



Satchel  
Paige

Oscar  
Charleston

Mahlon  
Duckett

# America at Bat: The Color of Baseball

Josh  
Gibson

Buck  
O'Neil

# The Color of Baseball



At the beginning of the 20th century, Philadelphia was a baseball mecca with a wealth of teams playing in every neighborhood and at all levels. At the forefront of the city's rich

baseball culture were two Major League teams, the National League Philadelphia Phillies and the American League Philadelphia Athletics. But entry onto the Phillies, Athletics or any other Major League team was restricted based solely upon the color of one's skin. Only white players were permitted to step onto a Major League Baseball field, forcing many of the era's top talents to find other avenues to play the game they loved.

In *America at Bat: The Color of Baseball* you will explore the factors that led to the creation of the Negro Leagues, the similarities and differences between the Negro Leagues and Major League Baseball (MLB) and the impact the Negro Leagues had on MLB from a social, cultural, financial and historical standpoint. You will also examine how Jackie Robinson's act of breaking of MLB's color barrier in the modern baseball era led to the dissolution of the Negro Leagues while at the same time ushering in

*Fans of all ages celebrate Jackie Robinson's first game each year on April 15.*



*Mahlon Duckett (seated) was honored by the Phillies at Citizens Bank Park for his achievements as a Philadelphia Stars player.*

a new type of baseball that we still see on the diamond today.

Particular attention will be paid to the Philadelphia Stars of the Negro National League. Nearly two decades ago, as MLB began to recognize on a wide scale the contribution that Jackie Robinson had on the game, the Phillies and members of the Philadelphia Stars came together to celebrate the play of the Stars and the legacy they left the city.

More importantly, however, the partnership produced the opportunity to share the history of the Negro Leagues, and in particular the Stars, with current and future generations of baseball players and enthusiasts who either did not know or did not understand

the Negro Leagues' place in baseball history.

## How to use this booklet

*America at Bat: The Color of Baseball* is meant to work in conjunction with the online Negro League Curriculum found at [www.phillies.com/uyanegroleagues](http://www.phillies.com/uyanegroleagues). Topics will be introduced throughout the booklet and will be expanded upon online.

Educational lessons will be incorporated throughout the booklet that will allow for a deeper understanding of the information presented. The answers to the questions posed will be combinations that ask for one's background knowledge and interpretation of information presented both in the booklet and online.

## Learn About History

On the cover is an image of Jackie Robinson surrounded by stars of the Negro League. Visit [www.phillies.com/uyanlcovers](http://www.phillies.com/uyanlcovers) to learn more about the players on the cover and the teams they played for.

# Increasing Participation in the Game

Prior to the 1997 season, Major League Baseball recognized that current players only had a surface understanding of Jackie Robinson and his impact on the game. The response was to begin an educational movement that was ushered in on April 15, 1997 with the retiring of Robinson's #42 across all of baseball. Today every April 15 is celebrated as Jackie Robinson Day and every player, manager and coach wears #42. In Philadelphia it has also been a day to celebrate the Philadelphia Stars. Through the 2015 season, the Phillies were privileged to recognize members of the Stars on field and in broadcast. While 2016 marked the first season without a living member of the Stars, the celebration of their contributions continues through tributes at Citizens Bank Park, educational activities such as *They Said We Couldn't Play: An Oral History of the Philadelphia Stars* and this booklet.

Stanley Glenn, a catcher for the Stars from 1944 to 1950, lamented during an interview featured in *They Said We Couldn't Play* that the fight to play that he, his Stars' teammates and all those who played in the Negro Leagues was not resonating with current generations of African-American players. And fewer African-Americans are playing baseball, with less than 10% of Major League players of African-American heritage. MLB recognizes this decrease and through programs such as [RBI](#) (Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities) and the construction of [Urban Youth Academies](#), MLB is working to increase



The mural Philadelphia Stars: A Tribute to Negro League Baseball is located on Belmont Avenue directly across from Memorial Park in West Philadelphia.

not just the number of African-Americans, but all youth, participating in the game.

## Resources for the community

In 1989, the Phillies recognized Philadelphia was no longer the mecca for baseball that it had been in the early half of the 20th century and that they needed to start providing resources to deserving communities throughout the region if they wanted the game to rebound in youth communities. Born out of this realization were Phillies Rookie Leagues (now [Junior RBI](#)) that provided 400 youth aged 12 and under with uniforms and equipment to play the game of baseball. In 1993, the Phillies, seeing the need to have Rookie League players graduate to the

next level and following the lead of MLB introduced RBI Leagues to serve 13-18 year olds. Today more than 8,000 players (5,000 in Jr. RBI and 2,000 in RBI) play baseball and softball throughout the tri-state area thanks to the Phillies. The growth led to the partnering of the Phillies, MLB and the City of Philadelphia to develop a UYA which officially opened fields at Franklin Delano Roosevelt Park on June 4, 2015 as the [Phillies MLB Urban Youth Academy](#). On July 21, 2016 the Phillies MLB UYA opened the [Ryan Howard Training Center](#). The indoor site is housed at the Marian Anderson Recreation Center located at 17th and Fitzwater and is the only existing multi-site UYA. It will provide free year-round instruction and educational programming to those in the Phillies youth baseball programs.



The Philadelphia Stars were led by Ed Bolden (center) in 1944.

## Resources

There are many great resources on the Internet for learning more about the Negro Leagues. Click on the links below to access three top ones.

- [Phillies Negro League Curriculum](#)
- [They Said We Couldn't Play: An Oral History of the Philadelphia Stars](#)
- [MLB Negro Leagues Legacy page](#)

# Climate of U.S. and Its Impact on the Segregation of Baseball

Today it is hard to imagine relegating the best baseball players in the game to the professional baseball sidelines simply because of skin color, but that is what occurred from 1867 until Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in the modern baseball era when he stepped onto the field on April 15, 1947 to play for the Brooklyn Dodgers.

**To understand why the color barrier existed in baseball, one has to understand the climate of the country in 1867 when the ban unofficially became common practice in baseball.**

The climate in the United States of America during the late 1860s was a fragile balance between the Northern and Southern states trying to mend the fault lines of the country that came to a head during the Civil War fought between 1861 and 1865. One of the leading issues in the fight between the Confederacy (Southern) and Union (Northern) armies was the issue of slavery. Southern states felt that, with the 1860 election of President Abraham Lincoln who believed that there should be a ban on slavery in U.S. territories, that their constitutional rights were being violated. This feeling led to the secession (breaking away) from the United States by seven southern states with the highest slave populations and to the outbreak of war.

The Union war efforts were aided by large numbers of slaves and free black men fighting for their rights. The official beginning to the end of the Civil War happened on April 9, 1865 when General Robert E. Lee of the Confederate Army surrendered his forces to the Union's General Ulysses S. Grant at McLean House in Appomattox, VA.

While the war was being fought, an amendment to the U.S. Constitution was introduced to abolish slavery. The measure passed the U.S. Senate on April 8, 1864, the U.S. House on January 31, 1865 and was ratified (approved by required number of states) on December 6, 1865. Amendment XIII



*Free black men fought for the Union Army in the Civil War as part of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment.*



*Black Codes during segregation required white and black Americans to drink from separate water fountains.*

(the 13th Amendment) was officially adopted on December 18, 1865 and declared that “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any places subject to their jurisdiction.”

Despite the Union's victory and the 13th Amendment's abolition of slavery, the Reconstructionist Era (1863-1877) and later years were still difficult for African-Americans who were governed by laws known as Black Codes that restricted their movements and place in society. These Codes, which existed prior to the Civil War, and were expanded upon by many southern states after the war, continued to segregate society. In Southern states local and state laws known as Jim Crow laws enforced the segregation of public facilities such as schools, restrooms, transportation and restaurants.

The 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling by the United States Supreme Court upheld state laws mandating racial segregation in public facilities by stating “separate but equal” was legal. This ruling stood until 1954 when the Supreme Court overturned the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

## Learn About History

Throughout *America at Bat: The Color of Baseball* print and online curriculum, significant dates in the history of both Negro League and Major League Baseball will be shared, as well as important dates in the history of the United States. Visit [www.phillies.com/uyanlntimeline](http://www.phillies.com/uyanlntimeline) to download a timeline template on which significant dates can be compiled.

# The Ban of African-American Players in Professional Baseball



Catcher Moses Fleetwood Walker (top row, center) of the Toledo Blue Stockings was targeted by Adrian “Cap” Anson in Anson’s effort to bar black players.

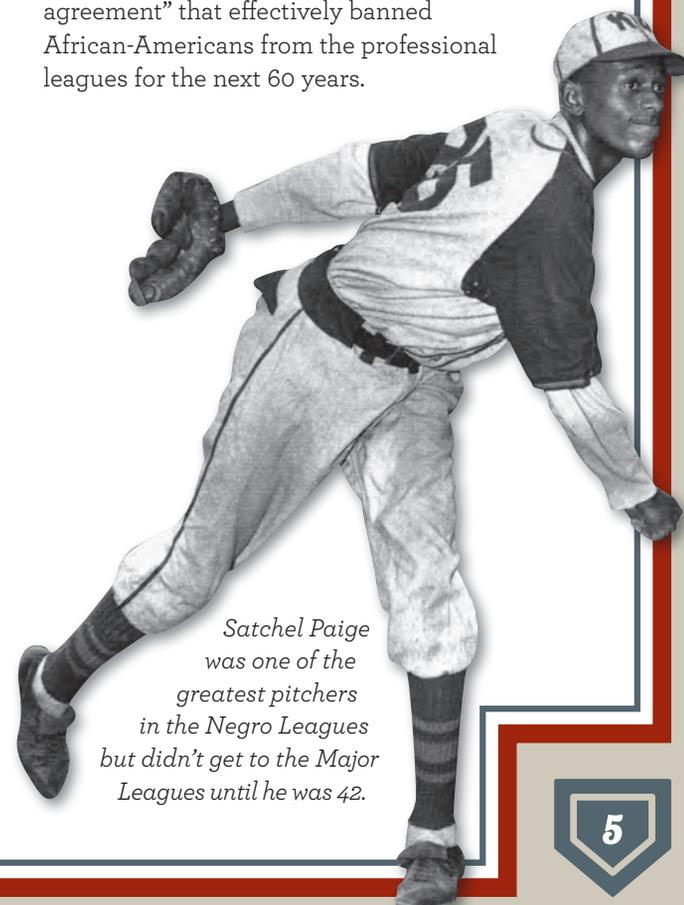
African-American baseball players were not allowed to play in what would come to be known as Major League Baseball until 1947 as Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier when he took the field for the Brooklyn Dodgers. But when was the rule written that excluded African-American players from the game? The truth is no rule was expressly written to exclude African-American players. The ban can be traced back to deep-rooted prejudices present in the United States during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In fact, a team in Philadelphia is often cited as setting baseball on the course to segregation.

On October 16, 1867 an all African-American baseball team known as the Philadelphia Pythian Baseball Club applied for admission to the Pennsylvania State Convention of Baseball in Harrisburg. They were denied admission because of the number of African-American players on the team. While some teams operated with African-Americans on the roster, it was becoming a less common occurrence.

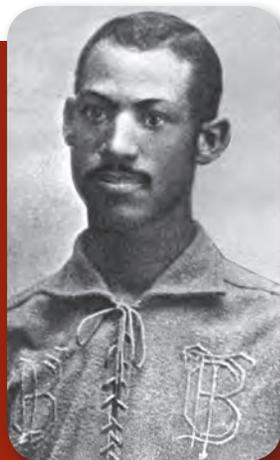
It would be another 15 years until the ban on African-Americans playing would come to the forefront of baseball. On August 10, 1883 Adrian “Cap” Anson of the Chicago White Stockings (now the Cubs), refused to play in an exhibition

game against the minor league Toledo Blue Stockings because they had a black catcher named Moses Fleetwood “Fleet” Walker. Anson was a top baseball figure and someone whom others in the game respected. While his threat not to play in the game against the Blue Stockings failed when Anson learned he would not be paid if he sat, he did not give up his fight.

Anson would continue to push to have African-Americans excluded from baseball with many players, due to Anson’s prominence in the sport and their own racist beliefs, backing the notion. On July 14, 1887 during an exhibition game against the Newark Little Giants, Anson refused to play if African-American pitcher George Stovey took the mound as scheduled. Anson’s threat to sit led to Stovey being scratched from the game. Ironically, while Anson was taking his stand, the International League, to which the Little Giants belonged, voted to ban the future recruitment and signing of African-American players. The National League and American Association, though nothing formal was written into any rulebook, followed suit with a “gentleman’s agreement” that effectively banned African-Americans from the professional leagues for the next 60 years.



Satchel Paige was one of the greatest pitchers in the Negro Leagues but didn’t get to the Major Leagues until he was 42.



## Learn About History

Moses Fleetwood “Fleet” Walker is credited for being the first player to break the color barrier in baseball when his team, the Toledo Blue Stockings, joined the American Association in 1884. Imagine you were “Fleet” Walker. How would you have felt to be the first African-American player in a white game — and to face the opposition of baseball leaders like “Cap” Anson? Write a letter home describing your feelings to your family.

# Growth of Negro League Baseball

Negro League Baseball has a complicated and rich history. To many, the Negro Leagues were the teams that combined and played under the umbrella of the Negro National League. Others, however, say that the Negro Leagues encompass all African-American-only teams that played prior to, during and right after African-Americans were banned from what evolved into today's Major League Baseball. In this curriculum, the term "Negro Leagues" will refer to all African-American teams and leagues that played the game until and just after the integration of baseball on April 15, 1947.

With the banning of African-Americans from professional baseball in the National League, American Association and the minor leagues, talented African-American players were left with a choice — give up the game they loved because of their skin color or form their own teams and leagues in order to play. The history and contributions to baseball of these players are important to note, remember and celebrate.

## The first professional African-American baseball team

While many African-American teams were in existence during the mid- to late 1800s, they were amateur teams, meaning the players were not paid to play. That changed in 1885

when headwaiter Frank P. Thompson of the Argyle Hotel in Babylon, New York; Stanislaus Kostka "S.K." Govern and C.S. Massey founded the professional Babylon Black Panthers, a team later renamed the Cuban Giants when it relocated to Trenton, New Jersey. In this sense professional meant that all players on the team were paid. Recognizing that top players could attract patrons to the hotel, the team founders sought only the best players.

## The first attempts at an organized African-American baseball league

The first attempt to pull African-American teams together into a league was orchestrated by *The Leader*, a newspaper in Jacksonville, Florida in 1886. Named the Southern League of Base Ballists, the league consisted of 10 teams. It quickly fell deep in debt, however, and folded after one season.

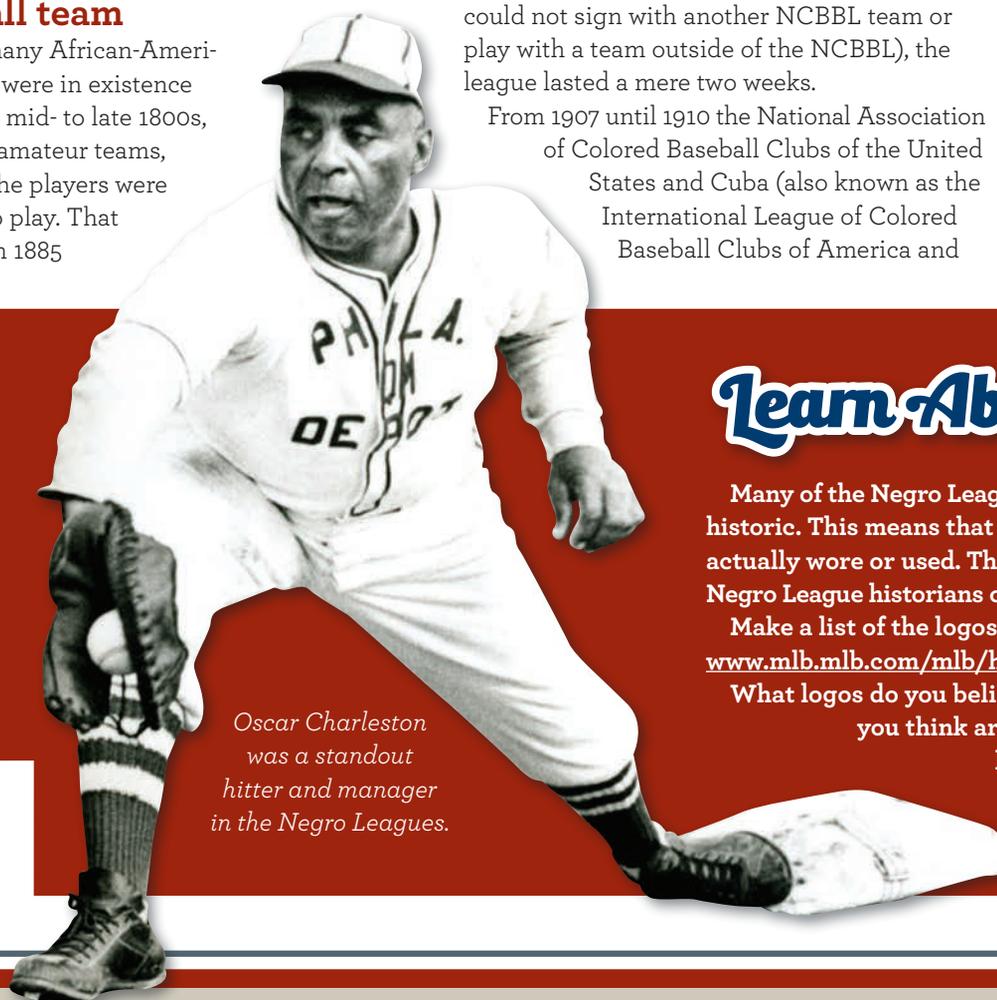
In 1887, the National Colored Base Ball League (NCBBL) was founded with six teams. Despite being granted, under the National Agreement, official minor league status (players could not sign with another NCBBL team or play with a team outside of the NCBBL), the league lasted a mere two weeks.

From 1907 until 1910 the National Association of Colored Baseball Clubs of the United States and Cuba (also known as the International League of Colored Baseball Clubs of America and



*King Solomon "Sol" White co-founded the Philadelphia Giants, and as a sportswriter wrote the first definitive history of the Negro Leagues.*

Cuba) operated. It was founded by Philadelphia Giants owner Henry Walter Schlichter, Sol White and Harry A. Smith and played with just four teams.



*Oscar Charleston was a standout hitter and manager in the Negro Leagues.*

## Learn About History

Many of the Negro League team logos in the booklet are not historic. This means that they are not the logos that teams actually wore or used. The logos depicted are interpretations by Negro League historians of what the logos could have looked like.

Make a list of the logos you find in this booklet and online at [www.mlb.com/mlb/history/mlb\\_negro\\_leagues\\_teams.jsp](http://www.mlb.com/mlb/history/mlb_negro_leagues_teams.jsp).

What logos do you believe are interpretations? Which ones do you think are accurate? For the teams listed that don't have logos, draw or write a description of how you think the logo may have looked.

# Successful Negro Leagues Formed



Andrew "Rube" Foster was the force behind creation of the Negro National League.

## Negro National League

On February 13, 1920 the Negro National League was born and, while previous attempts to organize black baseball teams into a league failed, this league found success.

The force behind the creation of the Negro National League was Andrew "Rube" Foster. Foster was a baseball man. He was considered to be one of, if not the best, pitchers during the first decade of the 20th century. In 1907 Foster was the player-manager for the Leland Giants in Chicago. In 1910 he gained control of the Leland Giants from their owner, Frank Leland, and renamed the club the Chicago American Giants.

Ten years later in 1920, Foster felt the time was right to organize the strongest Negro League teams into a league. He wanted to foster competition among the teams, as well as to control team bookings. He called together the owners of the Midwestern teams and they met at a YMCA in Kansas City, Missouri on February 13, 1920. At that meeting the Negro National League was formed, and the first game took place on May 2, 1920. Though the league had formal status, the schedules of the teams varied greatly due to the fact that each team scheduled its own games.



By 1930 the Negro National League was struggling in large part due to The Great Depression that had been triggered by the stock market crash in late October 1929. By 1931 the NNL was down to five teams and the financial pressures finally proved too much. The league shuttered at the conclusion of the season.

## Eastern Colored League

The Eastern Colored League (ECL) was formed in 1923 when Ed Bolden, president of the Hilldale Athletic Club in Darby, Pennsylvania, and the Bacharach Giants joined with white promoter Nat Strong. Both teams had been associate members of the Negro National League and the leadership of both teams felt that they were losing profits due to that association because they were not permitted to play any teams outlawed by the Negro National League.



The ECL raided players from the Negro National League rosters, angering both the teams and NNL President Rube Foster. By 1925 the NNL and ECL came to an agreement that would prevent player raiding and also led to the establishment of the Colored World Series. The first Colored World Series lasted over three weeks, was played in four different cities and was won five games to four by the Kansas City Monarchs of the NNL over the ECL's Hilldale Athletic Club.

Bolden, who had founded the ECL, felt by 1928 that the league was not profitable and withdrew his team. Two other teams, the Brooklyn Royal Giants and the Harrisburg Giants, withdrew prior to Opening Day thus handicapping the league and leading to its demise in the midst of the 1928 season.

## The Negro National League Resurrected & the Birth of the Negro American League

Just two short years after the Negro National League folded, Gus Greenlee, owner of the Pittsburgh Crawfords and a successful bar owner, launched a second incarnation of the league.

It initially featured teams from both

the Eastern and Midwestern parts of the United States, but by 1936 only eastern teams were included. The exclusion of teams outside of the East led to Southern and Midwestern teams banding together to form the Negro American League in 1937.

From 1942 the champions of the Negro National League and the Negro American League competed in the Negro World Series.



By 1948, one year after Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in Major League Baseball, the Negro National League was struggling to continue. The league's best players were playing either on Major League Baseball teams or in the minor league system. This left rosters without the ability to compete, and the league folded at the conclusion of the 1948 season.

Negro National League teams that were still competitive were either absorbed by the Negro American League or continued to play as independent entities. The Negro American League would continue to play until 1962 when, due to the full integration of Major League Baseball, it could no longer attract the top talent or interest to play in the League.



Judy Johnson played for the Hilldale baseball club from 1921 to 1929.

# Game Preparation & Style

The style of play in the Negro Leagues varied greatly from that of white professional baseball. This covered everything from play on the field to preparation for their season, travel and the hardship of discrimination.

## Play Style

During the first half of the 20th century the white baseball game relied on the power of the players. Players focused on hitting the ball out of the park, scoring runs in bunches. The Negro League game was much different. It was a game of finesse. Players manufactured runs with the bunt, base stealing and the hit and run.

With the fast pace of the Negro League game, players on both offense and defense had to be on their toes. Base runners always slid with their spikes up and out so that the defensive player would not be able to tag or spike them in the hands or arms. When players got on base, they did not like to stay still. They would look for the chance to take the next base either by a steal or attempting to take an extra base on a hit by a teammate. This constant activity on the base paths made the defense, and pitchers in particular, really pay attention to what was happening when players got on base.

When Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in 1947, he brought the Negro League style of play to Major League Baseball. Philadelphia Stars player Wilmer Harris shared that “Jackie took Negro League Baseball to the Major Leagues. There was no such thing as hitting a single and going to second. He made the Major Leagues better and everyone was trying to play like the Dodgers.”

## Spring Training

By 1900 Spring Training had become the normal practice for the American and National Leagues. Spring Training was — and is — an opportunity for players to work on their skills and for each team’s manager and coaches to evaluate talent that would eventually make the roster. In the Negro Leagues, the luxury of Spring Training did not exist. Players joked that their Spring Training was one day on which they did some calisthenics and then the next day played a game.



*The style of Negro League baseball featured speed, base running and finesse.*

## The Roster

Since around 1910, the American and National Leagues have allowed for the active roster — players eligible to play — to have up to 25 players. In 1921 the 40-man roster went into effect, enabling teams to include players on the disabled list and players in the minor leagues who were signed to a Major League contract.

By contrast, Negro League teams carried between 16 and 18 players on their teams. This was partially due to the strict budgets of teams and lack of money to pay more players. As a result, Negro League players had to be able to play more than one position, something that happened frequently as the teams traveled extensively and played multiple games in a day.

## Life on the Road

Barnstorming, the practice of taking to the road to play multiple exhibition games across the country, was a large part of Negro League baseball. This practice was not easy for the players. They spent

large amounts of time traveling by bus and often played up to eight games in a weekend. Even more difficult, players often could not find places to stay or eat as a result of the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* Supreme Court ruling that allowed businesses to deny services to African-Americans if there were “separate but equal” accommodations elsewhere.

Throughout the country, but particularly in the South, restaurants that would serve African-Americans were scarce. When players found a place that provided food, they often had to go to the back door to collect their meals if the establishment had a rule that it only seated whites.



*Stars like Roy Campanella made their mark in Negro League competition.*

# Sacrificing for a Chance to Play

Players in the Negro Leagues faced many obstacles. Hotels that accommodated African-Americans, for example, were not places where one could sleep comfortably. Negro League players recalled that the hotels often were bug infested and not cleaned regularly. When hotels could not be found, players were forced to sleep on the bus. On top of that, many of the ball fields where they played didn't have showers — or the showers were not available to African-American players. This meant players had no opportunity to shower before boarding a bus after a game for either a night of sleep or the next leg of their trip. The situation made travel miserable.

Sometimes teams were lucky and were able to stay in the home of an African-American family willing to open their doors. The players enjoyed this opportunity because they were able to take a hot shower, eat better than they could in a restaurant and get a good night's sleep.

## Playing White Teams

While Major League Baseball was segregated, it was not unusual for white and African-American teams to play against one another. Barnstorming tours for African-American teams often included games against white semi-professional and professional teams. Teams of Negro League All-Stars would also play against all-star teams from the American and National Leagues. In these games the contrast between the power game and the Negro League style of "small ball" was apparent. Records reflect that the Negro League teams won the match-ups approximately 60% of the time.

## Off-Season Baseball

There was money to be made during the off-season for Negro League players. Many players would travel to states such as California or Florida or even leave the country and play in Latin American countries to continue earning a salary while keeping themselves in baseball ready shape.

Hotels and Negro League teams had an early connection. The first professional African-American team played out of the Argyle Hotel in Babylon, New York so it was not surprising that Negro League teams continued a partnership with hotels during the winter

months. Hotels would form Negro League teams that played exhibition games to attract and entertain hotel visitors. While not on the field, the players would work in the hotel to earn extra money as waiters, bellhops or in other roles that needed to be filled.

Other players traveled to Latin American counties to play during the offseason. Because there was no segregation, players reported that playing in Latin American countries was an exhilarating experience and one quite different from their time playing in the United States.

Players unable to play winter ball returned to their hometowns and sought work that would get them through to the next baseball season.

## Fans

Negro League baseball games were a special occasion for fans, and they would dress in their best clothes. This was partly due to a large number of games being held on Sunday, when fans would attend church prior to a game. Dressing "to the nines" was also an opportunity to celebrate the social excitement of attending a game.

African-Americans weren't the only ones attending games, however. Whites, particularly in the northern cities, were often in the stands as well. The Negro League All-Star Game

regularly pulled 50,000 people through the gates between 1933 and 1950 — outdrawing the Major League All-Star Game.

## Learn About History

The Negro League players faced many hardships while playing, particularly when on the road. As a result, players formed tight bonds.

Once someone played in the Negro Leagues, regardless of the length of time, he became part of a brotherhood. The bonds the players forged would last well beyond their playing days.

Detail why you believe Negro League players formed such tight bonds. How do you think they managed to stay positive and continue to play despite the difficult conditions? What character traits did they need to succeed?



Negro League teams like the Kansas City Monarchs often traveled by bus to play exhibition games against white teams — and occasionally posed for pictures with their opponents.

# Pay Scale and Economics

When baseball teams began to organize into professional leagues in the late 1800s, the pay was meager and varied depending upon the talent of the player and the team. This was especially true for those playing in the Negro Leagues.

The Black Panthers (later the Cuban Giants) was the first professional Negro League team, and in 1885 players earned a weekly salary of \$12 to \$18.

As the popularity of Negro League baseball grew, so did the salaries. During the 1920s it was not unusual for players to earn a monthly salary between \$100 and \$400 compared to Major League players who could earn between \$4,000 and \$10,000 for a five-month season. Both the Eastern Colored League and Rube Foster's Negro National League had a monthly player salary cap of \$3,000 per team in 1926. That would equal about \$40,000 in 2016 dollars. But by 1927, with the country on the verge of the Great Depression, team salary caps in both leagues were reduced to \$2,700 a month. By 1932, the Hilldale Athletic Club, by then operating as an independent team, had a monthly salary cap of \$2,200. The tight economic conditions caused many teams to move from a salaried system to that of a co-op or co-play system that called for managers and players to divide gate receipts from ticket sales.

Fortunes of teams began to rebound as the 1930s progressed. When Gus Greenlee resurrected the Negro National League, salary caps again became the norm. By 1936 the NNL had a monthly cap of \$2,600 and it was \$2,700 the following year. When the Negro American League was founded in 1937 the cap was set at \$2,200.

Oddly enough, salaries of Negro League players rose in the 1940s, even as the country was fighting World War II. By 1943 players were making up to \$300 a month and that figure continued to rise. By 1947, the NNL had a team salary cap of \$8,000 (equal to \$88,000 today). While progress in pay was good for the players, the salaries caused great strain to teams that had to consistently fill the stands to cover costs.

After Jackie Robinson broke



*Negro League teams like the Homestead Grays sometimes attracted more fans than Major League teams in their cities.*

the color barrier in Major League Baseball, interest in Negro League baseball began to erode as fans turned to watch what was becoming the more integrated competition of MLB. Salaries in the Negro Leagues took a sharp downward turn as a result. The NNL would fold after the 1948 season, and though the NAL would stay afloat until the early 1960s it was at a much lesser level.

## Negro League Team Owners

Negro League teams provided more than an outlet for talented baseball players and an opportunity for fans to take in a game. The contests were also an opportunity to benefit the African-American community. Many Negro League teams were owned by African-American businessmen who relied on their fans to help keep the teams afloat. Since owners typically lived in the community where their team played, they recognized the community could benefit from their games. Therefore it was common for teams to designate a local charity to receive a portion of the gate receipts.

Additionally, businesses in areas where Negro League teams were located could see a boom in their profits when the teams were playing. Nearly 75% of game revenues stayed within the team's community. By the early 1940s Negro League baseball was the largest African-American enterprise in the United States, bringing in annual revenues of

approximately \$2 million. This was due in large part to the dedication of the fans.

## Major Leagues Rent to Negro League Teams

The great majority of Negro League teams lacked high quality facilities that could seat large numbers. Therefore it became somewhat common for Negro League teams to rent Major League facilities to play in. Ballpark owners knew that they could make a nice sum, which often required a piece of the gate in addition to a rental fee, in exchange for the use of the facility.

The days and times that Negro League teams could play was limited by the schedule of the professional team that called that location home. Many Major League teams did not play on Mondays so this was a typical rental day for the Negro Leagues. Even so, the number of fans that Negro League teams could draw would often exceed the number of fans that a Major League franchise would draw to its games — particularly in the 1940s. This appeal — coupled with the fact that many of the fans watching were white — began to make many in baseball believe that integration of baseball not only was possible but someday would become necessary.

## Learn About History

**Make a chart of team salary caps Negro League teams by league and date. Knowing that Negro League teams carried rosters of 16 to 18 players, determine the average salary of players on a 15-, 16-, 17- and 18-player roster.**

**Players, as a whole, tended to make less when rosters were larger. What were the positive benefits of a large roster? What were the negative effects?**

# The Road to Baseball Integration

For nearly 60 years Major League Baseball was a segregated sport, as the American and National Leagues unofficially banned African-Americans from their ranks. That all changed on April 15, 1947 when Jackie Robinson took the field as a Brooklyn Dodger. But the roots of this historic moment can be traced to a multitude of factors in U.S. history, including the nation's involvement in World War II.

When the war began, over 2.5 million African-American men registered for the draft and over 1 million served in all branches of the military. Additionally, a large number of African-American women volunteered to help the war effort. After the war, African-American players thought it ironic that they could die for their country but they couldn't hit and field a ball in the Major Leagues.

## Jackie Robinson

In 1945 Robinson was playing for the Negro American League's Kansas City Monarchs. At the same time Branch Rickey, the president and general manager of the Brooklyn (now Los Angeles) Dodgers, was looking for a Negro League player to add to his roster. Rickey focused on Robinson because he was college educated, had served in World War II and had talent, having lettered in four sports (baseball, basketball, football and track) while at UCLA.

On October 23, 1945 Robinson signed a contract with the Dodgers' Minor League team the Montreal Royals, thus ending the segregation that had existed in the International League since the 1880s.

After playing with the Royals during the 1946 season, Robinson was brought up and made his debut as a Dodger on April 15, 1947. It was a great moment of pride for the African-American community. On that day, of the more than 26,000 people attending the game, 14,000 were African-American.

Robinson did not disappoint.



In his first season, he was named the first ever Rookie of the Year, hit .297, scored 125 runs, stole 29 bases and helped the Dodgers win that year's National League title. He played 10 seasons for the Dodgers, retiring after the 1956 season, and was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962.

## Beginning of the End

Jackie Robinson's breaking of the color barrier in MLB also signaled the beginning of the end for Negro League Baseball. MLB clubs recognized that the Negro Leagues were filled with talented players who could enhance their rosters and bring new fans through the gates. As Negro League talent signed both Major and Minor League contracts, the Negro National League felt the impact and played only one more season. The NNL teams that did survive were absorbed into the Negro American League or operated as independent teams. Though the NAL would operate until 1962, Negro League baseball was never the same.

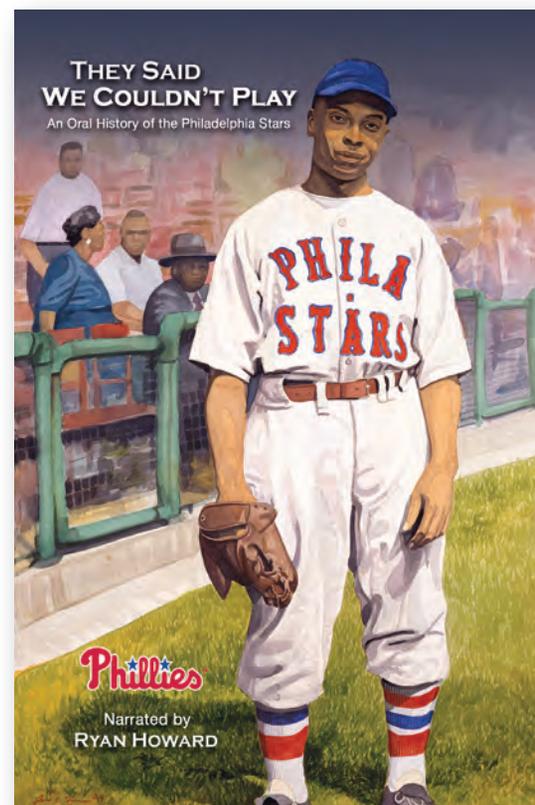
## Jackie Robinson Legacy

For nearly 50 years, Jackie Robinson's breaking of the color barrier in the modern baseball era was not celebrated widely across Major League Baseball. Recognizing that Robinson and his impact should never be forgotten, MLB universally retired his number "42" during the April 15, 1997 game at Shea Stadium in New York City. In 2004, MLB officially named April 15 [Jackie Robinson Day](#). By 2009 all players, coaches and managers wore "42" on April 15 in Robinson's honor.

*Jackie Robinson as a Kansas City Monarch.*

## They Said We Couldn't Play: An Oral History of the Philadelphia Stars

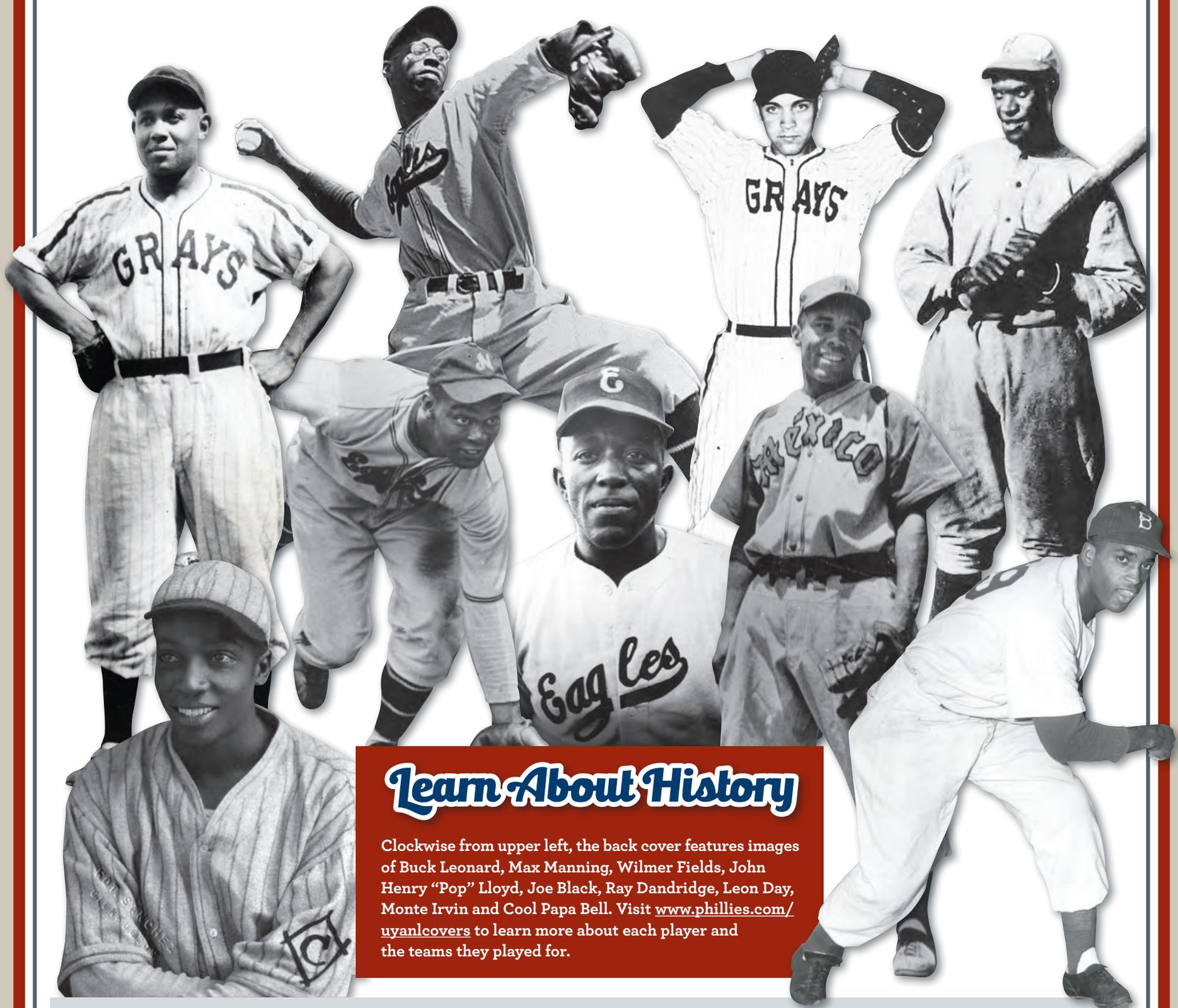
In 2015 the Phillies released a documentary called [They Said We Couldn't Play: An Oral History of the Philadelphia Stars](#). Written and produced by the Phillies' Director of Video Production, Dan Stephenson, the documentary examines what it was like to be play in the Negro Leagues. Compiled over 10 years, the documentary features conversations with the Philadelphia Stars, baseball historians and Phillies players.



## Negro Leagues Baseball Museum

In 1990, former Negro League players established The Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City, Missouri. The Museum highlights the history of the Negro Leagues from the late 1890s through the 1960s and displays equipment used by famous Negro League players.

# Meet Some Stars of the Negro Leagues



## Learn About History

Clockwise from upper left, the back cover features images of Buck Leonard, Max Manning, Wilmer Fields, John Henry "Pop" Lloyd, Joe Black, Ray Dandridge, Leon Day, Monte Irvin and Cool Papa Bell. Visit [www.phillies.com/uyanlcovers](http://www.phillies.com/uyanlcovers) to learn more about each player and the teams they played for.

### Credits

*America at Bat: The Color of Baseball* was written by Meghan Essman of Meghan Essman Consulting, LLC with contributions from Dr. Mahlene Duckett Lee, daughter of Philadelphia Stars second baseman Mahlon Duckett, and Rob Holiday, Phillies Director, Amateur

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