

# The Courier

A Publication of SABR's Negro Leagues Committee

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

Editor, Larry Lester

March, 2009

## In the News

### 2009 Jerry Malloy Conference

Discover America's *original* Negro League conference as it makes a whistle stop in Pittsburgh this year. Are you ready for this year's celebration of Negro League history? The Malloy conference, the *only* symposium dedicated exclusively to the examination of black ball history will be co-sponsored and hosted by **The Western Pennsylvania Museum at the Senator John Heinz History Center**, at 1212 Smallman Street in "The Strip" of Pittsburgh's historic market district.



The three-day event, July 16-18, will celebrate the **Crossroads of Black Baseball** with special emphasis on the Pittsburgh Crawfords and the Homestead Grays.

With support from the **Josh Gibson Foundation**, the Steel City highlights

include a tour of the **Legacy Square** (see insert), a Pirates ball game at the new PNC Park against the San Francisco Giants. Strikeout king, Tim Lincecum, may be on the mound for the Giants that weekend.

Conference highlights include two **player panels**, a tour of the **Western Pennsylvania Sports Museum**, a state-of-the-art museum, with 70 interactive exhibits, plus a live auction at Saturday's dinner.

For those who like to test their knowledge of Black Baseball there is a highly competitive two-round **trivia contest** with grand prizes galore. As the late Jerry Malloy once said, "If you know the answer, its history." He added, "If you don't know the answer, its trivia."

Vendors and authors will be present selling books and memorabilia.

**For educators** there will be a workshop on Thursday in which participants will learn about and receive curriculum materials to share with your students of this rich legacy.

You can REGISTER on line at the SABR store:

<http://store.sabr.org/sabrstore.cfm>

Or by mail: Make your checks or money orders out to **SABR – Malloy Conference**.  
c/o **John Zajc - 812 Huron Road Ste 719 - Cleveland, OH 44115 - (216) 575-0500**

Hotel reservations should be made directly with the **Marriott City Center**

112 Washington Place  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
**412-471-4000**

**888-456-6600 Toll Free**

Single or Double: \$109 a night *plus tax*

Additional Person: \$20

Ask for "**Jerry Malloy Conference**" when you call.

For the latest information about the conference go to:

<http://www.larrylester42.com/jerry-malloy-negro-leagues-conference/> on a regular basis.

### The Krock Watch . . . . .

In January, the **Judy Johnson Memorial Foundation**, through SABR member Joseph Mitchell, president and founder, presented a \$1,000 gift for the purchase of headstones for unmarked graves of Negro League players.

On February 24 in Jacksonville, Florida, **John Irvin Kennedy**, the first black player on a Philadelphia Phillies roster (April 22, 1957), had a marker placed on his grave, courtesy of Ocala (FL) Marble & Granite Works. Through the campaigning efforts of Dr. Wes Singletary, who contacted Senator Tony Hill and Florida Times-Union writer Mike McCall to aid in having the first marker installed for this barrier breaker in Evergreen Cemetery. Senator Hill hosted the ceremony, with Phil Myers of the Phillies on hand to present accolades to his daughter Tazena Kennedy.

This spring we will finalize purchase of markers for **Bobby Robinson** (in Chicago) and **Bill Gatewood** (Columbia, MO). Markers for **Bruce Petway**, **Walter Ball** and **Billy Francis** are under negotiation.

The search for the burial place of Hall of Famer **Pete Hill** in the Chicago area continues, while **William Binga's** unmarked grave has been identified in Crystal Lake Cemetery in Minneapolis, Minnesota. **Contact Jeremy Krock** at [jlkrock@comcast.net](mailto:jlkrock@comcast.net) for player gravesites in need. Your tax-deductible donations can be made through the SABR office.

## 3rd Annual Civil Rights Game

Major League Baseball and the Cincinnati Reds announced that Great American Ball Park will host the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Civil Rights Game against the Chicago White Sox on June 20, 2009. This marks the first time that the historic game will be a regular season game and played at a major league ballpark.

The **Civil Rights Game**, held in Memphis the last two years, pays tribute to one of the country's most significant eras of social change and honors Major League Baseball's involvement in this historic struggle through which legendary African American players broke barriers and made important contributions to American society.



# CIVIL RIGHTS GAME

The game will culminate two days of events commemorating the Civil Rights Movement. Cincinnati a city

rich with civil rights history, once served as heavily traveled hidden trails, which became known as the “**Underground Railroad**,” in which many slaves escaped to freedom. The Great American Ball Park is a stone's throw away from the Underground Railroad Freedom Center, which opened in 2004.

Proceeds from the banquet and game events will be donated to charity. Be mindful that the **Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**, once said, "**Jackie Robinson made it possible for me in the first place. Without him, I would never have been able to do what I did.**"

## Pop Durham honored

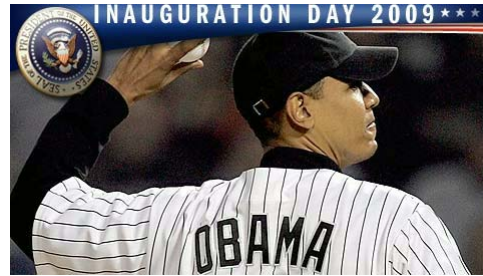
As we went to press last time, **Joe Vann “Pop” Durham** was inducted into the Hampton Roads African American Sports Hall of Fame in Virginia on November 25, 2008. Durham, a Huntington High School alumnus, was the first athlete from the Peninsula to land a professional baseball contract, when he signed with the 1952 **Chicago American Giants** of the Negro American League.

In 1953, he signed with the St. Louis Browns of the American League, who assigned him to the York (PA) White Roses of the Piedmont League. Durham later played outfield for the Baltimore Orioles in 1954 and 1957, and finished his career with the 1959 St. Louis Cardinals.

Pop Durham was honored at the **2007 Jerry Malloy Negro League Conference** held in Portsmouth, Virginia. Congratulations Mr. Durham!

## President Obama's Bobblehead Day

The Associated Press reports that the **Brooklyn Cyclones**, a minor league affiliate of the New York Mets will change their name to the “Baracklyn Cyclones” on June 23<sup>rd</sup> and give away Barack Obama bobbleheads to the first 2,500 fans.



Among other events that evening, the players will wear red-white-blue jerseys to be auctioned off

during the game, with proceeds going to the **Jackie Robinson Foundation**. Also, all fans named Barack will be admitted at no charge. Fans named McCain or Palin will get free bleacher seats, and any plumber named Joe gets two free tickets.

It has been reported the Cyclones are reserving four seats behind home plate for the First Family, just in case the family has nothing else to do that day.

Reserved that date and get your action figure.

## New Negro Leagues Museum to Open

The **Negro Leagues' Baseball Museum of Maryland** is scheduled to open its doors on February 19, 2009. The museum's curator **Ray Banks** has collected Negro League memorabilia for more than a decade and has decided to create a permanent place for the artifacts. They will be located in the basement of the Lochearn Presbyterian Church at 3800 Patterson Avenue, just over the Baltimore County line.

Banks, teaming with former pitcher **Bert Simmons** of the Baltimore Elite Giants, they hope the museum will educate children and adults about the sometimes-forgotten piece of history. "**Gaining knowledge about a part of history that's left out of the schools. We intend to fill that gap and do what we can do to educate the public,**" Simmons said.

If you would like to donate or contribute to the Museum call 410.597.9797.

**Late News.** . . On February 21, the Village of Brooklyn, IL, renamed two streets in the community. One street is named in honor of **Prince Joe Henry**, from nearby Lovejoy, IL, a former Negro Leaguer, showman, and author who passed away on January 2<sup>nd</sup>. The streetwise philosopher recently published his memoirs in *Princoirs: Official Memoirs of Prince Joe Henry, Ex-Negro Leaguer*, compiled by his grandson Sean R. Muhammad. Go to: [www.myspace.com/princoirs](http://www.myspace.com/princoirs) to order your copy before the next inning.

## Sunrises!

SEND YOUR FAVORITE NEGRO LEAGUER A BIRTHDAY CARD.

### MARCH

- 1<sup>ST</sup> - VERNELL JACKSON - 79  
2<sup>ND</sup> - FELIX GUILBE - 86, SONNY SMITH - 82, DONALD TROY - 82  
4<sup>TH</sup> - CHARLES MIDDLEBROOK - 73  
5<sup>TH</sup> - **BERNARD FERNANDEZ - 91**  
7<sup>TH</sup> - JAMES WOODS - 75; **ANDY PORTER - 98**  
11<sup>TH</sup> - BOB MOTLEY - 86  
12<sup>TH</sup> - BEE BOP GORDON - 81  
13<sup>TH</sup> - LEROY HANCOCK - 78  
15<sup>TH</sup> - ALBERT JEFFCOAT - 77; CHARLIE DAVIS - 82  
18<sup>TH</sup> - CHARLIE PRIDE - 74; EZELL KING - 79  
19<sup>TH</sup> - WILLIE LEE - 74  
20<sup>TH</sup> - GEORGE ALTMAN - 76  
21<sup>ST</sup> - BENNY RODRIQUEZ - 82  
22<sup>ND</sup> - GEORGE CROWE - 88  
29<sup>TH</sup> - SIDNEY BUNCH - 78  
31<sup>ST</sup> - MEL DUNCAN - 80



### APRIL

- 4<sup>TH</sup> - JOSE PILOTO - 83  
5<sup>TH</sup> - MARVIN PRICE - 77  
6<sup>TH</sup> - HAL HAIRSTON - 87  
15<sup>TH</sup> - J.C. HARTMAN - 75  
16<sup>TH</sup> - JOHN GIBBONS - 87  
18<sup>TH</sup> - JIM ZAPP - 85  
23<sup>RD</sup> - CHUCK HARMON - 85; **GENE SMITH - 92**  
25<sup>TH</sup> - JERRY BENNETT - 88; SAM ALLEN - 73  
26<sup>TH</sup> - BUDDY WILLIAMS - 95  
27<sup>TH</sup> - TONY LLOYD - 73  
30<sup>TH</sup> - JOE DOUSE - 79

### MAY

- 1<sup>ST</sup> - PIANO RED WALKER - 77  
6<sup>TH</sup> - WILLIE MAYS - 78  
9<sup>TH</sup> - CARL LONG - 74  
13<sup>TH</sup> - JESSIE MITCHELL - 75; J.W. WINGATE - 80  
17<sup>TH</sup> - GENE SCRUGGS - 71; IRVIN CASTILLE - 83  
18<sup>TH</sup> - SUPERMAN PENNINGTON - 86  
19<sup>TH</sup> - BERT SIMMONS - 85  
22<sup>ND</sup> - GEORGE SPRIGGS - 72; MAURICE PEATROS - 70  
23<sup>RD</sup> - RAY HOLMES - 73  
25<sup>TH</sup> - LARRY LEGRANDE - 70; CURLEY WILLIAMS - 84  
27<sup>TH</sup> - MACK PRIDE - 76  
29<sup>TH</sup> - HAROLD HAIR - 77; ROBERTO VARGAS - 80

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Nonagenarians:  
**BERNARD FERNANDEZ, ANDY PORTER AND GENE SMITH.**

## Sunsets . . . .



**EDDIE LEE REED**, 79, died January 25, 2009, in Great Falls, MT. In 1955, Reed from Straven, Alabama, was an Army veteran and played for the **Memphis Red Sox**.

**PRINCE JOE HENRY**, 78, died January 2, 2009, in St. Louis,

Missouri. A resident of Lovejoy, Illinois, Henry played the hot corner for the **Memphis Red Sox, Indianapolis Clowns, Detroit Clowns** and the **Detroit Stars**. The clown prince of black ball, Henry was known to don tails and top hat to entertain the fans. Sometimes he painted his shoes red and turned his back to the pitcher during the windup, spin around and drive a pitch for a base hit.

**CARLOS MANUEL SANTIAGO**, 82, died December 20, 2008 in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico. A veteran of the Korea War, Sergeant Santiago played second base for the 1945-46 **New York Cubans**. The former teammate of Latino stars such as Minnie Minoso, Luis Tiant, Sr., Pancho Coimbre, Silvio Garcia and Horacio "Rabbit" Martinez, Santiago was inducted into **Puerto Rico's Baseball Hall of Fame** in 1993.

**EUGENE "FIREBALL" WILLIAMS**, 76, died December 8, 2008, in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Williams pitched and played first base from 1956-62 for the **Memphis Red Sox, Birmingham Black Barons**, and the **Satchel Paige All-Stars**. Fireball was a native of Auburn, Alabama, and played in the 1956, 1957 and 1959 East-West All-Star classics.

**GEORGE CARTER "CHIN" DAVIS, SR.**, 70, died December 6, 2008, in Memphis, Tennessee. Davis, from Eads, Tennessee, was an outfielder for the 1960-61 **Kansas City Monarchs**. He appeared in the 1961 East-West All-Star game played in Yankee Stadium.

**SIDNEY WYNN**, 84, died November 22, 2008, in Miami, Florida. Wynn, a native of Ocilla, Georgia, was a utility player for the 1952 **Kansas City Monarchs**.

**NOTE:** As of March, 2009, we currently know of 240 living Negro League players.

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## Conferences hosted in 2009

March 7, 2009 – The 6<sup>th</sup> annual **Southern Baseball Association Conference** will be held at Rickwood Field in Birmingham, Alabama. This conference is dedicated to the preservation of the Southern baseball history, with this year's theme on the Southern Association's All-Star Game. The symposium will include authors and historians discussing their research and presentations. Contact **David Brewer** at [david@rickwood.com](mailto:david@rickwood.com) or 205.458.8161 for more information.

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March 12, 2009 – The 16<sup>th</sup> annual **NINE Baseball Conference** will be held in Tucson, Arizona.

NINE seeks to promote the study of all historical aspects of baseball and centers on the cultural implications of the game wherever in the world baseball is played. The Journal reflects an eclectic approach and does not foster a particular ideological bias. For conference information contact: **Trey Strecker** at [tstrecker@bsu.edu](mailto:tstrecker@bsu.edu) for additional information.

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June 3, 2009 – The 21<sup>st</sup> annual **Cooperstown (NY) Symposium on Baseball and American Culture**, co-sponsored by the State University of New York College at Oneonta and the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, examines the impact of baseball on American culture from inter- and multi-disciplinary perspectives. Contact **Fawn Holland** at [hollanfm@oneonta.edu](mailto:hollanfm@oneonta.edu) or 607.436.2522 for more information.

**NOTE:** The Hall of Fame will be opening two new exhibits this spring; one featuring # 44, **Hank Aaron**, and another exhibit about Latino baseball.

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July 29, 2009 – The 39<sup>th</sup> annual **Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) Convention** will be held in Washington, DC at the J.W. Marriott Hotel.



SABR's mission is to foster the study of baseball past and present, and to provide an outlet for educational, historical and research information about the game.

Reservations are going fast, so hurry for a fun time in the Nation's capital.

To register online go to:  
<http://store.sabr.org/sabrstore.cfm?a=prd&scid=22>

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## The MarketPlace:

**Pitching Man: Satchel Paige Defying Time** celebrates the life of baseball's most enduring legend. This DVD produced by filmmaker Craig Davidson shows Paige as an extraordinary athlete and a genuine original who played the game for 40 years on makeshift sandlots and in major



league ballparks against the best of the best.

Davidson is known for his award winning documentary in 1989 called **There Was Always Sun Shining Somewhere: Life in the Negro Leagues**.

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Visit [www.pitchingman.com](http://www.pitchingman.com) to view the trailer and purchase this historic documentary.

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### Willie Wells' Home 4 Sale.

The former home of Hall of Famer Willie Wells is on the market for \$325,000. Danny Jeff Bingham, who purchased the home in May of 2002, has plans and city permits to redevelop the property into a multifamily compound, although the 1910 house is an Austin Historic Landmark.

The 896 square feet home with two bedrooms and one bath is at 1705 Newton Street in south Austin's historic Swisher addition.

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### SABR's Negro Leagues Committee

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

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