, Topeka, KS - 1980
- **Sellers McKee Hall** - Allegheny Cemetery, Pittsburgh, PA – death year unknown
- **Ted Page** - Allegheny Cemetery, Pittsburgh, PA - 1984
- **Connie Morgan** - Mount Lawn Cemetery, Sharon Hill, PA - 1996
- **King Solomon White** - Frederick Douglass Memorial Park, Staten Island, NY - 1955

With a large number of volunteer hours, the Negro Leagues Player's Grave Marker Project remains active and effective. Led by **Bob Bailey**, we have had many volunteers researching, locating and documenting players' graves, both marked and unmarked. The JERRY MALLOY NEGRO LEAGUE COMMITTEE and JEREMY KROCK would like to thank **Tom Perry, Raymond Buck, Kent Frederickson, Jan Finkel, Mike Garvey, Ron Marcelle, David Chase, Leslie Heaphy, Doug Kenison, Trey Strecker, Dennis Bidwell, Philip Ross, Donald Fairchild, Chris Bohus, and Joe Mitchell** for their donations in making this humanitarian effort possible.

If you wish to make a tax-free donation go to SABR's **Negro Leagues Restoration Headstone Program** at this web link: <http://store.sabr.org/sabrstore.cfm?a=dnt>

Since 2005, we have raised funds for 22 headstones with more installments scheduled. If you know of a Negro League veteran buried in an unmarked grave, please email the information to Jeremy Krock at: [jlkrock@comcast.net](mailto:jlkrock@comcast.net) or to the *Courier* editors.

## Harry "Suitcase" Simpson is Honored.

Recently, the city of Dalton, Georgia honored their native son, Harry Leon Simpson (1925-1979) with the unveiling of a granite monument. More than 100 family members, friends and community members gathered in Dalton's historic West Hill Cemetery.



Photo courtesy of Kelly Jackson. Sons Kerry Simpson & Gary Simpson unveil the new granite monument.

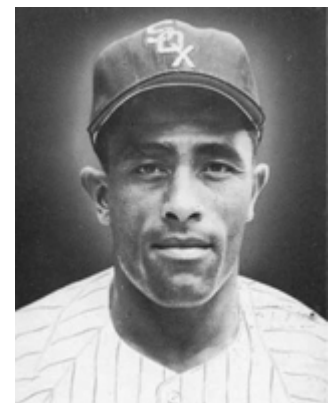
Simpson started his baseball career with the Dalton Tigers before joining the **Philadelphia Stars** of the Negro Leagues in 1946. He spent three years with the Stars before playing two years in the minor leagues, leading the Pacific Coast League in 1950 with 151 RBI's, before joining the Cleveland Indians in 1951.

He spent eight seasons as an outfielder (1951 to 1953, 1955 to 1959) with the Cleveland Indians, Kansas City Athletics, New York Yankees, Chicago White Sox and Pittsburgh Pirates, playing 888 games compiling a .266 career batting average.

He achieved notoriety on April 26, 1952 when he broke up Detroit Tigers pitcher Art Houtteman's no-hitter with a two out single in the 9th inning.

The 1956 All-Star, led the American League in Triples in 1956 and 1957. Simpson was the 16<sup>th</sup> former Negro Leaguer to play in the Major Leagues.

The World War II veteran was once called by **Casey Stengel** the best defensive right fielder in the American League.



## Sunrises!

SEND YOUR FAVORITE NEGRO LEAGUER A BIRTHDAY CARD.

### DECEMBER

2<sup>ND</sup> - HENRY ELMORE - 68  
3<sup>RD</sup> - BILL HAYDEN - 85  
4<sup>TH</sup> - TED TOLES - 84  
6<sup>TH</sup> - BILL LITTLE - 75  
7<sup>TH</sup> - ENRIQUE MAROTO - 77  
9<sup>TH</sup> - QUACK BROWN - 79  
**14<sup>TH</sup> - WILLIE POPE - 91**, HENRY SAVERSON - 80  
16<sup>TH</sup> - FRANK EVANS - 88, JOE MARBURY - 71  
20<sup>TH</sup> - MAL DUCKETT - 87  
21<sup>ST</sup> - CHARLES WELLS - 78, PAUL CASANOVA - 68  
23<sup>RD</sup> - MAYNARD JORDAN - 81  
25<sup>TH</sup> - JOHN MITCHELL - 72  
26<sup>TH</sup> - ORLANDO O'FARRILL - 87  
27<sup>TH</sup> - JIM COBBIN - 75

### JANUARY

8<sup>TH</sup> - DAVEY WHITNEY - 80  
9<sup>TH</sup> - FRANK MARSH - 79  
21<sup>ST</sup> - PORTER REED - 87, JIM ROBINSON - 80  
26<sup>TH</sup> - RON TEASLEY - 83  
27<sup>TH</sup> - SAM TAYLOR - 81  
28<sup>TH</sup> - TOMMY TAYLOR - 72  
30<sup>TH</sup> - LONNIE HARRIS - 79  
31<sup>ST</sup> - ERNIE BANKS - 79

### FEBRUARY

4<sup>TH</sup> - ERNIE NIMMONS - 80  
5<sup>TH</sup> - HANK AARON - 76  
9<sup>TH</sup> - MIKE HOULEMARD - 77  
12<sup>TH</sup> - BILL DUMPSON - 80  
14<sup>TH</sup> - JOE CAFFIE - 79  
20<sup>TH</sup> - WALTER MCCOY - 87  
**21<sup>ST</sup> - BILL CASH - 91**  
23<sup>RD</sup> - WILLIE SHEELOR - 82  
**25<sup>TH</sup> - MONTE IRVIN - 91**  
26<sup>TH</sup> - MICKEY STUBBLEFIELD - 84



NOTE: Congratulations to Nonagenarians: **WILLIE POPE, BILL "READY" CASH, & MONTE IRVIN.**

**\$\$\$** When you RENEW your SABR membership for 2010, please consider earmarking extra funds for the **JERRY MALLOY NEGRO LEAGUE CONFERENCE** and/or **Jeremy Krock's HEADSTONE RESTORATION PROJECT** for unmarked graves. Go to: <http://store.sabr.org> and enter your tax-deductible gift, along with a brief description for allocation of your funds.

We welcome donations in any amount to support our efforts in providing scholarships, library grants and honoring black baseball history. **\$\$\$**

## Sunsets . . . .



### BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

**"BENNY" FELDER**, 82, died October 2, 2009, in Tampa, Florida. Felder played shortstop and third base from 1946-48 and 1951 in the Negro National League for the Newark Eagles, the Indianapolis Clowns, the Philadelphia Stars, and the

Brooklyn Brown Dodgers of the United States League. In 1946, he played on the Negro World Champion Newark Eagles team with Hall of Famers **Monte Irvin**, **Larry Doby**, **Leon Day**, and **Biz Mackey**.

After integration, he played professionally in the Florida International League and the West Texas-New Mexico League. When he retired and returned to Tampa, Felder coached at the Belmont Heights Little League and won several championships.

### WALLACE IGNATUS "BUCKY" WILLIAMS



102, died November 16, 2009, in Pittsburgh, PA. Williams, who would have turned 103 next month played the infield and occasionally pitched for the 1930-31 Pittsburgh Crawfords and the 1936 Homestead Grays. His career

started with the semi-pro Pittsburgh Monarchs in 1925. After his professional baseball career, Williams worked at the Edgar Thompson Works of U.S. Steel in Braddock and was a member of the company team.

### SABR's Negro Leagues Committee

Larry Lester      Co-chair, Editor  
Dick Clark        Co-chair (Tstearnes@comcast.net)

*The Courier* is a quarterly newsletter published by the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR); March, June, September and December. Inquiries, submissions and research requests can be sent to Larry Lester at [NTresearch@comcast.net](mailto:NTresearch@comcast.net).

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