

THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE HOMESTEAD GRAYS
AND THE INTEGRATION OF BASEBALL



BEYOND THE SHADOW OF THE SENATORS



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OF THE SENATORS

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For Harry, Linda, and Ivan Snyder

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INTRODUCTION

Between the Babe and Jackie

July 5, 1924

Griffith Stadium is packed for a doubleheader between the Washington Senators and the New York Yankees. The two teams are battling for first place, and the atmosphere at the stadium, located in the heart of Washington's black community, is electric. In the first game, while chasing a foul ball off the bat of Senators first baseman Joe Judge, Yankees legend Babe Ruth knocks himself unconscious running into the right-field retaining wall—directly in front of the pavilion reserved for the Senators' black fans.

A photographer perched in foul territory captures a classic image of the black fans peering down at the sprawled-out slugger. Trainers rush from both dugouts with water buckets and black medical bags. Players from both teams look on anxiously. Police Captain Doyle, a caricature of an Irish cop, stretches out a white hand to keep a sea of black faces at bay.

Buck Leonard, a husky, sixteen-year-old railroad worker, almost certainly stands among the multitude of concerned fans. A future Negro League star, Leonard is attending his first major league baseball game. Sam Lacy, an eighteen-year-old stadium vendor and future sportswriter, is selling soft drinks and making comparisons between the white players in major league baseball and the black

During the first half of the twentieth century, Washington, D.C., was a segregated Southern town. Racial discrimination in the nation's capital prevented blacks and whites from attending the same schools, living on the same streets, eating in the same restaurants, shopping in the same stores, playing on the same playgrounds, and frequenting the same movie theaters. As a result, black and white Washingtonians lived in separate social worlds.

Those worlds collided at Senators games. Griffith Stadium was one of the few outdoor places in segregated Washington where blacks could enjoy themselves *with* whites. The ballpark, located at Seventh Street and Florida Avenue in northwest Washington, stood in the heart of a thriving black residential and commercial district. It also was just down the street from Howard University, the “Capstone of Negro Education.” The educational opportunities at Howard and the job opportunities in the federal government had lured many of the country's best and brightest black residents to the nation's capital. Many of them lived near the ballpark in neighborhoods such as LeDroit Park, which was just beyond Griffith Stadium's right-field wall.

With an affluent black population in their own backyard, the Senators boasted one of major league baseball's largest and most loyal black fan bases. The Senators' black fans sat in the right-field pavilion—Griffith Stadium was one of only two segregated major league ballparks (Sportsman's Park in St. Louis was the other). Segregated seating, however, did not deter the Senators' black fans from attending games. On the contrary, black Washingtonians were so enamored of the Senators that they refused to support any of the Negro League teams that played at Griffith Stadium during the 1920s and 1930s. The Senators enjoyed unprecedented success during this period—winning the World Series in 1924 and returning to the Fall Classic in 1925 and 1933—as well as unwavering support from their black fans.

Only one player during the 1920s and '30s tested the loyalty of the Senators' black fans—Babe Ruth. The Babe's big lips and broad, flat nose often triggered racial epithets from white players and fans but endeared him to black ones. “Ruth was called ‘nigger’ so often that

many people assumed that he was indeed partly black and that at some point in time he, or an immediate ancestor, had managed to cross the color line,” wrote Ruth biographer Robert W. Creamer. “Even players in the Negro baseball leagues that flourished then believed this and generally wished the Babe, whom they considered a secret brother, well in his conquest of white baseball.”¹

With their “secret brother’s” retirement in 1935 and the Senators’ nosedive after the 1933 season, the calls for a “real brother” on the Senators came from the team’s black fans. One of those fans was a Washington native and young journalist named Sam Lacy. During the mid-1930s, Lacy began lobbying Senators owner Clark Griffith to integrate his team. But from Ruth’s retirement until Jackie Robinson’s debut with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947, Lacy and other black Washingtonians waited in vain for another major league hero.

During World War II, the Homestead Grays ended the long-standing love affair between black Washingtonians and the Senators. Blacks flocked to Grays games, not out of some social obligation but because they thirsted for recreational outlets during the war and they loved good baseball. While such major league stars as Ted Williams, Joe DiMaggio, Hank Greenberg, and the Senators’ Cecil Travis were off serving in the military, the Grays maintained a team of talented yet aging players led by Gibson and Leonard. Satchel Paige, the star pitcher for the Kansas City Monarchs, also was too old to serve in the military, but not too old to compete. The Grays-Monarchs clashes were the best show in town. Although white fans never caught on, more than twenty-eight thousand black fans attended a 1942 Grays-Monarchs game at Griffith Stadium. They sat wherever they wanted. And they saw top-notch professional baseball.

xii The Grays’ popularity and on-field success transformed Washington into the front lines of the campaign to integrate major league baseball. The city was a natural forum for social protest. Segregation thrived in the nation’s capital while the United States fought a war against Nazi white supremacy. The city’s sophisticated black population was ready to embrace a black major league player. The best team in the Negro Leagues played in the same ballpark as one of the worst teams in the major leagues, highlighting the illogic of main-



SAM, BUCK, AND GRIFFITH STADIUM

The day the Babe crashed into the right-field pavilion at Griffith Stadium was one of many afternoons Sam Lacy spent at the ballpark. The eighteen-year-old stadium vendor had grown up five blocks from the ballpark—it was his second home. An aspiring young ballplayer, Lacy would shag balls in the outfield for the Senators while they took batting practice. He befriended several players, including first baseman Chick Gandil, shortstop George McBride, and center fielder Clyde Milan, and, after batting practice, he would run errands for them such as picking up their laundry and taking their shirts to the cleaners. Even after these players left the team, the Senators rewarded Lacy for his pregame work with the most profitable items to sell in the stands: coffee in the spring, cold drinks in the summer, and scorecards when the Senators defeated the New York Giants in the 1924 World Series.¹

Lacy discovered an added benefit from shagging flies and selling scorecards: He learned how to make comparisons between the white major leaguers and the black professional players who took the field at Griffith Stadium when the Senators were out of town. Lacy knew that Babe Ruth and Ty Cobb were good, but the future Hall of Fame sportswriter also knew that contemporary Negro League stars Oscar Charleston and John Henry Lloyd should be playing on the same teams as Ruth and Cobb.

Racial segregation wasn't confined to the playing field; it also was in the stands. In 1924, the right-field pavilion was reserved for the Senators' black fans. There were no signs or rigid seating policy as in St. Louis (which did not lift its racially segregated seating policy until 1944).² There was even some debate as to whether segregated seating at Griffith Stadium existed at all,³ in part because black fans occasionally sat in the left-field bleachers. Blacks rarely, if ever, sat in box seats or the grandstand. "There were black people around from time to time, but you used to do almost a double take when you saw them," recalled baseball author Bill Gilbert, who had grown up going to Senators games. "You just thought they were going to be sitting out in the right-field pavilion or the bleachers."⁴

Calvin Griffith, who assumed ownership of the team upon his Uncle Clark's death in 1955, confirmed that his family segregated black fans in the right-field pavilion. "That was because of the colored preachers coming in there and asking Mr. Griffith to put aside a section for the black people," Calvin recalled, respectfully referring to his uncle. "Mr. Griffith gave them practically down from first base to the right-field fence. That's what they wanted. They got what they asked for."⁵

The segregated seating rankled Lacy. "There were places I couldn't go, places my friends couldn't go, places my family couldn't go. At that time, by nature of being raised here, you have to know where they had segregated seating at Griffith Stadium . . ." Lacy recalled. "They required you to sit in the right-field pavilion up against the fence almost, and [there was] no being able to sit anywhere else in the stadium."⁶

2 Segregation—the separation and exclusion of blacks through laws and local customs—thrived in the nation's capital, but in an idiosyncratic way. It existed in the public schools, housing, and employment, but not transportation. It existed on most playgrounds, but not ones controlled by the Department of the Interior. It existed in all parts of downtown Washington, but not in public buildings, such as the White House, the Capitol, the Smithsonian museums, art galleries, public libraries, or the Library of Congress. It existed in downtown restaurants, department stores, and movie theaters, but to

varying degrees. Some offered blacks a full range of services; others served blacks in limited ways; however, most refused to serve them at all.

The inconsistency arose from the Northern and Southern characteristics Washington inherited as a border city and from the presence of the federal government.⁷ It is therefore not surprising that there were no “white” and “colored” signs at Griffith Stadium. Washingtonians often refused to advertise their discriminatory practices.⁸ Segregation developed through local custom, in part because the city had passed “lost laws” in 1872 and 1873 that actually prohibited discrimination in public accommodations.⁹ The laws were never repealed, but they were usually ignored. As historian C. Vann Woodward observed, “Laws are not an adequate index of the extent and prevalence of segregation and discriminatory practices in the South.”¹⁰ The off-the-books segregation at Griffith Stadium proved that Washington was no different from the rest of the Jim Crow South.

Griffith Stadium, however, was different from other public places in Washington by virtue of its location—the ballpark at Seventh Street and Florida Avenue was a white island in the heart of the black community. The center-field wall detoured around five houses in the upscale black neighborhood known as LeDroit Park. Howard University, one of the nation’s finest historically black colleges, lay on a hill just north of the ballpark. Another black institution, Freedmen’s Hospital, stood between Howard and Griffith Stadium.

It was not always a black neighborhood. Professional baseball had been played on the site of Griffith Stadium since 1891. That year the Washington Nationals of the American Association cut down about 125 oak trees, filled in the holes from the stumps, and built a single-level wooden grandstand and baseball diamond known as Boundary Field.¹¹ At the time, Seventh Street and the Boundary (Florida Avenue) marked the end of the horse-drawn trolley line and the beginning of farmland.¹² During the late nineteenth century, the neighborhood around the ballpark was a white suburb.

Griffith Stadium itself was built in 1911, during the golden age of baseball’s concrete and steel ballparks. Comiskey Park opened in

starting out in law and medicine and science; and lots of Pullman porters and dining-car waiters.”²⁷

Seventh Street’s grittiness also captured the imaginations of several Harlem Renaissance artists. During Langston Hughes’s fourteen unhappy months amid the city’s black elite, he delighted in Seventh Street’s simple pleasures. “Seventh Street was always teemingly alive with dark working people who hadn’t yet acquired ‘culture’ and the manners of stage ambassadors,” Hughes wrote in 1927, “and pinks and blacks and yellows were still friends without apologies.”²⁸ Jean Toomer, a less heralded Harlem Renaissance writer who had grown up amid Washington’s black upper class, found Seventh Street an inspiring source of poetry and prose. “Seventh Street is a bastard of Prohibition and the War,” Toomer wrote. “A crude-boned, soft-skinned wedge of nigger life breathing its loafer air, jazz songs and love, thrusting unconscious rhythms, black reddish blood into the white and whitewashed wood of Washington.”²⁹

Just a few blocks west of the Seventh Street ball yard people strolled up and down the bustling U Street corridor known as “Black Broadway” and the “Colored Man’s Connecticut Avenue.” On U Street, blacks wore their finest clothes to movie theaters such as the Lincoln and the Booker T, dance halls such as the Lincoln Colonnade and the True Reformers Hall, and black businesses such as the Murray Brothers Printing Company and Addison Scurlock’s Photography Studio.³⁰ Like Beale Street in Memphis, Auburn Avenue in Atlanta, and Lenox Avenue in Harlem, U Street presented the best that segregation could offer Washington’s black residents.

6 Yet what distinguished the neighborhood near Griffith Stadium from other large African-American communities was the size and influence of the black elite.³¹ Black doctors, lawyers, college professors, schoolteachers, and civil servants flocked to the nation’s capital because of the educational opportunities at Howard University and the job opportunities with the federal government. They prized educational and professional achievement, multiple generations of local ancestry, and light skin color. They included an upper echelon that the *Washington Bee* referred to as the “Black 400” (after New York City’s white aristocratic “400”), though in 1900 the Black 400 con-

sisted of about one hundred families out of seventy-five thousand black residents. The Black 400's influence on Washington's economic, social, and intellectual life extended far beyond their actual numbers and far beyond the area near Griffith Stadium. According to historian Willard Gatewood, "From the end of Reconstruction until at least World War I, Washington was the center of the black aristocracy in the United States."³²

Sociologist E. Franklin Frazier labeled the black elite "the old black middle class," likening their economic status and social behavior to that of middle-class whites: "They wanted to forget the Negro's past, and they have attempted to conform to the behavior and values of the white community in the most minute details. Therefore, they have often become, as has been observed, 'exaggerated' Americans."³³ Frazier derided Washington's black elite as living in a "world of make believe."³⁴

The grandson of the first black detective on the D.C. police force, Samuel Harold Lacy was born into Washington's world of make-believe on October 23, 1905, as the youngest of four surviving children.³⁵ From his mother, Rose, a Shinnecock Indian, Lacy inherited a long, thin face, high cheekbones, an angular nose, a prominent forehead, and a caramel-colored complexion.³⁶ Lacy should have felt comfortable in this exclusive social world—his family was professionally accomplished, he was a third-generation Washingtonian, and he was fair-skinned.

Lacy's family, however, struggled to make ends meet. He recalled wearing the shoes of his older brother, Erskine, "with paper inside the soles to cover the holes where he had worn them out."³⁷ Lacy's father, a notary and legal researcher, moved the family several times.³⁸ They rented houses just a few blocks south of U Street on Tenth and Thirteenth Streets and frequently took in boarders.³⁹ His mother, the family disciplinarian, worked as a hairdresser, raised her children as devout Catholics, and refused to allow alcohol in her home.⁴⁰

Lacy found release from Washington's class-divided black community on the vacant lot next to the Twelfth Street YMCA. The

nation's first full-service YMCA for blacks, the Twelfth Street Y opened only a block and a half away from Lacy's home on Thirteenth Street.⁴¹ Lacy spent hours on the Y's vacant lot playing baseball. Although right-handed, Lacy learned how to hit left-handed to avoid breaking windows in the adjacent Y building that served as the third-base line.⁴²

Lacy's childhood in some ways paralleled Duke Ellington's, though Ellington was several years older than Lacy. Ellington's family moved around Washington as many as fourteen times, often within a block or two of Lacy's Thirteenth Street home.⁴³ Ellington's father worked as a chauffeur, a butler, and a caterer. His mother worked as a laundress and a domestic. Yet his parents inculcated him with middle-class values, experiences, and habits and the belief that he could accomplish anything.⁴⁴ Families like the Ellingtons and the Lacys constituted the majority of Washington's growing black middle class—not rich professionals, but lower-middle-class black families striving for education, social refinement, and a better life.

Lacy attended and then rejected the black middle class's crown jewel, Dunbar High School. The first black public high school in the United States, Dunbar boasted a faculty with Ivy League educations, law degrees, and Ph.D.s.⁴⁵ They taught at Dunbar in part because the federal government paid all of Washington's black teachers the same salaries as white teachers.⁴⁶ Dunbar churned out future generations of Ivy League graduates and a who's who of black America. Lacy's classmates included William Hastie, the first black federal appeals court judge; W. Montague Cobb, a Howard professor of anatomy and medicine for forty years; Charles Drew, the founder of the American Red Cross Blood Bank and early developer of blood plasma; William George, a diplomat under President Truman; and Allison Davis, a University of Chicago professor.⁴⁷ Other famous Dunbar graduates included the first black general in the U.S. Army, Benjamin O. Davis; the first black member of a presidential cabinet, Dr. Robert C. Weaver, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development under Lyndon Johnson and one of the leaders of Franklin D. Roosevelt's "black cabinet"; the first black U.S. Senator since Reconstruction,

olina, to see the Senators-Yankees doubleheader. He didn't care about sitting in the right-field pavilion. He didn't care about the lack of black players on the field. Years later, the future star first baseman for the Homestead Grays described his first afternoon in a major league ballpark as "the thrill of my life until that time."⁹⁷

Leonard recaptured his lost childhood that weekend at Griffith Stadium. Five years earlier, his father, John, had died of influenza and pneumonia at age thirty-six. John Leonard's death had thrust his eleven-year-old son into the role of "Mr. Man."⁹⁸

Walter Fenner "Buck" Leonard was born on September 8, 1907, the great-grandson of slaves who had toiled in the cotton and tobacco fields of Franklin County in eastern North Carolina.⁹⁹ A stocky, broad-shouldered young man, Leonard was not averse to hard work. He had quit school after the eighth grade to help support his mother and five siblings. He sewed stockings at a hosiery mill and shined shoes at the railroad station before finding steady employment with the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad.¹⁰⁰

In 1885, the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad—owners of track from New York to Florida—had turned Rocky Mount into a thriving industrial town by building a repair shop there.¹⁰¹ Although the trains eventually took many of Rocky Mount's most ambitious black residents north during the Great Migration, the trains initially provided others, like Leonard's father, with employment.

John Leonard worked as a railroad fireman shoveling coal into the steam engines of freight trains as they traveled from Rocky Mount to Washington, North Carolina.¹⁰² It was hard, physical labor, but it bought the Leonard family a four-room wooden house. They lived near other families of black railroad workers in a west Rocky Mount neighborhood known as Little Raleigh.¹⁰³

After his father's death, Buck Leonard started in the rail yard picking up trash for less than two dollars a day. Soon, he landed a job as an office messenger because he could read and write. After two years, he persuaded the foreman to allow him to work in the repair shop as a mechanic's helper. For the next seven years, he cleaned brake cylinders and installed them on boxcars for about four dollars

a day. He worked as a mechanic but received a helper's salary because blacks could not belong to the shop union.¹⁰⁴

As his family's primary breadwinner, Leonard asserted his authority at home. He ordered his younger sister, Lena, home from the playground. He bossed around his younger brothers, Herman and Charlie. He bought the family's first radio, an Atwater-Kent, the kind that sat on the family mantel.¹⁰⁵ He raised hogs to make extra money.¹⁰⁶ In his spare time, he liked to do crossword puzzles and to take apart household appliances.¹⁰⁷ An introspective young man who rarely got into trouble, Leonard had a dark brown complexion, a round face, and a brilliant smile.

One of Leonard's younger brothers who had been learning how to talk kept trying to call him "Buddy," but it came out as "Bucky" instead.¹⁰⁸ Everyone in Rocky Mount began referring to Walter Leonard as Buck or Bucky. One person refused to call Buck by his nickname—his mother, Emma. A short, educated woman with Native-American features, Emma Leonard always called her son "My Walter." He, in turn, called her "Miss Emma." The other children simply referred to them as Buck and Mama. They acted like husband and wife. She helped support the family by taking in white people's laundry.¹⁰⁹ He worked for the railroad and presided as head of the household. "He made the big decisions, and my mother went along with it," Leonard's sister, Lena Cox, recalled. "So what could we do?"¹¹⁰

Leonard relinquished his father-figure role on the baseball diamond. Although not very tall, he was strong, coordinated, and a good hitter. He had joined the Lincoln Junior High School baseball team while he was still in grade school.¹¹¹ At that time, there was no black public high school in Rocky Mount. Lincoln Junior High was Leonard's first and last scholastic baseball experience.

After graduating from the eighth grade in 1921, Leonard joined the local black sandlot team known as the Rocky Mount Elks. Sandlot teams organized by amateur players served as the unofficial breeding ground for black professional baseball.¹¹² For most players, sandlot baseball was the place where working men blew off steam. On the Elks, Leonard played center field while holding down his job at the

Leonard's aspirations, however, did not extend beyond managing and playing for the Elks. He had a decent job at the rail shop, a steady girlfriend, and a big reputation on the ballfield. Weekend trips to Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and New York City to see an occasional major league game satiated any desire to leave town permanently. The twenty-four-year-old sandlot king planned to live in Rocky Mount forever.¹²⁰

Sam Lacy saw baseball as his escape from class-divided black Washington, from the intellectual world of make-believe, and from his mounting gambling debts. He yearned to leave Washington and to make his mark in the world as Duke Ellington did with his music and Langston Hughes did with his poetry.

Lacy's road to professional success was on the sandlots. In 1923, during the summer after his junior year at Armstrong, he pitched for one of the worst teams in Washington's six-team black sandlot league, the Buffalo A.C. Against stronger teams, such as the Piedmonts and the Teddy Bears, he mostly struggled on the mound.¹²¹

Near the end of the 1923 campaign, however, Lacy led the lowly Buffaloes to an 11–10 victory over the mighty LeDroit Tigers.¹²² Named after the upscale LeDroit Park neighborhood just south and east of Griffith Stadium's right-field wall, the Tigers were the black champions of the D.C. sandlots. In 1922, they nearly beat the all-black professional Lincoln Giants at Griffith Stadium. The Tigers loaded the bases in the ninth inning, forcing the Giants to bring in their six-foot five-inch Hall of Fame pitcher, Smokey Joe Williams, to salvage a 2–1 victory.¹²³ The Tigers served as Washington's unofficial farm team for the black professional ranks.¹²⁴

The *Washington Tribune*, the local black weekly, proclaimed Lacy's 11–10 victory over the Tigers the "Season's Biggest Upset." Lacy "pitched effective ball," and his triple was "the longest clout of the day."¹²⁵ A year-end review of the sandlot season described him as "another star in the making."¹²⁶

This effusive praise may have come from Lacy's own pen. During his sophomore year of high school, he had begun covering sports for

baseman Elias “Country” Brown, and two prospects in Leonard and future Philadelphia Stars center fielder Gene Benson.¹⁸⁷ Leonard played out the year in right field.¹⁸⁸

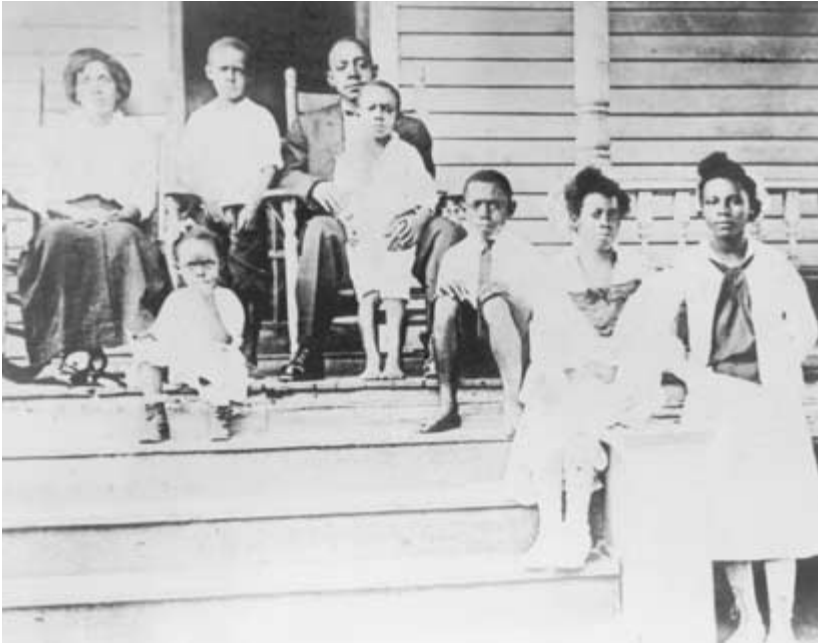
After the season, Leonard stayed in New York City because he had arranged to play on an All-Star team in Puerto Rico. At the last minute, however, the organizer of the trip informed Leonard that the roster had been cut from fifteen to thirteen players. Jobless, penniless, and transportation-less, Leonard duped an old girlfriend into giving him enough money to get home to Rocky Mount.¹⁸⁹

In April 1934, Leonard returned to New York City to play again for the Brooklyn Royal Giants. One night, Smokey Joe Williams, the pitcher who had shut down the LeDroit Tigers in 1922, told the players to send Leonard over to the Harlem Grill, a Lenox Avenue bar near 135th Street.¹⁹⁰ Williams, who had recently retired and was tending bar, offered Leonard some sage advice: “Look, Buck, don’t you want to get with a good team?”

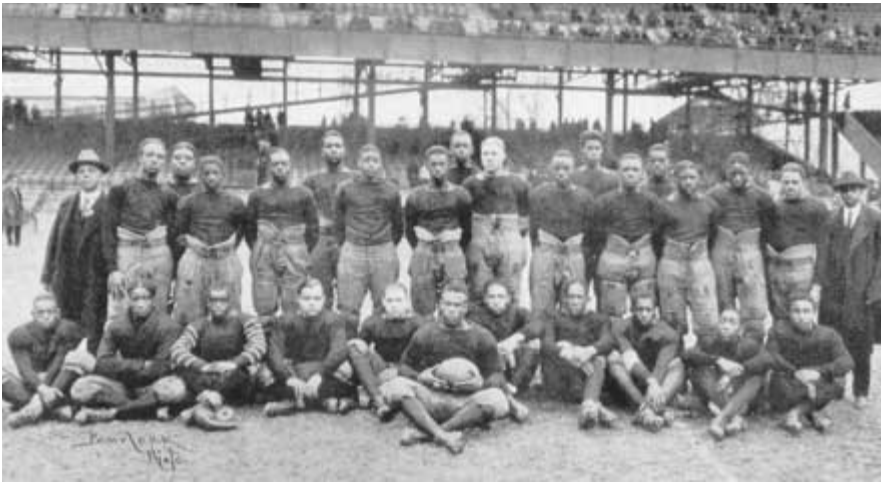
“What are you talking about?” Leonard replied.

Williams said: “The Homestead Grays.”

Williams, who had capped off his career with a seven-year run as the Grays’ ace pitcher, had seen Leonard play several times and believed that the first baseman could make his former team. Williams called Grays owner Cum Posey, who instructed Williams to give Leonard a bus ticket and five dollars spending money. Along with an old catcher named Tex Burnett, Leonard hopped on an overnight bus to West Virginia to try out for the Grays.¹⁹¹



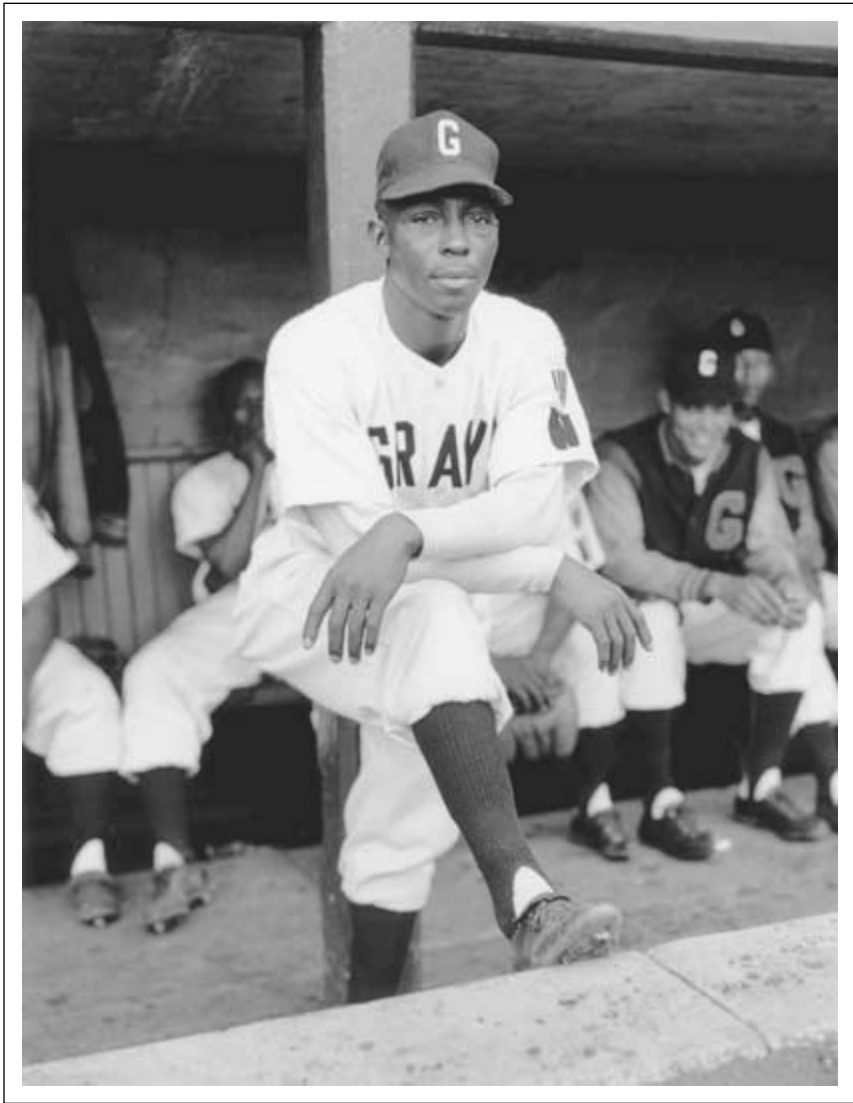
Buck Leonard (seated third from right) poses with his family in 1918 in front of their home in the Little Raleigh section of Rocky Mount. His brother, Charlie, is standing in front of his father. (WILLIE B. COX PRATHER)



Sam Lacy (seated far right) with the 1924 Armstrong High School football team at Griffith Stadium. Griffith regularly allowed the public schools, black and white, to use his stadium for their athletic events. (CHARLES SUMNER MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES)



Sam Lacy (second row, second from left) and the Armstrong High School basketball team lost in the finals of the black high school championship in Chicago. (CHARLES SUMNER MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES)



Grays manager and outfielder Vic Harris is pictured in the Griffith Stadium dugout with several of his players behind him. A mean, fiery player who liked to slide hard into opposing infielders, Harris initially played for the Grays in 1925.
(ROBERT H. McNEILL)

popularity in Washington, but they represent only part of the story. It's a story that began in Pittsburgh with a wealthy local black basketball star named Cum Posey.

The Grays started in 1910 as a recreational activity for black steelworkers in Homestead, Pennsylvania. Homestead was a steel town across the Monongahela River from Pittsburgh and the home of the Homestead Works of the Carnegie-Illinois Steel Company. Black workers flooded into Homestead after the famous steel strike of 1892.⁸ They worked in the mills, and many lived in boardinghouses in a rough, immigrant neighborhood close to the river known as "The Ward."⁹ For recreation, black steelworkers formed baseball teams because they were excluded from white steelworker teams. In 1900, some young black steelworkers organized a sandlot team known as the Blue Ribbons and later the Murdock Grays. A decade later, the team changed its name to the Homestead Grays.¹⁰

In 1911, an outfielder named Cum Posey joined the Grays and changed the team's fortunes forever. Cumberland "Cum" Willis Posey Jr. wasn't a steelworker. He was the son of one of the richest black men in Homestead. His father, Cumberland "Cap" Willis Posey Sr., earned an engineering license, supervised the construction of ships, and ran the largest black-owned business in Pittsburgh, the Diamond Coke and Coal Company.¹¹ His father also served as the first president and one of the founding incorporators of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the nation's largest black newspaper.¹² His mother, Anna, was said to be the first black graduate of Ohio State University.¹³

36 Cum Posey was one of Pittsburgh's most famous basketball players. Although only five feet nine and 140 pounds, the quick, intelligent guard played for and managed the famous semipro Monticello basketball team and its professional counterpart, the Loendi Club. Posey's win-at-all-costs attitude, which he instilled in players on the Grays, initially earned him fame on the basketball court. "No 'all time' floor quintet would be complete without him," sportswriter W. Rollo Wilson wrote in 1934.¹⁴ The light-skinned Posey played basketball at Penn State and studied chemistry and pharmacy at the

University of Pittsburgh. He played college basketball again in 1916 at Holy Ghost (later called Duquesne) under the assumed name “Charles Cumbert.”¹⁵ Journalist Merlisa Lawrence wrote of Posey/Cumbert: “His skin was pale, his eyes were hazel, his hair slick and wavy—he passed for white.”¹⁶

Posey brought his athleticism to the Grays’ outfield and his experience promoting basketball games to the team’s business operations. Five years after joining the Grays, he had taken over as the team captain, field manager, and booking agent. In 1920, he quit his job with the Railway Mail Service to own and manage the Grays full time. He replaced the steelworkers with Pittsburgh’s best sandlot players including pitchers Oscar Owens and Charles “Lefty” Williams, second baseman Raymond “Mo” Harris, outfielder Elander “Vic” Harris (Mo’s brother), and third baseman Jasper “Jap” Washington. He even put his star players on salary to prevent rival teams from stealing them away. With Posey scheduling games against white semipro teams and managing the team on the field, the Grays dominated the baseball scene in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia.¹⁷

Black professional baseball came into its own just as Posey began to groom the Grays for greatness. In 1920, Andrew “Rube” Foster established the original Negro National League. A large, barrel-chested pitcher, Foster had earned his nickname by defeating white major league ace Rube Waddell in 1904.¹⁸ Seven years later, Foster had started one of the most successful black professional teams, the Chicago American Giants. Unlike other teams that traveled by car or bus, the American Giants traveled by train in private Pullman cars. “If the talents of Christy Mathewson, John McGraw, Ban Johnson, and Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis were combined in a single body, and that body were enveloped by black skin,” Negro Leagues historian Robert Peterson wrote, “the result would have to be Andrew (Rube) Foster.”¹⁹

During the 1920s, Posey rebuffed Foster’s entreaties to join the NNL. Rather than be tied down by a league schedule, Posey preferred that his team traverse both sides of the Allegheny Mountains playing white semipro teams. He also enjoyed the luxury of raiding both leagues of their best players. In 1925, Posey lured Hall of Fame

pitcher Smokey Joe Williams from the Lincoln Giants. Although thirty-nine years old when he joined the Grays, the six-foot five-inch Williams towered over the competition in stature and talent. The part-Native American pitcher from Texas threw so hard that some opposing hitters called him “Cyclone.” In a 1952 *Pittsburgh Courier* poll of black baseball aficionados, Williams edged Paige as the greatest pitcher of all time.²⁰

Over the next seven years, Williams helped Posey make history with the Grays. The Grays finished 130–23–5 in 1925 and 106–6–6, including forty-three straight wins, in 1926.²¹ The following year, Posey quit playing, continued managing, and installed outfielder Vic Harris as team captain. Harris—a notoriously hard slider and ruthless competitor—embodied Posey’s ideal ballplayer.²² Posey sought out tough guys like Harris who refused to back down from the opposition and who hated to lose, fighters like Posey himself. In 1928, Posey added pitchers Sam Streeter and Webster McDonald, power-hitting shortstop John Beckwith, and jack-of-all-trades Martin Dihigo. A Hall of Famer, the Cuban-born Dihigo pitched and played the other eight positions on the diamond.

The 1930 edition of the Grays is one of Posey’s greatest teams. Hall of Famer Oscar Charleston held down first base. Regarded as the best all-around black player of his generation, Charleston once roamed center field like Willie Mays and brought to the plate both speed and power. The rest of the infield included George Scales at second base, Jake Stephens at shortstop, Hall of Famer Judy Johnson at third base, and Josh Gibson, an eighteen-year-old catcher plucked off the Pittsburgh sandlots.

38 Gibson, even more than Paige, is black baseball’s Paul Bunyan. The Negro Leagues’ incomplete statistics, the Grays’ barnstorming schedule, and Gibson’s early demise facilitate the tall tales about his home-run-hitting prowess. Some credit him with more than eight hundred career home runs and seventy-five in a season. These incredible numbers, however, obscure known facts about Gibson the man, the teammate, and the ballplayer—and how his career changed the fortunes of the Grays.

Born in Buena Vista, Georgia, on December 11, 1911, Gibson grew up in the Pleasant Valley section of Pittsburgh's Hill district as the oldest of three children and the son of a Carnegie–Illinois Steel worker. He dropped out of school after the ninth grade to become an apprentice electrician at an air brake company. Standing six feet one and 210 pounds, he looked as if he had been carved from stone. In 1940, Sam Lacy asked Gibson if he had acquired his incredible physique through manual labor. “Naw, man, you can’t put that down there,” Gibson replied. “I never had but two jobs in my life and they were soft. I got paid for them only because the people liked me.”²³

Gibson’s Negro League career allegedly began on a July night in 1930 as a spectator. The story goes that Posey pulled Gibson—already an eighteen-year-old sandlot legend with the semipro Crawford Colored Giants—out of the stands after the Grays’ only catcher had busted his finger.²⁴ More likely, Posey simply signed Gibson midway through the 1930 season and found a hitter for the ages.

In September 1930, Gibson smacked one of the longest home runs ever hit at Yankee Stadium. He hit it off Lincoln Giants pitcher Connie Rector in the ninth game of a ten-game playoff series for the eastern championship of black baseball. In a contemporary account of that game, black sportswriter W. Rollo Wilson reported that “Gibson made the longest home run wallop of the year in Yankee Stadium when he hit into the left field bleachers, a distance of over four hundred thirty feet. . . .”²⁵ Another contemporary account, in the *New York Age*, stated that “Gibson hit a home run that went into the left bleachers, a distance of 460 feet. It was the longest home run that was hit at the Yankee Stadium, by any player, white or colored, all season.”²⁶

Over the years, people have dubiously claimed that Gibson hit the ball clear out of Yankee Stadium. In 1934, Wilson wrote that “[e]ven Babe Ruth has hit no home run further” at Yankee Stadium and described Gibson’s blast as clearing “the extreme left wing of the grandstand.”²⁷ In 1938, Gibson appeared to set the record straight: “I hit the ball on a line into the bullpen in deep left field.”²⁸ Posey added that Detroit Tigers first baseman Hank Greenberg was the

only other player who had hit a ball there—Greenberg accomplished the feat in 1938 while Gibson was in the Dominican Republic.²⁹ Years later, however, eyewitnesses from both teams debated whether Gibson's home run cleared the stadium's left-field grandstand or merely hit the back wall of the left-field bullpen 505 feet from home plate.³⁰ The consensus, especially in light of the two eyewitness accounts, is that Gibson's home run landed more than 450 feet away in Yankee Stadium's old left-field bullpen.

The 1930 Grays were so good that on the day Gibson blasted the ball into the Yankee Stadium bullpen, he batted sixth. Gibson hit behind left fielder Harris, third baseman Johnson, first baseman Charleston, center fielder Chaney White, and second baseman Scales.³¹ In fact, Gibson hit sixth that entire series against the Lincoln Giants, in which the Grays captured black baseball's Eastern championship. With Smokey Joe Williams pitching, Gibson catching, Charleston playing first base, and Johnson manning third, the 1930 Grays featured four future Hall of Famers.

In 1931, the Grays' roster got even better. Posey added Hall of Fame pitcher Willie Foster (Rube's half brother), catcher/pitcher Ted "Double Duty" Radcliffe, outfielder Ted Page, and third baseman Jud "Boojum" Wilson. Gibson later said the 1931 Grays were the best team he ever played on, better than the Crawford teams of the mid-1930s.³² Posey agreed, five years later describing the 1931 Grays as "the strongest club the Grays ever assembled and the strongest club of modern Negro baseball as far back as we can remember."³³ The following year, in 1932, Hall of Fame outfielder James "Cool Papa" Bell, second baseman Newt Allen, pitcher/outfielder Ray Brown, catcher/outfielder Quincy Troupe, and Hall of Fame shortstop Willie Wells joined the Grays. During the 1930s and 1940s, nearly every great black ballplayer suited up for the Grays at one time or another.

Financially, however, Posey could not afford to pay his abundance of talented players. The Depression destroyed the Grays' profits, as well as the rest of black baseball. From 1912 to 1929, the Grays boasted that they had made a profit every year.³⁴ But after 1929 many people could no longer afford to attend Negro League games, and profits

dried up. After the ECL folded in 1927, its brief successor, the American Negro League, lasted until 1931. The NNL, leaderless after Rube Foster's mental illness in 1926 and death in 1930, also disbanded after the 1931 season.

In 1932, Posey tried to fill Foster's shoes by forming the East-West League. Posey's plans for the new league were too ambitious—he hired the Al Munro Elias Bureau to keep statistics, drew up a 112-game split-season league schedule, and obtained the use of several major league parks. Travel was impossible with teams in both the Midwest and on the East Coast. Posey owned at least two of the franchises, the Grays and the Detroit Wolves, and maybe even a third.³⁵ The Wolves folded in June, and the East-West League quickly followed suit.³⁶

Posey's biggest problem in 1932 came from the Pittsburgh Crawfords. Started in 1928 as a local sandlot team, the Crawfords gained the financial backing of William A. "Gus" Greenlee, the king of Pittsburgh's North Side numbers racket. Greenlee was one of many brilliant black entrepreneurs of that era who made their fortunes through underworld activities. As the operator of the city's illegal lottery, Greenlee attempted to gain legitimacy in the world of sports and entertainment. In addition to owning the Crawfords, Greenlee sponsored a stable of championship-caliber boxers and owned a popular nightclub—the Crawford Grill—in Pittsburgh's Hill district.³⁷

Greenlee capitalized on Posey's financial woes and preoccupation with keeping the East-West League afloat by persuading many of the Grays' players to jump ship.³⁸ Gibson joined a contingent of former Grays on the Crawfords that included Cool Papa Bell, Judy Johnson, Ted Page, and Oscar Charleston. Satchel Paige headlined as the star. With Paige pitching and Gibson catching, the Crawfords of 1932 to 1936 featured the game's two best players and rivaled the Grays of 1930 and 1931. The mass defections prompted sportswriter W. Rollo Wilson to state: "If there is room for only one team in that district—I am very much of the opinion that the Grays are closing their books."³⁹

More than a businessman with extra money to throw around, Greenlee revolutionized black baseball. During the 1932 season, he

Giants, joined the Grays in time for Sunday's game. The Grays were hot after Leonard last season but were unable to get him until a few days after practice sessions had started for the 1934 season.⁴⁹

Posey recognized Leonard—still mastering the fundamentals of first base but a natural hitter—as the Grays' potential star. A month into the season, Leonard broke a 3–3 tie against the Philadelphia Stars with an eleventh-inning home run.⁵⁰ Local baseball observers, such as W. Rollo Wilson, who doubled as the NNL commissioner that season, began to take notice: “Leonard, a first baseman who is a ringer for the Ben Taylor of two decades ago, proved that he could field and hit in big-league fashion.”⁵¹

Even with Leonard, however, the Grays were no match for the Crawfords. On July 4, Satchel Paige no-hit the Grays and struck out seventeen before an overflow crowd of 7,500 at Greenlee Field. He walked only one hitter, Leonard, in the first inning. It was the first reported no-hitter thrown against the Grays in the team's twenty-five-year history.⁵² The Grays defeated the Crawfords, 4–3, later that same night despite a relief appearance by Paige. From 1934 to 1936, however, the Grays played second fiddle to the Crawfords.

At the end of the 1934 season, Leonard finally met up with his phantom first-base competition. August 5 was “Smokey Joe Williams Day” at Forbes Field, with Williams returning to pitch two scoreless innings for the Grays against an interracial team sponsored by the Berghoff Beer Company of Fort Wayne, Indiana. Fort Wayne's first baseman was Joe Scott.⁵³

Joe Scott finally did come to Pittsburgh, but he was an afterthought in light of Leonard's terrific first season. Posey installed Leonard as the team's captain and even tried to make him the Grays' field manager on the road. Leonard lacked the experience and edginess to manage—he couldn't stand up to the veteran players who balked at his decisions.⁵⁴ Posey, who resumed his job as the full-time field manager, placed Leonard on his year-end All-American Team: “I take it for granted there is no diversion of opinions in Gibson, Paige, [left-handed pitcher Slim] Jones, [and] Leonard in their positions.”⁵⁵ W. Rollo Wilson agreed: “Cum Posey had the greatest find

In 1935, the Grays came to Leonard by holding spring training practically in his backyard, in nearby Wilson, North Carolina.⁶² The *Pittsburgh Courier* described Leonard as “Rocky Mount, N.C.’s gift to the Grays. He is almost without a peer at the initial sack, playing an aggressive game at all times.”⁶³

The 1935 season was even better than 1934 for Leonard. He flew in an airplane for the first time in August, playing in the 1935 East-West All-Star Game in Chicago before twenty-five thousand fans.⁶⁴ During the spring of 1936, he joined the Brooklyn Eagles in the Winter League in Puerto Rico, facing the Cincinnati Reds in exhibition games and improving his fielding skills.⁶⁵ In 1936, Leonard remained the Grays’ captain, but Vic Harris (who had returned the previous season) took over as the field manager. During the second half of the 1936 season, Leonard competed on a black All-Star team that included Gibson and Paige and won the Denver Post Tournament, a national semipro tournament awarding the winning team five thousand dollars.⁶⁶ Leonard made Posey’s All-American Team both seasons.⁶⁷

Although Leonard led a glamorous life of flying to Chicago, Puerto Rico, and Denver to play baseball, it was not the life he wanted for his younger brother, Charlie. In a brief article at the end of the 1935 season, headlined “‘Young Buck’ Named Best in the ‘Tarheel’ State,” the *Pittsburgh Courier* wrote:

Charles “Pop-eye” Leonard, the “kid” brother of “Buck” Leonard, star Homestead Grays first-baseman, has been voted by fans as the best all around shortstop in the Old North State. Leonard is manager of the Wilson Braves during the summer and spends the fall and winter months as a student and athlete at Talladega College, down Alabama way.⁶⁸

At Talladega in 1935, Charlie lettered in track, tennis, and football.⁶⁹ With the Newark Dodgers training in Rocky Mount and the Grays training in Wilson in the spring of 1935, Charlie’s Negro League audition with Newark was not far behind.

1936 Charlie wasn't "physically strong enough to play that caliber of ball."⁷⁶

Leonard wanted Charlie to enjoy an educated, professional life.⁷⁷ After graduating from Brick Junior College and Talladega College, Charlie taught elementary school and served as the school's principal for three or four years in Hollister, North Carolina. Charlie then moved back to Rocky Mount to become the head of the black unemployment board; he later accepted a similar position in Kinston, North Carolina.⁷⁸ As the person in charge of finding employment for Kinston's black residents, Charlie became a pillar in his community while his oldest brother developed into a full-fledged Negro League star.

In 1937, the Grays returned to the pinnacle of black baseball by reacquiring their home-run-hitting catcher, Josh Gibson. In a deal that had been rumored for weeks leading up to the 1937 season, the Grays received Gibson from the Crawfords in exchange for third baseman Henry Spearman, catcher Lloyd "Pepper" Bassett, and \$2,500 cash.⁷⁹ While Gibson was playing for the Crawfords, the Grays had formed a solid nucleus around Leonard, pitcher/outfielder Ray Brown, center fielder Jerry Benjamin (Leonard's roommate and close friend), and left fielder/manager Vic Harris. Gibson's return not only brought his big bat into the lineup but also added his ebullient personality to team bus rides. "That's when we started winning," Leonard wrote. "Josh made the whole team better. He put new life into everybody. Before that we were just an ordinary ballclub. Josh made the difference."⁸⁰

48 The greatest hitter in the history of black baseball, Gibson feasted on off-speed pitches. A short, compact batting stroke, a small stride, and a long, heavy bat allowed him to adjust to breaking balls at the last minute and to knock them out of the park because of his strong hands and wrists. "You could get him out with a fastball, but if you threw him a curveball, he'd hit it a mile," Leonard wrote.⁸¹ Whereas Leonard, a left-handed pull hitter, banged line drives to right field, Gibson, a right-handed hitter, smashed laser shots to all fields. Gib-

son would hit the ball so hard that opposing infielders played him on the outfield grass.⁸² In his younger days, Gibson even ran well for a big man. Although no one questioned the strength of his throwing arm, he initially needed work on fielding different pitches and blocking balls in the dirt. His only enduring weakness was an inability to catch pop-ups. As a hitter, however, he was unmatched.⁸³

Leonard benefited the most from Gibson's return to the Grays lineup. With Gibson initially hitting fourth and Leonard hitting third, Leonard saw better pitches to hit. Playing one of their first exhibition games together in Miami, Gibson homered twice and doubled; Leonard homered and tripled.⁸⁴ By mid-July, Leonard led the Negro National League with a .500 batting average; he and Gibson tied for the team lead with seven home runs apiece.⁸⁵ Gibson became known as the "black Babe Ruth" and Leonard as the "black Lou Gehrig." Together they formed black baseball's best one-two punch. The black press dubbed them the "Thunder Twins."

Gibson left the Grays in mid-June of 1937 to play for dictator Rafael Trujillo's team in the Dominican Republic. Over the years, many black players jumped at midseason offers from Latin American teams because of promises of big paydays and to escape the South's Jim Crow laws that often made life difficult for them on the road. Gibson's leaves of absence in Latin America became a recurring pattern. Although Gibson played out the 1938 and 1939 seasons, he bolted for Venezuela in 1940 and for Veracruz, Mexico, in 1941. In Latin America, Gibson made more money (Trujillo reportedly paid him \$2,200 for seven weeks of work in 1937), played fewer games, and received first-class treatment at restaurants and hotels. Gibson also may have been running away from his inner demons. In 1930, Gibson's wife, Helen, had died while giving birth to twins. The babies' survival burdened Gibson with financial responsibility, and his wife's death haunted him. Gibson may have found release traveling the world playing baseball. Every time he left the country, however, Gibson returned to finish the season with the Grays. In 1937, for example, other black players who had jumped to the Dominican Republic formed an All-Star team that played in the Denver Post Tournament, but Gibson returned to the Grays by the end of July.⁸⁶

Buck and Sarah exhibited strong wills and independent spirits. Every Sunday they attended separate churches, and yet they formed a solid partnership. Before they got married, Buck had persuaded Sarah to sell the undertaker business. Leonard agreed to augment his initial \$125 monthly salary with the Grays by playing winter ball. Sarah taught first grade, with her monthly salary eventually increasing from forty-eight dollars to seventy-eight dollars. "If she hadn't been teaching school," Leonard admitted in his autobiography, "I would have had to quit playing baseball."⁹⁶

Leonard's continued presence and Gibson's return transformed the Grays into champions, but losing Gibson spelled disaster for the Crawfords. Before the 1937 season, Greenlee had fallen on hard times. Pittsburgh's ward politics had turned against him, leading to more frequent police raids on his numbers operation. Leonard claimed that Grays co-owner Sonnyman Jackson had acquired Gibson in return for helping Greenlee pay off a big hit in the numbers lottery.⁹⁷ In trading Gibson to the Grays, the Crawfords conceded his worth as a ballplayer but questioned his ability as a drawing card.⁹⁸ The Crawfords figured as long as they held onto Satchel Paige, they could attract large crowds and continue to rival the Grays. Before the 1937 season, however, Paige initiated a mass exodus of Crawfords to Trujillo's team in the Dominican Republic. Greenlee must have been out of money because his best players never came back. The Crawfords limped through the 1937 and 1938 seasons in Pittsburgh. Greenlee Field was demolished after the 1938 campaign.⁹⁹

Posey reaped the greatest rewards from the demise of Greenlee and the Crawfords. Although the NNL named him only the secretary in 1937, the Grays' owner ruled black baseball. His team captured the 1937 and 1938 NNL titles. Some Negro League historians claim that the Grays won nine consecutive NNL titles from 1937 to 1945, but that statistic overstates the team's accomplishments. Although the Grays are generally credited with winning eight of nine during this period, 1939 being the lone exception, league titles were often hard to measure. Like most black teams, the Grays based their league schedule on the availability of major league ballparks; they also played an inordinate number of exhibition games during a typical season—these two factors rendered the official league schedules

meaningless.¹⁰⁰ To complicate matters further, the league divided its season into halves. At the end of each season, the first-half and second-half winners competed in a playoff. In 1939, for example, the Grays won both halves of the “regular” season but lost a three-game series to the Baltimore Elite Giants in an unusual four-team playoff. Not even the Grays’ own letterhead boasted the 1939 championship, although it sometimes included 1939 as one of nine-straight “pen-nants.”¹⁰¹ The Grays won both halves of the regular season and the playoff every year from 1937 to 1945, except 1939 (when the Elites won the playoff) and 1941 (when the New York Cubans won the second half, but the Grays won the first half and the playoff). The first-half and second-half champion, however, was not always evident. Each team played a different number of league games, and the determination of what constituted a league game was critical.

Rival teams often accused the Grays of using their nebulous schedule and Posey’s power over league matters to manipulate their win-loss record. Dick Powell, the Elite Giants’ public relations director, denied that the Grays won nine-straight titles. “Sure it’s an inaccuracy,” Powell said. “They would be declared winners because they could show that they won more games than they lost because they either had accessibility to a ballpark or there were instances where we played each other in an exhibition game or a league game.”¹⁰² Leon Day, a Hall of Fame pitcher for the Newark Eagles, agreed that the determination of a game’s status rested with the Grays. “They’d play a game and they’d call it an exhibition if they lost,” Day recalled. “If they won, it was a league game.”¹⁰³

The best measure of the Grays’ dynasty is not their NNL titles but their decades of great teams and players. To their nucleus of Leonard, Gibson, Harris, Benjamin, and Brown, the 1938 Grays added pitchers Roy Partlow, Roy Welmaker, and Edsall Walker; second baseman Matthew “Lick” Carlisle; and shortstop Norman “Jellylegs” Jackson. Few could argue that the Grays did not possess black baseball’s best team. In a 1938 column describing the Grays as the new Gas House Gang, a reference to the great St. Louis Cardinals teams of the 1930s, Wendell Smith wrote: “Not only are the Grays champions of Negro baseball, but they are a cocky bunch of ballplayers.

\$250,000.³ The Senators' attendance the following season, 255,011, was their lowest since 1919.⁴ They missed the Babe's eleven appearances at Griffith Stadium each season.

Griffith envisioned a cheaper solution to his team's woes than investing in a farm system or playing night games—Cuban players. For years, he had been plucking a few players off the island of Cuba and turning them into major leaguers. Now he began employing them in even greater numbers. Although some of these Cubans may not have been “white” according to American definitions of race, their ambiguous racial heritage did not seem to matter to Griffith as long as they could play ball.

Sam Lacy had other ideas about how to improve the Senators. A few months after MacPhail unveiled his lights in Cincinnati, Lacy challenged Griffith and his cohorts: “Why Not Give Baseball a Little ‘Color’?”⁵ “If baseball club-owners are really anxious to come to their own rescue,” Lacy argued in the August 3, 1935, edition of the *Washington Tribune*, “they should put a little ‘color’ in the game.” Lacy insisted that the great Negro Leaguers of the 1920s and 1930s were every bit as good as Senators players past and present. “I can almost hear the snickering now in some quarters as I go on to say that Oscar Charleston, of the Pittsburgh Crawfords CAN PLAY AS MUCH FIRST BASE TODAY AS JOE JUDGE EVER PLAYED,” he wrote. “‘Showboat’ Thomas of the New York Black Yankees is deadly on ground balls to either side, possesses hands like the immortal Chick Gandil and has foot-work that would make a composite of Joe Kuhel and Mule Shirley look like a lumbering zoo elephant.” Lacy concluded:

58 Talking through my hat, eh? Now I'll laugh. No truer saying was ever mumbled or scribbled than ‘one-half of the world doesn't know what the other half is doing.’ Have you ever seen Stevens or Lundy or Harris field? Have you ever watched Bell or Crutchfield run base? Or Scale or Perkins throw? Or Gibson or Mackay [sic] or Beckwith hit? Or Matlock [sic] or Tianti [sic] or Brewer pitch? No? Well there's your TONIC.⁶

During the 1930s, no black college football players competed against whites in stadiums below the Mason-Dixon line. Instead, Northern teams agreed to hold their black players out of these games. Lacy decided to challenge this so-called gentlemen's agreement.¹³

In a front-page article headlined "Negro to Play U. of Maryland: Boy Called Hindy by Papers," Lacy revealed Sidat-Singh's true story. A *Tribune* editorial said:

The joke will be on staid University of Maryland, with its background of Southern tradition, next week when officials learn that a colored youth is a prominent member of the Syracuse football team which clashes with its own boys this Saturday. . . . There is much speculation as to what the University will do when and if it learns that its lily White team must rub shoulders with a Negro.¹⁴

After the publicity from Lacy's scoop, Syracuse and Maryland agreed to keep Sidat-Singh out of the game. Sidat-Singh practiced with the team all week, traveled to Maryland, and even suited up to play.¹⁵ At the team's pregame chalk talk, however, Syracuse coach Ossie Solem informed his team that "school officials" had decided that Sidat-Singh would sit out.¹⁶ Syracuse, which had been previously undefeated, lost without its star player. Lacy wrote on the *Tribune's* front page: "An unsoiled football record went by the boards here today as racial bigotry substituted for sportsmanship and resulted in the removal of the spark-plug from the machine which was Syracuse University's football team."¹⁷ Although neither team's coach responded to Lacy's postgame inquiries, Lacy wrote that Sidat-Singh "was denied the privilege of playing in today's 'contest' when Maryland University officials learned his nationality and demanded removal. . . ."¹⁸

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Some *Tribune* readers directed their anger at Lacy for exposing Sidat-Singh's racial background. Threatening a massive boycott of the paper, a subscriber wrote: "Negroes like you that like to dig up such on your race to help the White man keep you down are the cause of the Negro race being where they are today." Others, such as Edwin B. Henderson, the director of physical education for the black pub-

sive consumer boycotts against white-owned businesses that refused to hire black employees.²³ Its 1934 “Call to Arms” stated:

If the Negroes in Washington alone would organize 137,000-strong they could make and break at their will the businesses of Washington and change the economic condition of the masses. The white man may not want you to sit in the same theatre with him, he may not want you to work in the same room with him, he may not want you to go to the same school with him, but in order for him to live you must buy the goods he produces.²⁴

More than twenty years before the Montgomery bus boycott, the New Negro Alliance turned mass protest into a social and economic movement for racial justice.

The Alliance picketed a small U Street hot dog stand, People’s Drug Store, High’s Ice Cream, A&P, the Sanitary (Safeway) Grocery Co., and Kaufman’s Department Store—with mixed results. Although People’s refused to hire blacks or to serve them at its soda fountains, A&P hired eighteen black clerks, and Sanitary hired eleven. The Alliance claimed in 1934 that its boycotts had resulted in more than fifty new black employees, a number that eventually rose to three hundred.²⁵ It also received a boost from the United States Supreme Court, which in 1938 reaffirmed the Alliance’s right to picket stores engaging in racially discriminatory employment practices.

62 Rank-and-file members of Washington’s black community did not always support the boycotts. When the principal of Armstrong High School, G. David Houston, broke the picket line at People’s Drug Store to buy Ping-Pong balls, one of the protesters confronted Houston and called him “a hell of a teacher.”²⁶ Howard University history professor Harold Lewis recalled going door-to-door to obtain signatures for a petition against a downtown department store: “No, indeed I’m not going to sign any petition,” one woman told Lewis. “They are the only ones that sell the type of shoe I wear.”²⁷ Sometimes the Alliance’s rallying cry—“Don’t buy where you can’t work. . . . Buy where you work—buy where you clerk”²⁸—failed to be heard.

subsisted on a forty-acre farm, where “the medium of exchange was apple butter.” Griffith was so small and sickly as a child that the neighbors speculated he had malaria. When he was thirteen, his mother, Sarah Ann, moved the family closer to her relatives in Bloomington, Illinois, and opened a boardinghouse in the nearby town of Normal.³¹

In Illinois, Griffith developed into a star sandlot pitcher. In 1887, at age seventeen, he signed with the Bloomington (Illinois) Reds of the Inter-State League, where his tutor was Bloomington resident and nineteenth-century pitching star Charles “Old Hoss” Radbourn. Griffith jumped to Milwaukee’s Western League team in June 1888 for \$225 a month. Three years later, he departed for the major leagues with the American Association’s St. Louis Browns. Although he made a lifelong friend in Browns manager Charles Comiskey, Griffith developed arm trouble, finished the 1891 American Association season with Boston, and bounced around the minors for much of the next two seasons.

In 1894, Griffith’s arm recovered and he returned to the majors for good with the National League’s Chicago Colts (later the Cubs). Only five feet six and a half inches and 156 pounds, Griffith succeeded on his wits and nerve. He threw an array of curveballs, screwballs, and change-ups. He also was willing to do whatever it took to win—scuffing the ball with his spikes, badgering umpires, and badmouthing opposing players. With bushy eyebrows, sparkling eyes, and a keen intelligence, the twenty-four-year-old Griffith earned the nickname “the Old Fox.” The young pitcher developed into the “pet” of Chicago manager Adrian “Cap” Anson. Sportswriters Bob Considine and Shirley Povich wrote of Anson: “From the picturesque master [Griffith] picked up the sulphuric vocabulary, the pugnacious disposition and the umpire and crowd baiting tactics which made him enthusiastically hated and feared and admired.”³²

Griffith may have absorbed Anson’s ignominious enforcement of baseball’s color barrier. During the 1880s, Anson reigned as one of baseball’s best players and its most prominent bigot.³³ In 1887, he refused to play in an exhibition game against International League pitcher George Stovey, and he had pulled similar stunts against

treal, Arnold “Chick” Gandil. Seven years before fixing the World Series as a member of the 1919 Black Sox, Gandil led the Senators to seventeen straight wins and a miraculous second-place finish.⁴¹

Griffith made another key acquisition in Montreal: his nephew and unofficially adopted son, Calvin. After marrying Anne Robertson in 1900, Clark raised two children from Anne’s brother, Jimmy Robertson, a failed ballplayer and alcoholic. Calvin and Thelma Robertson, ages ten and nine, respectively, arrived in Washington in 1922 for a summer vacation with Uncle Clark, and they never left. Upon their father’s death a year later, their mother and five siblings joined them in Washington. Only Calvin and Thelma took the Griffith name.

Calvin was the apple of Griffith’s eye and Griffith’s eventual successor. Over the years, Calvin served as the team’s batboy (’23–’26); custodian of the concession stand (’27); batting practice pitcher, locker-room attendant, and general manager of the team’s Charlotte farm club (’35–’37); president and general manager of the Chattanooga farm club (’38–’39); and then back to Washington as the head of the concessions business and Griffith’s right-hand man.⁴² Calvin idolized the man he always referred to as his Uncle Clark. “I did everything in the world to make that man happy. Everything,” Calvin told writer Gary Smith while admiring Griffith’s picture. “His eyes could pierce right through you. Look at those goddamn bushy eyebrows. When he got mad at you, it was like they were coming out and pointing at you. Next to God, Clark Griffith was it.”⁴³

After the 1919 season, Griffith purchased a majority interest in the team with the help of Philadelphia grain exporter William Richardson and a \$100,000 loan from a Washington bank. He stopped managing after the next season. As an owner and general manager, Griffith proved himself to be an adept trader and a shrewd judge of talent. The Senators won their only World Series in 1924 behind their twenty-seven-year-old “boy manager,” shortstop Bucky Harris. They made two more unsuccessful appearances in the Fall Classic in 1925 and 1933.

Then Griffith’s days of nickel-and-diming his way to the World Series through a few nifty trades came to an abrupt halt. As Fred Lieb

pany. In 1915, he had earned favor with major league baseball's powers-that-be by refusing to rule for nearly a year on an antitrust lawsuit brought by the rival Federal League. The Federal League, which at that time operated as a third major league, had settled out of court during Landis's delay.

After eight members of the 1919 White Sox had been accused of fixing the World Series, the owners sought to repair baseball's image by making Judge Landis the game's first commissioner. He wielded absolute power, and he wasted no time in using it. He banned for life the eight Black Sox, even though they had been acquitted in court of conspiring with gamblers. During the 1920s, Landis banished eleven additional active players who either had consorted with gamblers or had engaged in other conduct that tarnished baseball's image.⁴⁸ He exonerated others, such as Ty Cobb, Tris Speaker, and Smokey Joe Wood, of gambling charges. In 1921, he fined Babe Ruth and suspended him for forty games for violating Landis's edict against postseason barnstorming by members of a World Series team.

Landis also abhorred the advent of the farm system. During the 1930s and 1940s, he freed more than two hundred minor league players who had been buried on their teams' massive farm systems and had been bound contractually to those teams under baseball's reserve clause. In 1938, he released ninety-one players from the St. Louis Cardinals, whose general manager, Branch Rickey, had invented the farm system idea, and two years later Landis released 106 players from the Detroit Tigers.⁴⁹ He also imposed fines on various teams for hiding players by signing them to bogus contracts.

Judge Landis struck the fear of God into a small-time operator like Cambria. Before the 1941 season, Landis banned major league scouts from owning minor league teams.⁵⁰ Although Cambria was forced to sell his teams, Griffith hired Cambria as the Senators' primary scout. "Griffith, being a good friend of Landis, stepped in to save [Cambria's] life in that respect," *Washington Post* sportswriter Shirley Povich recalled.⁵¹ Over the years, Cambria signed some of the Senators' best players—Mickey Vernon, Eddie Yost, George Case, Pete Runnels, Early Wynn, Dutch Leonard, Walt Masterson, Camilo Pascual, Pedro Ramos, and Zoilo Versalles.

College Park, Maryland, in 1944, housing an additional six in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. Even Calvin admitted that the Senators bent, if not broke, the color line. “You had to have ’em mixed up,” he told biographer Jon Kerr. “You got a Cuban and you got a Castilian, they were white—true Spanish. There’s no question that some of the ballplayers Mr. Griffith signed had black blood. But nobody said anything about it. Nobody said nothing about it. So why bring up questions about something that nobody asked about.”⁶⁴

Opposing players showered Estalella and his Cuban teammates with racial insults and abuse. Estalella endured more than his fair share of beanballs and brushback pitches.⁶⁵ “Perhaps you didn’t know it, but there are many 200 per cent Americans among the pitchers in the big leagues and they resent the presence of the Cuban ballplayers, particularly the *swarthy ones* like Estalella,” *Washington Post* columnist Shirley Povich wrote in 1938.⁶⁶ But it didn’t seem to bother the power-hitting Estalella. “[Senators manager Bucky Harris] had a hunch Estalella would reap more than a just crop of mean pitches and he’d be knocked down plenty,” the *Washington Daily News* reported. “Just how the stumpy little gent would take it was an itching question. So far, Senor Estalella’s courage is holding up remarkably well.”⁶⁷

During the 1944 season, the St. Louis Browns “insisted on expressing the opinion audibly and volubly that the Cuban players on the Washington roster were of African, rather than Latin, descent.”⁶⁸ The race-baiting reached a boiling point when the Browns’ third-string catcher, Tom Turner, physically threatened the Senators’ diminutive, 150-pound catcher, Mike Guerra. Senators outfielder Roberto Ortiz, six foot four and 200 pounds, challenged Turner, six foot two and 195 pounds, to a fight. Ortiz won the brawl, but he broke his thumb.⁶⁹

The Senators’ Cuban players protected each other because they could not expect much help from most of their white teammates or from their manager. Some white Senators ostracized their Cuban teammates, according to a 1940 *Washington Daily News* article, and manager Bucky Harris “nursed a deep-seated grudge against the chattering monkeys from Gen. Bautista’s game preserve.”⁷⁰ Harris, who

described the Senators' Cuban players at their 1940 spring training as "trash," said, "If I have to put up with incompetents, they must at least speak English."⁷¹ During one spring training, Harris tried to confine the weak-fielding Estalella to the outfield. When Estalella, an aspiring third baseman, playfully protested, Harris chased Estalella into the outfield by threatening him with a bat.⁷² Others, however, insisted that Estalella got along well with his teammates. "Bobby was a pudgy, happy-go-lucky fellow who struck people the right way," Ossie Bluege, the Senators' longtime third baseman who replaced Harris as manager in 1943, told writer Robert Heuer.⁷³

For Estalella and other Cuban players, life on the Senators was hard. During spring training and on their Charlotte and Chattanooga minor league affiliates in the segregated South, the Senators often found alternative housing and eating arrangements for their darker-skinned Cubans. "The Cuban ballplayers, some of them were as black as your tape recorder," Calvin Griffith recalled. "We had to find places for them to stay across the railroad tracks."⁷⁴ Although the Senators' Cuban players faced the added handicaps of a language barrier and cultural disorientation, they never experienced the degree of public scrutiny, racial harassment, and isolation thrust upon Jackie Robinson when he officially integrated the minor leagues in 1946 and the major leagues in 1947. The Cubans had their own means of communication, and, as the Turner-Ortiz fight illustrated, they had each other.

Griffith also searched for unclaimed baseball talent within U.S. borders. At the end of the 1934 season, Cambria signed Allen Benson, a pitcher for the House of David, a barnstorming team that had been affiliated with a Michigan-based religious sect and whose players sported long hair and beards. Although Benson got hammered in his first start with the Senators, Griffith wanted him to pitch again as long as Benson kept his beard. The beard, Griffith believed, was a gate attraction. Benson, however, wanted to shave it off. "Nothing doing," Cambria said. "You're staying only if the beard stays."⁷⁵ Benson made one more disastrous start, and then he quietly left the scene. In 1935, Cambria signed Edwin "Alabama" Pitts to a minor league contract; Pitts had just been released from Sing Sing prison.

Although Judge Landis shockingly reversed minor league president William G. Bramham's ban of Pitts, the convicted robber fared less well at the plate in the Triple-A International League, where he batted .233 in forty-three games, than he did in the prison yard.⁷⁶ Griffith recognized that Cubans were easier to find, cheaper to sign, and more reliable on the field. "They were good ballplayers," Calvin told Jon Kerr. "They could play and they were eager to play because \$400 or \$500 a month was like a million dollars to them. That's where Mr. Griffith got in with those Cubans way back in those days."⁷⁷

Where else could Clark Griffith find top-notch ballplayers, not signed by other major league teams, who were willing to play for the Senators for four hundred and five hundred dollars a month? Lacy confronted him with the obvious answer.

In early December 1937, shortly before the start of baseball's winter meetings, Lacy wrote separate letters to Clark Griffith and Judge Landis. Lacy urged Griffith to discuss with his fellow owners the prospect of "the Negro baseball player as a potential big league performer." Lacy requested that Judge Landis grant "a committee of three colored newspaper men" an audience with the owners "to plead the cause of Negro representation in major league baseball." He argued that "it was time for organized baseball to keep apace with the spirit of the times."⁷⁸ Landis never responded personally. After Griffith brought the matter to Landis's attention, Landis instructed Griffith to talk to Lacy as soon as the Senators owner returned to Washington.

74 On the Monday morning after the winter meetings, Griffith invited Lacy to the Senators' offices at Griffith Stadium. The former stadium vendor established a professional tone with Griffith. "I told him that I was approaching him in a new role as sportswriter, rather than as an employee," Lacy told author Peter Sheingold. "I brought the proposition to him that he should try to get out of the cellar, or improve his team, by using some of the black players that he was seeing on Thursday nights when the Senators were out of town."⁷⁹

Griffith's optimistic reply grabbed headlines in the black press: "[T]he time is not far off when colored players will take their places beside those of other races in the major leagues. However, I am not so sure that time has arrived yet. . . . A lone Negro in the game will face rotten, caustic comments. He will be made the target of cruel, filthy epithets. I do not try to win your opinion when I say I certainly would not want to be the one to have to take it."⁸⁰

Griffith also rejected the immediate integration of baseball because of the black athlete's alleged inferiority: "The economic stress through which the American Negro race has been forced to grow has so hindered their athletes that the group itself is not to be blamed for their shortcomings in certain phases of athletic life," he said. "It is unreasonable to demand of the colored baseball player the consistent peak performance that is the requisite of the game as it is played in the big leagues."⁸¹

Lacy acknowledged that the first black major leaguer would face "caustic comments" from Southern ballplayers and fans, but he rejected Griffith's inferiority argument. Lacy believed that though some of the Negro League stars could not make the majors, others could. Lacy asked Griffith to offer a long-term solution.⁸²

The solution, according to Griffith, "is one that will not be realized in one year, or two, or maybe five. It will take time. My belief is that the answer lies in the setting up of a single league of eight REAL, bona-fide clubs. A league that is going to be run on the level, one that is going to completely remove any and all forms of shady goings-on." Griffith envisioned a Negro League so professional and well run that it "cannot be ignored when world's series time comes around."⁸³ According to his nephew Calvin, Griffith desired a World Series in which "the black boys play the white boys."⁸⁴ On the basis of its professionalism, he argued that the Negro Leagues would force the major leagues to integrate.

For several years, Griffith had been encouraging black professional teams to build up their own leagues. While watching an August 1932 night game between the Washington Pilots and the Pittsburgh Crawfords at Griffith Stadium, Griffith praised Crawfords out-

The 1937 interview with Griffith marked the beginning of Lacy's campaign to integrate baseball in Washington. For the next seven months, Lacy ran a column in the weekly *Washington Tribune* titled "Pro and Con on The Negro in Organized Baseball." He reprinted letters of support from prominent black Washingtonians. He also quoted the mixed reactions of prominent white sportswriters. Washington-based writers initially gave Griffith the benefit of the doubt. Bob Considine of UPI said: "I think Griffith is sincere and that his paramount interest is in merit, rather than in color." Vincent X. Flaherty of the *Washington Herald* said: "If the colored man isn't playing big-league baseball, it's not the fault of the major leagues. It's the fault of the colored race, for not until colored baseball is thoroughly organized will the colored player break into the scheme." New York-based writers were generally more sympathetic to integration. John Kieran of the *New York Times* said: "There can be no logical, intelligent, and unprejudiced objection to permitting Negroes to play in organized baseball." Jimmy Powers of the *New York Daily News*, a frequent advocate of integration, said: "Football is a much more vicious body-contact sport than baseball, yet there are not 'cruel epithets' hurled at the Negroes who play all over the country."⁸⁸

The Senators' black fans were getting just as worked up as Lacy about baseball's discriminatory practices. Letters of support streamed into the *Tribune* offices. During the late 1930s, black Washingtonians no longer reacted to racial bigotry with indifference (as they had with the New Negro Alliance boycotts); they reacted with indignation.

The first public display of discontent from the Senators' black fans arose from a Griffith Stadium appearance by New York Yankees outfielder Jake Powell. During a July 1938 pregame radio interview in Chicago, a WGN reporter asked Powell how he stayed in shape during the off-season. Powell, a police officer in Dayton, Ohio, during the winter months, responded that he wielded a police club "cracking niggers over the head." Chicago's black leaders demanded that Powell be banned for life. Judge Landis immediately suspended Powell for ten days.⁸⁹ Shirley Povich quipped of the .254-hitting Powell that "Negroes on Powell's off-season beat have little to fear if he is no more effective with a police club than he is with his bat this season."⁹⁰

Powell's first game back from his suspension just happened to be an August 16 doubleheader at Griffith Stadium. The game drew the largest crowd of the season, twenty-three thousand fans. Before the game, Washington fans, calling themselves the National Constitution Defense League, wrote a letter to the Yankees' owner, Col. Ruppert, urging him not to play Powell when the Yankees came to Washington.⁹⁵ Their urgings went unheeded.

A pop bottle greeted Powell, who played left field during the second game of the doubleheader, as he walked to first base after his first at-bat. The glass grenade was a prelude of things to come. Pop bottles rained down on Powell in the sixth inning as he left the Yankees' dugout and took his position in left field. After a ten-minute delay in which the grounds crew cleaned up the bottles, the fans flung more bottles at Powell in the seventh. There was no mistake where the bottles came from—the right-field pavilion and left-field bleachers. Shirley Povich wrote: "From the right-field pavilion, favorite section of colored fans, came loud and insistent shouts of 'Take him out!' At one point during the turmoil, a pop vender's bucket came hurtling out of the stands and fell perilously close to the Yankee outfielder."⁹⁶ This wasn't a few drunken fans (Griffith refused to sell beer in those days, though one of his biggest advertisers was the National Bohemian beer company). This was a full-scale rebellion. The artillery, according to the *Washington Herald's* Vincent Flaherty, included thirty-eight pop bottles, a pop bottle bucket, a peanut vendor's bucket, two straw hats, a slightly worn shoe, and "3,967 coarse remarks."⁹⁷ Unaware of the pregame warning, Povich blamed Yankees manager Joe McCarthy for returning Powell to the lineup in Washington: "In Washington, unlike other league cities, colored fans are congregated chiefly in one sector of the park. They could have been expected to work up a fury against Powell. They did, too."⁹⁸ Griffith responded to the anger from the Senators' black fans by announcing that ballpark soda vendors would serve beverages in paper cups.⁹⁹ The following year, the city's black fans improvised by pelting Powell with vegetables.¹⁰⁰

In 1939, black Washingtonians proved to be less violent but more organized when the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.) barred an Easter performance at Constitution Hall by black opera

singer Marian Anderson. The Howard University School of Music had invited Anderson to give the concert in Washington. A fire had destroyed the theater where Anderson originally was supposed to sing.¹⁰¹ Anderson's agent, Sol Hurok, attempted to book Anderson's concert at the D.A.R.-controlled Constitution Hall, the city's largest auditorium. To this day, the D.A.R. says that the Washington Symphony already had reserved Easter and that Hurok failed to request another date.¹⁰² Hurok, however, inquired about the days before and after Easter but was told that those dates were open only to "white artists."¹⁰³ That applied to just about every day at Constitution Hall, where blacks attended concerts but could not perform. In fact, the D.A.R. board voted thirty-nine to one to deny Anderson a special exception.¹⁰⁴

Charles Houston, James Nabrit, and Mary McLeod Bethune—three of the city's most prominent black leaders—formed the Marian Anderson Citizens Committee (MACC).¹⁰⁵ They rallied the black community through a series of church-based protest meetings. On February 26, Houston spoke at Mt. Pleasant Congregationalist Church. That same day, Nabrit discussed the legal implications of the D.A.R.'s segregated practices at Lincoln Congregationalist Church, with a benediction from the Church of God's Elder Michaux. Houston and Nabrit reached out to Washington's black middle class at the Congregationalist churches while Elder Michaux attracted Southern migrants. They also generated support among Howard University students, who demonstrated March 7 in front of Constitution Hall.¹⁰⁶

As the architect of the NAACP's legal campaign, Houston used the Marian Anderson controversy to call national attention to the nation's capital's segregated schools. Houston petitioned the District of Columbia School Board to use one of the city's largest public auditoriums at all-white Central High School for Anderson's performance. The school board, consisting of five whites and three blacks, initially rejected Houston's request outright.¹⁰⁷ In the face of "national indignation," the board reconvened March 9 and agreed to allow Anderson to use the auditorium, "provided colored people did not take advantage of this situation to try to get the auditorium again."¹⁰⁸ Houston rejected the "back door" offer. On March 26, he spoke at



Clark Griffith sits at his Griffith Stadium office in front of pictures of U.S. presidents throwing out the first ball on Opening Day. Griffith's friendship with FDR was a major reason that Roosevelt wrote the "Green Light" letter allowing professional baseball to continue during World War II. (AP/WORLDWIDE)



Buck Leonard and wife Sarah Wroten Sorrell, “the lady” of black Rocky Mount, having earned a master’s degree in speech education from the University of Michigan. While Leonard played ball, she taught in the Rocky Mount public school system. (ART CARTER PAPERS, MOORLAND-SPINGARN RESEARCH CENTER, HOWARD UNIVERSITY)



Sam Lacy (seated fourth from right) covers a Howard University football game. Lacy’s good friend, Grays promoter Art Carter (third from right), is seated next to him. (ART CARTER PAPERS, MOORLAND-SPINGARN RESEARCH CENTER, HOWARD UNIVERSITY)



Buck Leonard slams a home run over Griffith Stadium's right-field fence during a 1938 game against the New York Cubans. (NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY)

FOUR



THE GRAYS COME TO WASHINGTON

Washington, D.C., seemed like the ideal fit for the Grays. The city had a growing, educated black population that loved baseball, a major league stadium in the heart of the black community, and a convenient location on the rail lines to Philadelphia and New York. Every Negro League team playing on the Eastern seaboard passed through Washington.¹ The Grays had played at Griffith's ball yard—then known as American League Park—as early as 1921 against the Washington Braves.² Sixteen years later, Josh Gibson's return had transformed the Grays into Negro National League champions. To this day, Washington remains a transient, political town that treats its sports teams like it treats politicians—the nation's capital likes winners.

Events during the late 1930s made Washington even more attractive as a black baseball town. Senators owner Clark Griffith had expressed strong support for the Negro Leagues in his December 1937 interview with Lacy. Jake Powell's comments in 1938 had infuriated many of the Senators' loyal black fans. A year later, Marian Anderson's concert had united black Washingtonians across the economic and social spectrum.

In February 1940, the Grays announced that they would play some of their home games at Griffith Stadium. They rented the ballpark

when the Senators were out of town and wore *Ws* on the sleeves of their uniforms to connote their new status as the *Washington* Homestead Grays. In Pittsburgh, the Grays donned uniforms with *Hs* on their sleeves. During their first few seasons, the Grays divided their home games evenly between the two cities.³

The Grays introduced themselves to black Washington primarily through Sunday doubleheaders. After playing Saturday at Forbes Field, they would leave Pittsburgh well after midnight, drive 263 miles from Pittsburgh to Washington, and arrive in Washington about 11:00 A.M. Most of the players would grab sandwiches before heading into the ballpark around 11:30 A.M. The players referred to weekend doubleheaders, usually the most profitable days of the week for a black baseball team, as “‘getting-out-of-the-hole’ days.”⁴

Black Washington, however, greeted the Grays with indifference. Only four thousand people attended the team’s official home opener, a Sunday sweep of the Cuban Stars (also known as the New York Cubans).⁵ The following week, a rematch of the 1939 playoff series between the Grays and the Baltimore Elite Giants garnered only forty-eight hundred fans.⁶ In 1940, the Grays’ attendance hovered between three thousand and four thousand a game. The following season, it dwindled to fifteen hundred to three thousand in June and July.⁷

Other cities kept the Grays afloat. A 1940 Grays-Elites doubleheader at Forbes Field drew seven thousand fans, and a similar contest at Yankee Stadium attracted eight thousand to ten thousand.⁸ The 1940 NNL playoffs at Yankee Stadium featured four teams and fetched fifteen thousand fans.⁹ The following season, eleven thousand people ventured to Brooklyn’s Dexter Park to see the Grays play the white semipro Brooklyn Bushwicks, and two Yankee Stadium doubleheaders against the Cubans drew twelve thousand people each.¹⁰ After fifty thousand people witnessed the 1941 East-West All-Star Game at Chicago’s Comiskey Park, twenty-eight thousand fans flocked to a Grays-Elites doubleheader at Detroit’s Briggs Stadium.¹¹ At the end of the 1941 season, the Grays announced that they had made a profit for the first time in more than eight years—despite their poor attendance in Washington.¹²

The Grays failed to catch on in Washington in 1940 and 1941 in part because they hired a white publicity agent. The agent—former

Posey sued the catcher for breach of contract and received a ten thousand dollar lien on Gibson's house.¹⁸ In both 1940 and 1941, a handful of the Grays' better players, such as shortstop Sam Bankhead and left-handed pitcher Roy Partlow, followed Gibson to Latin America.

In addition to losing Gibson as an everyday gate attraction in 1941, the Grays failed to arrange a Griffith Stadium contest featuring Satchel Paige. Pitching for the Kansas City Monarchs in the Southern and Midwestern Negro American League, Paige single-handedly kept black baseball out of the red. His three-inning appearance at the 1941 East-West Game in Chicago was the major reason fifty thousand people showed up. In 1941, Paige drew crowds between ten thousand and twenty thousand in major league ballparks from Chicago to St. Louis to New York City. "Sir Posey is still dreaming of bringing him to Washington on a night date at Griffith Stadium . . ." *Washington Afro-American* sportswriter Ric Roberts wrote. "It may attract 20,000 fans."¹⁹ In 1941, however, Paige's Monarchs wouldn't cooperate.

As a drawing card, Leonard paled in comparison to Gibson and Paige. Near the end of the 1940 season, a *Pittsburgh Courier* columnist dubbed Leonard "the least colorful."²⁰ Perhaps the best description of Leonard came from Newark Eagles pitcher Max Manning, who played with Leonard in Mexico later in their careers. Manning told John Holway:

Two people who reminded me of each other were Buck Leonard and Pop Lloyd; their characters were so similar—the quiet humbleness, the spartan-like kind of living. Buck never cursed, never drank. You'd always find him with a paper in his hand. In Mexico, if I wanted to find him, I'd go to the park, and he'd be sitting on a bench reading the paper, doing his crossword puzzle. He'd be in bed by nine o'clock.²¹

Leonard's "Black Lou Gehrig" moniker was apt, not only as a fellow first baseman and line drive-hitting RBI man, but as a more easy-going, bland personality compared with his home-run-hitting coun-

terpart. Two qualities stood out about Leonard: his free and easy smile that Wendell Smith described as revealing “a set of teeth that would take a dentist’s breath away”²² and his introspectiveness that masked an intense competitiveness and a fertile mind absorbing everything around him. Leonard was as reliable as Gibson and Paige were unreliable.

Leonard emerged as the Grays’ quiet, dependable star. Defensively, he had developed into the best first baseman in the league. He played far and deep off the first-base bag, enabling him to catch sharp grounders that otherwise would have gone into right field for base hits. Although he occasionally experienced trouble with underhand tosses to Grays pitchers covering first base, Leonard’s defensive lapses were overshadowed by his fielding gems. H. G. Salsinger of the *Detroit News* raved in 1941 about “a play that we have never seen matched by an American League first baseman. He ran almost to the extreme end of the bullpen in right-field foul territory and caught a fly ball over his shoulder.”²³ After watching Leonard play first base at the 1939 East-West All-Star Game, Frankie Mastro of the *Chicago Tribune* gushed: “Buck Leonard is the greatest first baseman I have ever seen on any club, black or white.”²⁴

Offensively, Leonard stood out as one of the most feared hitters in the Negro National League. A dead fastball hitter, Leonard regularly rapped line drives up and over Griffith Stadium’s thirty-foot-high right-field wall. He also mastered curveballs, especially after Posey had taught him to open his stance against left-handed pitchers. If Leonard had any weaknesses as a hitter, it was the change-up. Every pitcher knew this. Unfortunately for them, so did Leonard. At the 1941 East-West Game, he knocked Ted “Double Duty” Radcliffe’s change-up 368 feet into Comiskey Park’s right-field bleachers. The fans accused Radcliffe of serving up a fat pitch. Posey wrote: “After the game ‘Double Duty’ came all the way to the Braddock Hotel on 126th street to tell this writer that Leonard was a ‘sucker’ for a slow ball, and as long as he lived ‘Double Duty’ would not throw Leonard another fastball.”²⁵

Some opposing pitchers preferred to pitch to Gibson instead of Leonard. “The toughest one for me to get out was Buck Leonard,”

Negro Leaguers who were physically unable to serve in the military, such as Leonard and Gibson. There could have been dozens of war-time Jackie Robinsons.

Twenty-twenty hindsight belied the racial attitudes emanating from the White House. A presidential-led movement to integrate baseball was incompatible with Roosevelt's (and his wife's) personal philosophy and his New Deal agenda. As Dr. Robert Weaver, who had grown up in Washington, D.C., worked on the New Deal, and served in Roosevelt's informal black cabinet, explained:

In the first place, he had no real background in this area. Secondly, he had been down in Warm Springs, Georgia, he had respected the southern pattern. Mrs. Roosevelt talked about darkies, Mrs. Roosevelt was anti-Semitic in the beginning, as I told her great-granddaughter, but she changed rapidly. His program was never designed like [Lyndon] Johnson's program, to deal with racial issues. His program was designed to deal with broad, economic, social issues. And because it was concerned with the man further down it did affect the Negro, but the Negro was not affected as a Negro, he was affected as part of the population.⁴⁴

Roosevelt's papers revealed a 1943 letter from a baseball fan in Toledo, Ohio, lobbying for an All-Star Game between black and white teams in support of "the day when Negro baseball players will be permitted to play besides the White man in the major leagues." Roosevelt's White House staff ignored the letter.⁴⁵ Yet even without President Roosevelt's assistance, World War II moved major league baseball closer to integration.

96 Not only was Griffith unwilling to integrate his team in 1940 and 1941, he also hurt the Grays' chances of succeeding at Griffith Stadium by refusing to allow them to play white semipro teams. For more than twenty years, he barred white and black teams from playing each other in his ballpark. His ban arose from an incident in the early 1920s between the black professional Brooklyn Royal Giants and an All-Star team of white major and minor league players formed by Senators first baseman Joe Judge and the black professional Brook-

lyn Royal Giants.⁴⁶ It was the final game of the four-game series (which the teams split two apiece). After a close play at first base, Senators outfielder Frank Brower punched a black umpire in the face. The police escorted Brower out of the ballpark. A near-riot ensued.⁴⁷

Based on the Frank Brower incident, Griffith concluded that interracial contests at Griffith Stadium stirred up violent, pent-up emotions. His opinion was not completely unfounded. An on-field dispute during a July 1940 game between the Grays and the white semipro Brooklyn Bushwicks at Dexter Park triggered a hail of bottles from the stands.⁴⁸ In a June 1941 rematch between the two teams, Grays third baseman Jud “Boojum” Wilson reacted to a bad call by pushing a white umpire and accusing the Bushwicks’ first baseman of taking a swing at him.⁴⁹

The violence wasn’t limited to baseball. In late July 1942, an interracial “Battle of Music” between Louis Armstrong’s band and Charlie Barnett’s band before twenty thousand fans at Griffith Stadium turned into a battle of the bottle throwers that led to thirteen arrests. Just as Armstrong’s band had begun to play, a large group of fans swarmed onto the field, drawing the ire (in the form of glass bottles) of customers who had purchased box seats.⁵⁰

But in general, black and white baseball teams regularly competed against each other without incident. The Grays, like many Negro League teams, often traveled to small towns to play weekday games against white semipro teams. Leonard recalled that the Grays sometimes stopped on their way from Pittsburgh to Washington to play semipro clubs in towns such as Rockville, Maryland.⁵¹ For the Grays and other Negro League teams without their own home ballparks, interracial contests helped black teams survive.

Even if the Grays had hired a black publicity agent, even if Gibson had been with the team for most of 1940 and 1941, and even if Griffith had allowed them to play white semipro teams in his ballpark, the Grays still would not have drawn well in Washington. Their poor attendance at Griffith Stadium before 1940 was further proof of it. During a 1939 Grays–Philadelphia Stars doubleheader, Gibson conquered Griffith Stadium’s faraway fences by launching three

home runs into the left-field bleachers. He nearly hit a fourth homer that day, but the ball hit a metal railing in front of the bleachers and fell back onto the field for a triple. Yet only two thousand fans turned out for his spectacular performance.⁵²

In 1940 and 1941, as in 1939, black Washingtonians were still stuck on the Senators. The black elite, in particular, eschewed Grays games in favor of the Senators' games. *Washington Tribune* columnist Joe Sewall observed in 1940 that members of the city's black upper crust "are seen regularly cooped up in the pavilion of Griff's stadium on the occasions when the Senators are playing here. . . . Looking through the stands during the last appearances made here by the Grays, such a thing as a doctor, lawyer, teacher or student was quite a rarity."⁵³ The black elite perceived the Negro Leagues as second-rate, and the Grays' white publicity agent lacked the requisite social contacts to change their minds. Sewall appealed to the black intelligentsia, the leaders of the movement to desegregate Washington, in the language of black protest: "Such an omission on the part of Washington's upper strata is obviously inconsistent and makes most of our efforts to improve race conditions here open to attack from the great mass of laymen who make up the strength of any worthwhile movement."⁵⁴

Lacy's coverage of the Grays often reinforced the black elite's notions of inferiority about black baseball. In 1940 and 1941, he adopted Griffith's argument that the only way to integrate baseball was to improve the professionalism of the Negro Leagues. Thus, Lacy assumed the role of watchdog over black baseball—often at the Grays' expense. In a column about the Grays' inaugural game in Washington against the New York Cubans, he characterized the play of both teams as "decidedly amateurish in spots," described three errors on one play as "inexcusable," criticized the players for not catching four foul pop-ups, and chastised them for "between innings loafing."⁵⁵ When Gibson broke his 1941 contract with the Grays, Lacy excoriated Gibson for "throw[ing] those of us who are interested in the fight back about five years in the campaign to get colored performers into big-league baseball."⁵⁶ In a May 1941 column, he indicted all of Negro League baseball: the players who ignored their

contracts, the teams who welcomed them back, the leagues that failed to inform the press and public, and the owners who raided each others' rosters. Lacy concluded: "Perhaps there is something to the contention that we are keeping ourselves down."⁵⁷

Lacy's ally in the integration crusade, the *Pittsburgh Courier's* Wendell Smith, blamed black fans. In 1938, Smith encouraged black fans to boycott major league games in favor of Negro League contests. "Major league baseball does not want us. It never has," Smith wrote. "Still, we continue to help support this institution that places a bold 'Not Welcome' sign over its thriving portal and refuse to patronize the very place that has shown that it is more than welcome to have us. We black folks are a strange tribe!"⁵⁸

In 1941, the Senators and their major league counterparts cast a long shadow over the Gibson-less Grays and their two-straight NNL titles. Despite, and perhaps because of, the absence of black players, 1941 was one of the most memorable seasons in major league history, in which Ted Williams hit .406 and Joe DiMaggio hit safely in fifty-six consecutive games. Indeed, the Griffith Stadium faithful saw DiMaggio break George Sisler's modern record of forty-one games on a day when someone stole Joltin' Joe's lucky bat.⁵⁹ At season's end, the Senators' Cecil Travis finished two points ahead of DiMaggio for second place in the AL batting race with a .359 average and a league-leading 218 hits. The Senators finished tied for next to last in the American League.

In another major Griffith Stadium event in 1941, Joe Louis defended his heavyweight championship against a white challenger, Buddy Baer. Nearly twenty-four thousand people paid \$105,000 to attend the fight; about 70 percent of the fans were black. Blacks all across America listened to the fight on the radio, cheering on Louis and their race. "If Louis lost, we were back in slavery and beyond help," Maya Angelou wrote in her memoir *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, describing her emotions as a little girl growing up in Arkansas listening to the Louis-Primo Carnera fight. "It would all be true, the accusations that we were lower types of human beings."⁶⁰

The Louis-Buddy Baer fight was marred by controversy. Baer knocked Louis through the ropes early in the fight, then Louis hit

Baer after the bell in the sixth round. Baer was disqualified when he refused to come out for the bell in the seventh. Art Carter of the *Afro-American* advised Louis never to fight in Washington again. “The town is still overburdened with too much of the Southern element,” Carter wrote. “The below-the-Mason-Dixon-line whites, even the supposed fair-minded sports scribes, can’t stand to see a colored champion beating a white challenger, and to put Louis in Washington again would only jeopardize Joe’s prestige.”⁶¹

During the early 1940s, desegregation in the nation’s capital occurred in fits and starts. A year before the Louis fight, Kid Cocoa won a unanimous ten-round decision over Wild Bill McDowell at Griffith Stadium in the city’s first interracial professional boxing match.⁶² In February 1940, Howard University professors and former organizers of the New Negro Alliance picketed the world premiere of the movie *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* at Washington’s all-white RKO-Keith theater. Eleanor Roosevelt, one of many prominent government officials who crossed the picket line, commented after the movie: “I think it is particularly tragic that the people whom Lincoln freed should not be allowed to see the show about him.”⁶³ In July 1941, the Department of Interior ordered Washington’s East Potomac Park Golf Course opened to all races. Yet a black golfer returned to his car only to find that someone had poured sand in his gas tank and sugar and coffee in his carburetor and oil pump.⁶⁴ That same year, newly opened Uline Arena denied admission to more than one hundred blacks who wanted to see the Ice Capades.⁶⁵

The words of Griffith Stadium’s public-address announcer at a 1941 football game between the Washington Redskins and the Philadelphia Eagles changed everything. In the middle of the second quarter, he began paging generals, lieutenants, and cabinet secretaries. One by one, government officials made their way out of the stadium. It was December 7. The Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor.

World War II triggered the events that ultimately turned things around for the Grays in Washington. The war spared many of the

professional occupations.⁷⁰ Hiring African Americans as clerical workers enlarged Washington's black middle class and gave it more money to spend on Grays games.

The burgeoning federal job market brought the Great Migration to Washington and bolstered the Grays' fan base. From 1940 to 1950, Washington's black population increased from 187,255 to 280,803.⁷¹ This was not the same type of mass migration that compelled Leonard to leave Rocky Mount after he had been laid off by the railroad at the height of the Depression. The "depression migration" of the 1930s had given way to a "boom migration" during the 1940s.⁷² Contrary to prevailing stereotypes, many black migrants of the 1930s and 1940s were not uneducated, rural farmers. They came from larger towns and cities, brought experience in skilled or semiskilled jobs, and possessed a high rate of literacy.⁷³ Many of these boom migrants came from Virginia and the Carolinas.⁷⁴

Some of them hailed from Rocky Mount. A. C. Braxton, who had grown up climbing the trees behind Rocky Mount's ballpark to watch Leonard play baseball, came to Washington in June 1941. By October, Braxton had found a job with the Social Security Administration, commuting five and a half days a week from Washington to Baltimore. Another Rocky Mount native, Eddie Dozier, had arrived in Washington in 1937, found a job in 1941 with the Department of Defense, and worked for the government for thirty-two years.

For recent migrants such as Braxton and Dozier, Grays games at Griffith Stadium reunited them with friends whom they had grown up with in the South but who lived in different parts of the city. The Grays billed an August 5, 1940, Sunday doubleheader against the Cuban Stars as "North Carolina Day: Featuring 'Buck' Leonard."⁷⁵ During the war years, Braxton and Dozier would walk to the ballpark together from Fifteenth and T Streets where Braxton lived.⁷⁶ Lena Cox, Leonard's younger sister, who had moved to Washington in the early to mid-1930s, recalled attending Grays games with many former Rocky Mount residents who lived in Washington and even nearby Baltimore. "You would see everybody from home when you went to the ball game," she said.⁷⁷

the newspaper and the basketball team. Lacy—citing commitments to players, opposing teams, and the owner of Turner’s Arena where the team played—chose the team. Murphy said that Lacy could return to the newspaper at the end of Lacy’s commitment to the team, but only in the *Afro*’s news department in Baltimore.⁸⁰

Lacy’s return to the *Afro* after the basketball season proved to be short-lived. Although he occasionally wrote about sports in 1941, he primarily worked in the news department under the direction of one of Murphy’s daughters, Elizabeth (Bettye) Phillips Moss. Lacy bristled at some of Moss’s story assignments. It didn’t take long for him to reach his breaking point. “I was driving on Orleans Street on an assignment from Bettye that made no sense whatsoever to me,” he wrote. “I just swung the damn car, made a U-turn, and the next time anyone from the paper heard from me, I was in Chicago.”⁸¹

Before arriving in Chicago, Lacy wrote copy for a Cincinnati radio station, WJLW. In Chicago, he briefly worked for a white daily newspaper, the *Chicago Sun*, for the first and only time in his career. He eventually landed a job as the assistant national editor of the *Chicago Defender*, one of the nation’s largest black newspapers, where he worked in 1942 and 1943. During those two seasons, the Grays reached the height of their popularity in Washington while their biggest critic was in exile.

In Lacy’s absence, the Grays made amends with the local black press by hiring a black publicity agent, Art Carter. Carter’s role in the Grays’ success in Washington, D.C., has been overlooked by the traditional histories of the Negro Leagues. As the team’s public relations arm and business manager in Washington, he helped the Grays make the transition from Pittsburgh’s team to Washington’s team. His papers, which are in the manuscript division at Howard University’s Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, document his promotional efforts and provide insights into the financial dealings of the Grays in Washington.

Arthur Mantel Carter grew up in a poor neighborhood in Southwest Washington and graduated from the newly opened Cardozo Business High School in 1929.⁸² He had met Lacy while playing for the Pleasant Plains basketball team (Lacy was the coach of an oppos-

ing team) and soon developed into the first of Lacy's many journalistic protégés.⁸³ From 1932 to 1934, he wrote for the *Tribune* sports section while playing basketball at Howard University.⁸⁴ In 1935, Carter joined Lacy's *Tribune* sports staff full-time as a college and high school sports reporter.

Two years later, Carter joined the rival *Afro-American*, where he began writing about Negro League baseball and authoring his "From the Bench" sports column. He soon became the chain's national sports editor in charge of all of its editions. In 1939, Lacy joined his former protégé and close friend as the sports editor of the *Afro*'s Washington edition. Lacy promoted the Washington Bruins basketball team along with Carter and future *Afro* sportswriter and Grays radio play-by-play man Harold "Hal" Jackson.⁸⁵ Only Lacy—perhaps because of his boastful comments in the white *Washington Daily News* about the team's profits—drew the *Afro* management's wrath.⁸⁶ Carter kept his job at the *Afro*.

Carter brought his lifelong knowledge of black Washington, his promotional experience with the Bruins, and his status as the *Afro* sports editor to his new part-time job as the Grays' D.C. public relations director. The secret to his success was his aggressive courtship of the black elite. He augmented the Grays' upper-class black fan base by chartering an informal yet exclusive club of fans to whom he gave season passes. Giving out season passes to the "Black 400" made perfect business sense—many of them brought their friends to the games. William B. West, Howard University's dean of men, wrote a glowing letter to Carter thanking him for his free pass for the 1945 season. "To date through your kindness I have not missed a single game and have enjoyed them immensely," West wrote Carter in August 1945. "Further, several of my friends because of my enthusiasm . . . have fallen into the habit of attending the games and are like myself ardent fans of our Homestead team."⁸⁷ West and his friends turned Grays games into well-dressed affairs like Howard-Lincoln football games, where men wore fedoras, jackets, and ties and ladies wore hats and sundresses.

Carter handed out free passes to Howard faculty, wealthy businessmen, prominent black federal employees, and religious leaders.

Posey, Pittsburgh public relations director John L. Clark, manager Vic Harris, and the Grays' players.⁹³

Carter's most important relationship was with Clark Griffith and his adopted son, Calvin. Carter had known the elder Griffith for several years. In 1937, the Senators' owner had given a season press pass to Carter, who was working for the *Washington Tribune*. The following year, Carter, now the *Afro's* sports editor, asked Griffith for another press credential.⁹⁴

As the Grays' promoter at Griffith Stadium, Carter dealt primarily with Griffith's heir apparent, Calvin. In 1942, Clark promoted Calvin from overseeing the Senators' minor league team in Charlotte to running the concessions operations at Griffith Stadium, an important job considering that the Griffiths made most of their money off concessions. Clark also named Calvin the team's vice president so that Calvin could attend major league meetings. Another of Calvin's responsibilities was taking care of the stadium during Grays games. "We used to have wrestling matches, Negro League baseball, and all of these things," Calvin told Jon Kerr. "Someone had to stay around to supervise these things, and I was the low man on the totem pole."⁹⁵

Calvin's equating Negro League baseball with professional wrestling would have strained his relations with Carter, who marketed Grays games as classy affairs tailor-made for an upper-class clientele. Their divergent perspectives about the Grays eventually led to conflict. Bill Scott, the *Afro* photographer in Washington and a close friend of Carter's, related a story that Carter had told him:

"Scott," he said, "I don't know whether I should get angry at Calvin or not." I said, "What'd he say, Art?" He said that Calvin told him that all the people coming out here on Sundays, they were "nigger rich." Art said he wanted to fight, see. But what the hell? That's the way things were.⁹⁶

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Scott laughed as he told the story. When it came to dealing with Calvin, however, Carter put the Grays' interests ahead of his personal pride.

Carter and Grays owner Cum Posey depended on the Griffiths to give the Grays the first crack at the open Sunday dates when the Senators were out of town. Posey went to great lengths to compliment Clark Griffith in his *Pittsburgh Courier* column.⁹⁷ In April 1942, Posey wrote: “Clark Griffith, owner of the Washington Senators is in a class with the late [Pirates owner] Barney Dreyfuss of Pittsburgh in his friendliness to N.O.B. [Negro Organized Baseball]. Mr. Griffith allowed the Grays to use Griffith Stadium at Washington to play [sic] Newark Eagles on April 19. By doing so he allowed two Negro clubs to play in his home park before the Senators.”⁹⁸

For Griffith, renting his ballpark to the Grays was not an act of altruism. The Senators’ owner profited handsomely from the relationship, hiring out the Senators’ ticket takers and ushers, reaping all the profits from concessions, and taking 20 percent of the gross gate receipts. For example, the April 19, 1942, exhibition game between the Grays and Eagles drew 4,714 fans. With tickets selling for seventy-five cents and fifty cents, the game grossed \$3,176.66. The Senators received 20 percent of the gross profits, or \$635.33, for stadium rental, plus \$62.50 in expenses for ticket sales, ushers, and cleanup. After subtracting additional expenses and 10 percent of the net profits for promotion, each team that played netted \$1,059.84. Thus, the Grays took home \$1,000, and Griffith nabbed nearly \$700 merely for lending them his ballpark.⁹⁹ The relationship, though exploitative, was symbiotic. The larger the crowds at Grays games, the better Griffith and the Grays fared.

Although the ticket windows opened at 11:00 A.M., a last-minute surge surprised Griffith's ticket sellers. Temperatures rose, and three thousand people were still waiting for tickets as the game began at 2:00 P.M. "Scalpers," according to the *Afro*, "were getting \$3.30 [nearly three times face value] for 'choice' grandstand seats."¹⁰ The black fans had bought up all the tickets in the right-field pavilion where they usually sat for Senators games. Only bleacher seats remained. Tempers flared. Windows broke. Griffith, already edgy about a game between black and white teams at his ballpark, sounded a riot call for additional police protection. The Old Fox, however, had overreacted. As the *Post* observed:

Although there were so many frenzied calls for additional police help from both official and unofficial sources that some auxiliaries were routed from their homes, there was little disorder. Three windows were broken on the ground floor of the clubhouse. One man, colored, was arrested for creating a disturbance and another man, white, suffered a heart attack but recovered before leaving the stadium.¹¹

The last of the twenty-two thousand fans on hand—which the *Post* described as "the largest non-major league crowd in Griffith Stadium history"—did not enter the ballpark until the fourth inning.¹² By that time, the game was effectively over.

Dean's Griffith Stadium return was less than triumphant. He wore his old St. Louis Cardinals uniform but didn't pitch much like a major leaguer. Although the previous week in Chicago he had retired the Monarchs in order in his lone inning, the Grays were a much better hitting team than the Monarchs were.¹³ In only one inning, the Grays tagged Dean for two runs on three hits. And it could have been worse.

Leadoff hitter Dave Whatley reached base on an infield hit off Dean's glove, Jerry Benjamin sacrificed Whatley to second, and Howard Easterling walked. Josh Gibson launched a shot to the deepest part of the ballpark, right-center field, more than 422 feet away from home plate—for a very long second out. With both base runners advancing on Gibson's fly ball, Jud Wilson (playing first base for

state of Georgia. The army gave Travis a weeklong furlough to play with Dean's All-Stars. Playing once a week at Camp Wheeler, Travis said his timing was so off that he would be lucky to hit .100 in the majors. The slap hitter predicted that he would need at least three weeks to regain his batting stroke.²⁹ After an 0-for-3 afternoon in Chicago, Travis spent the week in Washington. He went fishing with friends on the Chesapeake Bay, received a gold watch from the *Times-Herald* for being the Senators' most consistent player in 1941, and on Sunday competed against Paige and the Grays.³⁰

Reflecting on that exhibition game nearly sixty years later, Travis confessed that at the time he did not even know that the Grays played at Griffith Stadium when the Senators were out of town.³¹ Travis's obliviousness about Griffith Stadium's other tenants is not surprising. The Grays had been playing in Washington for only two seasons, they did not break any Griffith Stadium attendance records in 1940 or 1941, and Gibson had been smashing home runs in Latin America during that time. Furthermore, the Senators hit the road when the Grays played in Washington.

Travis's appearance against the Grays marked a new chapter in the Grays-Senators' complex history. During the late 1930s, Griffith allowed the Grays to play exhibition games at the Senators' spring training facilities at Orlando's Tinker Field. Griffith's team also purchased the Grays' batting equipment along with the Senators'. Buck Leonard recalled that if the Senators were ordering eight hundred bats, they would order an additional one hundred for the Grays.³² Each Grays player, according to historian Donn Rogosin, found a Senator who used the same type of equipment: "Buck Leonard, a lifetime .355 hitter in the Negro Leagues, used Len Okrie's bat. Okrie batted a lifetime .218."³³ Griffith's clubhouse man also purchased uniforms that said "Grays" rather than "Senators." The easiest way to spot a rookie or seldom-used member of the Grays was to look at his uniform—if the front of the uniform said "Grays," he was an integral member of the team; if the uniform had only a *W* on the left front, then the player never made it into league games because he was wearing an old Senators uniform.³⁴

Negro athletes who have beaten white competitors has long been observed,” Swedish social economist Gunnar Myrdal wrote in 1944.⁴⁶ “Satchel Paige,” exulted Art Carter, “is the Joe Louis of baseball. Perhaps it is more proper to say Joe Louis is the Satchel Paige of boxing, for Old Satch was tossing ’em plateward long before Joe cut his first wisdom tooth.”⁴⁷

The Paige-Travis battle was different from Louis beating up Buddy Baer the previous year at Griffith Stadium. Griffith’s refusal to hire black players suggested that black teams such as the Grays were inferior to white teams such as the Senators, that a Paige or a Gibson lacked the requisite skill to play on the same team as a Travis. The black elite’s obsession with the Senators only reinforced this racial hierarchy. By striking out Travis, Paige refuted any notions of inferiority and gave people hope that the integration of baseball, as Griffith had prophesied in 1937, was not far off. Robert McNeill, a black photographer who snapped a pregame group picture of Travis, Dean, and Paige that appeared in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, recalled the jubilation of the black fans. He remembered “the gratification that they felt that Josh Gibson and Buck Leonard and others could perform as well as the white players. Even though they didn’t feel that blacks would ever play in the [major] leagues, they sort of smugly got satisfaction out of knowing that this may be possible.”⁴⁸

On the bench, Paige spoke clinically about making Travis one of his seven strikeout victims. “He went for two bad balls, fast ones inside, up against him,” said Paige, who sensed that Travis’s timing was off. “He wasn’t ready and steady—tried to make up his mind too quick, at the last second. He would have walked if he had looked at the last one.”⁴⁹ For his five innings, Paige received five hundred dollars plus all travel expenses incurred by him and his personal trainer. Paige, who gave up one unearned run after retiring Travis, failed to make good on his pregame promise to shut out Dean’s team. After the game, Paige boasted to a white writer that he could win thirty-five games during a major league season. He also claimed that he could beat the Grays even with Dean’s All-Stars behind him.⁵⁰ Privately, while riding the train to Pittsburgh with black sportswriter

Dominican Republic in 1937, and finally Mexico in 1938. In 1938, Greenlee tried to save his faltering franchise by selling Paige for five thousand dollars to the Newark Eagles. Paige flirted with the Eagles and in particular with their female owner, Effa Manley, but he never signed with them.⁷⁴

Paige's trip to Mexico nearly led to his demise. He developed a sore arm and felt a pop in his shoulder. Doctors informed him that his pitching career was over. So Paige returned to the states and in 1939 signed with the B team of the Kansas City Monarchs. He mostly played first base and outfield and soft-tossed a few pitches while receiving daily treatments on his arm from the Monarchs' trainer, a licensed masseur named Frank "Jewbaby" Floyd. ("I don't know why they called him 'Jewbaby,' because he was as black as I am," Buck O'Neil said.⁷⁵). After about a year and a half of rest, Paige suddenly regained his fastball. His arm felt better. He continued to pitch for the B team until 1941, when he joined the Monarchs.

Paige flourished with the Monarchs, whose owner, J. L. Wilkinson, rented him to other teams. Paige usually pitched three innings (but as many as five) for either a flat fee (like the five hundred dollars for May 31) or a percentage of the gate (as high as 15 percent).⁷⁶ During the 1940s, Paige made as much as forty thousand dollars in a given season, while Feller and DiMaggio made only thirty-five thousand dollars.⁷⁷ In 1942, by contrast, Leonard and Gibson made only one thousand dollars a month.

Paige's fame and fortune came with a price—the press portrayed him as a minstrel performer, a baseball player in blackface. Paige hated comparisons to "Stepin Fetchit," the famous minstrel show performer, or references to him in print as "Satchelfoot."⁷⁸ "Satchelfoot' sounds like a clown," Paige wrote in his first autobiography, *Pitchin' Man*. "I ain't no clown. I ain't no end man in no vaudeville show. I'm a baseball pitcher and winning baseball games is serious business."⁷⁹

Only Paige's closest friends saw his serious side. Buck O'Neil recounted a car ride with Paige to Charleston, South Carolina, when Paige drove them to nearby Drum Island, an old slave auction site.

"Seems like I been here before," Paige said to O'Neil.

“Me, too, Satchel,” O’Neil replied.⁸⁰

Quincy Troupe, who played with Paige in Bismarck, North Dakota, wrote: “I got to know Satch pretty well. As his teammate and friend, I soon learned he could clown one moment and become deadly serious the next. His complex personality made him immensely interesting.”⁸¹ The metaphor for Paige’s inner turmoil was his bad stomach. Paige often needed to drink bicarbonate of soda while on the mound to get through the game.

Paige clearly understood the racial dynamic of playing against Dean’s All-Stars in Washington, D.C. “Washington and Baltimore and those places like that,” Paige told Stephen Banker, “was just as bad as Mississippi or Georgia or any of those places down there for a colored man.”⁸² After an August 1945 Griffith Stadium double-header in which Paige pitched three innings and collected one thousand dollars, Paige made an illegal left turn at Eighth and Florida Avenue. A black police officer, who accused Paige of trying to run him over, socked Paige twice in the eye. Paige was taken to the police station, paid a five dollar traffic ticket, and was released. Paige probably would have quipped that the biggest insult of the whole experience was the police officer’s failure to recognize him.⁸³

130 In June 1942, everybody recognized Paige in Washington. Eighteen days after his May 31 performance against Dean’s All-Stars, Paige returned to Griffith Stadium with the Monarchs for a showdown against the Grays. People came to see the champions of the East versus the champions of the West, they came to see Gibson versus Paige, and they came in droves. The twenty-eight thousand who saw the Monarchs-Grays matchup was the largest baseball crowd at Griffith Stadium since the Senators’ World Series appearance in 1933.⁸⁴ The difference was that almost all the fans on the night of June 18 were black. That night, they sat wherever they wanted, instead of gravitating to the Jim Crow pavilion in right field as they had during the game against Dean’s All-Stars or being compelled to sit there during Senators games.

The June 18 Grays-Monarchs night contest was billed as the first time two Negro League teams played under major league arc lights.⁸⁵ Griffith allowed the Grays to use his new lights for the same reason he had allowed the Louis-Baer fight in 1941 and for the same reason he had lifted his ban on interracial exhibition games for Paige's previous appearance: money. Griffith charged the Grays 20 percent of the gross profits for stadium rental plus expenses for ushers, ticket takers, and stadium vendors. He also reaped 100 percent of the profits from the concession stands. On May 31, when Paige and the Grays played Dean's All-Stars, Griffith made between three thousand and four thousand dollars in rent and expenses alone. On June 18, Griffith took home four thousand to five thousand dollars—even though his grounds crew refused to rake the infield for two black teams—not including concessions and the exorbitant fee he charged for using his new lighting system.⁸⁶

Grays owner Cum Posey had been negotiating with Griffith for nearly a year to use the new lights.⁸⁷ In the past, the Grays had tried to illuminate the ballpark's expansive outfield with their own portable lighting system in addition to Griffith Stadium's floodlights. These night games usually turned into error-filled disasters because the players could not pick up the ball.⁸⁸ With black Washington teeming with war workers, however, night baseball had become a financial imperative. Estimates about how much Griffith charged the Grays on a per-game basis to use his lights varied from five hundred to fifteen hundred dollars.⁸⁹ The *Afro* wrote before the June 18 Grays-Monarchs contest: "The cost of lights, nightly, at Griffith Stadium is enormous and runs well into the hundreds of dollars. . . . However . . . a crowd of 15,000 will be on hand—maybe even more."⁹⁰

When twenty-eight thousand people showed up for the 9:00 P.M. game on June 18, the Grays were not surprised. Carter had advertised the game in *Nite Life*, a Washington weekly newspaper, with ticket prices listed as follows: Box Seats—\$1.65, Grandstand—\$1.10, Pavilion—80 cents, and Bleachers—55 cents.⁹¹ The advertisement from the game against Dean's All-Stars, by contrast, omitted the prices for bleacher seats because no one ever sat there.⁹² As early as 1941, Posey

owner) for the rest of his career.⁹⁷ Unlike white owners who also doubled as promoters, such as Philadelphia Stars part-owner Eddie Gottlieb and Indianapolis Clowns owner Abe Saperstein, Wilkinson was never accused of exploiting his own players or other black baseball teams. Wilkinson made the Monarchs the class of the Negro American League, the Western equivalent of the Grays.

The Grays-Monarchs matchups of 1942 allowed Paige and Gibson to renew their friendly rivalry. For years, they had robbed black baseball fans of head-to-head battles by playing on the same team—from 1932 to 1936 with the Pittsburgh Crawfords and in 1937 with Trujillo’s team in the Dominican Republic. Paige once told Gibson when they were with the Crawfords that the day would come when they would face each other again: “You know what they say, that you’re the best hitter in the world? Well I know I’m the best pitcher in the world, and some day we’re gonna be on different ballclubs and we’re gonna meet up and see who comes out on top.”⁹⁸

It was a rivalry predicated on mutual respect. Paige declared years later that Gibson was the best hitter he had ever faced, ahead of Williams, DiMaggio, and Stan Musial.⁹⁹ Gibson told anyone who would listen that Paige was the game’s best pitcher. Despite this underlying regard for each other’s talents, two elements fueled the Paige-Gibson rivalry: both men hated to lose, and both men loved to boast. Gibson and Paige were two of the game’s greatest trash talkers. Gibson had started talking about Paige even before the 1938 season had begun. At the end of a lengthy question-and-answer session for Posey’s *Pittsburgh Courier* column, Gibson told Posey to ask him how he would do against Paige that season. “Look to get even break, two out of four,” Gibson replied to his own question. “One thousand in a pinch, providing [Crawfords manager Oscar] Charleston don’t say, ‘Put him on.’”¹⁰⁰ Paige, however, had spent the 1938 season in Mexico instead of with the Crawfords and, therefore, never faced Gibson and the Grays. Gibson had to wait four years to show black baseball fans what he could do against Paige.

During the 1942 season, the one-upmanship took place right on the field, sometimes in the middle of an at-bat. On June 18, Paige

won the head-to-head battle with Gibson. After retiring the home-run-hitting catcher in the second inning, Paige struck out Gibson to end the fourth. As he walked off the field, Paige gave the Grays' bench some advice: "Say, you guys don't let me ever hear your ranting about Josh Gibson. Against the Monarchs he is just another batter who takes his three and then sits down!"¹⁰¹

Before the game, Paige wasn't even well enough to pitch. In the Monarchs' clubhouse, he was doubled over in pain because of his bad stomach. One of his teammates suggested that he see a doctor and stay in bed. "Do you see all those people out there?" Paige asked. "Lot of them came out to see Satch pitch, and Satch has gotta pitch."¹⁰² In the middle of the third inning, Paige's teammates crowded around him when he got sick on the mound. Frank "Jew-baby" Floyd brought out some liquid antacids to soothe his bad stomach. Paige's physical condition did not hurt his pitching. He allowed only one ball out of the infield. In five innings, Paige gave up three hits (two of them infield singles) and no runs. He received fifteen hundred dollars for his performance.¹⁰³

Although he may have lost his individual matchup with Paige, Gibson focused on helping his team win. In the first inning, Gibson's defensive skills may have saved the game. Willie Simms led off the game for the Monarchs with a triple. Newt Allen then hit a fly ball to center field. As Simms began to tag up, Gibson stood at the plate with his arms at his side as if the Grays were conceding the run. But as Simms strode toward home plate, Gibson received a bullet throw from center fielder Jerry Benjamin and tagged out Simms standing up. "All Simms had to do was slide," Paige said later, "and we would have closed the Grays out, then and there."¹⁰⁴

134 Grays left-hander Roy Partlow held the Monarchs scoreless through nine innings. Partlow, who had spent the previous seventeen months playing in Latin America, was the Grays' surprise starter in lieu of ace right-hander Ray Brown. After Paige threw five scoreless innings, another Hall of Fame pitcher, Hilton Smith, took over for the Monarchs. Smith tied the Grays in knots for the next four innings with his wicked curveball. In a wise move, Smith intentionally

walked Gibson with one on in the sixth inning. Gibson could hit curveballs in his sleep.

In extra innings, the game seemingly favored the Monarchs because of their youth and the freshness of Smith. Partlow, by contrast, began showing signs of fatigue. In the top of the tenth, he walked the leadoff hitter, Joe Greene. Then Buck Leonard, having recently returned from his knee injury, unsuccessfully tried to throw out Greene at second base on a sacrifice bunt by O'Neil. With two on and no outs, Partlow retired the next two hitters. Smith, a notoriously good-hitting pitcher, singled, scoring Greene and giving the Monarchs a 1–0 lead.

The Grays rallied in the bottom of the tenth. Sam Bankhead led off with a walk. Vic Harris hit a grounder to the shortstop that forced out Bankhead at second base. People began heading for the exits. Matthew Carlisle, running for Harris, stole second base when Monarchs shortstop Jesse Williams couldn't handle the throw. Pinch hitter Jud Wilson, the Grays' best contact hitter, lined a 2–2 pitch into left field to score Carlisle. People returned to their seats as Wilson stood on first base with one out and the game tied 1–1.

Partlow, another good-hitting pitcher who, like fellow Grays pitchers Ray Brown and Wilmer Fields, often played the outfield when he wasn't pitching, stepped to the plate. Partlow smacked Smith's first pitch, a "lazy outside curveball," into the left-field corner 405 feet away from home plate for a game-winning triple.¹⁰⁵ Partlow's ten innings of pitching and game-winning hit gave the Grays a 2–1, come-from-behind victory over the Monarchs.

And twenty-eight thousand people couldn't believe it. For a few brief moments, baseball allowed the Grays' black fans to forget about the realities of second-class citizenship. Ric Roberts, writing for the *Afro-American*, described the jubilant postgame scene:

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It took the mob fully twenty minutes to stop shrieking and screaming. Partlow, the hero, was carried off the field on the shoulders of a hundred admirers; thousands swarmed onto the field to congratulate the champions of the West, the Kansas City Monarchs, and

Senators games. “The Poseys have done a beautiful job of promotion in the capital and entrenched the Grays firmly in the hearts of Washingtonians,” Roberts wrote. “It has been a very hard task to have the District people embrace the itinerant Homesteaders as their very own but, at long last, it has been done.”¹¹³

The Grays succeeded in Washington by appealing to the black community’s different social classes. Of the June 18 game with the Monarchs, Carter wrote: “Ninety per cent of the crowd was colored, and a cross-section ran from Dr. Mordecai W. Johnson, prexy of Howard U., down to Greasy, the rootin’ tootin’ fan who always brings his cow bell.”¹¹⁴ Carter’s strategy of handing out free passes to prominent members of the black elite had worked. The Grays attracted upper-class blacks by promoting the games as classy, well-dressed affairs. Grays management ejected fans who brought bottles of alcohol to the ballpark, refunding the fans’ tickets.¹¹⁵ They also refused to play the Cincinnati (later Indianapolis) Clowns at Griffith Stadium because of a minstrel-type performance by their mascots, lanky first baseman King Tut and the midget Spec Bebob, that many black fans (as well as Clark Griffith) found offensive.¹¹⁶ With ticket prices as low as fifty-five cents in the bleachers and eighty cents in the right-field pavilion, the Grays also appealed to the city’s working-class fans. Grays games continued to serve as a reunion of sorts for recently migrated Southern blacks. “It was a natural,” O’Neil recalled. “Those people we drew at Griffith Stadium and other ballparks, they were black. This was an important outlet. It was not only a sports event, it was a social event.”¹¹⁷

Most people within black baseball credited Carter for turning the Grays into Washington’s team. Posey, who marveled at the number of local white daily papers that covered the Grays-Monarchs game, wrote: “The game was advertised better than any in the Grays’ history.”¹¹⁸ The day after the game, Newark Eagles owner Effa Manley sent Carter a handwritten note:

Posey called and told me about the record crowd at Washington last night. I am writing to tell you how happy I am that you had a part in it. I am a great believer in that saying, “You get back out of

The Grays proved two things during the Monarchs' return trip to Washington: (1) Washington was a better black baseball town than Pittsburgh, and (2) the Grays, to date, had the Monarchs' number. On August 13 at Griffith Stadium, the Grays defeated the Monarchs, 3–2, in twelve innings before 20,084 fans. The Monarchs continued to ignore the advice of Negro National League teams that the key to beating the Grays was a good left-handed pitcher. The best pitcher in black baseball was a right-hander, and he wanted revenge. Paige had pitched sixteen innings against the Grays with nothing to show for his efforts. This time he pitched all twelve innings. The result, however, was the same.¹²⁸

Paige struck out twelve Grays and allowed only seven hits during those twelve innings. But with the Monarchs ahead 2–1 going into the bottom of the ninth, Paige couldn't hold the lead. Jerry Benjamin, after whiffing at two Paige fastballs, drove a change-up into center field for a single. Benjamin stole second and advanced to third on Howard Easterling's fly ball. Gibson stepped to the plate. Although he had not gotten a hit off Paige all season, the entire Monarchs infield deliberated whether Paige should pitch to the mighty slugger. That's how much they respected him as a hitter. Paige pitched to Gibson, who nearly ended the game with one swing, a 450-foot shot to left field, but foul. Gibson walked. Buck Leonard marked his return to the Grays from a broken hand with a clutch hit. Batting behind Gibson, Leonard singled to right field to score Benjamin and tie the game, 2–2. Leonard, who claimed years later never to have gotten a hit against Paige, had done just that to send the game into extra innings.¹²⁹

The Grays won the game in the twelfth, once again thanks to the less-heralded section of their batting order. Vic Harris reached base on an infield hit and advanced to second on Chester Williams's groundout. Paige intentionally walked Ray Brown, who had relieved starter Roy Welmaker after eight innings. Dave Whatley then singled off Paige to score Harris and to give the Grays another victory over the Monarchs.¹³⁰

During four games against the Monarchs in 1942 (including the preseason exhibition in New Orleans), the Grays had defeated the Monarchs four times—three times in extra innings, twice before

more than twenty thousand fans at Griffith Stadium. “Every time I saw Satchel Paige, the Grays knocked him all over the place,” *Afro* photographer Bill Scott recalled. “Beat his brains out! The only time I really saw him tame a baseball team was when Dizzy Dean brought some barnstormers here with Cecil Travis, who played for the Senators. I was out there! Satchel Paige even won, I think.”¹³¹

Scott’s memory may have been selective. The Grays never completely mastered Paige. But the image that stuck in the minds of most of Griffith Stadium’s black baseball fans was of Paige, the hard-luck loser, and the Grays, the victors. After the Monarchs lost for the second time at Griffith Stadium, the Grays edged the Baltimore Elite Giants for the Grays’ fifth Negro National League title in six years. The Monarchs also won their fifth Negro American League title in six years. The two teams met again in the 1942 Negro World Series—Paige’s much-needed vehicle for revenge.

The World Series was more like a postseason barnstorming tour than an annual Fall Classic. It depended on the willingness of the two best teams in each league and on the availability of major league ballparks. It usually lasted more than seven games. Because few Negro League teams owned their own ballparks, the teams traversed the country playing a series of exhibition and actual World Series games in major and minor league ballparks.¹³² Some of the games counted; some didn’t. So when the Monarchs crow about their triumphs over the Grays in the 1942 World Series, it must be placed in the proper context.

The 1942 World Series reinforced that Griffith Stadium had become the Grays’ most important venue, their home ballpark above all home parks, their principal moneymaker. Black Washington had become so enraptured with the Grays that, beginning with an August 7 game against the Baltimore Elite Giants at Bugle Field, the *Afro* sponsored live radio broadcasts of the Grays games on WWDC 1450.¹³³ The *Afro* also sponsored the radio broadcast of the second Grays-Monarchs clash.¹³⁴ Before Game 1 of the World Series, local businesses, from the Logan Hotel at Thirteenth Street and Logan Circle to the Pig N’ Pit Bar B-Q on Fourteenth, sponsored a half-page advertisement in the *Afro* adorned with a large photo of Gibson batting and a headline that said, “Go Get ’Em, Grays.”¹³⁵

On September 8, twenty-five thousand fans braved rainy, humid weather for Game 1 of the World Series and the final Grays-Monarchs matchup of 1942 at Griffith Stadium. Paige retired the first ten Grays. With the game scoreless in the fourth inning, Bankhead and Easterling rapped back-to-back singles. Gibson, still hitless against Paige all season, came to the plate. He launched a fast-ball 420 feet to left-center field.¹³⁶ “By the sound of the crack, it was the usual Josh Gibson home run,” O’Neil wrote. “I can still see the ball streaking across the dark blue sky.”¹³⁷ O’Neil recognized the sound because he had heard it come from the bat of only one other man, Babe Ruth, whom O’Neil had seen play when the Monarchs’ first baseman was just a boy. The first time O’Neil had heard that sound during batting practice at Griffith Stadium, he “ran down to the dugout in just my pants and my sweat shirt to see who was hitting that ball. And it was Josh Gibson. I thought, my land, that’s a powerful man.”¹³⁸ But on the night of September 8, O’Neil’s eyes and ears fooled him. Griffith Stadium’s left-center-field wall was more than 420 feet from home plate. Monarchs center fielder Willard Brown caught the ball on the warning track.

Gibson’s sure home run that turned into a long out stunned the Grays into submission. From that point, besides a walk to Vic Harris, no Grays hitter reached base. The Monarchs poured on eight runs against Grays starter Roy Welmaker, whose teammates committed six errors behind him. Paige had departed with the Monarchs leading 1–0 after six innings; Jack Matchett finished off the Grays. With the Monarchs’ 8–0 victory over the Grays, a 1–0 lead in the World Series, and another 0-for-3 day from Gibson, the 1942 Negro League World Series began and ended for the Grays that night at Griffith Stadium. After the game, Gibson sat in the locker room looking “forlorn and dejected,” his pinstriped uniform partially unbuttoned, his pants rolled up to his knees, his stirrups pushed down to his ankles, and his hat in his hands.¹³⁹

Paige’s revenge and Gibson’s humiliation was just beginning. The next game, in Pittsburgh, Paige humbled Gibson for eternity. With the Grays trailing 8–4, Paige struck out the mighty slugger with the bases loaded on three-straight pitches. This Paige-Gibson confrontation is probably the most memorable story among Negro

Paige, the Monarchs relied on Hilton Smith (another Hall of Famer), Jack Matchett (who was particularly effective against the Grays during the World Series), Booker McDaniels, Jim LaMarque, and future major leaguer Connie Johnson. “They had the best pitching staff I ever saw,” Leonard wrote. “They just mostly had ordinary players other than the pitchers.”¹⁴¹

The Monarchs’ most extraordinary pitcher, Paige, according to Paige’s good friend Buck O’Neil, had gotten inside the heads of the Grays before the first World Series game at Griffith Stadium. Paige told Grays shortstop Chester Williams that Monarchs owner J. L. Wilkinson would be giving his players all the profits from the World Series. An incredulous Williams informed his Grays teammates, who knew that Posey wouldn’t do the same for them. O’Neil wasn’t implying that the Grays threw the 1942 Negro League World Series, but Paige had given them something extra to think about besides winning. “These guys, they were stirred up,” O’Neil recalled. “They were only getting a percentage of the money. That upset them. We had more to play for than they had to play for.” And, according to O’Neil, Wilkinson actually handed over all the proceeds to his players.¹⁴²

After watching Game 2 in Pittsburgh, Grays public relations director John Clark concluded that the Monarchs played harder than the Grays during the 1942 World Series. “The Monarchs outplayed, out-hustled and outgamed the Grays in every inning,” Clark wrote Art Carter. “To my mind, the Grays showed a very indifferent spirit, in contrast to the Monarchs who played as if something was at stake.”¹⁴³

The most credible explanation is that the Grays were simply exhausted. They relied on a much older nucleus than the Monarchs did.¹⁴⁴ Leonard, Gibson, Vic Harris, Jud Wilson, Chester Williams, Jerry Benjamin, Ray Brown, and Sam Bankhead had been playing in the Negro Leagues since the mid-1930s. The Grays’ merciless travel schedule had taken its toll. Injuries and defections mounted as the season wore on—with Bankhead breaking his arm before the first World Series game in New York, Partlow pitching with boils under his arm, infielder Jud Wilson injuring his heel before the World Series, outfielder Dave Whatley refusing to play because of a charley horse and then heading home because of a sore shoulder, infielders

Matthew Carlisle and Jelly Jackson leaving the team for lucrative defense jobs, and third baseman Howard Easterling heading home to Cincinnati on September 16 after being called for army service.¹⁴⁵

The Grays' two best players, Leonard and Gibson, bore the brunt of the strain. Financially, they made out OK. Before the season had begun, they used the salaries offered to them by the Mexican League as negotiating leverage. Posey doubled Leonard's monthly salary (from five hundred to one thousand dollars) as well as Gibson's (from six hundred to twelve hundred dollars).¹⁴⁶ Although their salaries paled in comparison to those of Paige or major league stars, Leonard and Gibson were the two highest-paid position players in the Negro Leagues. Their problems were medical rather than financial.

Injuries slowed Leonard all season. A bad knee kept him out of the lineup for a few weeks in May, including the game against Dean's All-Stars. Ten days after he returned on June 18 against the Monarchs, he broke his left hand sliding into second base against the Newark Eagles. The hand injury kept him out of action for nearly two months.

Leonard's body broke down after years of enduring the Grays' cross-country travel schedule, bus rides from Pittsburgh to Washington and then back to Pittsburgh, and 150 to 200 games a year. He had labored for the Grays for a longer uninterrupted stretch than any other member of the team.¹⁴⁷ He was the Grays' captain, their iron man. His devotion to the Grays, however, finally caught up with him. For the first time since 1936, he missed the annual East-West All-Star Game. In early July, while Leonard was recuperating from his hand injury in Rocky Mount, Ric Roberts wrote: "Whatever Became Of—The batting eye of Buck Leonard who, in other years, was always a .400 hitter with a penchant for right-field home runs?"¹⁴⁸ Playing in only eight of fifteen games at Griffith Stadium that season, Leonard finished with a .217 average and two RBI.¹⁴⁹ His league numbers weren't much better: ten of twenty-one games, .233 average, and six RBI.¹⁵⁰

These statistics fail to capture Leonard's season: the Griffith Stadium numbers exclude numerous games against white semipro teams, and the league numbers exclude games against both semipro

teams and Negro American League teams such as the Monarchs. Neither figure conveys the importance of Leonard's game-tying, ninth-inning single off Paige August 13 at Griffith Stadium. But for the first time since Leonard's rookie season with the Grays, Posey left Leonard off his year-end All-American Team. In selecting Newark Eagles infielder Lennie Pearson over Monarchs first baseman Buck O'Neil as his All-Star first baseman, Posey wrote of Leonard: "We think Buck Leonard is the best Negro first baseman of all time, but Buck was out of almost 50 games in 1942."¹⁵¹ In 1942, Leonard played like the 4-F he was.

Leonard's off-season employment in 1942 couldn't have been worse for a thirty-five-year-old ballplayer with a bad back and aching knees. The draft board forced him to return to work at the railroad station, loading and unloading boxcars for the Railway Express and Southern Express Company. He worked the night shift. The North Carolina winter was cold and wet, and the heavy lifting hurt his back. "That was hard work and I would rather have been playing baseball," he wrote, "but with us being in the war, things were different."¹⁵²

As bad as things were for Leonard in 1942, things looked worse for Gibson. On the surface, everything appeared to be fine. In ten games at Griffith Stadium, he batted .297 with one home run and ten RBI.¹⁵³ And in nineteen league games, he fared slightly better: .311 (19 for 61) with a team-leading four home runs and sixteen RBI.¹⁵⁴ He had two hits and an RBI in the East-West Game, and he made Posey's All-American Team.¹⁵⁵

Behind the numbers and the accolades, however, black baseball's most feared hitter suffered through a horrific season. In 1942, Gibson arrived at spring training in Raleigh, North Carolina, overweight—
not a good sign for someone with knees bad enough to keep him out of the military.¹⁵⁶ His futility against Paige was a metaphor for his misfortune. He failed to get a hit off Paige all season.¹⁵⁷ After Paige intentionally walked Easterling to strike him out July 21 at Forbes Field, Gibson went into a tailspin. The nadir of Gibson's season was the second World Series game, when he struck out with the bases loaded against Paige. After the first World Series game at Griffith Sta-

dium, an *Afro* photographer captured the normally happy-go-lucky Gibson looking eerily sad.

Gibson showed signs of fatigue during the second half of the season. In August 1942, Posey answered Gibson's critics that the slugger had lost his home-run power of years past. Posey wrote that Gibson had injured himself sliding into a base, making it difficult for him to swing the bat or to reach low balls behind the plate. Against the advice of doctors and Grays management, Gibson insisted on playing through his injury. "We would like to see Josh taking his natural cut at the ball each time at bat or stay out of the game until he can do justice to his vocation," Posey wrote.¹⁵⁸ As the World Series indicated, however, Gibson's batting stroke never came around. The big catcher did not heed the advice of his doctors. During the final game in Philadelphia, he collapsed in the dugout and, after the third inning, mercifully ended his season.¹⁵⁹

Gibson's body was the least of his problems compared with those inside his head. On New Year's Day in 1943, his whole world came crashing down. The newspapers reported that he had suffered a nervous breakdown. His sister, Anne Gibson Mahaffey, claimed that he suffered an alcohol-induced seizure and lapsed into a coma. She also claimed that doctors diagnosed a brain tumor but that he refused to allow them to operate. Medical records do not support the family's story.¹⁶⁰ After his ten-day stay at Pittsburgh's St. Francis Hospital, the black press continued to report that he had suffered a nervous breakdown.¹⁶¹ Posey reported that Gibson was "ailing" during the 1942 season and failed to heed the advice of doctors to rest after the World Series. Gibson, according to Posey, had stopped by the Grays' Pittsburgh offices a few weeks later and appeared to be fully recovered.¹⁶² For the rest of his life, however, Gibson battled his inner demons while continuing to perform at a high level on the field.

Despite Leonard's and Gibson's maladies, 1942 was an unmitigated success for the Grays. The Monarchs may have won the World Series, but Posey probably made more money than any other Negro League owner that year. "It was the best financial season ever enjoyed by Negro baseball as a whole," wrote Posey, adding that the Grays, Monarchs, and Clowns "profited most."¹⁶³ The source of Posey's windfall: Griffith Stadium.



Satchel Paige gets a rubdown from his personal trainer, Frank “Jewbaby” Floyd. “I don’t know why they called him ‘Jewbaby,’ because he was as black as I am,” Buck O’Neil told a recent audience of World War II veterans in Washington. (AP/WORLDWIDE)



Paige shows off one of his many windups at Griffith Stadium. Paige broke many barriers in the major leagues—he was the first black pitcher in the World Series with the Indians in 1948 and the oldest performer in major league history, pitching three innings of scoreless ball at age fifty-nine in 1965 with the Philadelphia Athletics. (ART CARTER PAPERS, MOORLAND-SPINGARN RESEARCH CENTER, HOWARD UNIVERSITY)

ington Senators team and more home runs over the left- and center-field walls than the entire American League.³

Keep in mind the daunting task of hitting a ball over the outfield walls at Griffith Stadium. Its faraway fences made it the toughest home-run park in the American League—405 feet down the left-field line, 421 to straightaway center, and 320 to right. The difficulty lay with the stadium's deep power alleys. Left-center field went from 383 feet to 409. Right-center field went from 378 to 457 (the deepest corner resulted from the right angle around five row houses and the Tree) to 420, backed by a thirty-foot-high wall with a forty-one-foot-high scoreboard in deep center.⁴ For a straightaway hitter such as Gibson—who rarely pulled the ball and preferred to keep it in the center of the diamond—hitting a home run over the left- and center-field walls was like blasting a ball out of the Grand Canyon.⁵

Wartime travel restrictions gave Gibson more opportunities to hit home runs at Griffith Stadium than ever before. In 1943, the Office of Price Administration rationed gasoline and banned “pleasure driving.” In March, Posey asked Joseph B. Eastland, the director of the Office of Defense Transportation, to allow Negro League teams to continue to use their buses. Posey received an assist from Griffith, who arranged and even agreed to attend the meeting with Eastland. The *Pittsburgh Courier* reported: “Griffith’s participating in the meeting marks the first time in history that an owner of a major league team has ever injected himself officially into the operations of organized Negro baseball.”⁶ Although it is unclear whether Griffith actually participated, Eastland denied Posey’s request.⁷ The Grays leased their new bus to the government and traveled almost exclusively by rail.

154 Reliance on train travel forced Negro League teams to concentrate their games in railroad-accessible cities with major league ballparks—for the Grays, that ballpark was Griffith Stadium. John L. Clark, the team’s Pittsburgh public relations arm, viewed Griffith Stadium as the Grays’ primary advantage in 1943:

The Grays get credit for stringing along with Griffith Stadium and made it pay last year. Washington Potomacs, Pittsburgh Crawfords

ing home-run hitter in 1943, Stan Spence, hit only two of his twelve homers in Washington.¹⁸ Of the team's next leading home-run hitters, "Indian" Bob Johnson hit only two of his career-low seven home runs at Griffith Stadium, and Mickey Vernon managed only one.¹⁹ As left-handed hitters, Spence and Vernon had the advantage of hitting to right field.²⁰ With the right-field fence listed as 328 feet from home plate (it was actually only 320 feet), Vernon and Spence merely poked the ball over the thirty-foot-high wall.

Gibson, by contrast, was a right-handed batter who smashed his homers to left and center. The Senators often heard about Gibson's exploits upon their return home. "When we came in from a road trip, some of the fellas in the clubhouse talked about the black teams that had played there the previous weekend," Vernon recalled. "They would talk about some ball Josh Gibson had hit high up in the bleachers."²¹

Gibson clouted more home runs over Griffith Stadium's left-field and center-field walls in 1943 than the entire American League. He launched ten home runs in forty games and roughly 160 at-bats. In seventy-six games and roughly 5,400 at-bats, two hundred-plus American Leaguers managed only nine over the same two fences. Of the twenty-three Griffith Stadium home runs by American Leaguers in 1943, four of them landed inside the park (a likely occurrence with a center-field corner extending to 457 feet) and ten of them over the 320-foot right-field fence.²² That leaves only nine American League home runs over the left-field and center-field walls.

Gibson's success compared to the American League defies a single explanation. As a whole, American League home runs plummeted during the war years. American Leaguers hit nearly nine hundred home runs in 1940 but only about half as many during each of the 1943, 1944, and 1945 seasons.²³ Many players attributed the home-run drought to the quality of the ball. With rubber in short supply in 1943, Spalding replaced the ball's rubber core with balata, a substance from the milk of tropical trees used to make the cover of golf balls. The players complained that the balata baseballs didn't go anywhere.²⁴ The Senators ran out of the balata balls on May 2 and began using their old supply of rubber core balls from 1942. That

foot shot into the left-field bleachers broke an 11–11 tenth-inning tie and gave the Grays a 13–11 victory.⁵⁴ It was his final Griffith Stadium homer of the season—either his tenth or eleventh depending on your view.

The Grays finished with a 32–6 record at Griffith Stadium in 1943.⁵⁵ With Gibson, Leonard, and Cool Papa Bell on the same team, the 1943 Grays featured three future Hall of Famers. Posey placed four members of the Grays on his year-end All-American Team: Gibson, Leonard, third baseman Howard Easterling, and center fielder Jerry Benjamin. Offensively, the Grays pummeled the opposition. Right-hander John Wright (26–4) and left-hander Edsall Walker (18–5) emerged as the Grays' top two pitchers that season, with Ernest "Spoon" Carter and Ray Brown also carrying major portions of the load. "Look it, I would have paid to pitch for that team," recalled Walker, who rejoined the Grays in 1943 after a season of defense work and part-time duty with the Philadelphia Stars. "It was a cinch."⁵⁶

The war forced the Grays to make personnel changes. Vic Harris (who had turned over the managerial reins to Candy Jim Taylor), infielder Matthew "Lick" Carlisle, and Brown preferred to hold onto lucrative, year-round defense jobs and play for the Grays on week-ends. Pitcher Roy Partlow spent most of the season in the Mexican League. The Grays lost outfielder David Whatley and pitcher Roy Welmaker to the draft. To replace Whatley, the Grays signed the fastest man in the history of the Negro Leagues, 40-year-old James "Cool Papa" Bell. Bell led off, played left field, and proved he could still hit.

162 The players benefited from wartime travel restrictions. The Grays' owners no longer could shuttle them back and forth between Pittsburgh and Washington on the same day. The lack of constant travel was easier on older players, such as Leonard and Bell. It also gave them all time to enjoy Black Washington's sights and sounds. Leonard relished Howard Theater performances by comedian Dewey "Pigmeat" Markham. "If Pigmeat were on the stage, he didn't have to say anything," Lena Cox, Leonard's sister who lived in Washington, recalled. "Buck would just crack up if Pigmeat walked out there."⁵⁷

Gibson (who finished the day 4 for 4) by walking him intentionally.⁶³ For Paige, walking other players to get to Gibson was a thing of the past. So were the Grays' troubles in the World Series. After capturing another Negro National League title, the Grays defeated the Birmingham Black Barons in the Negro League World Series four games to three. The World Series once again, however, turned into a farce, with Chicago American Giants catcher Ted "Double Duty" Radcliffe and other Negro American League players joining the Black Barons and meager crowds forcing the cancellation of the final exhibition game in New Orleans.⁶⁴

Around this time, Gibson began receiving the national media attention traditionally reserved for Paige. In July 1942, *Sport* magazine glowingly profiled Gibson and dubbed him a "\$200,000 catcher."⁶⁵ The following year, *Sport* featured the entire Grays team along with two pages of photographs, including a full-page close-up of Gibson in his catching gear. The magazine also included an image of Gibson surrounded by a group of admiring black children above a caption describing him as the "chocolate-skinned Babe Ruth."⁶⁶ In July 1943, *Time* magazine ran a one-page story on Gibson with a picture under the headline, "Josh the Basher." The article referred to Paige as "famed but fading."⁶⁷

*White Sox pitcher Eddie Smith homered to left-center field off Senators pitcher Bill LeFebvre on September 26. Gibson 10 (or 11), AL 9.*⁶⁸

164 The American League couldn't even catch up to Gibson after his season at Griffith Stadium had ended. He hit ten home runs to left and center (eleven including the right-center-field clock shot), compared with nine by American Leaguers over the same two walls, and nine by the Senators over any wall and inside the park. Carter, who first wrote about Gibson's dominance over the American League, dubbed Gibson "the uncrowned Home Run King of Baseball." Under the headline "Joltin' Josh Helps Grays hit the Jackpot," Carter posited that Gibson was the biggest reason for the Grays' new attendance record at Griffith Stadium. Carter went easy on the Old Fox's refusal to sign Gibson: "Clark Griffith, white haired owner of the Washington Senators, once called Gibson a \$250,000 catcher and lamented the fact that his skin was black—an accident of birth that

denies him the privilege of making the heavy ‘sugar’ paid major league players.”⁶⁹ Griffith pumped up Gibson as a \$250,000 ballplayer because Gibson made Griffith at least that much money at Griffith Stadium over the years. Grays’ games had become so lucrative for Griffith by 1943 that he rescheduled one of the Senators’ regular-season games so that the Grays could play a World Series game in his ballpark.⁷⁰

Griffith attended almost every one of the Grays’ home games. They piqued his curiosity because of the tremendous talent lurking in his ballpark when the Senators were out of town. Not everyone on the Grays was capable of playing in the major leagues. The play of Gibson and Leonard, however, raised Griffith’s bushy eyebrows.

Sometime during the 1942 or 1943 season, Griffith’s curiosity got the best of him. After one of the Grays’ doubleheaders in his ballpark, he sent a message down to the locker room. Leonard and Gibson should report to Griffith’s office immediately.

“Sam Lacey [sic] and Ric Roberts and a lot of the other fellows have been talking about getting you fellows on the Senators’ team,” Griffith told the two black superstars. “Well let me tell you something: If we get you boys, we’re going to get the best ones. It’s going to break up your league. Now what do you all think of that?”

“Well, we haven’t given it much thought,” they replied. “We’d be happy to play in the major leagues and believe that we could make the major leagues, but so far as clamoring for it, we’ll let somebody else do that.”

“Well, I just wanted to see how you fellows felt about it,” Griffith said.

“Well if we were given the chance, we’d play all right, try to make it,” they responded. “And I believe we could make it.”⁷¹

Relaying the account of that meeting to John Holway, Leonard recalled:

I always thought the Senators might be the first to take a Negro, because Washington was about half Negro then. I figured if half the city boycotted the games, the other half would come. But Griffith was always looking for Cuban ballplayers. He had Joe Cambria down

there scouting for him. I guess he didn't have to pay them much money—but he wouldn't have had to pay us much either.⁷²

The integration of professional baseball surfaced as a hot topic during the 1942 season. In March, a UCLA football star named Jackie Robinson and Nate Moreland, a former Baltimore Elite Giants and Mexican League pitcher, showed up at the Chicago White Sox's spring training facilities in Pasadena, California (Robinson and Moreland's hometown). The two players requested a tryout. The request was denied.⁷³

A few months later, Brooklyn Dodgers manager Leo Durocher made national headlines by declaring that he would field black players if the owners and the commissioner would let him. Judge Landis, however, refused to play the fall guy. "There is no rule or understanding, 'subterranean' or otherwise, barring Negroes from participating in major league baseball," Landis declared in July 1942.⁷⁴ Larry MacPhail, then president of the Dodgers, responded that Landis's statement was "100 per cent hypocrisy" and that a tacit bar prevented blacks from playing in the majors.⁷⁵

Durocher's comments and Landis's response ignited calls for integration in Washington. *Washington Times-Herald* columnist Vincent X. Flaherty, no racial liberal himself, tried to appeal to Griffith in language that the Old Fox could understand—dollars and cents. "Some day the colored star will make his way in either the National or American league. When? That's something else Judge Landis might answer," Flaherty wrote. "When it happens, you can look for greatly increased attendance figures from all fronts. Why not start it off by giving Josh Gibson the first try?"⁷⁶

166 Griffith attempted to mollify the Senators' black fans while protecting his business interests in the Grays. "Colored people should develop their own big league baseball and challenge the best of the white major leagues," Griffith advised. "I am sure the latter would be willing to allow their best teams to meet such an accredited colored nine.

"Why take a few stars like Satchel Paige and Josh Gibson away and put them in with the whites and ruin organized colored baseball? No,

build up your leagues for the benefit of all colored ball players instead of just a few.”⁷⁷

Grays manager Vic Harris echoed Griffith’s prescription. “If they take our best boys,” Harris said, “we will be but a hollow shell of what we are today. No, let us build up our own league and, as Clark Griffith said, we can then challenge the best white team in the majors and play them.”⁷⁸ As the manager of the nation’s best black baseball team in 1942, Harris was protecting his livelihood. Several of Harris’s players, notably Jud Wilson, Ray Brown, Dave Whatley, and Jerry Benjamin, expressed skepticism that any progress would be made in the near future.⁷⁹ Gibson, however, remained optimistic: “Dozens of us would make the majors if given the opportunity to play under the same circumstances as whites.”⁸⁰

Paige’s reaction to all of this talk about integration caused a firestorm. On the eve of black baseball’s 1942 East-West Game, Paige told an Associated Press reporter in Albany, New York, that he would prefer to stay in the Negro Leagues rather than sacrifice his thirty-seven thousand dollar yearly salary. Paige refused to face “unharmonious other problems” playing in the majors. He said: “All the nice statements in the world from both sides aren’t going to knock out Jim Crow.”⁸¹

Paige publicly denied the story. Arriving at the East-West Game in the second inning, he entered the game in the seventh. Before taking the mound, he strode into the dugout and grabbed the public-address microphone. Players from both dugouts stood up and listened. Paige said he favored integration, but that it “might be a good idea to put a complete Negro team in the majors.”⁸² The speech took Paige off his game. He intentionally walked Gibson twice and allowed three earned runs as the East won 5–2 before 45,179 paying customers.⁸³ The black press leveled its criticism not at Paige’s pitching performance but at his thoughts on integration.

Even in exile, Lacy tossed verbal grenades at Paige. As the assistant national editor for the *Chicago Defender*, Lacy lacked a sports column. So Lacy’s closest friend among the white daily press corps, Bob Considine, turned over his entire *Washington Post* column to Lacy, who wrote:

the 1942 season, in which Griffith received 20 percent of the Grays' gate receipts on the 127,690 fans plus a fee for using his new lights, he probably made at least sixty thousand dollars. In 1943, given that the Grays' attendance at Griffith Stadium eclipsed 225,000, his take increased to one hundred thousand dollars. The revenue from Grays games kept Griffith from signing Gibson or Leonard. In making his primary concern his profits from black baseball, Griffith preferred that the Thunder Twins stayed in their own league. "Clark Griffith said our league wasn't organized," Leonard liked to say. "We were organized, but we weren't recognized."⁸⁶

During the 1943 season, pressure on Griffith to integrate intensified as World War II accelerated the fight for racial equality in the nation's capital. Unlike the race riots in 1943 that exploded in Detroit, however, black Washingtonians mobilized for social change through nonviolent protest. In April 1943, a group of Howard University students led by spokeswoman Pauli Murray protested two whites-only restaurants, the Little Palace Lunch at Fourteenth and U Streets and Fish and Chips Restaurant in the 2400 block of Georgia Avenue. The students picketed for four days before the restaurants changed their policies. The protesters marched with banners that read: "Our boys and our brothers are fighting for you — why can't we eat here?"⁸⁷

Perhaps the most tragic local symbol of the war was the death of Wilmeth Sidat-Singh. Syracuse's "Hindu" halfback whom Lacy had exposed in 1937 as an American-born black was a second lieutenant in the famous all-black flying force known as the Tuskegee Airmen. In May 1943, Sidat-Singh's plane caught fire during a routine flying mission and crashed into Lake Huron. Sidat-Singh drowned after ejecting from his plane.⁸⁸

Amid wartime attention about segregation and discrimination, the black press exhorted black Washingtonians to abandon the Senators in favor of the Grays by appealing to their racial pride. In March 1943, Carter encouraged the *Afro's* readers to boycott major league baseball over the integration issue. "If John Q. Fan says he wants to see colored players on the major league teams," Carter wrote, "and says it by word and deed, the stubborn owners would soon let down



Josh Gibson looks skyward at Griffith Stadium. Gibson's major weakness defensively, particularly in his later years, was catching pop-ups. Some people, including Sam Lacy, believed that Gibson was only an average defensive catcher. (ROBERT H. McNEILL)

Josh Gibson signs a baseball for Marva Louis, the wife of heavyweight champion Joe Louis, before the 1944 East-West All-Star Game in Chicago. (ART CARTER PAPERS, MOORLAND-SPINGARN RESEARCH CENTER, HOWARD UNIVERSITY)



A smiling Josh Gibson swings away at Griffith Stadium. When Gibson returned to the Grays in 1937, he “brought new life into everybody,” according to Leonard. (ROBERT H. MCNEILL)



Jackie Robinson spent one unhappy season in the Negro Leagues with the Kansas City Monarchs in 1945, making two appearances at Griffith Stadium. In his second season with the Dodgers, Robinson wrote an article for *Ebony* magazine blasting the organization and conditions in the Negro Leagues.

(LIBRARY OF CONGRESS)

the problems which have prevented major league baseball's serious consideration of the plea.⁷

With Sengstacke in particular, Lacy felt a profound sense of betrayal.⁸ Sengstacke represented Lacy's people, his profession, and his newspaper. As a result of the December 3 debacle, Lacy left the *Defender*.

Judge Landis also hijacked the December 3 meeting. First, the commissioner repeated his blather about there being no legal impediment to blacks playing in the major leagues. Second, he instructed the owners not to ask the delegation any questions. Finally, he invited a surprise speaker of his own: black actor/athlete Paul Robeson.

"I brought Paul here because you all know him," Landis told the owners. "You all know that he is a great man in public life, a great American."⁹

An All-America football player at Rutgers who had played on integrated professional football teams with the Akron Pros and Milwaukee Badgers during the early 1920s, a Columbia Law School graduate, and a stage star in London and on Broadway, Robeson was one of black America's greatest renaissance men. He appeared at the December 3 meeting sporting a beard fresh from his lead role in the Broadway production of *Othello*. For nearly twenty minutes, Robeson gave an impromptu performance about why the owners should hire black players based on examples from Robeson's own integrated life experiences. "They told me I would never be able to play *Othello* in America," Robeson said. "It has been my greatest success."¹⁰ Neither Robeson's theatrics nor his facial hair put off the owners. In fact, they "broke into loud and sustained applause" after he had finished speaking.¹¹

But Robeson's mere presence discredited the entire delegation. As Lacy wrote in the same article in which he chastised the black publishers:

While I have the utmost respect for Robeson, a fine artist, a great actor, and every bit a man, I feel he is definitely out of place in this campaign. The reason: Paul is generally regarded as having Com-

munistic leanings. And the major league club owners are almost fanatical in their dislike for Communism. His presence on the occasion under discussion, and at the instance of Landis, reminds me of a cartoon I once saw of a man extending his right hand in a gesture of friendship while clenching a long knife in a left hand concealed behind his back.

In other words, by this clever little maneuver, Landis told the gullible colored folks, "Here's how I feel. This is your chance to put it squarely up to the men who control the purse-strings of the game. I'm with you, now go to it."

But on the other hand, he said to his owners, "Use your own judgment in this matter, but remember here's a Communistic influence along with these people."¹²

Indeed, Griffith and Mack, according to the black press, had repeatedly described integration as "a Communistic plot to overthrow baseball—to create confusion between the races and, finally, to overthrow the government."¹³ The sports staff of the Communist *Daily Worker* had been extremely active in the fight to integrate baseball. After Robeson spoke, it didn't matter what the three publishers said. The delegation was just a group of Communist agitators.

As instructed by Landis, after Robeson and the publishers had finished speaking, none of the owners asked any questions. Branch Rickey, president and general manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, remained silent during the entire presentation. A rabid anti-Communist, Rickey scratched out several notes to himself, one of which said: "Robeson a Communist?"¹⁴

180 "Well, I guess that's all gentlemen," Landis said as he sent Robeson and the black newspapermen on their way.¹⁵ Then, without any further discussion, the commissioner moved on to the next item on the meeting's agenda.¹⁶ After the meeting adjourned, Landis publicly placed the onus of integration on the owners: "Each club is entitled to employ Negroes to any and all extents it desires. The matter is one solely for each club to decide without any restrictions whatsoever."¹⁷

Griffith reiterated his position on the front page of the *Baltimore Afro-American*: "My opinion now is the same as it was then, and

that is that; colored players should have their own league and white players have theirs.”¹⁸

The former “red-eyed radical,” who as a player had jumped the National League and founded the American League, had turned into an “arch-conservative.”¹⁹ As an owner whose livelihood depended solely on his ball club, Griffith opposed all of the game’s latest innovations: farm systems, night baseball (at least initially), and selling beer inside the park. He was not a virulent racist who, like his former manager Cap Anson, seemed to hate all black people and objected to their presence in the major leagues out of sheer prejudice. Griffith simply clung to all of baseball’s traditions, and one of those traditions happened to be separate black and white professional leagues.

Those traditions included profiting from black baseball. Griffith wasn’t about to give up his annual windfall from renting Griffith Stadium to the Grays in order to sign a black player. Indeed, during the next few years, he would sign almost anyone *but* a Negro, from racist Yankee outfielder Jake Powell to New York Sanitation Department worker Ed Boland to one-legged pitcher Bert Shepard.

Griffith’s steadfast commitment to segregation after the December 3 owners meeting prompted a declaration of war from Lacy. He left the *Defender* and returned to Washington and the *Afro-American* newspapers.²⁰ With editions in Baltimore, Washington, Philadelphia, Richmond, and Newark, the Baltimore-based *Afro* was the nation’s second-largest black newspaper. Its circulation ranked behind only that of the *Pittsburgh Courier* and ahead of those of the *Defender*, *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, and *Amsterdam News*.²¹ These papers—

known as the “Big Five”—achieved the status of national newspapers, reaching far beyond their own cities by appealing to many black communities that experienced common hardships and yearned for information about black colleges, churches, politicians, entertainers, and sports figures that white daily newspapers typically ignored.

The *Afro*, like many of the nation’s largest black weeklies, was a family-owned, black-run operation. In 1892, John H. Murphy Sr., a

whitewasher and Sunday school superintendent, purchased a church newspaper known as the *Afro-American* for two hundred dollars at an auction. Murphy, then fifty-two, had borrowed the money from his wife; his idea was to use the newspaper to unite the state of Maryland's Sunday schools. In 1907, he merged the *Afro-American* with another Sunday school paper, and for a time the paper became known as the *Afro-American Ledger*.²² Murphy, who died in 1922, left the paper with a vision: "The *Afro-American* must become a bi-weekly, then a tri-weekly, and eventually, when advertising warrants, a daily."²³

Murphy's son, Carl, came the closest to turning that vision into a reality. A small, quiet man who didn't drink, Dr. Carl—as the *Afro* staffers referred to him—began his career as a German scholar. He turned out to be a shrewd businessman, increasing the paper's circulation from 8,300 in 1917, to 38,377 in 1930, and to 79,352 in 1938.²⁴ Unlike the *Pittsburgh Courier* and the *Chicago Defender*, which thrived under their respective founding editors, Robert L. Vann and Robert S. Abbott, both of whom died in 1940, the *Afro* came of age under its second-generation boss.²⁵

The *Afro's* circulation, as well as the importance of the black press, skyrocketed during World War II. During the war, more than a million people read African-American newspapers each week.²⁶ The black press, like Negro League baseball, experienced rapid wartime expansion because of the migration, urbanization, and increased literacy of the post-World War I black population.²⁷ Indeed, the Big Five accounted for 40 percent of the total circulation of the black press, which rivaled the black church as one of the leading black-run industries in America.²⁸

182 The *Afro* stood on the front lines in the fight against segregation and discrimination in the nation's capital. Carl Murphy made good on the newspaper's slogan—"Independent in all things, neutral in nothing"²⁹—by injecting the paper into numerous controversies. The *Afro* financed the first lawsuit contesting the Southern Railroad's segregation of black passengers on all trains heading south beginning in Washington, D.C.³⁰ In 1939, Murphy also helped establish the Mar-

By the way, it's Clark Griffith and Connie Mack, you know, together with one or two other "old" heads, who stand in the way of baseball's acceptance of qualified colored players.⁴⁰

Lacy exposed Joe Cambria's hunt for Latin players as focusing on light-skinned unknowns whom many Negro leaguers playing winter ball had never heard of while bypassing "can't-miss" darker-skinned prospects. "Word is that the Washington scout purposely overlooked them," Lacy wrote. "The reason: They're sundown brothers, brother."⁴¹

During the 1944 season, the Senators finished last. The team lost its budding star of a first baseman, Mickey Vernon, to military service. Several of the team's Cuban players had gone home in the middle of the season rather than face the prospect of being drafted.

Griffith was so desperate for talent that he signed Ed Boland, a thirty-six-year-old New York Sanitation Department worker. Boland, who had last appeared as an outfielder with the Philadelphia Athletics in 1935, most recently played at Griffith Stadium in 1943 with the white semipro Brooklyn Bushwicks. In that July game at Griffith Stadium, the Grays pounded Boland and the Bushwicks, 11–3. Gibson tripled and smacked a 420-foot homer to left field. Boland doubled and singled in four at-bats; he also committed an error.⁴²

As during most Grays games, Griffith likely was on hand that day. But if Griffith was so desperate for a major league outfielder, why didn't he take a chance on the Grays' fleet-footed center fielder, Jerry Benjamin? If age wasn't the issue (as it clearly wasn't with the thirty-six-year-old Boland), why didn't Griffith try the Grays' legendary outfielder, James "Cool Papa" Bell? Although forty years old, Bell had a marvelous 1943 season and could still run as fast as Benjamin or anyone else in the Negro Leagues. Or, if Griffith wanted to get the most for his money, he could have signed the Grays' ace pitcher and outfielder, Ray Brown. Playing outfield against the Bushwicks that day, Brown knocked in three runs on three hits.⁴³ Benjamin, Bell, or Brown—not to mention Gibson and Leonard—could have helped the Senators out of the American League cellar. Boland, for his part,

appeared in only nineteen games for the Senators in 1944, his lone season with the team.

That year, Lacy turned up the heat on Griffith and the Washington Senators from every conceivable angle. Exposing the team's discriminatory hiring practices was just part of his strategy to integrate the game. If the campaign to integrate the major leagues could not be won in Washington, it would be won elsewhere by other black sportswriters.

Lacy's efforts were part of a national campaign led by the black sporting press. Black sportswriters endured many of the same hardships as the black ballplayers whom they covered every week. The sportswriters could not work at white daily newspapers, they stayed in second-rate accommodations while on the road, and they suffered racial slights while covering games at major league ballparks. Although black baseball has received belated recognition from books, documentaries, and magazine articles, the legacy of black sportswriters largely remains buried in libraries of old microfilm.⁴⁴ Lacy led a cadre of black writers who influenced the Washington market during the 1940s—Lacy, Carter, and Harold Jackson at the *Afro*; Joe Sewall and Lanier "Pee Wee" Covington at the *Washington Tribune*; and Wendell Smith and Ric Roberts of the *Pittsburgh Courier*.

Roberts, who left the *Afro* in 1943 and joined the *Courier* as the paper's Washington sports correspondent, displayed the widest array of talents. A former college football star at Clark University in Atlanta, Roberts drew terrific sports cartoons, wrote accounts of Grays games as well as any of his colleagues did, and possessed an encyclopedic knowledge of black baseball. Roberts ruled the regular backroom discussions at Beltrin Barker's Esso station at Eighth and Florida Avenue, just up the street from Griffith Stadium. "If Ric didn't know it, and Ric didn't say it, it wasn't right," photographer Robert McNeill recalled.⁴⁵

Several black sportswriters lobbied hardest for the integration of baseball: Lacy, Joe Bostic of Harlem's *People's Voice*, Fay Young of the *Chicago Defender*, and Wendell Smith of the *Pittsburgh Courier*. Of

these men, only Smith could match Lacy's writing ability, his obsession with breaking down the color barrier, and his influence with white major league owners. As sports columnists at the nation's two largest black newspapers, Smith and Lacy sounded the loudest, most consistent calls for change. Just as the *Courier* ranked ahead of the *Afro* in terms of circulation, however, Smith maintained an edge over Lacy.

There are two famous sportswriters named Smith—a white one named Red, and a black one named Wendell. Wendell Smith was simply the greatest black sportswriter of his generation. “He was a better writer than I, I've always maintained that,” Lacy recalled.⁴⁶ “Wendell had that something extra,” Lacy told author Jim Reisler. “He was always thinking ahead and never quite satisfied with what he had accomplished.”⁴⁷ Smith had several advantages over Lacy: Smith grew up in an integrated environment, he was a better athlete than Lacy, and he graduated from college. Discrimination kept Smith from becoming a professional ballplayer and drove his success as a sportswriter.

Born and raised in Detroit as the son of Henry Ford's chef, Smith grew up in an all-white neighborhood and was the only black student at Southeastern High School. An all-city basketball and baseball star at Southeastern, he won an athletic scholarship to West Virginia State College and served as the team captain in both sports.⁴⁸

Smith discovered baseball's double standard while still in high school playing on an integrated American Legion baseball team. After pitching his team to a 1–0 victory, he watched as a Detroit Tigers scout signed his catcher, Mike Tresh, who went on to play in the major leagues, as well as the opposing pitcher. “I wish I could sign you, too, kid,” Wish Egan, a famous Tigers scout, told Smith. “But I can't.” Smith, recounting the incident to sportswriter Jerome Holtzman in the early 1970s, said: “That broke me up. It was then that I made the vow that I would dedicate myself and do something on behalf of the Negro ballplayers. That was one of the reasons I became a sportswriter.”⁴⁹

At West Virginia State, in addition to playing baseball and basketball, Smith served as sports editor of the school paper, the *Yellow*

Jacket, and as director of publicity for the school's athletic department. In the latter capacity, he contributed articles in the fall of 1936 to the *Pittsburgh Courier*.⁵⁰ On July 31, 1937, Smith met *Courier* editor Robert Vann in the office of sports editor Chester Washington Jr. Four days later, he wrote Vann asking for a job:

I have had the pleasure of working with your very competent sports editor, Mr. Washington. Through his advice and coaching I have learned many essential things about the field of journalism.

Although I have a little experience in this type of work, I realize that I have a great deal to learn. If given the opportunity I will work diligently to become a success.

The letter was signed, "J. Wendell Smith."⁵¹

Smith joined the *Pittsburgh Courier* as a cub reporter in the fall of 1937, nearly eleven years after Lacy had begun his career with the *Washington Tribune* and the same year as Lacy's first interview with Griffith. A year later, the *Courier* made Smith city editor and assistant sports editor, as well as giving him a sports column, "Smitty's Sport Spurts" (later known as "The Sports Beat"). In 1940, Smith replaced his mentor, Chester Washington, as the *Courier's* sports editor.⁵²

Smith's big break resulted from a survey he conducted with white major leaguers during the 1939 season. Smith was not always welcome at the Pirates' Forbes Field because he was not a member of the Baseball Writers Association of America, so he interviewed many of the out-of-town major leaguers in the lobby of Pittsburgh's Schenley Hotel. He asked them how they would feel about having black players on their teams. Of the forty National League players and all eight managers interviewed, about 75 percent favored it, 20 percent were against it, and 5 percent had no opinion.⁵³ Boston Braves manager Casey Stengel, Brooklyn Dodgers manager Leo Durocher, Pittsburgh Pirates coach Honus Wagner, and Chicago Cubs pitcher Dizzy Dean were among those who favored integration. Durocher, who raved about the abilities of Paige and Gibson, said: "I certainly would use a Negro ball player if the bosses said it was all right."⁵⁴ New York

At least initially, the *Daily Worker's* biggest ally, according to sports editor Lester Rodney, was Wendell Smith. In August 1939, Smith wrote Rodney congratulating the *Daily Worker* on its own series of interviews with major leaguers about integration.⁷² The *Courier* and the *Daily Worker* often exchanged Smith and Rodney's stories and ran them under their respective bylines.⁷³ But when the color ban eventually fell in 1947 and Smith allied himself with Dodgers president/general manager Branch Rickey, a committed anti-Communist, Smith disassociated himself from Rodney. Smith eventually wrote that the Communist Party "did more to delay the entrance of Negroes into organized baseball than any other factor."⁷⁴

Although Smith initially viewed the *Daily Worker* as a helpful ally, Lacy always saw the Communists as retarding any chance for success. Lacy never wanted anything to do with Rodney or his Communist newspaper. "He said he didn't want to get tied up with the Reds," Rodney told writer Peter Duffy. "That's his privilege. I didn't knock him for that."⁷⁵ Lacy's anti-Communist stance may have stemmed from his bitterness over Robeson's involvement at the 1943 owners meeting or simply his recognition that "the major league club owners are almost fanatical in their dislike for Communism."⁷⁶ Lacy claimed that both he and Smith didn't want Robeson speaking at that 1943 meeting. "We wanted to be completely divorced from any communistic influence," Lacy told author David Falkner.⁷⁷

During the early 1930s, several white sports columnists began calling for the integration of baseball, beginning with Westbrook Pegler, Jimmy Powers, and Heywood Broun.⁷⁸ Several others joined the brigade during the late 1930s and early 1940s. But as Smith pointed out to Jerome Holtzman, "the baseball writers, at that time, were very conservative."⁷⁹ Even the liberal white writers failed to champion the cause of the black ballplayer on a regular basis as black sports-writers such as Lacy and Smith did.

One white liberal writer rankled Lacy more than any other—legendary *Washington Post* sports columnist Shirley Povich. "If Red Smith was the all-time No. 1 sportswriter," the *Post's* former execu-

tive editor, Ben Bradlee, said, "Povich is 1-A."⁸⁰ Several decades before Bradlee and the Watergate scandal transformed the *Post* into a national newspaper, the *Post* was fourth in circulation among the city's five daily newspapers. Publisher Katharine Graham estimated that Povich's "This Morning" column "was responsible for one-third of our readership."⁸¹

The eighth of ten children, Povich grew up above his family's furniture store in the resort town of Bar Harbor, Maine. He spent his summers caddying for famous people, such as the then-owner of the *Washington Post*, Edward B. McLean. In 1924, McLean offered nineteen-year-old Povich a job as a copy boy at the *Post* for twelve dollars a week and as a weekend caddie at McLean's personal eighteen-hole golf course for another twenty dollars. McLean also paid for Povich's tuition to Georgetown Law School.⁸² By 1926, the twenty-one-year-old Povich had been named the *Post's* sports editor, a position he held on and off for the next fifty years.

From the outset, Povich stole Lacy's thunder on the integration issue. In April 1939, a little more than a year after Lacy's December 1937 conversation with Griffith, Povich wrote a column about a game between the Grays and the Newark Eagles at the Senators' spring training facility at Orlando's Tinker Field. Povich, who happened to be sitting with the Senators' Hall of Fame pitcher, Walter Johnson, described the scene:

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Curious Washington [Senators] players flocked to the game and went away with a deep respect for colored baseball. Walter Johnson sat in a box at the game, profoundly impressed with the talents of the colored players. "There," he said, "is a catcher that any big league club would like to buy for \$200,000. His name is Gibson. They call him 'Hoot' Gibson, and he can do everything. He hits the ball a mile. And he catches so easy he might as well be in a rocking chair. Throws like a rifle. Bill Dickey isn't as good a catcher. Too bad this Gibson is a colored fellow."⁸³

The comments from Johnson captured headlines in the black press.⁸⁴ The column cast Povich into the vanguard of white sportswriters promoting integration.⁸⁵ It also drew Lacy's ire.

the colored fellow will never have any real appeal; for they will just be some more baseball players.

Remind me to remind Willie Wells and Josh Gibson and Buck Leonard to learn how to stand on their eye-brows while performing their chores next year.⁹⁰

Lacy offered only these two paragraphs of observations about Povich, without direct quotes or evidence from Povich's many sports columns. At his column's outset, Lacy offered a disclaimer that the summer heat had made him "punch-drunk, irrational."⁹¹

Even in his later years, Lacy harbored tremendous enmity toward Povich. During an interview with Lacy at his northeast Washington apartment, the mere mention of Povich's name caused Lacy to erupt. Lacy simmered about one of Povich's stories from the 1940s that quoted Lacy as saying that no Negro Leaguers were ready for the majors. Lacy claimed that Povich had left off the last part of Lacy's statement, that no Negro Leaguers were ready without at least a year in the minors.⁹² Lacy bristled that Povich had not called to check the quotation. "I thought he did me a terrible injustice because at that time I had established a pretty good reputation," Lacy recalled. "My credibility had been accepted. That was a case where, in a sense, he could have destroyed it."⁹³ Povich, however, was not the only person to take that particular article by Lacy—an unusually harsh critique of the Negro League's top players in the 1945 edition of *Negro Baseball*—out of context. New York Yankees president Larry MacPhail also selectively quoted from Lacy's article to argue for separate leagues.

196 Several hours after the interview with Lacy, he called to elaborate on his problems with Povich. He railed about a 1991 article in the *Washington City Paper* claiming that while Povich was the chairman of the Washington chapter of the Baseball Writers Association of America (BBWAA) during the 1930s, he had admitted Lacy.⁹⁴ "The [BBWAA] was closed to all blacks in the 1930s, and baseball itself was all-white, so why would I need or want a baseball writer's credential?" Lacy asked rhetorically. "I never held a baseball writer's membership in the Washington chapter. I held it in the New York chapter and later had it transferred to the Baltimore chapter."⁹⁵

Although Lacy's beef with Povich could have festered from these sources as well as from petty jealousy over Povich's status as the top dog in town, it could not have been simply because Povich was white. Lacy was not a racist. Over the years, he befriended many white sportswriters.¹⁰¹ Bob Considine, one of Povich's early protégés who wrote the foreword to Povich's autobiography, also endeared himself to Lacy. During a Senators game at Griffith Stadium, Considine once saw Lacy standing in the back of the press box and promptly found Lacy a seat. Before Considine's death he offered Lacy the services of his literary agent if Lacy wanted to write and publish an autobiography.¹⁰² Another of Lacy's pals was the best sportswriter of them all, Red Smith. Lacy, who received the Red Smith Award from the Associated Press Sports Editors, recalled enjoyable encounters with Smith at the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City, the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich, and the 1975 Preakness Stakes in Baltimore. "Red Smith had no color hangups," Lacy wrote.¹⁰³ Later in Lacy's career, one of his close friends was longtime Baltimore sports columnist John Steadman.¹⁰⁴

Ultimately, Lacy may have held Povich to a higher standard than Washington's other white columnists. Compared with Francis Stann of the *Star* and Vincent Flaherty of the *Times-Herald* (another Lacy friend), Povich was a bona fide liberal on racial issues. Lacy may have felt that Povich, as the most powerful liberal voice in Washington, didn't use it often enough on racial matters, particularly against Griffith.

Povich, however, poured his energies into exposing the racist attitudes of the keeper of the city's other major sports franchise, Washington Redskins owner George Preston Marshall. Marshall, who had moved the Redskins from Boston to Washington in 1937, was the last NFL owner to integrate his team in 1962. Two of Povich's most famous lines came in criticizing Marshall's racist hiring practices: "The Redskins' colors are burgundy, gold, and Caucasian," and "Jim Brown, born ineligible to play for the Redskins, integrated their end zone three times yesterday."¹⁰⁵ The Redskins integrated only after they moved out of Griffith Stadium. In March 1961, Stewart Udall, President Kennedy's secretary of the interior, threatened to prevent

Marshall from moving his team into the new D.C. Stadium (later known as RFK Stadium) unless Marshall integrated his team.¹⁰⁶ The following year, the Redskins drafted Syracuse's Ernie Davis and traded him to the Cleveland Browns for Hall of Fame running back-wide receiver Bobby Mitchell and rookie Leroy Jackson, two of four pioneering blacks on the 1962 Redskins. In 1969, Povich wrote: "It is no mere coincidence of history that the Redskins' last championship was in 1945, just one year before the recognition of the Negro in professional athletics."¹⁰⁷ Povich relentlessly hounded Marshall, so much so that Marshall litigated a two-hundred-dollar libel suit against Povich. Marshall lost. The two men didn't speak for years.¹⁰⁸

As much as Povich despised Marshall, however, Povich delighted in talking with Griffith. The Old Fox charmed Povich just as he had charmed Franklin Delano Roosevelt and many other presidents before him. But Griffith needed Povich more than he needed Truman or Eisenhower. Povich outlasted the presidents whose favor Griffith courted every four years. Griffith used to call the *Post's* young sports editor during the 1920s and say, "Gimme a headline tomorrow morning, Walter Johnson's pitching."¹⁰⁹ In 1938, Povich wrote a thirty-three-part series about Griffith. Two years later, Povich and Bob Considine coauthored a two-part article on Griffith, subtitled "Baseball's Red-Eyed Radical and Archconservative," for the *Saturday Evening Post*.¹¹⁰ Griffith didn't like the article, although it was overwhelmingly positive, because it mentioned a few of his bad trades. "Never mind the nice things you wrote about me," Griffith told Povich. "It's the bad things that count. You can't poison a man and then pump his stomach out and call yourself his friend."¹¹¹

Marshall's boorishness and Griffith's impish charm may have blinded Povich, at least partially, to the Senators' owner's racial shortcomings. Although his 1961 *Sporting News* article described Griffith as having been "wrong" about baseball's color barrier, Povich wrote that after Jackie Robinson's success, "Griffith was completely won over." He also wrote that Griffith had failed to come up with a good Negro player, but that Griffith had made a dozen offers to Cleveland for Larry Doby, whom Griffith described as "the fellow who would do us more good than any other left-handed hitter in the league."¹¹²

Povich put a nice spin on Griffith's failure to sign a black player for seven years after Robinson played for the Dodgers. But it was the wrong spin.

Povich was wise to some of Griffith's motives regarding the Grays, but not all of them. Years later, Povich recalled:

At the same time he was singing the praises of Josh Gibson, he was saying let's not interfere with the Negro Leagues. If we take too many ballplayers from them, they will break up the Negro Leagues and we shouldn't break them up. I think that was probably a cop-out: "Let them have their league and we'll have ours."¹¹³

Povich failed to understand that Griffith's pattern of praising Gibson, protecting the Negro Leagues, and refusing to integrate was a well-orchestrated financial strategy that kept the Senators afloat. Povich underestimated the revenue Griffith received from the Grays for renting Griffith Stadium. "He rented the ballpark to them, but he rented it cheaply to them," recalled Povich, unaware of the 20 percent for stadium rent plus light fees. "Actually he liked to go sit in the stands and watch the games himself. No, he possibly made some small profit but that was not a factor. The crowds were not that great to start with."¹¹⁴

Povich's ignorance about the Grays and misjudgment of Griffith's motives were understandable. During the 1940s, Povich did not have time to cover the Grays or to mount a regular campaign to integrate baseball. He wrote six columns a week while covering the Senators both home and away. The *Post* usually included a game story and a column from Povich in every paper. He didn't even have time to be the paper's sports editor, a position he relinquished four times over the years.¹¹⁵ From November 1944 to the early summer of 1945, Povich took leave from the sports scene to serve as a war correspondent covering the Pacific theater.¹¹⁶ And in Povich's defense, he never wavered from his uncompromising stance in favor of integration. During the 1940s, he was far more outspoken about the issue than Red Smith was, for example.¹¹⁷ Black writers such as Wendell Smith admired Povich for his consistent pro-integration position.¹¹⁸ Povich

wrote a fifteen-part series on the integration of baseball titled "No More Shutouts" that the *Post* nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. Finally, Povich was not alone in preferring Griffith to Marshall. Many black fans boycotted Marshall's Redskins yet regularly followed Griffith's Senators. Lacy's father was one of them.

The most unfortunate aspect of Lacy's rift with Povich was that it severely damaged any chance of breaking baseball's color barrier in Washington, D.C. Povich was not only the most liberal white sports voice in Washington, he also was the most popular. In this pretelevision era of baseball, Povich ruled the local sports scene. Povich, moreover, had Griffith's ear; he had tremendous power over Griffith given the *Post's* coverage of the Senators. Publicly and privately, Povich could have exerted enormous pressure on Griffith to integrate.

In short, Lacy and Povich could have been allies in the campaign to integrate major league baseball. Lacy, to his discredit, allowed personal animosity to get in the way of his lifelong crusade. Lacy could have educated Povich about Griffith's relationship with the Grays and courted Povich's public support. Povich, who focused his energies on the more virulently racist owner in Marshall, was sympathetic to Lacy's cause, but Povich rarely used his pulpit to take Griffith to task. Unfortunately, this alliance was not meant to be. Instead, in 1945, Lacy and Wendell Smith kept the pressure on Griffith while searching for other allies.



Sam Lacy sits at his desk at the *Afro*. He called the Jackie Robinson beat the “story of a lifetime.” (NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY)



The 1945 Kansas City Monarchs featured three future Hall of Famers: pitcher Hilton Smith (standing at left), Satchel Paige (fourth from left), and Jackie Robinson (kneeling at right). (ART CARTER PAPERS, MOORLAND-SPINGARN RESEARCH CENTER, HOWARD UNIVERSITY)



Sam Lacy, Jackie Robinson, and the editor and publisher of the *Afro-American* newspapers, Dr. Carl Murphy, meet in 1947 at the *Afro's* Baltimore offices. Robinson credited Lacy and other members of the black press with making his major league career possible. (NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY)



POSEY'S POINTS

For the second consecutive year, the Grays held their annual pre-season banquet in Washington. Approximately one hundred guests, including black sportswriters from several Eastern cities, feasted on beer, fried chicken, hot rolls, tomato salad, and candied sweet potatoes.¹ Lacy, pinch hitting for his buddy and overseas war correspondent Art Carter, served as the master of ceremonies. Sitting three seats down from Grays owner Cum Posey, Lacy listened with a grim expression on his face as the head of the local Elks lodge “warned Negro sports writers not to be too zealous in their effort to get a few colored players in major league baseball without considering the possibility of tearing down the backbone of colored athletics—organized Negro baseball.”²

The admonition may as well have come from Posey himself. Paul Robeson’s speech at the 1943 major league owners’ meeting had attracted national attention to the cause of integrating baseball and put Negro League owners, such as Posey, on the defensive. Dan Burley of the *Amsterdam News* reported that the barons of black baseball “right now are muttering, ‘we gotta protect our investments,’ meaning ball players they have under contract.” An unidentified owner told Burley: “‘We are built on segregation. If there was no segregation, we wouldn’t have colored ball clubs; we wouldn’t make money; and we’d all probably be out of business.’”³

Posey responded in his weekly *Pittsburgh Courier* column, “Posey’s Points,” by blasting Burley and his aggressive colleague at the *People’s*

Voice, Joe Bostic. “For years we have conscientiously read the personal columns of Dan Burley and Joe Bostic,” Posey wrote. “They have yet to write me one constructive article on Negro baseball.” Posey bemoaned Burley and Bostic’s refusal to run box scores and player averages in their respective newspapers. He also lauded his favorite sportswriters, Carter and Chester Washington of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, because they “seemed to follow the motto, ‘If I cannot boost, I will not knock.’”⁴ Lacy was much more of a knocker than a booster. Yet Posey wisely refrained from singling out Lacy for criticism.

If Lacy had a stealthy adversary in the campaign to integrate baseball, it was Posey. Since moving his team to Washington in 1940, the Grays’ owner had formed a tacit alliance with Griffith. They shared a common goal of maximizing the Grays’ profits at Griffith Stadium. That meant keeping other major league teams from stealing the Grays’ players and maintaining a viable Negro National and Negro American League. While Posey praised major league magnates for allowing the Grays to use their ballparks, Griffith encouraged black baseball teams to build up their own leagues. Privately, both men opposed integration.

Of Lacy’s three biggest adversaries—Landis, Griffith, and Posey—Posey was in the most precarious position. His primary aim was protecting his business. Yet Posey could not openly oppose integrated baseball and risk alienating his black fan base or his chief publicity arm, the black press. Just as Griffith needed headlines in the *Post* from Povich, Posey hankered for good publicity in the *Afro* from Lacy and in the *Courier* from Smith. Thus, Posey remained relatively silent while Lacy and Smith carried out their crusade.

206 While Lacy and Smith hammered Griffith for his discriminatory hiring habits, they exhorted Negro League owners to reform their business practices. In December 1943, Smith warned them that record profits would not last and integration was on the horizon. Smith and others contended that, in order to compete, black baseball needed a commissioner, regular scheduling, and uniform player contracts. “As they operate now, the Negro owners are in no position to bargain with major league teams for their players. The Negro

ballpark would have been a financial disaster, based on the enormous capital outlay, limited real estate, and even more limited seating. Gus Greenlee floundered financially by building Greenlee Field, the Pittsburgh Crawfords' bandbox of a ballpark that was torn down at the end of 1938; the Baltimore Elite Giants never attained the financial success of the Grays playing at tiny Bugle Field. Posey knew that it was better to let other people build big ballparks, especially for an itinerant team such as the Grays with a regional as well as a national following.

Posey knew that publicly praising Benswanger and Griffith was good business. For several years, he had vigorously defended the Pirates' and Senators' owners as friends of the Grays, rather than portraying them as rapacious profiteers.¹¹ As early as 1942, Posey urged the black press to temper its criticism of major league officials. "The letters which are sent to Judge Landis and various club owners of major league clubs, despite the good intentions of the writers do not help the cause of Negro baseball and may cause the loss of some of the parks we now rent," Posey wrote. "That would set Negro baseball back 20 years."¹² A few years later, Lacy took offense at Posey's excuses for these segregationists: "If your administrators hold to the theory that they owe something to major league owners because the latter agree to make money for themselves by renting their parks, they're all wet."¹³

Posey mastered the art of renting major league ballparks by forging good working relationships with owners such as Griffith and Benswanger and circumventing white booking agents. For several years, Posey waged his own personal war against booking agents whose monopoly over major and minor league ballparks cost some black baseball teams as much as 40 percent of the profits.¹⁴ He encouraged New York Cubans owner Alex Pompey to rent the Polo Grounds and Newark Eagles owner Effa Manley to rent Ebbets Field rather than go through a booking agent to rent Yankee Stadium. Eddie Gottlieb, a part owner of the Philadelphia Stars, promoted all of the black baseball games at Yankee Stadium and Philadelphia's Shibe Park for a percentage of the gate receipts.¹⁵ Abe Saperstein, who owned the Harlem Globetrotters basketball team and retained

partial stakes in the Indianapolis Clowns and Birmingham Black Barons, played a similar role in Chicago and Indianapolis. Posey organized a boycott of Saperstein's venues and visited several owners of Midwestern ballparks to dissuade them from submitting to Saperstein's business practices.¹⁶ Saperstein basically controlled the Midwest, Gottlieb controlled part of New York and Philadelphia, and Posey controlled Pittsburgh and Washington. Posey, however, did not exploit his territory—he needed other Negro League teams to thrive to ensure the continued prosperity of the Grays.

Not owning his own ballpark was the least of Posey's problems heading into the 1944 season. Although the Grays had played to record crowds in Washington in 1943, train travel and other wartime expenses cut into Posey's profits.¹⁷ In 1944, the Office of Defense Transportation allowed the Grays to use their bus for two thousand miles per month but also lifted the ban on pleasure driving—depriving the Grays of their captive audience in Washington.¹⁸ In an article proclaiming black baseball a two million dollar enterprise, Ric Roberts wrote:

Washington was, for example, an average 3,000-fan town until Paige's visits and good promotional work hiked it to well near a 10,000-fan average. The crowds leveled off in 1943 and began showing a slight over-all decline in 1944. This indicates the need of a new promotion series by the owners, and above all an elaborate public relations medium to "sell" Negro baseball to the public year 'round.¹⁹

During the Grays' fifteen home dates at Griffith Stadium in 1944, attendance dipped to seven thousand to eight thousand a game. The team drew fifteen thousand only twice that season, once for the home opener against the New York Black Yankees and once for a late June doubleheader against Paige and the Monarchs.²⁰

As attendance fell, Posey's team was crumbling around him. Before the season, he was in such dire need for talent that he placed an application form in the *Pittsburgh Courier*.²¹ Despite the discovery of a young pitcher and hard-hitting outfielder from Ohio named

Leonard's hitting tailed off considerably at the end of the season. His .299 batting average was the lowest among the members of Posey's All-American Team. In December, discussing an aborted trade between the Grays and the Monarchs (center fielder Jerry Benjamin for shortstop Bonnie Serrell), the *Afro* reported that "Posey's willingness to consummate some kind of swap indicated that only Buck Leonard, first baseman, and Dave Hoskins, right fielder, were not on the block."⁵⁰ Although Hoskins may have been the Grays' best young prospect, thirty-seven-year-old Leonard was still the team's best player and black baseball's best first baseman. If any further evidence was needed, Leonard led the Grays with eight hits (including a home run) and a .500 batting average in the 1944 World Series.⁵¹ He skipped the Grays' final two exhibition games because the draft board wanted him back in Rocky Mount unloading packages for the Railway Express Service.⁵² There was no time for him to recover from an exhausting season.

Although Leonard, Bell, and pitcher Ray Brown helped the Grays gut out another NNL title in 1944, other teams questioned the validity of the championship. During the first half, the Newark Eagles protested a loss because the Grays used one of their former pitchers, Roy Partlow, who belonged to the Philadelphia Stars. The league ordered the Grays and the Eagles to replay the disputed game. In August, a home run by Gibson and sterling pitching by John Wright (on leave from his naval duties) sealed the Grays' victory and first-half title.⁵³ During the second half, the Philadelphia Stars protested because the Grays played the second game of a Labor Day double-header against the New York Cubans as an exhibition game, which could have cost the Grays the second-half title if it had been a league game and if the Grays had lost.⁵⁴ Nothing ever came of the Stars' protest. Lacy attributed the whole controversy to the league's uneven, haphazard scheduling. "The whole thing just doesn't make sense," he wrote. "That's why I stay out of that mess."⁵⁵

Three leading black sportswriters—Lacy, Smith, and Frank Young—joined forces so that the 1944 World Series would not be marred by similar irregularities. At Smith's urging, they formed a World Series Arbitration Commission to resolve any disputes arising

during the postseason series between the Grays and the Birmingham Black Barons.⁵⁶ The Grays won the series in five games after a bus accident seriously injured five Black Barons a week before the first game. The sportswriters allowed the Black Barons to add extra players to their roster. The significance of three sportswriters running the World Series was not lost on Posey.

As the owner of black baseball's best team located in one of its most profitable cities, Posey basically ran the entire Negro National League. Although nominally listed as the NNL secretary, he dominated the league's 1944 winter meetings. He secured the reelection of his choice for NNL president, Baltimore Elite Giants owner Tom Wilson; he prevented former Crawfords owner Gus Greenlee from entering a new team in the NNL despite rumors (which turned out to be true) of a rival black league; and he quashed attempts by NNL and NAL owners to hire a commissioner.⁵⁷ It was obvious why Posey was not in favor of having a commissioner: the *de facto* commissioner of black baseball was Cum Posey.

The threat of integration was Posey's biggest concern heading into the 1945 season, especially with the death of major league baseball's commissioner. Almost a year after sabotaging Lacy's meeting by inviting Paul Robeson, Judge Landis died of heart failure on November 25, 1944. He was seventy-eight. Per his request, his body was cremated, and there was no funeral.⁵⁸ Five days before his death, Landis received a birthday telegram from Clark Griffith on the occasion of Griffith's own seventy-fifth birthday celebration and Landis's seventy-eighth: "Judge, I feel sure that you are going to be okay soon and that you will be with all of us old fellows for a long time to come."⁵⁹ Landis, Griffith, and Connie Mack were golfing buddies.⁶⁰

214 For years, Landis had served as Griffith and Mack's front man in keeping major league baseball all-white. Landis's insistence that no rule existed against black players in the majors masked their fears about integration's economic and social repercussions. Smith described the late commissioner as a "Gibraltar of Honesty" on all issues except integration. "Mr. Landis never set his teeth into the question of Negroes in the majors with the same zest that he did other problems which came under his jurisdiction," Smith wrote.

“Mr. Landis had 25 years to prove that he wanted to see Negroes in the majors. Yet, they buried him this week and we are still fighting for Negroes in the majors.”⁶¹

The death of baseball's segregationist-in-chief sent the black press's campaign into overdrive. It decentralized major league baseball's governing body (leaving acting commissioner Leslie O'Connor and the American and National League presidents, William Harridge and Ford Frick, in a power struggle), and it provided a crucial opening for aggressive sportswriters, such as Lacy. Without Landis at the helm, neither Griffith nor Posey could keep Lacy and Smith at bay. It was open season on baseball's color barrier.

Lacy immediately took aim at Griffith. In January 1945, Lacy proposed a July 4 boycott of Griffith Stadium based on a report that Griffith had signed a Chinese prospect (though he was more likely Mexican), Miguel Hidalgo, along with thirty-five Cuban players scheduled to report to the Senators' spring training. Lacy, who dubbed his mass protest “lily-white baseball day,” called on fans, stadium vendors, and cabdrivers to stay away from the ballpark on July 4:

There are colored men or women in every major league city in the country, my dad among them, who have attended the home games of their local teams throughout the season for the past two decades. They could afford to miss one afternoon at the park in order to add their unspoken vote to the nation-wide protest.⁶²

“Major league operators don't want us,” Lacy concluded. “They should be able to do without us.”⁶³ An enthusiastic *Afro* reader (“Brother, you've got something!”) suggested turning Lily-White Day into a weeklong protest.⁶⁴ Lacy's proposed boycott, however, never came to pass.⁶⁵ The *Afro*, fearing a lawsuit from the major leagues, persuaded Lacy to moderate his public stance. “My publisher, who was a lawyer, told me to be careful,” Lacy told author Peter Sheingold, “because I was stepping on very delicate grounds.”⁶⁶

Many black Washingtonians, including Sam Lacy's father, began boycotting Senators' games on their own. After signing a racist (Jake

Powell) in 1943 and a New York sanitation department worker (Ed Boland) in 1944, Griffith continued the trend in 1945 by signing a one-legged pitcher. Bert Shepard lost his right leg just below the knee when his plane was shot down over a German air base. After Shepard returned to the states a war hero, Griffith signed the left-handed pitcher and even put him into a major league game. Pitching against the Boston Red Sox with an artificial right leg, Shepard allowed three hits and one run in five and a third innings. Shepard's story was inspiring.⁶⁷ But, like his more well-known American League counterpart, the St. Louis Browns' one-armed outfielder Pete Gray, Shepard's presence on the Senators belittled the talented two-legged men on the Grays and alienated the Senators' black fans.

For Lacy's father, signing Shepard was the last straw. More than twenty years after Nick Altrock had spit in his face at the team's World Series parade, the seventy-seven-year-old Lacy decided not to attend Opening Day in 1945 for the first time since before the Senators had begun playing on the site of Griffith Stadium. Lacy's father wrote Griffith a letter explaining his reasons: he "found a one-legged man on [the] team and no colored given a tryout."⁶⁸

The confrontational styles of two of Lacy's colleagues, Smith and Joe Bostic, convinced him that an *Afro*-sponsored boycott was not the best way to achieve his goals. On April 6, 1945, Bostic arrived unannounced at the Brooklyn Dodgers' Bear Mountain, New York, spring training site with two aging Negro Leaguers, Newark Eagles pitcher Terris McDuffie and the New York Cubans' fancy-fielding first baseman Dave "Showboat" Thomas. Bostic demanded a tryout for the two players. Enraged over being set up in what he regarded as a publicity stunt, Dodgers president-general manager Branch Rickey gave the two players a forty-five-minute workout and sent them away.⁶⁹

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Ten days later, Smith orchestrated a similar situation in Boston. Backed by city councilman Isadore Muchnick, Smith showed up April 14 and 15 at Fenway Park with three bona fide major league prospects: Philadelphia Stars second baseman Marvin Williams, Cleveland Buckeyes speedy outfielder Sam Jethroe, and a shortstop recently signed by the Monarchs named Jackie Robinson. After a two-day delay, the Red Sox worked out the impressive trio for about

I could make them white.” Rickey claimed that the Charlie Thomas story haunted him and drove him to integrate baseball.⁷⁶

As much as Rickey reveled in his moral stand, he desperately wanted the Dodgers to benefit from an untapped source of baseball talent. He was a visionary who viewed baseball scouting as a science. He was a notorious skinflint whom *New York Daily News* columnist Jimmy Powers nicknamed “El Cheapo.” He was a master politician who knew how to work the media, other owners, and the public. And he was a pragmatist who understood that integration was more possible in racially sympathetic Brooklyn, where white sportswriters such as Powers had been lobbying for integration, than in southern towns like St. Louis and Washington.

Rickey single-handedly shifted the focus of Lacy and Smith’s integration efforts from Washington to New York. After the tryout at Bear Mountain in the spring of 1945, he persuaded Dr. Dan Dodson, a New York University sociologist in charge of Mayor La Guardia’s Committee on Unity, to establish the Mayor’s Committee on Baseball to study the issue of admitting blacks into the professional game.⁷⁷ Rickey also began making overtures to black baseball through Gus Greenlee’s newly established United States League (USL), a rival black organization formed in 1945. In May, Rickey pledged his full support to the league, raked in profits by renting out Ebbets Field, and eventually assumed ownership of a USL franchise, the Brooklyn Brown Dodgers.⁷⁸ Although the six-team league folded after the 1946 season, the Brown Dodgers gave Rickey the perfect vehicle through which to scout black talent.

Rickey’s involvement with the USL also began a season-long war of words with his former manager on the 1907 New York Highlanders. Griffith charged Rickey with “trying to dictate the affairs of colored baseball” and attacked the Dodgers president–general manager for meddling with Posey’s domain:

Mr. Rickey is attempting to destroy two well organized leagues which have been in existence for some time and in which colored people of this country have faith and confidence.

This is not the age of dictators, and when one man sets himself up to foster the new organization which only has in mind the thought of destroying the existing two colored leagues, then I think the time has arrived when a halt should be called.⁷⁹

Griffith cared as much about protecting his profits from renting his ballpark to the Grays as about protecting the Negro Leagues. Rickey, when pressed for a response by Sam Lacy, retorted: “Whenever some one does anything to interfere with his making of a dollar, that fellow gets all upset. I won’t even bother to answer him.”⁸⁰

A few weeks later, Smith elaborated on Rickey’s criticism of Griffith. Having begun working behind-the-scenes with Rickey, Smith attacked Griffith for signing dozens of foreign players from Cuba and Mexico but not a single American-born black. “All he has to do is look out the window of his office at Griffith Stadium on any day the Homestead Grays are playing there and see plenty of players good enough to play with the Senators,” Smith wrote.⁸¹ Smith also seized on Rickey’s point about Griffith’s obsession with losing the profits from his stadium rentals:

Clark Griffith’s defense of the present Negro leagues is not motivated by anything but his own selfish interests. He makes money by renting his park to the Homestead Grays. He doesn’t want any one fooling around with that profitable mellon [sic]. He’ll do anything he can to help perpetuate the present setup in Negro baseball because it’s to his advantage. . . .

Although he makes his money in the shadow of the Capitol of the United States, Griffith is in no way democratic on this issue of Negroes in the majors. Therefore, anything he advocates in Negro baseball must be looked upon with suspicion. He is no friend. No one who helps perpetuate segregation and discrimination is a friend of the Negro.⁸²

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Smith failed to mention Griffith’s silent ally.

Posey chose his words carefully after Rickey’s USL announcement. He avoided antagonizing the Grays’ black fans in Washington by

expressing his criticism through the mouths of Rickey's fellow major league magnates. Several major league owners were "giving him hell!" Posey told Sam Lacy. "William Benswanger called me on the phone and said it was bad stuff, and Clark Griffith thinks he's crazy."⁸³

While Griffith publicly denounced Rickey, Posey launched a guerilla attack on the integration campaign. In June 1945, Lacy sent a letter to the Negro National League and the Negro American League presidents imploring them to send a representative to the major league committee meetings. The NNL and NAL owners declined because of a "faction . . . reputedly led by Cum Posey."⁸⁴ Although one of the committee's goals was to improve relations between the black and white leagues, Posey and other Negro League owners objected that "Lacy should not be permitted to 'run our business' and that 'our representatives would be outnumbered in any controversial voting.'⁸⁵

Posey's distaste for Lacy's diplomatic efforts also extended to Bostic and Smith's confrontational approaches. Many members of the black press criticized the two impromptu major league tryouts. Bostic brought two players, Thomas and McDuffie, both past their primes, to the Dodgers camp; Smith showed up in Boston with Robinson, Jethroe, and Williams, younger but relatively unproven players. People wondered, according to the *Defender's* Fay Young, "why players like Buck Leonard, Washington Grays first sacker, or some others weren't chosen."⁸⁶ An *Amsterdam News* writer made a more specific suggestion:

Why not contact some of the ball players on the Grays and get them up here for tryouts. Or even get them into Griffith Stadium, where they could show themselves off as the classy ball players they are. By the way, Clark Griffith, owner and president of the Senators, has been hiring Cuban ball players for some years now — why not try him as the man to give the Negro a break in the big game. I shouldn't doubt it in one instant, that the President would get great satisfaction in tossing out the first ball to start the first game of the season in Griffith Stadium to an American team having Americans of all creeds and races on the field. It would show true Americanism on the part of the "National Pastime."⁸⁷

came away notably impressed. "I feel pretty sure that sports writers, players, and fans who have seen him in action can hardly disagree that Jackie Robinson, shortstop of the Kansas City Monarchs, is the rookie of the year," Jackson wrote, citing Robinson's .349 batting average and daring baserunning, "if not the most outstanding player on the diamond for 1945, in colored baseball."¹⁰⁵ Jackson also asked Robinson about playing in the majors. "I hope like most of the fellows in our leagues that we may be playing on one of the major league teams one day," Robinson said. "But since the war's ended, I can't help feeling that it is going to be a lot tougher now, to crash the big show."¹⁰⁶

Rickey had been trailing Robinson for several months. Shortly after Rickey pledged his support for the United States League, Smith told Rickey about Robinson's impressive tryout with the Boston Red Sox. Smith also informed Rickey about Robinson's educational and athletic background in California: the brother of an Olympic sprinter, a standout football player at UCLA, and a former army lieutenant. Rickey was so intrigued that during the summer of 1945 he sent Dodgers scout Clyde Sukeforth (as well as several others) to follow Robinson around the country and to evaluate the player Rickey referred to on the telephone with Smith as the "Young Man from the West."¹⁰⁷

While Smith and Rickey privately conferred about Robinson, Lacy publicly agreed that Robinson was the right player to break baseball's color barrier. Lacy wrote a controversial article, "Will Our Boys Make Big League Grade?" in the 1945 edition of *Negro Baseball* evaluating all the potential black major leaguers with the undue harshness that Lacy brought to his weekly coverage of the Grays. In fact, the article was so critical that New York Yankees president Larry MacPhail took it out of context before Mayor La Guardia's committee to support his arguments against integration.¹⁰⁸ MacPhail quoted Lacy as follows:

I am reluctant to say that we haven't a single man in the ranks of colored baseball who could step into a major league uniform and disport himself after the fashion of a big leaguer. . . . There are those

chologically unstable that usually landed him in a mental institution. Gibson was “at various times suspended, fined, and destined for trade to one of the lowlier teams in the Negro National League as penalty for breaking training and other demeanor not exactly keeping with the standards of a \$1,000 per month ball player.”¹¹⁴ Posey even left Gibson off the East’s team for the 1945 East-West All-Star Game in Chicago, leading Smith to write that Gibson “probably has seen his last season with the Homestead Grays.”¹¹⁵

Lacy, of all people, rushed to Gibson’s defense. “I take the floor at this time as attorney for the defense in the case of ‘The People vs. Josh Gibson,’” Lacy wrote. Lacy’s defense of Gibson was an unusual one—the Grays expected too much of him. Lacy wrote:

I have never considered him the cream of the crop among colored catchers and have never been able to understand the high rating given him as such. . . . In recent months, Josh has shown himself to be nothing more or less than I’ve always called him: namely a hell-firing batsman but just an ordinary backstopper.¹¹⁶

Lacy pointed out that the ineffectiveness of Rab Roy Gaston forced Gibson to catch every Negro National League game, magnifying Gibson’s defensive liabilities. In late July, Gibson’s two passed balls in a game at Baltimore’s Bugle Field contributed to the Grays’ 5–4, tenth-inning loss to the Elite Giants.¹¹⁷

Gibson still reigned supreme as a hitter, though. His home-run output at Griffith Stadium dropped from his 1943 levels, but he still finished with at least four home runs there.¹¹⁸ By comparison, the Senators, who rebounded from their last-place finish in 1944 to finish second, hit only one home run at Griffith Stadium during the entire 1945 season.¹¹⁹ By season’s end, Gibson had captured the Negro National League batting championship with a .393 average.¹²⁰ Gibson belonged on Lacy’s list of potential major leaguers for his hitting alone.

Given Gibson’s lack of mental stability, however, he was totally incapable of playing in the majors. That winter, playing for the San-turce Crabbers in Puerto Rico, he once again suffered a nervous

breakdown and landed in a mental hospital. He escaped from the hospital, and the Puerto Rican police discovered him in the mountains naked and without the ring and watch he usually wore.¹²¹ Although Gibson returned to his Puerto Rican team for a time, the police again found him drunk, naked, and wandering the streets of downtown San Juan claiming to be “on ‘his way to the ballpark.’”¹²² The team eventually sent him home. Gibson wouldn’t be making the grade anytime soon.

Leonard was further down on Lacy’s list of potential major leaguers than Gibson was. The Grays’ first baseman anchored his team’s cleanup spot for almost the entire 1945 season, and deservedly so. In late July, Leonard earned another starting berth in the East-West Game and was leading the Negro National League with a .396 (40-for-101) batting average.¹²³ Although Leonard finished third in the NNL batting race with a .375 (48-for-128) average, he wore down during the second half and sat out the last month of the season with another broken hand before returning for the World Series.¹²⁴ About Leonard’s major league prospects, Lacy wrote:

Leonard is definitely of big league calibre. But the venerable Buck has become much too brittle of late to expect any great deeds. There is some doubt in my mind, therefore, as to whether or not he would be equal to the demands of a daily program such as is required of major league performers.¹²⁵

Leonard lacked Gibson’s defensive deficiencies, never drank too much or suffered from mental problems, and, when healthy, proved to be the second-most feared hitter in the league.

228 Contrary to Lacy’s scouting report, Leonard seemed to have a better shot than Gibson at playing in the majors. That winter, playing on a team of black All-Stars with Jackie Robinson in Caracas, Venezuela, Leonard hit two home runs, including one off the Senators’ Venezuelan-born pitcher, Alex Carrasquel.¹²⁶ The only difference between Leonard and Carrasquel: Carrasquel was lighter-skinned and spoke a foreign language. Robinson, although privately expressing doubts about his own ability to make the majors, raved to Wendell Smith about Leonard’s home-run hitting.¹²⁷

The announcement sent shock waves through black baseball. Leonard, having played with Robinson that winter in Venezuela and against him during the 1945 season, said, “we did not think too much of Robinson. . . . He was a hustler but other than that he wasn’t a top shortstop. We said, ‘We don’t see how he can make it.’”¹³⁶ In hindsight, Leonard observed that Robinson’s college-educated background made him the right person for the job.¹³⁷ Paige, although publicly supportive of Robinson (“he’s the greatest colored player I’ve ever seen”¹³⁸), was crushed about not being the first player chosen. “Signing Robinson like they did still hurt me deep down,” Paige recalled.¹³⁹ Gibson was off in Puerto Rico losing his mind. And Negro League owners faced the prospect of losing their best young ballplayers without a cent of compensation.

Rickey stole Robinson from the Monarchs because he knew he could get away with it. “Branch Rickey raped us,” outspoken Newark Eagles owner Effa Manley told author William Marshall years later. “We were in no position to protest, and he knew it. Rickey had us over a barrel.”¹⁴⁰ Rickey signed Robinson without even bothering to ask the Monarchs for permission, much less to negotiate a settlement. Initially, Thomas Baird, a white co-owner of the Monarchs along with J. L. Wilkinson, protested the Dodgers’ signing of Robinson and threatened to appeal to the new major league commissioner, Albert “Happy” Chandler. Baird, however, later claimed that he had been misquoted.¹⁴¹ A white owner of a black team could not be perceived as standing in the way of integrating major league baseball. The Monarchs’ owners publicly expressed support for Robinson, as did Negro American League president J. B. Martin. The rest of the Negro League owners seethed in silence—at least initially.

Responding to the charges of theft like the skilled lawyer he was, Rickey publicly derided the Negro Leagues as a “booking agent’s paradise” with uneven schedules, team owners serving as league presidents, and nonexistent contracts. He dared the Monarchs to produce a contract with Robinson’s signature on it. Then he personally attacked the Negro League owners, alluding to many of their occupations as numbers operators. “I do not regard either of the Negro baseball organizations as leagues, and will not until they clean

dreds of thousands of dollars every year,” according to the initial draft of a secret major league steering committee report issued on August 27, 1946, part of which was submitted to a 1951 congressional committee. “They naturally want the Negro leagues to continue.”¹⁴⁸

The difference between the Yankees and the Senators was that Griffith's profits from the Grays represented the difference between finishing the season in the red or in the black. “Clark Griffith used to say, ‘If I could draw 350,000 people, I can make money.’ He made money 25 consecutive years there,” his nephew Calvin recalled. “The money that he made, though, was \$1,000, \$2,000, or \$3,000, sometimes \$10,000 or \$15,000.”¹⁴⁹ The Senators' financial statement from 1960, the Griffith family's last season in Washington, indicates that the team made \$5,565.06 in net profits that year and \$7,393.93 from stadium rentals.¹⁵⁰ Although it had been ten years since the Grays contributed \$50,000 to \$100,000 per year to play at the ballpark, stadium rentals still meant the difference between a profit and a loss. “They were our bread and butter,” Calvin Griffith said of the Senators' black fans. “The Homestead Grays . . . brought in money all summer—14 games or so. You're not gonna knock anybody that kept you alive.”¹⁵¹ During the war, the stadium rentals from the Grays equaled, if not surpassed, the \$100,000 yearly fee the Griffiths received from the Redskins. Griffith's defense of the Grays represented a defense of his financial survival. Smith told Jerome Holtzman: “In Washington, it was said that the Negro teams, by renting Griffith Stadium, were saving the Senators from bankruptcy.”¹⁵²

Griffith and the other major league owners disagreed that their lost stadium rentals could be recouped by integrating their teams and increasing black attendance. According to the secret major league report, which was probably authored by MacPhail, “[a] situation might be presented, if Negroes participated in major league games, in which the preponderance of Negro attendance in parks such as the Yankee Stadium, the Polo Grounds and Comiskey Park could conceivably threaten the value of Major League franchises owned by these Clubs.”¹⁵³ Increased black attendance from integration was a definite possibility in Washington, where many blacks loved baseball and lived near Griffith Stadium. The report, alluding to twenty-eight

right-handed pitcher. It also emphasized the validity of Negro League player contracts, citing a 1941 order from the Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County (Pennsylvania) awarding the Grays ten thousand dollars when Gibson had jumped his contract in order to play in Mexico. Finally, it asked Chandler to intervene on black baseball's behalf: "We feel that the clubs of Organized Negro baseball who have gone to so much expense to develop players and establish teams and leagues should be approached [sic], and deals made between clubs involved, even though Negro Organized Baseball is not a part of White Organized Baseball. That is the only way in which we can be assured that Negro Organized Baseball *can* continue to operate."¹⁶⁰

Griffith stood firmly behind Posey's efforts to save black baseball. Griffith urged Chandler to "protect the rights" of Negro League teams with regard to their players. After receiving an advance copy of Posey's letter, Griffith wrote the Grays' owner an optimistic reply. Griffith told Posey that "*custom* makes *law* and that both the Negro National and American Leagues are under this custom entitled to every consideration and fair dealing from Organized Baseball."¹⁶¹

Griffith used his letter to Posey to answer Rickey's criticism. "Mr. Rickey publicly denounced Negro Baseball as *racket*," Griffith wrote. "This assertion you can prove not to be true." Griffith argued that the Negro Leagues always have respected the rules and contracts of "Organized Baseball," and they have built up a "splendid reputation" among "colored people all over this country as well as the decent white people." In response to Rickey's assertion that the Monarchs had no written contract with Robinson, Griffith emphasized that oral agreements between black teams and their players constitute enforceable contracts. Finally, Griffith offered Posey words of encouragement. "Mr. Posey, anything that is worth while is worth fighting for, so you folks should leave not a stone unturned to protect the existence of your two established Negro Leagues. Don't let anybody tear it down. . . . It is my belief that the Commissioner will give you relief."¹⁶²

The baseball commissioner, however, was no longer Judge Landis, Griffith's buddy; it was Albert B. "Happy" Chandler. A former gov-

During his military service, Wright sometimes pitched for the Grays under the name of Leftwich (either because he couldn't get an official leave or to thwart the protests of Negro League officials). He competed against several major league teams with the integrated Floyd Bennett Naval Air Base team in New York; he also finished with a 16–4 record pitching for the all-black Great Lakes Navy team in Illinois.¹⁷⁶

Rickey had been wooing Wright for several months. In December 1945, Wright denied having signed a minor league contract with the Dodgers and pledged his loyalty to Posey and the Grays.¹⁷⁷ Along with outfielder Dave Hoskins, the twenty-nine-year-old Wright was one of the Grays' best young players. More than just a roommate and traveling companion for Robinson on the Montreal Royals, as some have suggested, Wright was a legitimate prospect.¹⁷⁸

Lacy broke the news to Posey that the Dodgers had signed Wright. Although Posey was “in a rage,” the brunt of his displeasure was aimed at Wright. Posey explained how he had increased Wright's salary to \$150 a month in the middle of Wright's stellar 1943 season and also paid Wright \$250 a month “the whole time he was in the Navy.” In the wake of this desertion by one of his ballplayers, Posey failed to hide his sense of betrayal. “Why, he told me a week ago that he wasn't going to leave us because we had been too good to him,” Posey said. “If Wright's done that, I don't know what to think of him.”¹⁷⁹

A notoriously sore loser, Posey wouldn't let it go. He called Wright a “dirty so-and-so.” Then he began picking apart Wright's weaknesses, including his inability to field bunts or to hold runners on base. “Oh, he'll have a tough ride, Sam, take it from me,” Posey said.¹⁸⁰ Posey turned out to be right. Of Rickey's initial four recruits—Robinson and Wright at Triple-A Montreal and Roy Campanella (Baltimore Elite Giants) and Don Newcombe (Newark Eagles) at Class-B Nashua—only Wright did not become a star. According to Rickey and Robinson, Wright could not handle the pressure of being a racial pioneer.¹⁸¹ The Dodgers demoted Wright after a month to Three Rivers in the Class-C Canadian-American League. They replaced him with left-handed pitcher Roy Partlow, whose stay in

Montreal also proved to be short-lived. Partlow, however, thrived with Wright at Three Rivers.¹⁸² The Grays' erstwhile hero on the June 18, 1942, night during the 2-1 come-from-behind victory over the Monarchs, Partlow had been pitching with the Philadelphia Stars. Rickey paid one thousand dollars for Partlow because the Stars produced a written contract and because Partlow was a midseason acquisition.¹⁸³ It marked the only time Rickey ever paid a Negro League team for a player's services.

When Rickey signed Wright, Posey publicly expressed confidence that Chandler would stop Rickey's raids on the Negro Leagues. "I'm sure Commissioner Chandler isn't going to let Branch Rickey get away with this," Posey told Lacy. "I took the matter up with him [Chandler] personally just this month."¹⁸⁴ Privately, however, Posey knew better. "Do you realize we have not made one single change for the better since Negro baseball was called a 'racket?'" Posey wrote Effa Manley.¹⁸⁵ Posey's personal appeals, his conferences with Griffith, and his anger about Wright all amounted to nothing. Chandler allowed Rickey to raid the Negro Leagues with impunity. "It was like coming into a man's store and taking the commodities right off his shelf without paying a dime," Posey told Ric Roberts. "You don't know how much it cost me to build this team. I've been struggling with this damn thing since 1913. I guess I won't live to fight anymore."¹⁸⁶

About two months later, on March 28, 1946, Cum Posey died. He was fifty-four. Posey, who had been battling a lung infection for the previous year, spent his final three weeks at Pittsburgh's Mercy Hospital. From his hospital bed, the day after the doctors collapsed one of his lungs, Posey called the *Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph's* Harry Keck to thank him for a column about how the "Dodgers stole our pitcher, Johnny Wright, for their Montreal club. That column did me a lot of good." The day before he died, Posey left the hospital to be driven around Homestead; he wanted one last glimpse at his old hometown.¹⁸⁷

Posey was revered by people of all races in his community. He had been serving on the Homestead school board since 1931. On April 1, Homestead closed its schools in his honor. During halftime of a 1949

high school football game, the people of Homestead dedicated the Cumberland W. Posey Memorial Field House.”¹⁸⁸

In his later years, Posey rarely traveled with the Grays; he kept his distance while his older brother, Seward (“See”), served as the traveling secretary. Nothing, however, escaped Posey’s attention, and many of his observations found their way into his weekly newspaper column.

Posey wielded his *Courier* column, “Posey’s Points,” with a sanctimoniousness and self-righteousness that rubbed many people the wrong way. According to *Pittsburgh Courier* president Ira Lewis, Posey “prided himself on never being a good loser because, as he said, ‘Good losers are seldom winners.’”¹⁸⁹ He never admitted to losing an argument, and he often alienated the black press. In June 1943, Smith wrote that “Posey’s holier-than-thou attitude is typical. His record in Negro Organized Baseball is far from impressive. I am sure that anyone who has had the pleasure of doing business with Cumberland in baseball will agree with me. He’s quite a fellow that Cumberland Posey . . . so he says!”¹⁹⁰

It was hard to argue with the Grays’ success. Posey claimed to have made money every year from 1912 to 1929. He had survived battles with Rube Foster in the 1920s, Gus Greenlee in the 1930s, and white booking agents in the 1940s. His team had won eight of the previous nine Negro National League titles. Certainly no black team made more money than the Grays during World War II. Posey single-handedly turned Griffith Stadium into a baseball gold mine, succeeding in Washington after many other black teams had failed.

Posey, like all great businessmen, constantly adapted to change. He put his star players on salary in the early 1920s to prevent other teams from stealing them away. He eventually joined the Negro National League, yet maintained his team’s status as an independent outfit because the Grays could make more money barnstorming. He started his own league after Foster’s folded, yet had enough sense to join Greenlee’s revived Negro National League. He found a numbers man, Rufus “Sonnyman” Jackson, to bankroll the Grays to prevent Greenlee from stealing his players. He recognized that the Grays could not survive financially by playing their home games at Pitts-

burgh's Forbes Field, so he developed a larger home base in Washington. The only thing Posey could not adapt to was integration, a concept antithetical to the Grays' long-term financial success.

Not many people associated with black baseball loved Posey, but ultimately they respected him. Fay Young, the *Chicago Defender's* sports editor since 1907, had witnessed Posey's rise and fall and frequently disagreed with Posey over the years. "It is a sad state of affairs when both friends and enemies wait until the man dies before they will admit his true worth," Young wrote. "Posey and we disagreed many times. He always said we were for the Negro American League and the West. Sometimes, he'd hop on us through his column but never with any spleen—simply a difference of opinion. Then he'd meet us and we would shake hands. His only excuse would be, 'Well, that's the way I thought it at the time,' and laughingly would add, 'You know there ain't no way for me to rub the doggone thing out.'"¹⁹¹

Smith, also more charitable after Posey's death, described him as "the John McGraw of Negro baseball. . . . He gave no quarter and asked no quarter. His ballclub—the Homestead Grays—came first. That's probably why he was able to build the greatest organization in Negro baseball history." Smith subtly acknowledged his prior differences with Posey: "Posey's life was dedicated to the team he made, the Homestead Grays. Some may charge that his tactics were crude and his aims selfish. Some may say he crushed the weak as well as the strong on his way to the top of the ladder. But no matter what his critics say, they cannot deny he was the smartest man in Negro baseball and certainly the most successful."¹⁹²

Lacy, who fought for integration in the face of Posey's quiet opposition, characterized Posey as "one of those cussing, fighting, rootin' tootin' hombres who cared little about what he did to you and less about whether you liked it."¹⁹³ Posey lost the battle over the color barrier. Fortunately for him, he did not live to see just how big a loss it turned out to be.

A fellow loser in the integration fight, Griffith, sent flowers to Posey's funeral. Later that year, Griffith was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame after more than a half century as a major league pitcher, manager, and owner. Posey, who still has not been elected

to the Hall of Fame, passed into obscurity along with his three decades of accomplishments.

There was a distinct difference between Griffith and Posey's opposition to integration. Griffith could have recouped his lost stadium rentals from the Grays by signing the best black players and increasing his black fan base. Posey, however, was simply protecting the Grays the only way he could—by resisting integration and insisting on compensation from major league teams for his best players. The Grays represented much more than a financial investment for Posey. They were his legacy.

Leonard and most of his teammates did not attend Posey's funeral. The Grays had just left for spring training in Jacksonville, Florida. The city of Jacksonville voted to cancel a March 23 spring training game between the Montreal Royals and the Jersey Giants rather than allow Robinson and Wright to play there.¹⁹⁴ Instead, the two players attended the Grays' game on the other side of town.¹⁹⁵ The sight of Robinson and Wright in the stands and the Grays on the field signified the last time the champions of black baseball occupied center stage.



The Negro National League owners gather at a league meeting. The Grays are represented by Rufus “Sonnyman” Jackson (standing at left), Art Carter (standing second from left), and Cum Posey (seated back row, second from right). (ART CARTER PAPERS, MOORLAND-SPINGARN RESEARCH CENTER, HOWARD UNIVERSITY)

Wendell Smith, however, Lacy wrote uncharitably about Posey after his death.

While Lacy tore the Grays down, Art Carter built them back up. In 1946, Carter not only resumed his old job as the Grays' Washington promoter but also was named the Negro National League's public relations director. He also returned to the *Afro*, where he shifted from chronicling the lives of black troops overseas to covering black professional baseball at home.

The Grays made money for the last time in 1946 largely because of Carter's promotional genius. He showered the Grays with publicity in the pages of the *Afro*, running previews, box scores, and summaries of recently played contests. He expanded his free pass list, which originally had included about sixty people, to more than five hundred.⁷ He arranged three- or four-team Sunday doubleheaders that diluted the Grays' share of the profits but increased attendance to as many as fifteen thousand fans.

Carter also cultivated a new Griffith Stadium attraction in the Indianapolis Clowns. In the past, Posey had refused to schedule the Clowns in Washington because of his feud with their owner, Abe Saperstein, and because many fans found their minstrel-type show degrading. The Clowns featured between-innings gags performed by a midget named Spec Bebob and a tall, lanky mascot known as King Tut, who performed with an oversized glove and a swallow-tailed coat. Globetrotters star Goose Tatum doubled as the Clowns' first baseman. Before games, Tatum and the other players performed a famous "shadow ball" routine in which they took infield practice without a ball. The Clowns also played serious baseball, but it was the other stuff that brought out the fans.

Carter orchestrated one last league-wide windfall at Griffith's ball yard—the 1946 All-Star Classic. It represented one of Posey's last wishes to move the East-West Game from Chicago to an East Coast city like Washington. Promoted by Carter, hosted by the Grays, and sponsored by Negro National League officials, the All-Star Classic proved that black baseball could still thrive in the nation's capital.⁸ Played on the night of August 15, three days before the East-West

Griffith Stadium in Washington, D.C. is said to hold 32,000 people for baseball. A crowd which looked suspiciously like 23,000 saw the all-star game there Thursday night. The turnstile report was slightly more than 16,000. Where they could have put another 16,000 people in the ball park Thursday is something for the late Houdini to determine.¹⁷

The attendance paled in comparison to the 45,474 fans who attended the more-established East-West All-Star Game in Chicago three days later. Nonetheless, the All-Star Classic represented black baseball's last hurrah in Washington. For Carter, it was the final display of his promotional talents. For the fifteen thousand in attendance, it was an early farewell to a dying industry. For the ballplayers, it was a way to show people that they belonged in the major leagues.

The All-Star Classic served as a showcase for future major leaguers such as Larry Doby (Cleveland Indians) and Monte Irvin (New York Giants), as well as Quincy Trouppe (Indians), Sam Jethroe (Boston Braves), and Dan Bankhead (Brooklyn Dodgers). Major league scouts on hand included Clyde Sukeforth, the man who evaluated Robinson for the Dodgers.¹⁸ Grays batboy Billy Coward remembered the extra effort the ballplayers displayed on the field and the look of anticipation in their eyes as they sat in the dugout:

You could sense the enthusiasm of the ballplayers really wanting to put out. They were shifting gears. They were really motivated because any of them could be brought up to the major leagues. See, this I remember, that it was just like some new found blood or something, the enthusiasm that was generated by someone breaking the color ban for the most part.¹⁹

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No one wanted to break major league baseball's color barrier more than Gibson, who put on his Grays jersey with a W on the sleeve for one of the final times that night. Three days later, at the East-West Game in Chicago, photographer Ernest Withers captured Gibson looking frail, withdrawn, and downright sad. "There were fifty-one photographers on the field," Withers said, "but Gibson would only

ways, Gibson's death symbolized the death of the Negro Leagues. The big kid whom Cum Posey had plucked off the Pittsburgh sandlots in 1930 was black baseball's most feared home-run hitter, its Moses who never lived to see the Promised Land.²⁹

For Lacy, Robinson developed into the story of a lifetime. Robinson integrated the minor leagues in 1946 with the Triple-A Montreal Royals and the major leagues in 1947 with the Brooklyn Dodgers. As soon as Robinson officially signed a contract with Montreal, Lacy switched his beat to full-time coverage of Robinson. In the spring of 1946, Lacy and Smith traveled to the Dodgers' spring training camp in Florida. Lacy, Smith, *Courier* photographer Billy Rowe (who doubled as their driver), John Wright, and Robinson all lived together. For the next few seasons, Lacy and Smith served as Robinson's chroniclers, confidants, and travel companions. By staying in the same segregated hotels and sometimes in the same rooms as the first wave of black major leaguers, they got the inside scoop.

Lacy also experienced a few of Robinson's racial obstacles firsthand. Before one of the Royals' spring training games in Sanford, Florida, local officials denied Robinson and Lacy entrance to the stadium; they sneaked in through a loose plank in the outfield wall. A year later, while making their way North, the Dodgers stopped in Macon, Georgia. Lacy and Robinson, while staying in a rooming house in the black community, awoke to a cross burning on the front lawn.³⁰

Some racial incidents Lacy endured on his own, most of them because of a lack of access to the press box. At the 1946 Little World Series between the Triple-A International League and the American Association champions, he covered Robinson and the Royals from the far corner of the right-field stands near a sign that said, "The Black Press." These slights often occurred during Southern spring training stops. Refused entry to a press box in New Orleans, he decided to take in the game from the roof. Several New York sportswriters—Dick Young of the *Daily News*, Gus Steiger of the *Mirror*, Bill Roeder of the *World Telegram*, and Roscoe McGowan of the

Times—joined him up there. They said they wanted to work on their tans. In Beaumont, Texas, the Dodgers arranged for Lacy to cover the game from the team's dugout. The white players treated him with respect, and one of the black players usually lent him a team jacket during the cool Texas nights. Driving Dan Bankhead's black Lincoln Continental on the way to the Senators' spring training site in Orlando one year, Lacy was stopped by the police. The police wouldn't let him go until they called the Senators' traveling secretary, former *Washington Star* reporter Burton Hawkins, who vouched for him.³¹ For years, Lacy wrote about the second-class hotel accommodations afforded black players during spring training. For Lacy, the issue was personal.

Lacy's problems did not end in the South or during spring training. At a Dodgers game in Cincinnati, Tom Swope, the head of the local chapter of the Baseball Writers Association of America (BBWAA), denied him access to the press box. The Reds provided him with his own private box near the playing field. Even after he received his BBWAA credential from the New York chapter in 1948, he still experienced ugly incidents, such as the time a Yankee Stadium attendant denied him entrance to a 1952 Yankees-Dodgers World Series game. "Why can't he come in?" Milton Richman of United Press International asked. "He's got the same card that I have." Lacy and Richman walked in together without further incident.³²

During those first few seasons, however, Robinson became closer to Lacy's friendly competitor, Smith. By the end of October 1945, Smith had been exchanging letters with both Rickey and Robinson.³³ Rickey put Smith on the Dodgers' payroll at fifty dollars a week (matching Smith's salary at the *Courier*), as a scout for black talent and as Robinson's official traveling companion.³⁴ Smith's sunnier disposition, his position at the largest black newspaper, his college education, and his unparalleled writing talent may have endeared him to Robinson. Smith wrote Robinson's first autobiography, *Jackie Robinson: My Own Story*, which was published in 1948.³⁵ Another Robinson autobiography, *I Never Had It Made*, cowritten with Alfred Duckett and published in 1972, credited Smith with getting things started with the 1945 Red Sox tryout and his recommendations to

Rickey: "I will be forever indebted to Wendell because, without his even knowing it, his recommendation was in the end partly responsible for my career."³⁶

At some point, Smith and Robinson had a falling out. Robinson biographer Arnold Rampersad suggested that the seeds of discontent began with the bad financial deal surrounding Robinson's first autobiography.³⁷ Perhaps the two men drifted apart after Smith himself crossed over to the white *Chicago American*, leading to a successful career in Chicago as a weekly columnist for the *Sun-Times* and as a television broadcaster. By the time Robinson endorsed Richard Nixon for president in 1960, the rift was complete. *Pittsburgh Courier* executive editor P. L. Prattis, who wrote a column excoriating Robinson for his endorsement of Nixon, received several nasty letters from the former Dodgers infielder.³⁸ Smith sided with Prattis, complimenting him on the column and criticizing the tone of Robinson's letters.³⁹ "It is very typical and very insulting," Smith wrote Prattis. "I am not surprised, however. I am sure you have never received a letter from him thanking you for a story praising him. In fact, I do not know of any writer who has."⁴⁰

Although critical of Robinson at several points during his playing career, Lacy maintained a warm relationship with Robinson and his family. He wrote about Robinson showing up overweight to spring training in 1948 and about a feud between Robinson and Campanella in 1950. Each time Robinson, who was sensitive about criticism (particularly from his allies in the black press), got angry with Lacy. Each time, however, Robinson got over it. Robinson inscribed a copy of his autobiography *I Never Had It Made* as follows: "To Sam with thanks and appreciation for helping make our career possible. I'll always be appreciative, Jackie Robinson."⁴¹ In her later years, Jackie's wife, Rachel, spoke fondly of Lacy. And Lacy often wrote glowingly about her.⁴² Lacy loved and admired Robinson; he admired Robinson's courage, his outspokenness, and his character. Lacy wanted his son, Tim, to grow up to be like Robinson—not like Robinson the ballplayer, but like Robinson the man.⁴³

Robinson's outspokenness sometimes hurt those who had made it possible for him to succeed. In 1949 Robinson testified against sus-

pected Communist Paul Robeson before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). On April 20, 1949, Robeson told a Paris audience: "It is unthinkable that American Negroes would go to war on behalf of those who have oppressed us for generations against the Soviet Union which in one generation has raised our people to full human dignity."⁴⁴ Robinson, encouraged by Rickey to accept the invitation to testify, told a packed hearing room: "I know that I've got too much invested for my wife and child and myself in the future of this country, and I and other Americans of many races and faiths have too much invested in our country's welfare, for any of us to throw it away because of a siren song sung in bass."⁴⁵ Six years earlier, Robeson had pleaded with the major league owners to make Robinson's career possible. Although much has been written about the Robinson-Robeson relationship, Robinson's HUAC testimony foreshadowed the way Nixon and others would use Robinson as a political pawn.⁴⁶ Near the end of his life, Robinson admitted that he had "grown wiser and closer to painful truths about America's destructiveness" and therefore had "an increased respect for Paul Robeson."⁴⁷

256 A year before testifying against Robeson, Robinson blasted the Negro Leagues on behalf of Branch Rickey. Having grown up in an integrated environment in Southern California and having played on integrated athletic teams, Robinson hated playing in the Negro Leagues. He despised the second-class accommodations, run-down buses, and grueling travel schedule. Furthermore, the teetotaling, soon-to-be-married, and college-educated Robinson could not relate to many of his hard-drinking, womanizing, and uneducated fellow ballplayers. As a recently discharged army lieutenant, he signed with the Monarchs because he desperately needed money. "For me," Robinson recalled years later, "it was a pretty miserable way to make a buck."⁴⁸

In 1948, a year after making it to the majors with the Dodgers, Robinson wrote an article for *Ebony* magazine titled "What's Wrong with Negro Baseball."⁴⁹ Echoing Rickey's justifications for stealing black players from their respective Negro League teams, Robinson criticized black baseball's lack of written contracts, "low salaries,"

“sloppy umpiring,” “uncomfortable buses,” “hotels . . . of the cheapest kind,” and “questionable business connections of many of the team owners.” Robinson concluded that the Negro Leagues needed a “housecleaning from top to bottom.”⁵⁰ Robinson’s article alienated many Negro Leaguers who had publicly supported him and privately tutored him. It was a slap in the face to the proud men on his former team, the Monarchs, and on their Eastern rivals, the Grays. Newark Eagles owner Effa Manley, in an article of her own a few months later, rebutted Robinson’s negative characterization of black baseball.⁵¹ In disrespecting the Negro Leagues in 1948 and testifying against Robeson in 1949, Robinson betrayed many of those who had come before him.

Buck Leonard soldiered on with the Grays. The team lost or got rid of its aging players such as Gibson (who died before the 1947 season), Jud Wilson (who retired after the 1945 season), Cool Papa Bell and Double Duty Radcliffe (both released after the 1946 season), Ray Brown (Mexico), Howard Easterling (Mexico, New York Cubans), and Jerry Benjamin (traded after the 1947 season to the Cubans for Tom Parker). Besides manager Vic Harris, who rarely if ever still played, only Leonard and shortstop Sam Bankhead survived the purges.

A team in transition in 1947, the Grays began taking on the character of their young players. By 1948, the Grays’ strength lay in their trio of young outfielders: Luis Marquez, a converted infielder; Luscious “Luke” Easter, a six-foot, four-and-a-half-inch, 240-pound slugger with a weakness for curveballs but massive home-run power; and Bob Thurman, who pitched some but mostly played outfield. The pitching staff relied heavily on Wilmer Fields and John Wright, the latter returning to the Grays in 1947 after floundering in the Dodgers’ minor league system. Wright and pitcher Frank “Groundhog” Thompson jumped the Grays at midseason in 1948 to play in Mexico.⁵²

Leonard found himself with so little in common with these younger players that after Cool Papa Bell left, Leonard roomed with

benefiting Mary McLeod Bethune's National Council of Negro Women, he drove in five runs with a homer over the right-field wall and a triple to deep center to lead the Grays to a 13-4 victory.⁶⁴ At midseason, he earned a starting spot in the 1948 East-West Games in Chicago. In August, the *Pittsburgh Courier* ran a photograph of Leonard with his hands at his hips above the headline: "Going Strong."⁶⁵ He finished second in the league in home runs (ten), one behind teammate Easter.⁶⁶ Leonard hit over .400 for much of the 1948 season and bested Lester Lockett of the Elite Giants and Easter for the NNL batting title.⁶⁷

In 1948, Leonard led the Grays to their final Negro National League championship. The Baltimore Elite Giants nipped the Grays for the first-half title, and the Grays won the second half. During the playoffs at Baltimore's Bugle Field, the Grays won the first two games. In the third, the Grays appeared to break a 4-4 tie in the top of the ninth inning. After considerable stalling by the Elite Giants, however, the local umpire declared the game a tie because of an 11:15 P.M. curfew. After the Elite Giants won the next game, they refused to play the remainder of the disputed game. The NNL president declared the Grays league champions.⁶⁸

The Grays once again defeated the Birmingham Black Barons in the Negro League World Series, four games to one. The Barons featured a seventeen-year-old center fielder named Willie Mays. Testing the youngster's arm, the forty-one-year-old Leonard tried to advance from first to third on a single to center. "I said to myself, 'That young boy's out there and he ain't going to throw true to third base,'" Leonard wrote. "'I'm going on to third base.'" Mays threw him out.⁶⁹ The Grays' World Series victory capped a fitting end to the history of the Negro National League, which folded after the 1948 season and merged into a ten-team Negro American League.

During the last day of the regular season, at a September 4 three-team doubleheader featuring the Monarchs and the Clowns, the Griffith Stadium faithful recognized Leonard's accomplishments by holding "Buck Leonard Day." A committee led by Dr. Claude Carmichael—a local physician and longtime black baseball enthusiast—sought contributions from Grays fans to buy Leonard a tele-

vision. The *Afro* predicted a turnout of ten thousand, the largest crowd of the season. Local merchants promised to donate a radio and a suit of clothes.⁷⁰

The ceremony, emceed by Harold Jackson in between the doubleheader, didn't live up to its billing. The committee, lacking enough money for a television, presented Leonard with about two hundred dollars cash. The local merchants, instead of a radio and a new suit, presented him with a "two-unit leather traveling set" and a "swanky sports shirt." Just like on Josh Gibson Day, only six thousand fans showed up for Buck's tribute.⁷¹

Leonard, who had four hits in seven at-bats and was 3 for 3 in the second game against the Monarchs, thought the Grays held the celebration to nudge him into retirement. He received a book containing testimonials from New York Cubans owner Alex Pompey; NNL secretary Curtis Leak; Chester Washington and Ric Roberts of the *Pittsburgh Courier*; and Lacy, Carter, Al Sweeney, and Fred Leigh of the *Afro-American*. Then Leonard took the microphone and put the retirement talk to rest: "I want to thank all the fans of Washington for this testimonial, and I want to say that I believe I can give you two or three more years of service."⁷²

That Buck Leonard Day and a doubleheader featuring the Grays, Monarchs, and Clowns attracted only six thousand people spoke volumes. Nobody really cared about Leonard's batting title or the Grays' World Series triumph. The Grays' largest crowds of the season at Griffith Stadium included eighty-five hundred on July 14 against the Indianapolis Clowns, seven thousand at a preseason exhibition against the New York Black Yankees, and six thousand at Buck Leonard Day. By the end of the season, the Grays' attendance dwindled to an average of fewer than three thousand. "The Grays' box-office troubles aren't just confined to Washington," Sweeney wrote in July 1948. "In fact, all in all, the local club is averaging better attendance figures than any other member of the loop with the exception of Baltimore."⁷³

The Grays no longer played in the shadow of the Senators; they played in the shadow of the inaugural class of black major leaguers. In April 1950, black Washingtonians boarded chartered buses at

Fourth and K Streets, Southwest, to Baltimore to see a preseason exhibition between Robinson's Dodgers and the Triple-A Baltimore Orioles. The game drew nineteen thousand.⁷⁴ Dr. William McNeill took more drastic measures by buying the family's first television, which began regularly showing major league baseball games in 1949. Instead of ending his office hours early to attend Senators games, the prominent Howard University obstetrician/gynecologist spent his afternoons in his favorite chair in his living room watching Robinson on television. "I came in the room, he would ask us to get him a drink of water or something like that," his son, black photographer Robert McNeill, recalled. "And he would say, 'I never thought it would happen. In my whole life, I never thought it would happen.' And you could see tears."⁷⁵

Because the Dodgers played in the National League, Robinson didn't kill the Grays' attendance in Washington; Larry Doby, Satchel Paige, and other black players in the American League did. In July 1947, Cleveland Indians owner Bill Veeck bought Doby's contract for fifteen thousand dollars from the Newark Eagles and immediately promoted him to the major leagues. That same season, the St. Louis Browns negotiated a five thousand dollar option with the Monarchs for Willard "Home Run" Brown and Hank Thompson. Brown and Thompson brought massive crowds to Griffith Stadium in 1947, but St. Louis released the two players after a month.⁷⁶ The Indians' "experiment" with Doby and other black players continued. The following year, in July 1948, Veeck signed forty-two-year-old Paige.

The only Negro League legend who succeeded in crossing over to the major leagues, Paige displayed the same flair, showmanship, and skill that he always had. His self-deprecating antics, his tardiness for the team's scheduled rail departures, and his selfish disregard for the team's curfew on the road alienated Paige from his young roommate, the quiet and introverted Doby. "I didn't like it when guys laughed at Satch's stories," Doby told his biographer, Joseph Thomas Moore, "because I knew they were also laughing at Satch himself as a black man."⁷⁷ Robinson, who kept in frequent contact with Doby in 1947 despite playing in the other league, despised his former Mon-

archs teammate for the poor image Paige set as one of the first black major leaguers.⁷⁸

Doby and Robinson saw only Paige the minstrel performer; they didn't see how, in his own way, Paige broke barriers. He refused to take a salary cut to play in the major leagues, forcing Veeck to pay him a full season's salary in 1948 for only three months of work. The *Sporting News* and others viewed Veeck's signing of Paige as a publicity stunt that degraded the game. Veeck, however, insisted that the Indians needed a reliever and spot starter for the stretch run. With Paige starting and relieving and Doby starting in the outfield, the Indians won the 1948 World Series. Paige, who finished with a 6–1 record and 2.48 ERA in 1948, was the first black pitcher in World Series history.

Paige knew that he could still pitch and that he could still draw enormous crowds. On July 18 and 19, he made two scoreless relief appearances against the Senators at Griffith Stadium.⁷⁹ In one of his first starts, on August 3, Paige defeated the Senators, 4–3, before seventy-two thousand Cleveland fans. Paige's starts brought record crowds to countless American League ballparks—seventy-eight thousand in Cleveland and more than fifty-one thousand in Chicago.⁸⁰ And of course, there was Griffith Stadium.

With the Indians locked in a tight pennant race on August 30, Paige dominated the Senators in a 10–1 complete-game victory at Griffith Stadium before a capacity crowd of 28,058. Griffith turned away an additional five thousand eager fans. Paige allowed only seven hits, and he induced Senators outfielder Bud Stewart to swing and miss at a blooper pitch. “I don't think I shall ever forget that night, . . .” the *Afro's* Al Sweeney wrote, describing the California-born Stewart as a “red-necked outfielder from way down yonder.” “Stewart was so angry about it all that after popping up the next pitch, he deliberately cut across the diamond near the pitcher's mound to express his dissatisfaction to Paige.”⁸¹

Doby also brought black Washingtonians to the ballpark with his own electrifying moments. On May 8, 1948, he stepped to the plate with two on in the eighth and launched what sportswriters described

ter. The newspapers raved about it, but I didn't think it deserved the praise it got.

There was a stiff wind that night and it helped the ball considerably. That one tonight, though, was legitimate.⁸⁷

Griffith confirmed that Doby's homer traveled nearly five hundred feet: "It is 395 feet to the base of the fence where the ball cleared, and the fence itself is 20 feet high. With the carry, I would say it was better than 480 feet. I couldn't be too sure of that, naturally. But my guess would be pretty darned close to 500 feet."⁸⁸

With Doby's emergence as a star, Griffith began lavishing praise on the Indians outfielder the same way he used to do with Gibson. He also encouraged Veeck to start Paige in Washington. "As much as Clark Griffith might disapprove of me in Cleveland," Veeck wrote in his autobiography *Veeck as in Wreck*, "he would also call and plead with me to pitch Satchel Paige in a night game at Griffith Stadium."⁸⁹

The pressure mounted on Griffith to integrate his own team. During Doby's first Griffith Stadium appearance in 1947, a group known as the "American Youth for Democracy" picketed the ballpark to protest Griffith's refusal to hire black players.⁹⁰ In response to Griffith's complaints about a lack of talent at the Senators' 1948 spring training camp, the *Afro* wrote an open letter to Griffith urging him to try the "wealth of good material" in the Negro Leagues. The letter, titled "Griffs Could Use Colored Players" and most likely written by Lacy, declared: "It is a travesty on democracy that the major league team representing the nation's capital should continue to display discrimination by its steadfast refusal to give colored players an opportunity." The letter concluded: "It would be better that you relinquish control of the Nats to some one with a more liberal attitude than to inflict the shame on the nation's capital that the lily-white Nats represent."⁹¹

In July 1949, the Senators held a four-day baseball school and try-out camp in Alexandria, Virginia. Two days after several black players showed up, the Senators closed the camp. "Everybody got a chance, but the players were so far from being good league prospects,

we just canceled the school,” Senators farm director Ossie Bluege said. In the past, the Senators had complied with Virginia’s segregation laws by holding separate schools there.⁹² Even if the Senators had opened a tryout camp to black players, they had no place to put them. With most of their minor league teams in Southern locations such as Charlotte, Chattanooga, and Orlando, the Senators could not have placed a black prospect in its meager excuse for a farm system. The integration of Southern minor leagues did not begin until 1951 and persisted well into the 1960s.⁹³ The curse of Jim Crow continued for the Senators, who finished last in the American League in 1949 with their worst won-loss record (50–104) in forty years.

Shortly after the Indians’ Larry Doby and Luke Easter (formerly of the Grays) drew 24,228 fans at Griffith Stadium in late July 1950, the *Afro* tried to shame Griffith into integrating. “The crazy-quilt pattern of racial prejudice is well illustrated at Griffith Stadium,” the article asserted. It reviewed Griffith’s racially conscious seating practices: his old pattern of seating the black fans in the right-field pavilion versus his current habit of seating early black arrivals in the grandstand directly behind home plate and latecomers “scattered throughout the stands.” Then the article compared Griffith’s steadfast refusal to hire black players with his hiring of Cubans that mired his team in fifth place. Finally, it addressed the economic illogic behind Griffith’s discrimination: “He is unalterably opposed to colored players in the big leagues, except that he has never hesitated to take his share of the gate receipts made larger by the presence of Doby and Easter in the Indians lineup.”⁹⁴ In July 1950, however, Griffith’s refusal to integrate the Senators placed him among the overwhelming majority of American League teams, of which only the Indians fielded black players. Integration remained almost entirely a National League phenomenon.

Griffith’s prediction to Leonard and Gibson about integration destroying the Negro Leagues came true. The Grays could not compete at the box office with Paige and Doby playing eleven games a season against the Senators at Griffith Stadium. Furthermore, the Grays’ rebuilding efforts of 1947 and 1948 did not help the team’s

Carolina.¹⁰⁷ Vic Harris, after nearly twenty-five years with the Grays organization, left the club to serve as a coach with the Baltimore Elite Giants. Sam Bankhead, the Grays' respected shortstop-outfielder, became the new field manager. Leonard, already saddled with the job as the team's part-time traveling secretary, wanted no part of managing.

Cum Posey would have rolled over in his grave if he had seen his once-mighty Grays toiling in a two-bit black sandlot circuit. Perhaps the only player the new arrangement benefited was the forty-two-year-old Leonard. With teams in Norfolk (Virginia), Durham, Raleigh, Charlotte, Greensboro, and Winston-Salem, the new league allowed Leonard to play closer to his Rocky Mount, North Carolina, home.

The new league also brought Buck physically closer to his younger brother, Charlie. As the head of the state unemployment board for the black residents of Kinston, North Carolina, Charlie had ascended to a position of power and influence. Buck had discovered this several years earlier when the Grays played an exhibition game in Kinston that he and Gibson had decided to sit out. Charlie pleaded with them at least to put on their uniforms and make an appearance. When they refused, Charlie vowed that the Grays would not play in North Carolina ever again. And they didn't, at least not until 1949.¹⁰⁸

Playing in the Negro American Association, the Grays suffered through a financially disastrous 1949 season. Negro American League teams refused (at least initially) to play the Grays at Griffith Stadium, so the Grays filled their home dates by playing American Association teams, such as the Charlotte-Asheville Blues, the Greensboro Red Wings, the Raleigh Tigers, and the Norfolk-Newport News Royals. Down South, things looked even worse. "At home, the situation has been fair, with average crowds of 2,800," the *Afro* reported, "but in Virginia and North Carolina where the club plays its league rivals when not at Griffith Stadium the pickup has been terribly low."¹⁰⁹

The Grays pieced together a fairly decent team. In addition to Leonard and Wilmer Fields, the Grays reacquired lefty Roy Partlow from the Philadelphia Stars.¹¹⁰ Partlow, who fared only slightly better than John Wright in the Dodgers' farm system, held down the

happiness. He gave them disappointment. He gave them love. He gave them identity. The migrant poor, the middle and working classes, the light-skinned elite—they rallied around the Grays. As Ronald K. Crockett, who grew up watching the Grays at Griffith Stadium, told journalist Daniel Cattau:

We still don't realize what an important part of the community the Grays were. Josh was people. Buck was people. They didn't act like big shots or big stars. They were just down-to-earth, regular fellas. We still don't realize what a good thing we had.¹²⁴

Black Washington sacrificed the Grays for the larger cause of integration and opportunity that left Leonard and many others behind.



A strong, proud man and Gibson's closest friend on the team, Sam Bankhead played shortstop and center field for the Grays. Bankhead, a Pittsburgh native who was shot and killed in 1976, is thought by some to be the inspiration for the main character in August Wilson's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, *Fences*. (ROBERT H. McNEILL)



The 1946 Grays stand in front of Griffith Stadium's thirty-foot-high right-field wall. The sign says it was 328 feet from home plate, but it was actually 320. Josh Gibson (standing third from left), Buck Leonard (kneeling third from left), and Ted "Double Duty" Radcliffe (kneeling far left) are pictured. (ART CARTER PAPERS, MOORLAND-SPINGARN RESEARCH CENTER, HOWARD UNIVERSITY)



Wendell Smith (standing at left) and Sam Lacy (standing second from right) attend the Hall of Fame induction of Satchel Paige (standing center) in 1971. Smith and Lacy were part of the committee that helped make Paige the first Negro Leaguer elected. Future Hall of Famers Judy Johnson (standing second from left) and Monte Irvin (standing right) and Hall of Famer Roy Campanella (seated right) are also present. (NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY)

They had a rumor out there that we were interested in Buck Leonard, the Homestead Gray's [sic] first baseman.

Now what in the world would we do with Leonard? A fine ball player in his day, but so were a lot of other fellows.

Why Buck's as old as I am.⁴

Lacy credited Griffith for his sincerity. Unlike other owners, such as the Yankees' Larry MacPhail, Pirates' William Benswanger, or Cubs' Phil Wrigley, Griffith had never made empty promises or given the local black fans false hope. "From the very beginning of the campaign for integration, Griffith refrained from expressing a willingness to employ colored players," Lacy wrote. "The aged Washington boss has steadfastly refused to say he was even interested in the experiment."⁵

Although Lacy acknowledged that "Washington's first tan American Leaguer may be a long way off" and "in fact may never become a reality," he saw "a shining ray of hope in Griffith's new attitude. . . . Now things look brighter."⁶ Lacy wrote that his father, who had died the previous spring, "would have loved this day." In 1947, the elder Lacy had stopped going to Senators games altogether because of Griffith's opposition to integration.⁷ Despite the Old Fox's "change of heart" in March 1949, the first black player on the Senators was indeed more than five years off.

Things were changing all around Griffith's ballpark. In November 1948, a committee published a ninety-one-page report titled "Segregation in Washington." Its author was Kenesaw M. Landis II, the nephew of the late baseball commissioner and former Griffith ally. "In the Nation's Capital," the report concluded, "we must mean what we say, and give people of all races and colors an equal chance to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."⁸

During the summer of 1949, ninety-year-old Mary Church Terrell formed a committee that sought enforcement of the "lost" laws of 1872–73 prohibiting discrimination in the city's public accommodations. The committee picketed downtown restaurants that refused to serve blacks, including Thompson's Restaurant at 725 Fourteenth Street, N.W. Two other establishments, Kresge's Seventh Street vari-

ety store and the lunch counter at Murphy's Dime Store, relented—Thompson's would not. In 1953, after four years of protests and court battles, the United States Supreme Court upheld the city's nineteenth-century antidiscrimination laws and ordered Thompson's and all other area establishments to serve blacks.⁹ "Insist on the enforcement of the law," Terrell said, "for these laws can be lost again."¹⁰

Howard University law dean Charles Hamilton Houston led black Washington's quest for justice in the courts. Five years before the end of Terrell's public accommodations battle, he had argued a Supreme Court case about restrictive housing covenants on behalf of Washington's black home buyers. In a group of cases collectively known as *Shelley v. Kraemer*, the high court ruled that judicial enforcement of restrictive covenants constituted state action that violated the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause.¹¹ Although Washington's white residents could draw up all the restrictive covenants they wanted, they couldn't get the courts to enforce them.¹²

Houston, who died in April 1950, didn't live to see the ultimate fruit of his labor on May 17, 1954—the Supreme Court's landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision outlawing segregation in the public schools.¹³ The Court ruled in *Bolling v. Sharpe* that Washington's segregated schools violated Fifth Amendment liberties under the due process clause.¹⁴ In *Brown*, Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote for a unanimous Court that racial separation among schoolchildren "generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone."¹⁵

After the *Brown* and *Bolling* decisions, Griffith's Senators represented a conspicuous pillar of segregation in the nation's capital. In celebration of his fifty-year association with the American League in 1952, the Old Fox told his life story to good friend and fellow segregationist J. G. Taylor Spink of *The Sporting News*. At one point in the interview, Griffith suddenly turned confessional. "I had been wrong because I had assumed the mental attitude of the Old Guard, with its worship of the ancient fetishes of the game," Griffith said. "In assuming a more tolerant position, I helped myself in the long run."¹⁶ He was referring to night baseball, not integration.

Since his team's last World Series appearance in 1933, Griffith resisted many changes to major league baseball—night games, farm systems, and integration. The opposite of Posey and the Grays, Griffith refused to adapt. “They were trying to be a corner grocery store in a supermarket world,” Shirley Povich told Jon Kerr. “They got behind the times in minor league development and in payrolls. . . . Mr. [Clark] Griffith used to be a gambler. But in later times when the pot got too big, he shied off. Maybe he didn't think he had the resources.”¹⁷

The image of the Senators as a mom-and-pop operation, however, obscured the enormous profits Griffith reaped in owning Washington's major league team. “He's a rich man,” Ed Fitzgerald wrote in 1954, “one of the few to become rich in the game to which he has devoted his life.”¹⁸ In taking over as Washington's new field manager in 1912, Griffith had mortgaged his Montana ranch to purchase a 10 percent interest in the team for \$27,500. Seven years later, Griffith obtained majority ownership with help from Philadelphia grain dealer William Richardson for an additional hundred thousand dollars. At the time of his death in 1955, the franchise's estimated value was four million dollars.¹⁹ Griffith's heirs eventually sold the team for nine times that amount.

The minimal profits at the end of each season masked the hefty salaries Griffith doled out to his family members. Griffiths working for the team included his nephew and heir apparent, Calvin; his niece (and adopted daughter), Thelma; his niece, Mildred; and his nephews, Billy, Jimmy, and Sherry Robertson—the latter had a ten-year playing career with the Senators and the Philadelphia Athletics. Historian Harold Seymour wrote: “It is also, of course, possible for a club's books to show little or no profit while an owner and even his relatives make a comfortable living out of salaries and expenses, as in the case of the Griffith family when it was running the Washington American League club.”²⁰

In his later years, Calvin repeatedly claimed that his Uncle Clark refused to integrate the Senators at the insistence of the Grays. Calvin told Jon Kerr:

There were two brothers that owned the [Homestead] Grays. And they were talking to Mr. Griffith about one of these days they wanted to challenge the Major Leagues for the championship. And that's the only reason Mr. Griffith didn't sign some of 'em. But Branch Rickey went out and broke it all up by signing Jackie Robinson. If he hadn't signed Jackie Robinson there could have been in the years to come, a challenge of the black to white.²¹

A few years later, a public television producer from Washington asked Calvin why the Senators did not sign Gibson or Leonard. "I said Mr. Griffith already had black ballplayers on there, but he couldn't publicize it," Calvin recalled, referring to the team's Cuban players. "Then I went on and told her about [how] the Posey brothers and the other ballclubs wanted to get good enough to play the white teams. The black boys play the white boys. Not many people know that."²²

Griffith's opposition to integration was rooted in both prejudice and greed. Griffith believed he could make more money renting his stadium to black baseball teams than he could by increasing attendance from signing black players. Before 1945, he encouraged black baseball to build up its own leagues, helped owners such as Posey promote their businesses, and lavished praise on star players such as Paige, Gibson, and Leonard. After 1945, he defended the Negro Leagues as an economic entity and blasted Rickey for raiding black teams without compensating them. Griffith wanted the Negro Leagues to survive because he wanted to keep profiting off them. "He wouldn't think of taking black ballplayers from the Grays," the *Courier's* Ric Roberts told John Holway. "I don't call that prejudice. He just had a yen for making money."²³

Lacy, though less charitable than Roberts, looked back on Griffith's racial policies with the same caution that marked Lacy's integration campaign. He refused to call Griffith a racist, but he said Griffith "acted the part of a racist." Lacy explained:

That's the reason I say to you, it's kind of hard for me to get into his mind. But I will say his actions, see again, you can't say that a man

is racist. You can't say that a man is racist, you can say that he acted the part of a racist. There's quite a difference. That's the reason I dismiss Clark Griffith's attitude.²⁴

Griffith opposed integration at least in part based on underlying social concerns. His resistance to change, his position with Connie Mack as the leaders of baseball's traditionalist old guard, and his Southern clientele in Washington made his stance about more than just dollars and cents. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, Griffith's economic rationale no longer made sense. By that time, the Grays drew meager crowds at Griffith Stadium and then disbanded. Meanwhile, Griffith saw firsthand how Paige and Doby brought out the city's black fans en masse. By finding a few black players of his own, Griffith could have cultivated sellout crowds every night.

During his July 1952 *Sporting News* interview, Griffith addressed his failure to integrate the Senators:

To those who persist in speaking of me harshly on the Negro players issue, let me say that I would welcome the addition of players like Robinson, Campanella, Harry Simpson, Don Newcombe, Larry Doby, and Orestes [Minnie] Minoso to the Washington roster.

I stand ready, eager, to place Negro players on our Washington club. But they must rate the jobs on the basis of ability, and not merely because they happen to be Negroes.

I will not sign a Negro for the Washington club merely to satisfy subversive persons. I would welcome a Negro on the Senators if he rated the distinction, if he belonged among major league players.

The Washington club has a large Negro clientele. It represents some of the best citizenship of the District of Columbia. I would be only too glad to give that clientele a chance to root for a player of their own race.²⁵

Sportswriter A. S. "Doc" Young questioned the sincerity of Griffith's *Sporting News* comments because "while his Senators fell on their faces like so many Stoopnagles, playing in his park were the Home-

stead Grays and greats such as Josh Gibson and Buck Leonard. But, Griffith wanted none of them.”²⁶

In April 1953, Cleveland Indians general manager Hank Greenberg proposed trading Doby to the Senators for their young outfielder Jackie Jensen. But when Greenberg suggested the Doby-Jensen swap, the Old Fox “told Hank I did not want to talk trade.”²⁷ After the 1953 season, Griffith traded Jensen to the Red Sox for two white players, pitcher Mickey McDermott and outfielder Tom Umphlett. Griffith, citing four dark-skinned Cuban prospects in his minor league system, defended his record on race:

Insinuations that the Washington club really is opposed to playing Negroes on its team are lies.

If I could find another Doby or Minoso, I would make a place on the Senators for him. But nobody is going to stampede me into signing Negro players merely for the sake of satisfying certain pressure groups.

The Washington club would benefit financially from Negro representation in the field.²⁸

In September 1954, four months after the *Brown* and *Bolling* decisions, Griffith finally integrated his team but in his own perverse way. In 1953 and 1954, seven teams promoted black players to the majors (the Boston Red Sox integrated last, in 1959). Griffith chose Carlos Paula, a twenty-six-year-old Cuban-born outfielder who spent parts of three seasons with the Senators. Unlike Griffith’s former Cuban players who passed as white, there was no mistaking that Paula was black. Officially, Paula broke the Senators’ color barrier on September 6, 1954, before 4,865 fans and hardly any media attention.²⁹ He did not help the Senators on the field or at the box office.

The way Griffith integrated the Senators affronted the city’s black fans. “I think most of them recognized the fact that he was simply putting a token in there,” Lacy recalled. “Neither Carlos Paula nor Angel Scull [another dark-skinned Cuban prospect] was a legitimate major-league ballplayer. But it was a case where he brought them in

race. Instead, the bard of Washington sportswriters reviewed Griffith's fifty-year career as a player, manager, and owner; he regaled readers with Griffith anecdotes; and he expressed admiration for the man everyone called Griff. Povich concluded: "To me he was both philosopher and friend."³⁶

The *Washington Afro-American* viewed Griffith's death in less sentimental terms. In a twelve-paragraph editorial titled "No Tears for Griffith," the *Afro* wrote:

We wish we could shed a tear for Clark Griffith, the 85-year-old president of the Washington Senators, who was buried Monday.

Mr. Griffith was revered by many students of the game as one who had done more than anyone, past and present, for organized baseball. . . .

But Clark Griffith's contributions to baseball were accompanied by no desire to include us in it.

In fact, the paper simply ignored Paula's September call-up a year before Griffith's death: "Mr. Griffith never was convinced that colored Americans were good enough to play on the Washington Senators. . . . To this day there has never been a colored player in a Washington Senator uniform." The editorial concluded with an admonition: "We hope that his son, Calvin, will be enough in tune with the tempo of the times to reverse the undemocratic and outmoded policy of his father."³⁷

With Calvin at the helm, however, public relations quickly deteriorated. Calvin possessed his uncle's keen eye for baseball talent, but he lacked the old man's polish in dealing with people. Calvin tried everything from moving in Griffith Stadium's faraway fences for the team's young home-run hitters—such as Roy Sievers, Jim Lemon, and Harmon Killebrew—to selling beer. But he proved incapable of turning around his uncle's floundering franchise or dealing with the changes outside his ballpark.

During the 1950s, Washington officially became a majority black major city.³⁸ As integration began to affect Washington's schools,

project.⁴⁵ The man who had argued *Bolling v. Sharpe* before the Supreme Court regularly attended Senators and Redskins games at Griffith Stadium. He had been there the afternoon the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. Yet Nabrit steeled himself for change. “You can’t just be thinking of the good times you had here. I miss all those experiences, but I feel about this as I feel about all other progress,” he said. “This wasn’t adequate for baseball and football in a city the size of Washington, it had to go.”⁴⁶

Major league baseball, however, did not fare well in Washington. The new Senators played eleven seasons in Washington before becoming the Texas Rangers. Part of the reason for the Senators’ failures arose from their American League competition just up the road in Baltimore; in 1954, Clark Griffith and the other owners had permitted the St. Louis Browns to become the Baltimore Orioles. Another factor was his family’s refusal to sign black players. If either Clark or his nephew Calvin had reached out to the city’s black community—both in words and in deed—the original Senators might still be playing in Washington.

Up in Minnesota, the Twins enjoyed an initial run of success. Behind several young Cuban players, such as Tony Oliva and Zoilo Versalles, and home-run hitter Harmon Killebrew, the Twins captured the American League pennant in 1965 and division titles in 1969 and 1970. Calvin’s keen eye for baseball talent never failed him—he scouted and signed Hall of Famers Rod Carew and Kirby Puckett. His big mouth, racial insensitivity, and penuriousness, however, eventually ruined him.

During a September 1978 speech at the Lions Club in Waseca, Minnesota, Calvin revealed the real reason he had moved his ball club to Minnesota. He said: “It was when I found out you only had 15,000 black people here. Black people don’t go to ball games, but they’ll fill up a rassling ring and put up such a chant it’ll scare you to death. It’s unbelievable. We came here because you’ve got good, hardworking white people here.”⁴⁷ He also commented that his best player at the time, Carew, was “a damn fool” for signing a three-year, \$170,000 contract.⁴⁸ A *Minneapolis Star Tribune* reporter happened to be sitting in the audience. After reading Griffith’s comments in the

local paper, Carew responded: “The days of Kunta Kinte are over” and “I refuse to be a slave on his plantation and play for a bigot.”⁴⁹ Carew forced a trade to the California Angels in 1979. Calvin’s reputation in Minnesota never recovered.

After Calvin’s comments in Waseca, his sister confirmed the family’s racially conscious reason for leaving Washington. “The problem that we had run into in Washington was that our ballpark was in a very black district, and people were afraid of getting their tires cut up all the time and things like that, not that whites don’t do the same thing, I don’t mean that,” Thelma Haynes, Calvin’s sister and co-owner of the team, told Jon Kerr. “But it was hard to control and we didn’t have parking facilities like here [Minnesota].”⁵⁰

The Griffiths finally left baseball in 1984. Calvin could not stomach free agency, particularly the thought of giving multimillion dollar, multiyear guaranteed contracts to unproven players. Unable to adapt to the changes in baseball, much like his Uncle Clark thirty years earlier, he sold the Twins to Carl Pohlad for what today seems like a bargain-basement price, thirty-six million dollars. Three years later, with players largely signed by Calvin, the Twins won the World Series.

Calvin left baseball a rich man, with houses in Florida and Montana, but a lonely man. Baseball cost him his marriage (his first wife left him in 1974); and it severely damaged his relationship with his son, Clark II, a Dartmouth-educated lawyer who didn’t speak to Calvin for years. During a two-day visit with Calvin at his Florida apartment in 1996, Calvin exhibited the same combination of garrulousness, old-world charm, and ignorance that he had in the past. He admired a framed pen-and-ink drawing of Griffith Stadium and pointed out his Uncle Clark’s box. He talked about Ken Burns’s *Baseball* documentary (“I think they catered too much to the blacks”). Then he received a phone call from his son, Clark II. The two men had patched up their differences. Clark II wanted some advice. “Of course, my son is trying to buy the goddamn Twins,” Calvin said, matter-of-factly. “I think he’s nuts.”⁵¹

The Griffiths never got back into baseball. Calvin lived out his days in Florida and Montana. Like his Uncle Clark, Calvin lived a

long time because he kept his conscience clear. “Regrets?” Calvin said. “I don’t have any regrets. I don’t know why I should. I have no idea.”⁵² On October 20, 1999, he died at age eighty-seven of heart ailments and a kidney infection in Melbourne, Florida, and was buried next to his Uncle Clark at Fort Lincoln Cemetery near Washington, D.C.

The Griffith family’s racial attitudes destroyed a bond between Washington’s black community and the Senators and alienated a future generation of the city’s black baseball fans. The Griffiths are partly to blame for why Washington, D.C., has not experienced major league baseball for more than thirty years. Sadly, that is the Griffith family’s legacy in the nation’s capital. At a recent symposium about Griffith Stadium at Howard University Hospital, former Mayor Walter Washington issued a challenge to Clark Griffith II: “Mr. Griffith, you should take the lead in bringing baseball back to town.”⁵³ When major league baseball returns to Washington, it will be in spite of, not because of, the Griffiths.

Buck Leonard lived every Southern migrant’s dream of returning home a hero and a success.⁵⁴ Although technically he never left Rocky Mount, he spent every summer traveling with the Grays and eight winters playing in Puerto Rico, Cuba, or some other Latin American locale. From 1951 to 1955, he played in the Mexican League. He spent his first three summers with Torreón and two with Durango, as well as two winters with Obregón and one with Xalapa.⁵⁵ The Mexican League played only three games a week, enabling him to play until he was forty-eight. They called Leonard, one of the league’s few home-run threats, “Durango’s Babe Ruth.”⁵⁶

Word reached the States in the early 1950s that Leonard could still hit. During the winter of 1951, he finally got the call from Bill Veeck that for so many years never came from Griffith. In 1951, Veeck assumed control of the St. Louis Browns, and he wanted Leonard to play on his team. Leonard declined. Winfield Welch, the former manager of the Birmingham Black Barons, called on Veeck’s behalf to inform Leonard that they would send him money in advance.

more as a playground attendant for the public school system. In 1959, he received his real estate license after obtaining his high school equivalency degree. He built up his real estate business and from 1962 to 1975 served as the vice president of the local minor league team, the Rocky Mount Leafs, of the Class-A Carolina League.⁶⁰

Leonard had only two regrets: not pursuing his education and not having any children.⁶¹ “I wish I had had some children,” he said. “They might have grown up to be ballplayers.”⁶² Although childless during twenty-seven years of marriage, Buck and Sarah lived a happy life together. She was his partner, companion, and best friend. On February 15, 1966, Sarah died of a heart attack. “That was the hardest thing in my life I ever had to deal with,” Leonard wrote. “It was the worst time of my life.” Two years later, his mother, whom he called Miss Emma until the day she died, passed away.⁶³

In a sense, Leonard had raised three children: his brothers, Herman and Charlie, and his youngest sister, Lena. Leonard recognized Charlie’s academic gifts and made sure that Charlie would not get sidetracked by playing black baseball. After Charlie died in 1951, all three of his children graduated from college and became engineers.⁶⁴ Leonard’s sister, Lena, moved to Washington, D.C. Her daughter graduated from Bennett College and then worked as a chemist at the National Cancer Institute at the National Institutes of Health.⁶⁵ The Leonards ascended into the middle class, in large part because of the sacrifices that Leonard made for his younger brothers and sister. The entire family viewed Leonard as a father figure.

Leonard’s crowning achievement was his 1972 induction into the Baseball Hall of Fame with his deceased Grays teammate Josh Gibson. Six years earlier, Ted Williams had used his Hall of Fame speech to lobby for the inclusion of Negro Leaguers such as Paige and Gibson. “I hope that some day Satchel Paige and Josh Gibson will be voted into the Hall of Fame as symbols of the great Negro players who are not here only because they weren’t given a chance,” Williams said.⁶⁶ In 1971, the Hall of Fame made Paige its first Negro League inductee. Originally, the Hall of Fame planned to put the Negro Leaguers into a separate wing. After considerable uproar in the media, then–baseball commissioner Bowie Kuhn persuaded the

Luther King Jr. destroyed many of the businesses on U Street. Although Washington remained one of the nation's wealthier majority black cities, the city's demographics had changed.⁷³ Dunbar High School became a poor neighborhood school where only 30 percent of its students went on to college in 1976, compared with 80 percent during the pre-World War II era.⁷⁴ Although still one of the finest historically black colleges, Howard University is no longer considered the center of the black intellectual universe.

The black press, in fighting for integration in baseball and other aspects of life, contributed to its own undoing. World War II marked the economic apex of black businesses like the Negro Leagues and the black press. "The Negro press," Gunnar Myrdal wrote, "is bound to become even stronger as Negroes are increasingly educated and culturally assimilated but not given entrance to the white world."⁷⁵ Once white media organizations opened their newsrooms to black reporters and began covering issues in the black community, black Washingtonians forgot about the *Afro-American*. With a combined circulation close to 230,000 during the war, the *Afro* put out a Baltimore edition and a national edition that by 1969 reached about seventy thousand people.⁷⁶ In 1992, the *Afro* celebrated its one hundredth anniversary with a paid circulation between fifteen thousand and thirty thousand.⁷⁷ The Murphy family still runs the Baltimore-based newspaper.

Lacy spent a lifetime at the *Afro*, working there for more than fifty-eight years after returning from the *Chicago Defender* in January 1944. Over the years, he turned down numerous offers from white daily newspapers. "The *Afro* gave me the opportunity to pursue the Jackie Robinson story, my landmark story, which newspapers from the *Portland Oregonian* to the *Dallas Morning News* to the *Boston Globe* would not have allowed me to put three years into developing," Lacy recalled. "I couldn't turn my back on the *Afro*, no matter what kind of offer."⁷⁸ With the *Afro*, Lacy covered six Olympics, numerous World Series, and Robinson's Hall of Fame induction. He mentored many young black sportswriters, including *New York Times* columnist William Rhoden, and inspired countless others. He wrote his "From A to Z" column almost every week and for a time even

In 1997, Sam Lacy was the first sportswriter who had spent his career in the black press to be elected to the writers' wing of the Baseball Hall of Fame.

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Buck Leonard stands with Commissioner Bowie Kuhn at Leonard's 1972 Hall of Fame induction. Josh Gibson was posthumously inducted along with Leonard.

(NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY)

- Constance McLaughlin Green, *The Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation's Capital* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967), 201–2. Other historians, such as Washington native Rayford W. Logan, have written that Griffith Stadium wasn't segregated. Rayford W. Logan, "Growing Up in Washington: A Lucky Generation," *Records of the Columbia History Society of Washington, D.C.*, vol. 48 (1971–1972), ed. Francis Coleman Rosenberger (University of Virginia Press, 1973), 506.
4. Bill Gilbert, taped interview by author, 9 July 1992, Potomac, Md., and telephone interview, 3 June 1992.
 5. Calvin Griffith, taped interview by author, Indiatlantic, Fla., 10–11 February 1995. The reason for separate seating, according to Calvin Griffith, was partly economic and partly social. "[They] came to Mr. Griffith and asked him if he would build them a section where they could go and not be disturbed by anybody," Calvin said. "They built a place in right field called the pavilion. And that was strictly for the black people and the cost of that was either fifty cents or seventy-five cents, either one of the two. It was cheaper." See also Jon Kerr, *Calvin: Baseball's Last Dinosaur* (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1990), 137.
 6. Lacy interview, 15 July 1992. In his recently published autobiography, Lacy described the right-field stands at Griffith Stadium as the "Jim Crow pavilion." Sam Lacy with Moses J. Newson, *Fighting for Fairness: The Life Story of Hall of Fame Sports-writer Sam Lacy* (Centreville, Md.: Tidewater Publishers, 1998), 25.
 7. Southern congressmen who had seized control of the D.C. government legally segregated the schools from 1878 to 1954. Green, *The Secret City*, 116; Alvin E. White, "Washington Is (Not) a Jimcrow Town," *Our World* 9:1 (January 1954), 23.
 8. In the mid-1930s, a park official put up signs segregating the Rock Creek Park picnic area. The signs were removed, but segregation persisted through "the deft use of picnic permits." Victor R. Daly, "Washington's Minority Problem," *Crisis* 46:6 (June 1939), 170. The same was true on streetcars, which ran along Seventh Street and stopped at Griffith Stadium. Signs that said "This car reserved exclusively for colored people" hung from the streetcars in 1862, but Congress legally integrated all streetcars three years later. William Tindall, "Beginning of Street Railways in the Nation's Capital," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society* 21 (1928), 76–77. See also Green, *The Secret City*, 66–67 (placing the date of the Congressional ordinance at 1862). The 1862 ordinance may have applied to one streetcar company, but there were several competing streetcar companies at that time. The ordinance wasn't extended to all companies until 1865, according to Tindall. For the history of D.C. streetcars, see LeRoy O. King, *100 Years of Capital Traction: The Story of Streetcars in the Nation's Capital* (Dallas: Taylor Publishing, 1972); John W. Boettiger, "Street Railways in the District of Columbia" (master's thesis, George Washington University, 1963). The all-white bus and streetcar operators continued to discriminate by driving "non-stop express buses through thickly populated Negro Districts." Daly, "Washington's Minority Problem," 170.
 9. These laws fined businesses one hundred dollars and revoked their licenses for one year for refusing to serve "any well-behaved and respectable person, in the same room and at the same prices, as other well-behaved and respectable persons are served." Letitia Brown and Elsie M. Lewis, *Washington in the New Era, 1870–1970* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1972), 4.

10. C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 3d rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 102.
11. John Claggett Proctor, "Early Base Ball Games in the Capital," *Washington Evening Star: The Sunday Star Magazine*, 1 October 1933, pt. 7, 6–7; Douglas E. Evelyn and Paul Dickson, *On This Spot: Pinpointing the Past in Washington, D.C.* (Washington, D.C.: Farragut Publishing, 1992), 238–39.
12. Griffith Stadium Scorecard and Program, 1957; Gordon M. Thomas, "Griffith Stadium: 30th Anniversary of the Finale," (September 1991; unpublished article on file with author).
13. "Griffith Stadium was, putting it uncharitably, a dump," sportswriter Dick Heller wrote. "But it was our dump." Dick Heller, "Griffith Stadium Was Ugly, Charming and Uniquely D.C.," *Washington Times*, 24 September 2001, C13.
14. "Play Ball April 12," *Washington Post*, 18 March 1911, 1; "New Stand April 12," *Washington Evening Star*, 18 March 1911, 1.
15. The grandstand was far from complete. "Much of the concrete [was] still clad in wooden forms. All of the seats were uncovered, and no box seats had been installed except for the presidential party." Bill Shannon and George Kalinsky, *The Ballparks* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1975), 235.
16. "Ready for 'Fans'" *Washington Sunday Star*, 9 April 1911, pt. 1, 3.
17. Scorecard and program, 1957.
18. "The enlarged park, when completed, will be known as the Clark Griffith Stadium." Denman Thompson, "Big Stadium Here to Handle 50,000 Ready by Autumn," *Washington Evening Star*, 21 August 1923, 1. The concrete bleachers enlarged the park's seating capacity to between twenty-eight thousand and thirty-two thousand. Griffith periodically vowed to enlarge the stadium's seating capacity beyond thirty thousand but never made good on the promise. Id.; Kirk Miller, "Owner of Nats Plans to Enlarge Baseball Park by 12,000 Seats," *Washington Times*, 24 December 1938, 16; Burton Hawkins, "Plant to Seat 40,000 Baseball, 44,000 Grid Crowds, Nats Plan," *Washington Evening Star*, 5 July 1946, A-10.
19. William B. Mead and Paul Dickson, *Baseball: The President's Game* (New York: Walker Publishing Company, 1997), 24–25. Presidents Nixon and Ford threw out the first ball for Opening Days of the expansion Senators of the 1970s at RFK Stadium.
20. Ken Denlinger, "There Used to Be a Tree, and a Ballpark, and a Team," *Washington Post*, 10 July 1985, B1.
21. David Von Sothen, *The Last Out* (1964), documentary.
22. In 1927, a sociologist listed fourteen pool halls between the 1200 and 2000 blocks of Seventh Street/Georgia Avenue. William H. Jones, *Recreation and Amusement Among Negroes in Washington, D.C.* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1927; reprint Westport, Conn.: Negro University Press, 1970) 136–38. The 1924 city directory lists five pool halls in the 2000 block of Georgia Avenue. 1924 City Directory, 1680. By the 1930s, the storefront churches with names such as New Rising Mt. Zion Baptist Church (1527 Seventh Street), Bible-Way Church of Christ (1541 Seventh Street), and House of Prayer Church (1719-21 Seventh Street) lined Seventh Street. 1935 City Directory, 2577.
23. Sandra Fitzpatrick and Maria R. Goodwin. *The Guide to Black Washington* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1990), 152; Henry Whitehead, *Remembering U Street: There Was a Time* (private publication on file with author).

The Lacy's neighbors included a Navy Department messenger, a hotel waiter, a laborer/contractor, a hod carrier, a music teacher in the public schools, a clerk in the government printing office, a charwoman at the Treasury Department, a driver, a building contractor, and an engineer. 1910 Census, District of Columbia, E.D. 153, sheets 4a, 4b, 5a, lines 6–100, 1–31.

The 1911 City Directory lists the family as having moved again, to 1910 Thirteenth Street. 1911 District of Columbia City Directory, 890. Between 1910 and 1920, Thirteenth Street also changed from white to black and mulatto. Cultural Resources Survey 1991–1992. Lacy's immediate neighbors included a government laborer, a street laborer, and a hotel cook. 1920 Census, District of Columbia, vol. 13, E.D. 192, sheet 9b, lines 67–100.

Lacy's family also took in several boarders. The 1920 census says that two brothers from Kentucky, Philip and Wallace Brooks, ages twenty-two and twenty, respectively, lived with the family as "roomers." The census also lists Rachel Bell, a forty-nine-year-old public schoolteacher, as a "sister-in-law" living with the family. Bell, indeed, may have been Lacy's mother's sister because Lacy's mother is named Rosa B. Lacy. Bell's parents, however, are listed as having been born in Washington, D.C., whereas Rosa's were born in Maryland. 1920 Census, District of Columbia, vol. 13, E.D. 192, sheet 9b, lines 78–87. This discrepancy can be explained in two ways: (1) an error by the census taker, or, more likely, (2) the sister-in-law label was a pretense for taking in a female boarder. Lacy's parents were not averse to disguising unmarried females living in their home as relatives. Lacy's autobiography recounts several stories about Aunt Susie, another boarder whom his parents referred to as their aunt "simply to allay any curiosity we might have." Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 18.

Lacy's father moved two more times during the mid-1920s and 1930s. Id. at 19. The 1924 city directory lists Sam's father's address as 1719 Fifteenth Street, NW. 1924 District of Columbia City Directory, 902. The 1930 census says that the elder Lacy owned a fifteen thousand dollar house at 1222 Kenyon Street, NW, a mostly black neighborhood with a few Russian and European immigrant families. 1930 Census, roll 300, E.D. 287, sheet 5a, line 25. Lacy's sister and brother-in-law lived next door at 1223 Kenyon. See id. at lines 28–31. Lacy and his wife, Alberta, lived several doors down at 1216 Kenyon. See id. at lines 17–18; 1931 District of Columbia City Directory, 931. Lacy's father stayed at his house on Kenyon Street. See 1935 District of Columbia City Directory, 1175.

40. Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 19. The 1920 census lists Rosa B. Lacy as a "hairdresser" who worked at her "own shop." 1920 Census, District of Columbia, vol. 13, E.D. 192, sheet 9b, line 79. The 1930 census, however, does not list an occupation for Lacy's mother. 1930 Census, roll 300, E.D. 287, sheet 5a, line 26.
41. Sam Lacy, "The 'Y' a Mine That Yielded Many Goals," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 25 February 1995, A8; Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 15–16; Linda Wheeler, "Preserving a Century of Service in Shaw; History YMCA Finds New Community Role," *Washington Post*, 24 September 1998, J1.
42. Lacy interview, 15 July 1992; Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 20–21.
43. Ellington's addresses included 1803, 1805, and 1816 Thirteenth Street (between T and S), and 1206 and 1212 T Street (between Twelfth and Thirteenth). Whitehead, *Remembering U Street*, 2; Raymond M. Lane, "Jazzed on Duke," *Washington Times*, 18 May 2000, M4; M. Dion Thompson, "The Duke of U Street," *Baltimore Sun*, 29 April 1999, 1E.

44. Tucker, *Ellington*, 17–20, 24–27.
45. One of the school's first principals was Richard Greener, the first black graduate of Harvard. Another of the school's early principals was Robert Terrell, a graduate of Harvard and then Howard University Law School. Mary Church Terrell, "History of the High School for Negroes in Washington," *The Journal of Negro History* 2:3 (July 1917), 256. Dunbar's teachers arrived armed with undergraduate degrees from Harvard, Yale, Amherst, Dartmouth, Radcliffe, and Oberlin. Id., 261; Dr. Robert C. Weaver, taped interview by author, New York, N.Y., 30 July 1992.
46. During the 1943–44 school year, the average annual salary of principals, supervisors, and teachers in the District of Columbia school system was equal for blacks and whites: \$2,610. Although its funding of the school systems, based on per pupil allocations, was vastly unequal, the District of Columbia was apparently one of only three segregated school systems with equal teachers' salaries. Report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights, *To Secure These Rights* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1947), 64. It had been that way for decades. Jervis Anderson, "A Very Special Monument," *The New Yorker*, 20 March 1978, 107. Robert Weaver said that Dunbar paid its teachers higher salaries than Howard University paid its professors. He recalled: "I had teachers from Amherst, teachers from Yale, teachers from Dartmouth, they were Phi Beta Kappa men, too, teachers from Harvard, and teachers from Radcliffe." Weaver interview.

As Jervis Anderson's *New Yorker* article on Dunbar High School pointed out, if educated blacks did not have law or medical degrees, they could aspire to be "postal clerks, low-level government workers, soldiers, Pullman porters, manual laborers . . . teaching was the most distinguished career open to them." Anderson, "A Very Special Monument," 107.

47. Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 16.
48. Anderson, "A Very Special Monument," 97–98.
49. Anderson quoted a 1975 letter to the editor in the *Washington Post*: "The pride that Dunbar alumni rightfully have in the academic achievements of their school should be substantially tempered by sadness—the criteria for a guaranteed comfortable and successful student sojourn at Dunbar were, in order of importance (1) parents in professional jobs, (2) a minimum of melanin in the skin, and (3) a fairly high scholastic average, not necessarily deserved." Anderson, "A Very Special Monument," 103. Constance McLaughlin Green wrote: "Negro school administrators and teachers believed their first obligation was to the most able of the colored school population." Green, *The Secret City*, 245.

Although describing the students' socioeconomic backgrounds as "lower middle class" in light of their fathers' occupations as "clerks and messengers," Mary Gibson Hundley conceded that the "community was the most fortunate colored group in the country." Mary Gibson Hundley, *The Dunbar Story (1870–1955)* (New York: Vantage Press, 1965), 31.

50. Anderson, "A Very Special Monument," 107–8. Dr. Clark, of course, harbored his own biases. He was a lifelong integrationist who sought to minimize the achievements of a segregated school system. Dr. Clark's controversial doll test constituted part of a sociological study that the Supreme Court cited in overruling the constitutionality of segregated schools. *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 US 483, 495 n. 11 (1954).

51. Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 18. Houston later served as the principal at Armstrong, running into trouble with the New Negro Alliance when he crossed one of its picket lines. See *infra* Chapter 3, text accompanying note 26.
52. Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 16.
53. Although four high schools eventually served Washington's black students, Armstrong was Dunbar's lone rival when Lacy switched schools. Opened in 1902 on P Street between First and Third Streets, NW, the Armstrong Manual Training School actually had begun in 1894–1895 as a “noncollege preparatory technical course.” Lillian G. Dabney, “The History of Schools for Negroes in the District of Columbia 1807–1947” (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1949), 139–40. Eventually, it would become known as Armstrong Technical High School. Two other black high schools opened during this period: Cardozo (for business education, in 1928) and Phelps (vocational). *Id.*, 141–42.
54. For a discussion of the philosophical differences between DuBois and Washington regarding higher education, see David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. DuBois: Biography of a Race (1868–1919)* (New York: Henry Holt, 1993), 165, 206, 261–62; David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. DuBois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century* (New York: Henry Holt, 2000), 2, 76.
55. Lacy interview, 15 July 1992.
56. Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 19; Lacy interview, 15 July 1992.
57. The 1924 Armstrong yearbook says that Lacy played on the basketball and baseball teams from 1922 to 1924 and on the football team in 1923 and 1924. “The Reflector—Class of 1924, Armstrong Technical High School,” 83. The class history, however, omits Lacy's name as one of the leaders on those teams: “Frederick Ellis, Harry Turner, Francis Honesty, Chester Anderson, Norman McCoy, Vantile Harris, and Preston Allen began to forge to the front because of their athletic prowess. These young men have played a part in many of the athletic achievements of Armstrong, but more about them and their records will be found in other pages of this book.” *Id.*, 62. The omission of Lacy is perhaps because the yearbook discusses Armstrong's success only in football and perhaps because Lacy was a transfer student. Lacy is pictured on Armstrong's football team and basketball team, but oddly not on the baseball team. See *id.*, 119, 133, 137.

Lacy's basketball coach taught him zone defense and fast-break offense. Armstrong lost in the black high school national championship to Chicago's Wendell Phillips High School. Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 19–20. In 1923, Lacy's junior season, the *Washington Tribune* noted that “Lacey” was one of five “subs” in Armstrong's 23–16 victory over Dunbar. *Washington Tribune*, 10 March 1923, 4.

58. Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 19.
59. Kelly Miller, “Howard: The National Negro University,” in *The New Negro: An Interpretation*, ed. Alain Locke (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1925), 312.

Founded by whites (Congregationalist ministers started it as a theological seminary in 1866), named after one of its white founders (General Oliver O. Howard, the head of the Freedmen's Bureau), and led by whites until the third decade of the twentieth century (it did not have a black president until 1926), Howard handed out its first diplomas to four daughters of its all-white faculty. In 1867, Congress officially chartered Howard University and provided annual federal funding to advance “the education of youth in the liberal arts and sciences.” The school's purpose was to fos-

ter biracial education. Under the financial auspices of the Freedmen's Bureau, however, Howard evolved into a free person of color's ticket to self-advancement. Rayford W. Logan, *Howard University: The First Hundred Years, 1867–1967* (New York: New York University Press, 1969), 12–14; “Howard University: It Is America's Center of Negro Learning,” *Life* 2:21 (18 November 1946), 100.

60. Professor Logan's authoritative history of Howard credits Johnson's predecessor, President Durkee, with changing Howard's mission by repeatedly referring to it as “an institution of higher learning for Negroes” and by increasing the number of black faculty members. Logan, *Howard University*, 244. Technically, Johnson was not Howard's first black president. In 1873, John Mercer Langston was named acting president. Howard's trustees, however, passed over Langston for the presidency in favor of a white candidate. Henry F. Pringle and Katherine Pringle, “America's Leading Negro University,” *Saturday Evening Post*, 221:34 (19 February 1949), 97; Fitzpatrick and Goodwin, *Guide to Black Washington*, 133.
61. Howard's dream team chafed under Johnson's leadership. Johnson gave his faculty unlimited academic freedom to speak, write, and teach about any subject, “within reason, because President Johnson was one of the most fearless critics of American democracy in modern times.” Their academic freedom came at a price. Howard historian Rayford W. Logan, in his book about the university, wrote: “There is, however, one view about him on which friends, adversaries, and neutrals tend to agree—that he possessed a ‘messianic complex.’ In certain ‘messianic moments’ he would tell the late E. Franklin Frazier the kind of sociology to write or the late Abram Harris the kind economics to study.” Logan, *Howard University*, 249.

While faculty members tolerated Johnson's “messianic moments,” they simmered about their “limited voice in running the University.” Id., 251. Johnson stifled faculty criticism of his administration. “You were forbidden to write a member of the Board of Trustees, and if you did you had to take it into the president's office for him to mail,” John Hope Franklin recalled. “You know, that kind of plantation conduct we didn't like.” John Hope Franklin interview, 21 April 1994. By the end of his tenure at Howard, Johnson had alienated most of his academic superstars.

“It was the pinnacle for any black scholar,” recalled Franklin, a member of Howard's history department from 1947 to 1956. “You can look at it another way and say that it was a dead end because that was as far as you could go. There was never any thought on the part of a black scholar that you could go beyond Howard University.” Id.

62. In an era when Northern graduate and professional schools limited their black enrollment, Howard's medical, law, dental, pharmacy, engineering, and architecture schools offered the black elite an entree into the professional world. Howard's medical school was one of only two among traditionally black colleges, with Freedmen's Hospital (located between the University and Griffith Stadium) serving as the medical school's teaching hospital. Howard's law school offered the country's first course on civil rights and prepared Thurgood Marshall and a generation of black lawyers to contest the constitutionality of segregation. As of 1946, “half of all the Negro physicians, surgeons, and dentists and 80 percent of all the Negro lawyers in the U.S. [were] Howard graduates.” Pringle and Pringle, “America's Leading Negro University,” 36; Logan, *Howard University*, 18–20, 23.

63. The 1926 city directory lists Samuel H. Lacy as a student living at his father's house at 1719 Fifteenth, NW. 1926 District of Columbia City Directory, 919.
64. Asked why he did not graduate from Dunbar, Lacy told me: "Because I wasn't interested in medicine or law. I came up at the same time as Bill Hastie, Montague Cobb, and Charlie Drew. They were in my age level; they went to Dunbar." Lacy interview, 15 July 1992.
65. The 1924 city directory lists Erskine Lacy as an elevator operator. The 1935 city directory lists Erskine Lacy as a skilled laborer at the government printing office. Lacy's autobiography recounted the story about Erskine's quitting his job to hustle pool. Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 14.
66. *Ibid.*, 17.
67. Louis R. Lautier, "Sports Chatter," *Washington Tribune*, 12 September 1925, 4.
68. Henry Whitehead, telephone interview by author, 19 January 1995.
69. "When Dunbar won there would always be a fight because they thought it was rigged. Armstrong guys would figure they were playing favorites," recalled Robert McNeill, a major on Dunbar's team. "If you were on a winning company and you were a Dunbar student, you didn't put on the ribbon that you won. You got home as quietly and unobtrusively as you possibly could." Robert McNeill, taped interview with author, Washington, D.C., 17 August 1993.
70. Green, *The Secret City*, 208.
71. *Ibid.*, 239.
72. *Washington Afro-American*, 23 September 1944, 15.
73. Frank Rasky, "Harlem's Religious Zealots," *Tomorrow* (November 1949), 12.
74. In 1920, Washington's black population (109,966) was slightly ahead of that of Chicago (109,458) and Baltimore (108,322) and third behind New York (152,467) and Philadelphia (134,229). Bureau of the Census, *Negroes in the United States 1920-1932* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1935), tbl. 10, p. 55.
75. H. Scott, "Sports Chatter," *Washington Tribune*, 12 April 1924, 4.
76. McNeill interview, 17 August 1993.
77. Sam Lacy, "Looking 'Em Over," *Washington Tribune*, 13 July 1933, 12.
78. Griffith interview, 10-11 February 1995.
79. In his autobiography, Lacy quotes an old column saying that Altrock threw a wet towel in his father's face. Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 25. For years, Lacy refused to divulge the identity of the Senators player, but he distinctly recalled the man spitting in his father's face. Ron Fimrite, "Sam Lacy: Black Crusader," *Sports Illustrated* (29 October 1990), 94. Lacy relayed the incident to John Steadman as a man spitting in his father's face. John Steadman, "Lacy Has Spent Life Furthering Minorities, but Race He's Helped Most Is Human One," *Baltimore Evening Sun*, 16 November 1992, 4C. Lacy later told Steadman it was Altrock. For more on Altrock's career as the first clown prince of baseball, see Jim Blenko, "Nick Altrock," *The National Pastime: A Review of Baseball History* no. 18 (Cleveland: SABR, 1998), 73-77.
- In his autobiography, Lacy claimed that his father stopped going to games after the Altrock incident in the 1924 World Series. Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 25. Lacy's father actually stopped attending Senators games after Griffith signed Bert Shepard, a one-legged pitcher, in 1945. See *infra* Chapter 7.

80. Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 25.
81. Jones, *Recreation and Amusement*, 30.
82. Neil Lanctot has a terrific discussion of this issue. Neil Lanctot, *Fair Dealing and Clean Playing: The Hilldale Club and the Development of Black Professional Baseball, 1910–1932* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1994), 183.
83. H. Scott, “Sports Chatter,” *Washington Tribune*, 28 July 1923, 4.
84. H. Scott, “Sports Chatter,” *Washington Tribune*, 12 April 1924, 4.
85. The Pilots made a brief comeback in 1934.
86. Lacy interview, 15 July 1992.
87. Art Carter, “From the Bench,” *Washington Tribune*, 17 July 1937, 12.
88. *Washington Afro-American*, 5 February 1938, 18.
89. Dick Powell, taped interview by author, Baltimore, Md., 24 August 1992.
90. Donn Rogosin, *Invisible Men: Life in Baseball’s Negro Leagues* (New York: Atheneum, 1988), 93.
91. McNeill interview, 17 August 1993.
92. “Ben Taylor Plans to Enter His Team in N.N.L. in 1940,” *Washington Tribune*, 29 July 1939, 13; Russell Awkard, taped interview by author, Silver Spring, Md., 26 August 1993.
93. H. Scott, “Sports Chatter,” *Washington Tribune*, 12 April 1924, 4.
94. *Ibid.*
95. Leonard interview, 20 July 1992. Ruth actually had two doubles in that first game, one to right in the first inning and one off the left-field wall in the sixth. *Washington Daily News*, 5 July 1924, 1. Buck Leonard with James A. Riley, *Buck Leonard: The Black Lou Gehrig* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 1995), 7.
96. Gehrig played in only thirteen games in 1923 and in ten games in 1924, coming to bat only twelve times in his second major league season. Gehrig’s famous consecutive-games streak of 2,130 did not begin until June 1925.
97. The first reference to Leonard’s first major league baseball game appears in an article published three years before Leonard suffered a debilitating stroke in 1986 that affected his ability to speak and his memory. Barry Jacobs, “Buck Leonard,” *Baseball America*, 1 June 1983, 5. More was learned about that game in Leonard’s recently published autobiography based on interviews conducted before the stroke. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 7 (calling it “the thrill of my life until that time”). In his autobiography, Leonard incorrectly states that the game took place on the Fourth of July. Indeed, a doubleheader with the Yankees occurred that day, a Friday. However, in a poststroke interview with the author, Leonard specifically recalled his first game as a matchup between Herb Pennock and Walter Johnson. Buck Leonard, taped interview by author, Rocky Mount, N.C., 20 July 1992. According to numerous newspaper accounts, the only Pennock-Johnson matchup of the 1924, 1925, or 1926 seasons occurred July 5, 1924. Leonard also recalled sitting in right field. Leonard interview, 20 July 1992.
98. Lena Cox, taped interview by author, Chillum, Md., 29 August 1992.
99. His great grandfather, Thomas Leonard, was born in 1824 in the Cedar Rock Township of Franklin County, North Carolina. After the Civil War, Thomas Leonard continued to work on the farms of one of the surrounding white landowners in Franklin County. He had married another slave, Manerva, and they had nine children: William, Henry, Maxine, Margaret, Lucy, Sallie, Davy, Mary, and Spencer.

In 1870, Leonard's great-grandparents, Thomas and Manerva Leonard, were forty-six and forty years old, respectively. 1870 Census. See supra. By 1880, Thomas had died and Manerva was listed as forty-five years old. 1880 Census. See supra. Exactly how old Thomas and Manerva were remains somewhat of a mystery. In 1850, Thomas would have been about twenty-six years old and Manerva between twenty and twenty-five.

Frederick Leonard is the white farmer who probably owned Thomas and Manerva. An eighty-three-year-old farmer in 1850, Frederick Leonard owned more slaves than any other Leonard in Franklin County. Bureau of the Census, *Seventh Census of the United States—Population*, 1850 North Carolina Free Schedules, Franklin County, roll 630, unofficial page 766, line 5; id., 1850 North Carolina Slave Schedules, Franklin County, roll 652, unofficial page 649, col. 1, line 42, col. 2, line 1.

In 1850, the slave schedule for Franklin County lists Frederick Leonard as owning a thirty-year-old female slave and a twenty-nine-year-old male slave. 1850 Slave Schedule. Frederick's neighboring white relative, Bennett H. Leonard, owned a twenty-five-year-old male mulatto slave. Id., at roll 652, unofficial page 653, col. 1, lines 11–12. Frederick's son, Frederick Jr., owned a twenty-year-old female slave as well as her two infant children. Id., roll 652, unofficial page 609, col. 2, lines 23–25. Any of these slaves could have been Thomas and Manerva Leonard.

Frederick Leonard died in 1856. His will somewhat clarifies the picture. An inventory of his estate includes a slave with a name that looks like Manerva and a slave named Tom whose name is crossed out. Franklin County Wills and Estates, Box 039.508.46, Folder Frederick Leonard 1856, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina. An "Account of Sale of Negroes" belonging to Frederick's estate describes the sale of a "woman Manerv [unclear] and children" for \$1,230.00 to Dr. E. Lawneo [unclear]. Id., Folder Frederick Leonard 1816. No other antebellum wills and estates from Franklin County's white families named Leonard include slaves with names Manerva, Tom, or Thomas.

In 1860, the Franklin County Slave Schedule lists no male slaves in their early to middle thirties belonging to someone named Leonard. Frederick Leonard, presumably Frederick Sr.'s son, owned a thirty-four-year-old female slave. Bureau of the Census, *Eighth Census of the United States*, 1860 North Carolina Slave Schedules, Franklin County, roll 922, page 5, col. 2, line 2. Bennett Leonard also owned a thirty-five-year-old female slave. Id., roll 922, page 7, col. 2, line 28. According to Frederick Leonard's will, however, Manerva Leonard had been sold in 1856.

It remains unclear which white farmer named Leonard in Franklin County, North Carolina, owned Thomas and Manerva. Frederick Leonard probably owned them at some point because slaves named Tom (crossed out) and Manerva (different spelling) appeared in his will and estate. Frederick owned more slaves, about two dozen, than any other white Leonard in Franklin County. He also seems to have given many slaves to his children even before his death. Thus, Frederick Leonard or one of his children most likely owned Buck Leonard's great-grandparents, Thomas and Manerva Leonard.

100. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 6–7; John Holway, *Voices from the Great Black Baseball Leagues* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1975; rev. ed, 1990), 254; Lena Cox interview, 29 August 1992.

- uscript Division, Howard University, Washington, D.C., box 78-53, folder 1236; C. D. Leonard, taped interview with author, Oxon Hill, Md., 26 December 1994.
110. Cox interview, 5 August 1992.
 111. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 11–12.
 112. Rob Ruck, *Sandlot Seasons: Sport in Black Pittsburgh* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 39–46.
 113. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 12.
 114. Buck Leonard interview, 20 July 1992; Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 12–13.
 115. Cox interview, 21 April 1995; C. D. Leonard interview, 26 December 1994. Before entering college, Charlie worked as bootblack at a local barbershop. 1930 *Census*, vol. 36, E.D. 33, sheet 9a, line 37.
 116. *The Brick Bugle* (Bricks, N.C.), February 1931, vol II, no. 5; C. D. Leonard interview, 26 December 1994.
 117. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 13–14.
 118. Years later, Leonard confessed that he did not believe Charlie’s ankle was broken. Buck Leonard interview, 12 October 1992. Lena Cox vividly remembered this incident but claimed that Leonard was playing for Norfolk and Charlie was playing for Wilson. Cox interview, 5 August 1992. Lena recalled the game as being in the late 1920s because she left Rocky Mount in 1932. Cox interview, 29 August 1992. Leonard, however, did not begin playing for Portsmouth (which is right next to Norfolk) until April 1933. Buck (Portsmouth) and Charlie (Rocky Mount) clashed on opposing teams in 1933, but Charlie did not break his ankle that season.
 119. “Rocky Mount Elks in ‘Training,” *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, 18 April 1931, 12.
 120. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 17.
 121. *Washington Tribune*, 23 June 1923, 5; id., 7 July 1923, 5; id., 11 August 1923, 4. Lacy also pitched in relief in the Buffaloes’ 12–1 loss to the Piedmonts. Id., 18 August 1923, 4. In his autobiography, Lacy recalled his first sandlot experience as being with another D.C. team, the Teddy Bears. Lacy said he didn’t like the “drinking, womanizing and other carousing that was going on” and he switched to the LeDroit Tigers. Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 25–26. The *Washington Tribune*, however, indicates that Lacy played for the Buffalo A.C. before playing for the Tigers.
 122. *Washington Tribune*, 1 September 1923, 4.
 123. “Mantyne Harris Pitches Brilliant Games as Tigers Lose to Lincolns,” *Washington Tribune*, 12 August 1922, 4.
 124. A year after proclaiming themselves the 1922 city sandlot champions, the LeDroit Tigers applied for membership in one of the top two black professional leagues, the Eastern Colored League. “LeDroit Tigers Claim Championship,” *Washington Tribune*, 30 September 1922, 4; Lanctot, *Fair Dealing*, 98–99. The Tigers’ application was denied, but the team continued to send players to the black professional ranks. *Washington Tribune*, 16 June 1923, 5; id., 23 June 1923, 5.
 125. *Washington Tribune*, 1 September 1923, 4.
 126. *Ibid.*, 22 September 1923, 4.
 127. Lacy wrote: “My own baseball career ran simultaneously with high school, college, and my writing career, starting, as I’ve indicated, at Dunbar and Armstrong high schools and continuing on into the years when I was writing for the *Washington Tribune* and the *Afro-American*.” Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 25. Tom Callahan said Lacy wrote for a nickel an inch. Tom Callahan, “For 70 Years, Restlessness, Curious-

- ity Drove Sam Lacy to Chronicle History,” *Washington Post*, 21 June 1991, D3. Peter Sheingold, however, said it was twenty-five cents an inch. Peter M. Sheingold, “In Black and White: Sam Lacy’s Campaign to Integrate Baseball” (undergraduate thesis, Hampshire College, 1992), 23.
128. Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 23.
129. *Washington Tribune*, 5 July 1924, 4. Id., 2 August 1924, 4. Lacy lost again the following week. Id., 9 August 1924, 4.
130. Black baseball’s finest players of that era, including John Henry Lloyd, Dick Lundy, and Oliver Marcelle, played for the Bacharach. In 1926 and 1927, the Bacharach captured the Eastern Colored League championship before falling to the Negro National League’s Chicago American Giants in black baseball’s World Series. Robert Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970; rev. ed., 1992), 67–68; Lanctot, *Fair Dealing*, 40, 140, 245 n. 17; Dick Clark and Larry Lester, eds., *The Negro Leagues Book* (Cleveland: SABR, 1994), 25–26; Rogosin, *Invisible Men*, 28; John B. Holway, *Blackball Stars: Negro League Pioneers* (Westport, Conn.: Meckler, 1988), 32, 136.

Two years after forming in 1916, the Bacharach Giants folded. In 1919, several black New Yorkers revived the team as the New York Bacharach Giants. The original Atlantic City Bacharach re-formed in 1922 and merged with the New York Bacharach the following year. Lanctot, *Fair Dealing*, 75, 96; Neil Lanctot, E-mail, 22 November 2000 (on file with author). After the Bacharach joined the ECL in 1923, they folded again in 1929 before being revived two years later in Philadelphia.

131. Steve Katz, “Sam Lacy Traveled Rough Road with Black Athletes,” *Baltimore Sun*, 17 August 1980, C5; Patrick Ercolano, “He Went to Bat for Blacks,” *Baltimore Sun Magazine*, 6 April 1986, 15; Eunetta Boone, “The Write Stuff,” *Baltimore Evening Sun*, 18 August 1989, C1; Mark G. Judge, “Writing the Good Fight,” *Washington City Paper*, 17 May 1991, 29; Sheingold, “In Black and White,” 23.

At least two interviewers, about ten years apart, wrote that Lacy played for both the Bacharach and the Baltimore Black Sox. *Baltimore Sun*, 17 August 1980, C5; *Washington City Paper*, 17 May 1991, 29. These interviewers may have confused the Baltimore Black Sox with another sandlot team that Lacy played for during the 1920s, the Washington Black Sox.

Three of the best profiles of Lacy do not mention that he played for the Bacharach. Fimrite, “Black Crusader,” 90 (“He also played semipro ball in the all-black leagues in and around Washington, often against such stars of the Negro leagues as Oscar Charleston, Biz Mackey, John Henry Lloyd, and Martin Dihigo”); Callahan, “For 70 Years,” D3 (“A middle infielder with a middle infielder’s quick intellect [but unfortunately, a bat as light as balsa], Sam knocked about semi-pro ball on the periphery of the Negro leagues in and around Washington”); Jim Reisler, *Black Writers/Black Baseball* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1994), 11 (“Later, he played semi-pro baseball in and around Washington, competing against some of the stars of the Negro league ball like Martin Dihigo and John Henry Lloyd”). Although both Callahan and Reisler may have relied on Fimrite’s profile, the cautiousness of these three writers reinforces that Lacy may not have played with the Bacharach.

132. Lacy interview, 15 July 1992. Lacy told at least one other interviewer the same thing. *Washington City Paper*, 17 May 1991, 29.

Notes (Chapter 2)

177. "Ben Liked Them So He Took Two," *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, 1 July 1933, 12.
178. "Ben Taylor Heads New Baltimore Ball Club," *Washington Afro-American*, 4 March 1933, 17. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 19–20; Holway, *Voices*, 254–55.
179. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 21–22; Holway, *Voices*, 255–56.
180. In a late July doubleheader against the Kennett Square (Pa.) sandlot club, Leonard batted cleanup and played first base. He finished 1 for 2 in each game and made an error in the first one. "Taylor's Stars Win Twin Bill," *Washington Afro-American*, 29 July 1933, 21.
181. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 20–21; Holway, *Voices*, 255.
182. Theo Baron, "Balto. Stars Lose 2 Games to Dixie Nine," *Washington Afro-American*, 5 August 1933, 21.
183. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 21–22. Leonard, however, told John Holway that the team had been playing so poorly that it couldn't get any bookings. Holway, *Voices*, 255–56.
184. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 23.
185. Leonard consistently recalled sending Charlie home to get him to junior college. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 23; Holway, *Voices*, 256. Charlie, however, would have already finished at Brick by the summer of 1933 and headed for Talladega, where he attended school at least through 1935.
186. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 25.
187. Lanctot, *Fair Dealing and Clean Playing*, 188 (quoting sportswriter W. Rollo Wilson describing the Brooklyn Royal Giants in 1928 as "an old soldiers' home, a port for foundering hulks which have walloped through the seven seas on baseball"); Ruck, *Sandlot Seasons*, 118 (describing Strong). During the 1930s, the Royal Giants largely played against semipro teams in the New York area. "Royal Giants Face Bronx Carltons," *New York Amsterdam News*, 23 August 1933, 8; "A's Split with Royal Giants," *id.*, 27 September 1933, 8.
188. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 25–28.
189. *Ibid.*, 30; Cox interview, 5 August 1992.
190. "Cum Posey's Pointed Paragraphs," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 6 April 1934, sec. 2, p. 3.
191. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 33–34; Holway, *Voices*, 257.

CHAPTER 2

1. David W. Zang, *Fleet Walker's Divided Heart: The Life of Baseball's First Black Major Leaguer* (Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 47. For Zang's wonderful account of Walker's two years with Toledo, see *id.*, 35–45.
2. Jerry Malloy, "Introduction: Sol White and the Origins of Major League Baseball," in *Sol White's History of Colored Base Ball: With Other Documents on the Early Black Game, 1886–1936*, by Sol White (Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), xviii. For a concise history of black baseball, see Jules Tygiel, "Black Ball," in *Total Baseball: The Official Encyclopedia of Major League Baseball*, eds. John Thorn et al. (New York: Total Sports, 1999), 493–509.
3. Rayford W. Logan, *The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir, 1877–1901* (New York: Dial Press, 1954). See also Malloy, "Introduction," in White, *Sol White's Base Ball*, xviii (initially placing the rise of black baseball in the historical context of "the Nadir").

20. Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White*, 131.
21. Ruck, *Sandlot Seasons*, 131.
22. Holway, *Voices*, 224, 264.
23. Sam Lacy, "Looking 'Em Over," *Washington Afro-American*, 24 August 1940, 23.
24. This story first appeared in Robert Peterson's groundbreaking book on black baseball, promulgated by Grays third baseman Judy Johnson, who claimed to have been the Grays' manager in 1929 who "discovered" Gibson by calling him out of the grandstand when Smokey Joe Williams was pitching against the Monarchs. Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White*, 162–66. The Grays' longtime outfielder and manager, Vic Harris, discredited Johnson's claim about discovering Gibson. Harris pointed out that Johnson was not the team's manager (it was still Cum Posey). Harris wrote: "In 1930 when Josh was gotten from the Pittsburgh playground Judy was captain part of that season." Letter from Vic Harris to Art Carter, 8 March 1971, box 1, folder 5, Art Carter Papers, Manuscript Division, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University. Historian John Holway cast additional doubt on Johnson's story by claiming to have found the box score from Gibson's reputed first game against the Monarchs, which was in 1930 and showed the Grays' pitcher as Lefty Williams. John Holway, *Josh and Satch* (Westport, Conn.: Meckler, 1991), 23.

William Brashler, Gibson's first biographer, argued that the story was only "partially true." Gibson's first game was not July 25 against the Monarchs, and he was not called out of the stands. Brashler said that catcher Buck Ewing hurt his finger against the Dormont club; the Grays temporarily inserted Vic Harris behind the plate; and Gibson, playing across town at Ammon Field for the Crawford Colored Giants, arrived via taxi in time to take over the catching duties. According to one of Posey's own columns, Posey had "contacted Gibson and told him to be ready at any time." William Brashler, *Josh Gibson: A Life in the Negro Leagues* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 22–24.

Gibson biographer Mark Ribowsky wrote that Gibson was in Ingomar, Pennsylvania, playing for the Crawfords the night that Ewing hurt his finger, but that Gibson debuted for the Grays later that weekend against the Monarchs. Ribowsky, however, confirmed through box scores and oral interviews with Harold Tinker that Gibson came out of the grandstand and that he replaced Ewing midgame. Mark Ribowsky, *The Power and the Darkness: The Life of Josh Gibson in the Shadows of the Game* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 41–43.

Wherever the truth lies, Gibson began his Negro League career with the Grays in July 1930. The eighteen-year-old Gibson initially took over the catching duties from the injured Ewing and eventually earned the role as the Grays' primary backstop and chief batting threat.

25. W. Rollo Wilson, "Grays Win Eastern World Series," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 6 October 1930, sec. 2, p. 5.
26. "Homestead Grays Win Title As Champions of the East in 10 Games with Lincoln," *New York Age*, 4 October 1930, 6. A third account, contradicting the other two eyewitness accounts and Gibson himself (see *infra* text note 28), claimed that "Gibson drove the ball into the center field bleachers on the first bounce for a home run. . . ." "That Last Game Saturday," *New York Amsterdam News*, 1 October 1930, 12.

27. W. Rollo Wilson, "They Could Make the Big Leagues," *The Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races* 41:10 (October 1934), 305.
28. "Posey's Points," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 2 April 1938, 17.
29. Ibid.
30. Negro League historian John Holway interviewed three eyewitnesses from that 1930 contest: Judy Johnson and Jake Stephens of the Grays and Bill Yancey of the Lincoln Giants. Based on these accounts, Holway concluded that Gibson hit the ball nearly 500 feet into the distant left-field bullpen. Holway, *Josh and Satch*, 31–34; John B. Holway, *The Complete Book of the Negro Leagues: The Other Half of Baseball History* (Fern Park, Fla.: Hastings House Publishers, 2001), 268–69. See also Brashler, *Josh Gibson*, 29–30 (discussing the Yankee Stadium homer).
31. W. Rollo Wilson, "Grays Win Eastern World Series," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 6 October 1930, sec. 2, p. 5.
32. "Posey's Points," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 2 April 1938, 17.
33. "Cum Posey's Pointed Paragraphs," 7 March 1936, sec. 2, p. 4.
34. "In Memoriam: Cumberland Willis Posey," *Negro Baseball Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: 1946), 3; Harry Keck, "Late Cum Posey Was Heart of Grays," *Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph*, 26 March 1946, 26.
35. Lanctot, *Fair Dealing*, 215–17.
36. Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White*, 92.
37. For the best profile of Gus Greenlee, see Ruck, *Sandlot Seasons*, 137–69. See also James Banks, *The Pittsburgh Crawfords: The Lives and Times of Black Baseball's Most Exciting Team* (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Publisher, 1991), 91–99.
38. In 1932, Posey rejected Greenlee's entry into the East-West League because Greenlee refused Posey's terms: a five-year contract with the league and installing Posey's brother, Seward ("See"), as the team's manager. Ruck, *Sandlot Seasons*, 155. Perhaps Posey's harsh terms reflected his bitterness over losing many of his players.
39. W. Rollo Wilson, "Sports Shots: Press Box & Ringside," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 17 September 1932, sec. 2, p. 4.
40. Larry Lester, *Black Baseball's National Showcase: The East-West All-Star Game, 1933–1953* (Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 1–7.
41. Greenlee's NNL initially included the Grays, but he kicked them out at midseason for raiding players. The Grays claimed to have left the new NNL during the 1933 season because independent baseball was more profitable than contributing 5 percent of all gross profits to the league. Cum Posey, "Independent Ball Only Hope for Survival," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 8 July 1933, sec. 2, p. 4. League officials contended that the Grays stole two players, third baseman Jimmy Binder and outfielder John "Big Boy" Williams, from the Detroit Stars, and that they canceled league games without proper notice. John L. Clark, "Baseball's Future Lies in Organization," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 22 July 1933, sec. 2, p. 5.
42. Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White*, 93.
43. Although Jackson helped Posey meet the team's payroll at the end of the 1933 season, Posey formally announced Jackson as the team's co-owner at the beginning of 1934. Charles Walker was listed as the Grays' president, Posey as secretary, and Jackson as treasurer. "Cum Posey's Pointed Paragraphs," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 28 April 1934, sec. 2, p. 5; Ruck, *Sandlot Seasons*, 171.

44. "Posey's Pointed Paragraphs," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 26 May 1934, sec. 2, p. 5; "League Sec'y Scores Posey for Tactics," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 2 June 1934, sec. 2, p. 7.
45. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 35.
46. Ibid.
47. Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White*, 14; Holway, *Voices*, 257–58; Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 34–35.
48. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 36–37.
49. Leonard's "Joe Scott" story is true. In the third week of April, Posey touted "Scott, a left-handed first baseman from Indianapolis" as the team's starter. "Grays in Drills at Wheeling Ball Park," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 21 April 1934, sec. 2, p. 5. In the following week's paper, Posey promoted Leonard for the job. "Cum Posey's Pointed Paragraphs," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 28 April 1934, sec. 2, p. 5.
50. "Grays Gain Edge Over Philly on Eastern Trip," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 2 June 1934, sec. 2, p. 6.
51. W. Rollo Wilson, "Sport Shots," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 9 June 1934, sec. 2, p. 4.
52. Chester Washington, "Grays Win Second Holiday Tilt, 4–3," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 7 July 1934, 1; William G. Nunn, "Noted Speed-Ball Ace of Craw Fans 17 As Grays Are Beaten, 4–0," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 7 July 1934, 1.
53. "Baltimore to Battle Grays; Ft. Wayne Mixed Club Coming," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 28 July 1934, sec. 2, p. 5.; Chester L. Washington, "'Smoky Joe' Fans First Batter; Ft. Wayne Loses," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 11 August 1934, sec. 2, p. 5.
54. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 38.
55. "Cum Posey's Pointed Paragraphs," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 3 November 1934, sec. 2, p. 4.
56. W. Rollo Wilson, "Sport Shots," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 15 September 1934, sec. 2, p. 4.
57. Wilson, "They Could Make the Big Leagues," 305.
58. "There is a totally different class of colored people, who run houses of ill fame and gambling on Sixth Avenue; a 'sporty' element which is more in evidence and creates for the race an unpleasant notoriety," Margaret Byington wrote of Homestead in 1910. "These people frequently appear in police courts and form a lower element in the town's life." Byington, *Homestead*, 14; Miner and Roberts, "Engineering an Industrial Diaspora," 9, n. 9.
59. "Cum Posey's Pointed Paragraphs," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 28 April 1934, sec. 2, p. 5; "The Grays' Travel-Log," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 2 June 1934, sec. 2, p. 6 (displaying a photograph of the bus); Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 126.
60. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 70.
61. Holway, *Voices*, 258.
62. "Lundy to Work Out at Hot Springs," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 6 April 1935, sec. 2, p. 4. The Newark Dodgers and the Grays played each other in Wilson. Cum Posey, "Binder Injured, New Catching 'Find' Unearthed at Grays' Camp," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 13 April 1935, sec. 2, p. 4.
63. Chester Washington, "Sez Ches'," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 26 January 1935, sec. 2, p. 5.
64. William G. Nunn, "Mule Suttles 'Steals' East-West Classic Again," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 17 August 1935, sec. 2, p. 5; Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 63.
65. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 64–66; Holway, *The Complete Book of Baseball's Negro Leagues*, 331; "Four Reds Pitchers Fail to Halt Foes," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 7 March 1936, sec. 2, p. 5; "Brown's 3-Base Hit Defeats Leaguers," 14 March 1936, sec.

- ther Washington nor Cora Wroten are listed in the 1910, 1920, or 1930 census index for North Carolina, nor in the main records for Currituck County.
93. Lena Cox interview, 21 April 1995.
 94. *Ibid.*, 5 August 1992.
 95. C. D. Leonard interview.
 96. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 92.
 97. *Ibid.*, 79.
 98. John L. Clark, "Grays, Craws to Act on Gibson," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 20 March 1937, 16 ("With all of his ability, he has not developed that 'it' which pulls the cash customers through the turnstiles although he has been publicized as much as Satchel Paige"). Clark was the Crawfords' public relations director.
 99. John L. Clark, "The Rise and Fall of Greenlee Field," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 10 December 1938, 17.
 100. Leonard claimed that the Grays played between 200 and 210 games a year before he played winter ball in Cuba and Puerto Rico. See Holway, *Voices*, 258.
 101. "Team Press Releases," box 2, folder 7, Art Carter Papers.
 102. Powell interview, 24 August 1992.
 103. Leon Day, taped interview by author, Baltimore, Md., 24 August 1992.
 104. Wendell Smith, "'Smitty's' Sports Spurts," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 11 June 1938, 17.
 105. Cum Posey, "Posey's Points," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 10 December 1938, 17. For more on Greenlee Field, see John L. Clark, "The Rise and Fall of Greenlee Field," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 10 December 1938, 17; Ruck, *Sandlot Seasons*, 156–57, 163.
 106. Lester, *Black Baseball's National Showcase*, 13.
 107. Pittsburgh gained fewer than 8,000 black residents from 1930 (54,983) to 1940 (62,216). Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940—Population* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1943), vol. II, pt. 6, tbl. C-35, p. 218. Washington, by contrast, gained more than 50,000 from 1930 (132,068) to 1940 (187,266). *Id.*, vol. II, pt. 1, tbl. 2, p. 956.
 108. *Pittsburgh Courier*, 8 July 1939, 17.
 109. *Ibid.* Several weeks later, the *Washington Tribune* reported the rumors. Joe Sewall, "As Athletes Pass," *Washington Tribune*, 22 July 1939, 12.
 110. Wendell Smith, "Time Out!" *Pittsburgh Courier*, 29 July 1939, 15.

CHAPTER 3

1. Robert W. Creamer, *Baseball in '41: A Celebration of the "Best Baseball Season Ever"—In the Year America Went to War* (New York: Viking, 1991), 45–46.
2. Morris A. Bealle, *The Washington Senators: An 87-Year History of the World's Oldest Baseball Club and Most Incurable Fandom* (Washington, D.C.: Columbia Publishing Co., 1947), 164.
3. Clark Griffith, as told to J. G. Taylor Spink, "Clark Griffith's 50 Golden Years in the American League: Sale of Son-in-Law Cronin 'Nats' Financial Salvation," *The Sporting News*, 30 July 1952, 12. In his latest historical baseball abstract, Bill James wrote: "The team fell into a 25-year malaise after they sold Joe Cronin in 1934." James, *The New Bill James Historical Baseball Abstract*, 148. Although James correctly observed that the Senators were a good team during Griffith's first twenty years, selling Cronin was not the problem. It was merely symptomatic of the Sen-

ators' inability to compete against teams able to invest in elaborate farm systems, and later on, willingness to sign black players.

Griffith contended that he received \$250,000 in the Cronin trade, whereas other sources place the figure at \$225,000. Either way, the move indicated that Griffith was strapped for cash.

4. Robert L. Tiemann and Peter Palmer, "Major League Attendance," in *Total Baseball*, eds. Thorn et al., 106–07; Joseph L. Reichler, ed., *The Ronald Encyclopedia of Baseball* (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1962), 240–41.
5. Sam Lacy, "Looking 'Em Over with the Tribune," *Washington Tribune*, 3 August 1935, 12.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 31.
8. *Washington Tribune*, 31 August 1933, 12.
9. *Washington Tribune*, 22 September 1934, 12; Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 31–32.
10. *Washington Tribune*, 23 March 1935, 12.
11. *Washington Tribune*, 17 August 1935, 12.
12. *Washington Tribune*, 19 October 1935, 12; Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 31–32.
13. James Roland Coates Jr., "Gentlemen's Agreement: The 1937 Maryland-Syracuse Football Controversy" (master's thesis, University of Maryland, 1982), ii–iii. For an excellent article on Sidat-Singh, see Luke Cyphers, "Lost Hero: Sidat-Singh a Two-Sport Star, Harlem Renaissance Man," *New York Daily News*, 25 February 2001, 82, and 30 March 2001.
14. *Washington Tribune*, 30 October 1937, 1.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Coates, "Gentlemen's Agreement," 62–64.
17. *Washington Tribune*, 30 October 1937, 1.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*, 12.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), 186–94; Juan Williams, *Thurgood Marshall: American Revolutionary* (New York: Times Books, 1998), 75–79. Williams exploded the myth that Marshall had been rejected by the University of Maryland Law School; indeed, Marshall admitted to both Kluger and Williams that Marshall never even applied to Maryland. Williams, *Thurgood Marshall*, 52–53 and n. 1. In addition to Kluger's excellent recitation of the *Murray* case, see the NAACP Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Mark Tushnet, *The NAACP's Legal Strategy Against Segregated Education, 1925–1950* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1987).
22. *Murray v. Maryland*, 182 A. 590 (1936), 169 Md. 478 (1937).
23. The list of founders included Allison Davis, William Hastie, Belford Lawson, Frank Thorne, Clyde McDuffie, and Howard Fitzhugh. "Theory of the Alliance," Eugene C. Davidson Collection, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Manuscript Division, Howard University, Washington, D.C., box 91-1, folder 14, p. 5.
24. "Theory of the Alliance," Eugene C. Davidson Collection, box 91-1, folder 14, p. 4.
25. *Ibid.*, 5–6; Green, *The Secret City*, 229–30.
26. Letter from G. David Houston to Eugene Davidson, 16 July 1938, Eugene C. Davidson Collection, box 91-1, folder 23.
27. Dr. Harold O. Lewis, taped interview by author, Washington, D.C., 19 August 1992.

47. For example, Cambria bought the Albany club for \$7,500, sold off \$60,000 worth of players, and then sold the team for \$65,000 to the Giants. Warren Bornscheur, "Ivory Hunter Unique," *Baltimore Morning Sun*, 2 March 1941, sec. 1, p. 2.
48. Bill James, *The Bill James Historical Baseball Abstract* (New York: Villard Books, 1986), 134–139; Ron Fimrite, "His Own Biggest Fan," *Sports Illustrated*, 19 July 1993, 79.
49. J. G. Taylor Spink, *Judge Landis and 25 Years of Baseball* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1947), 232–40; David Pietrusza, *Judge and Jury: The Life and Times of Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis* (South Bend, Ind.: Diamond Communications, 1998), 361–70.
50. Bornscheur, "Ivory Hunter Unique," sec. 1, p. 2.
51. Shirley Povich, taped interview by author, Washington, D.C., 12 January 1993. Historian Bill James recounts a run-in Cambria had with minor league officials in 1937 that forced the Class-D Salisbury (Maryland) team to forfeit (unjustly according to James) twenty-six games. There were several Cubans on that team, including future Senators catcher Mike Guerra. James, *The New Bill James Historical Baseball Abstract*, 162–65.
52. Roberto González Echevarría, *The Pride of Havana: A History of Cuban Baseball* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 270; Bornscheur, "Ivory Hunter Unique," sec. 1, p. 2. Echevarría, *The Pride of Havana*, 269–270.
53. Burton Hawkins, telephone interview with author, Arlington, Tex., 25 July 1993.
54. Povich interview.
55. Rogosin, *Invisible Men*, 159.
56. Calvin Griffith interview.
57. Robert Heuer, "Look What They've Done to My Game!" *Americas*, 1 May 1995, 36; Robert Heuer, "Give Hispanics Some Spots in Baseball's Management Lineup," *Houston Chronicle*, 5 March 1989, 5H.
58. Echevarría, *The Pride of Havana*, 264.
59. *Ibid.*, 265.
60. James, *The New Bill James Historical Baseball Abstract*, 195.
61. Povich interview.
62. Povich, *The Washington Senators*, 208.
63. Echevarría, *The Pride of Havana*, 45, 253, 255 (classifying both Estalella and de la Cruz as nonwhite major leaguers); Fred Lieb, *Baseball As I Have Known It* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1977), 260 (claiming to have met Bithorn's black first cousin); Bjarkman, "Cuban Blacks," 61–62 (making the case for both Bithorn and de la Cruz).
In 1936, Bithorn pitched for the Brooklyn Eagles team that Leonard played on in Puerto Rico against the Cincinnati Reds. "Brown's 3-Base Hit Defeats Leaguers," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 14 March 1936, sec. 2, p. 4. Bithorn was obviously dark-skinned enough to pitch for a black team in Puerto Rico in 1936 but light-skinned enough to pitch for the Cubs in the early 1940s.
64. Kerr, *Calvin*, 138.
65. Echevarría, *The Pride of Havana*, 270; Bob Considine, "Ivory from Cuba: Our Underprivileged Baseball Players," *Colliers*, 3 August 1940, 19, 24. Other "Cuban and South American players" on the Senators had "been subjected to all sorts of

86. Cum Posey, "Posey's Points," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 22 January 1938, 16.
87. Anderson, "Washington Senators Owner Sees Bright Future for Negro Baseball," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 3 September 1932, sec. 2, p. 5.
88. "Pro and Con on the Negro in Organized Baseball," *Washington Tribune*, 25 January 1938, 13; id., 5 March 1938, 13; id., 19 March 1938, 13; id., 26 March 1938, 12; id., 2 April 1938, 13; id., 11 June 1938, 13; id., 23 July 1938, 13.
- Blacks had played professional football with whites during the 1920s, though no blacks played in the National Football League from 1933 to World War II. During the 1930s and 1940s, however, blacks and whites played football together on major college teams.
89. Reed Rennie, "Jake Powell Suspended," *Washington Post*, 31 July 1938, sec. 2, p. 1; "Fans Would Bar Powell for Life," *Washington Afro-American*, 6 August 1938, 22. For more on the Jake Powell incident and reaction of the press, see Richard Crepeau, "The Jake Powell Incident and the Press: A Study in Black and White," *Baseball History* (Westport, Conn.: Meckler, Summer 1986), 32; Chris Lamb, "L'Affaire Jake Powell: The Minority Press Goes to Bat Against Segregated Baseball," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 76:1 (Spring 1999), 21–34; Lester, *Black Baseball's National Showcase*, 107–09.
90. Shirley Povich, "This Morning with Shirley Povich," *Washington Post*, 1 August 1938, 13.
91. Povich wrote of Ruth's final at-bat as a Yankee:
- Away it went, taking the long route to deep center field, where Jake Powell gathered it in.
- With that, Ruth doffed his cap, waved a farewell to his admirers, and dashed to the dressing room. It was finis.
- Shirley L. Povich, "12,000 Pay Tribute to Babe Ruth in Final Game of 22-Year Career," *Washington Post*, 1 October 1934, 15. Povich concluded his game story as follows: "But the ballgame had been only an anticlimax. Unlike Hamlet, the Babe, not the play, was the thing." Id., 17.
92. Povich, *The Washington Senators*, 177.
93. That same year, as a member of the Yankees, Powell had tried to run over Senators first baseman Joe Kuhel. For a recitation of Powell's scrapes, see Shirley Povich, "This Morning with Shirley Povich," *Washington Post*, 5 November 1948, 19; "Jake Powell, Bad Boy of Big Leagues, Kills Self," *The Sporting News*, 10 November 1948, 22; "Ready for Fight or Frolic," *The Sporting News*, 17 November 1948, 11.
94. Sam Lacy, "Looking 'Em Over with the Tribune," *Washington Tribune*, 13 June 1933, 12.
95. "Fans Don't Want to See Powell in Washington," *Washington Afro-American*, 6 August 1938, 22.
96. Shirley Povich, "Red Ruffing, Gomez Yield 6 Hits Each," *Washington Post*, 17 August 1938, sec. 2, p. 18.
97. Vincent X. Flaherty, "Bottles Rain on Powell as Yankees Win Twice," *Washington Herald*, 17 August 1938, 15.
98. Shirley Povich, "This Morning with Shirley Povich," *Washington Post*, 17 August 1938, sec. 2, p. 18.
99. Vincent X. Flaherty, "Griffith to Curb Bottle Throwing with Paper Cups," *Washington Herald*, 17 August 1938, 17.

100. Wendell Smith, "'Smitty's' Sports Spurts," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 6 May 1939, 14.
101. Logan, *Howard University*, 382.
102. When Anderson died at the age of 96 in 1993, the D.A.R. reasserted that no color line had existed and that Constitution Hall had been reserved. Abigail Van Buren, "Dear Abby: Setting the Record Straight on DAR's 'Racism'" *Chicago Tribune*, 7 February 1994, C-9; Ellen Goodman, "Sorry About That," *Boston Globe*, 26 December 1993, 23.
103. Michael Kernan, "The Object at Hand; Marian Anderson's Mink Coat," *Smithsonian*, 24:3 (June 1993), 14; "Jim Crow Concert Hall," *Time*, 6 March 1939, 33-34.
104. *New York Times*, 7 June 1993, A16. Anderson eventually performed at Constitution Hall in 1943 to raise money for United China Relief. D.A.R. agreed not to segregate seating, but it balked at agreeing not to ban Anderson in the future. "Marian Anderson at Last Sings in D.A.R.'s Hall," *Life*, 25 January 1943, 102. D.A.R.'s ban on black artists continued until 1952. Kernan, "The Object at Hand," 14.
105. "Citizens Protest Marian Anderson Bar," *Washington Tribune*, 18 February 1939, 1; Marian Anderson-D.A.R. Controversy Collection, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Manuscripts Division, Washington, D.C.
106. *Ibid.*, box 2, folders 45, 47.
107. "Schools Bar Marian Anderson," *Washington Tribune*, 18 February 1939, 1.
108. "'Strings' on Action, However, May Cause Rejection of Hall," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 11 March 1939, 1.
109. Marian Anderson-D.A.R. Controversy Collection, box 2, folder 45.
110. Mrs. Roosevelt, however, played no actual role in securing Anderson's eventual venue. Although she subsequently organized a White House performance by Anderson, Mrs. Roosevelt did not even attend Anderson's Easter concert.
111. Weaver interview.
112. "'God Made No Distinction of Race, Creed, Color,' Ickes Tells Concert Audience," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 15 April 1939, 4.
113. Weaver interview.
114. "Anderson Affair," *Time*, 17 April 1939, 23.
115. Sam Lacy, "Throng Captured by Artistry of Miss Anderson," *Washington Afro-American*, 15 April 1939, 1, 9.
116. Letter to Charles H. Houston from Mary McLeod Bethune, 10 April 1939, Marian Anderson-D.A.R. Controversy Collection, box 1, folder 4.

CHAPTER 4

1. "Base Ball in Washington," *Washington Tribune*, 23 September 1922, 4.
2. A team billed as the "Pittsburgh Homestead Grays" played at American League Park on July 4 and 5, 1921, against the Washington Braves. "Braves to Meet Fast Pittsburgh Grays," *Washington Tribune*, 2 July 1921, 4. An advertisement billed the visiting team as the "Pittsburgh Homestead Grays" and permitted all women who arrived at the park before 10:30 A.M. on July 4 to be admitted free. Id.

Around the same time, NNL founder Rube Foster had considered operating a black baseball franchise in the nation's capital with black theater impresario S. H. Dudley. Lanctot, *Fair Dealing*, 78-79; "S. D. Dudley Dies," *Washington Tribune*, 9 March 1940, 1.

3. Rob Ruck, the leading historian of black baseball in Pittsburgh, argued that the Grays did not “relocate” to Washington; they merely decided to “expand.” Ruck, *Sandlot Seasons*, 173. This may have been true initially, but after 1942 the schedule tilted heavily in Washington’s favor. See *infra* Chapters 5 and 6.

In 1940, however, the first-half schedule listed five home dates in Washington and five in Pittsburgh; the second-half schedule listed three dates in each city. “Baseball Schedules: Negro National League,” *Washington Afro-American*, 30 March 1940, 23; “N.N.L. Schedule,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 9 March 1940, 17; “Nat’l League Schedule,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 6 July 1940, 17.

4. Holway, *Voices*, 258–59.
5. The previous day, the Grays opened their season in Pittsburgh by defeating the Cubans, 7–3, at Forbes Field. The *Afro-American* estimated the Pittsburgh crowd as five thousand. “5,000 Grays Win Opener at Forbes Field,” *Washington Afro-American*, 18 May 1940, 25. The hometown *Courier* said only two thousand fans braved the chilly weather to attend the Pittsburgh opener whereas five thousand showed up in Washington. “Cubans Lose 3 to Grays,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 18 May 1940, 16. The *Washington Tribune* estimated that more than four thousand fans attended the D.C. home opener and that Ben Taylor served as the Cuban Stars coach. “Ben Taylor’s Cuban Stars Drop 2 Games to Homestead Grays,” *Washington Tribune*, 18 May 1940, 12; “Two-Game Bill Features D.C.’s Homestead Grays vs. Cubans,” *Washington Tribune*, 11 May 1940, 16.
6. Sam Lacy, “4,800 See Teams Break Even in D.C.,” *Washington Afro-American*, 25 May 1940, 21. The *Washington Tribune* reported “4,628 cash customers.” “Grays Split Twin Bill with Champion Baltimore Elites,” *Washington Tribune*, 25 May 1940, 12. Possibly based on an inflated attendance figure from Posey, the *Pittsburgh Courier* estimated the crowd at 5,900. “Elite Giants and Grays Split,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 25 May 1940, 17.
7. In June, the Grays swept Philadelphia (Leonard tripled twice in the first game) before only 1,500 spectators, and the Grays split with the Elites before only 3,118. “Grays Take Pair from Philly Nine,” *Washington Afro-American*, 7 June 1941, 22; Ric Roberts, “Grays Beaten, 6–1, After 7–4 Victory,” *id.*, 14 June 1941, 27. In July, a Grays–Newark Eagles doubleheader drew 2,000 fans. Ric Roberts, “Eagles Top Grays on Rookie’s Hit,” *id.*, 26 July 1941, 27. And in August, another Grays–Stars doubleheader mustered only 2,500. Ric Roberts, “Bob Wright Shuts Out Philly Nine,” *id.*, 10 August 1941, 22.
8. “Grays Increase Lead by Scoring Double Victory,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 13 July 1940, 17; “Ray Brown Blanks Elites with Three Hit Performance,” *id.*, 3 August 1940, 17. Art Carter estimated the Elks’ crowd at Yankee Stadium as only eight thousand. Art Carter, “Ray Brown Blanks Foes for 12th Win,” *Washington Afro-American*, 3 August 1940, 21.
9. Ted Poston, “15,000 in N.Y. See Elites and Grays Cop,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 14 September 1940, 16.
10. “Fans, Players Riot as Grays, Bushwicks Split,” *Washington Afro-American*, 21 June 1941, 27; Morgen S. Jensen, “Leonard and Brown Slug Out Home Runs,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 5 July 1941, 17; “Grays Swamp Cubans, 20–0; Win N.N.L. Title,” *id.*, 27 September 1941, 17.

64. "Ickes Order Opens Golf Links to All," *Washington Afro-American*, 12 July 1941, 21; "Meddlers Makes Golf Costly on District Course," id., 9 August 1941, 28.
65. Sam Lacy, "100 Turned Away from Ice Show," *Washington Afro-American*, 1 February 1941, 22.
66. The Grays, by contrast, lost good young players but not great ones: third baseman Howard Easterling; second baseman Lick Carlisle; outfielders Wilmer Fields and Frank Williams; and pitchers Johnny Wright, Garnett Blair, and Roy Welmaker. *Negro Baseball*, 1945 edition, 23, 27, box 1, folder 24, Art Carter Papers.
67. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 147.
68. Mead, *Baseball Goes to War*, 25–27.
69. Ibid., 100. The Senators lost another player, outfielder Elmer Gedeon, for good. Gedeon, who had played five games for the Senators in 1939, was one of two major leaguers killed while fighting for their country. Gilbert, *They Also Served*, 7.
70. Frazier, *The Negro in the United States*, 250.
71. Bureau of the Census, *Eighteenth Census of the United States—Population: 1960, Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1963) vol. I, pt. 10, tbl. 15, p. 10–11.
72. Daniel M. Johnson and Rex R. Campbell, *Black Migration in America: A Social Demographic History* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1981), 101–2.
73. The high literacy rate among Southern migrants, according to sociologist Carole Marks, suggested that black North Carolinians first migrated from rural to urban areas in their own state before going to the North. Carole Marks, *Farewell—We're Good and Gone: The Great Black Migration* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1989), 43–44. The census supports Marks's theory. In 1940, of the 7,415 black Washingtonians who lived in the nation's capital but had made their residences in North Carolina in 1935, some 4,606 came from urban areas, 1,283 from rural nonfarming areas, and only 1,240 from rural farm areas. Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census of the United States. Population: Internal Migration 1935–1940* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1943), 19.
74. By 1950, more than thirty thousand African Americans living in Washington came from North Carolina, and another thirty thousand came from South Carolina. Bureau of the Census, *Seventeenth Census of the United States, Special Reports: State of Birth* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1953), tbl. 4A, 37–38.
75. *Washington Tribune*, 3 August 1940, 12.
76. A. C. Braxton, taped interview by author, Seat Pleasant, Md., 18 August 1992; Eddie Dozier, taped interview by author, Washington, D.C., 18 August 1992.
77. Lena Cox interview, 5 August 1992.
78. *Pittsburgh Courier*, 14 February 1942, 1.
79. Sam Lacy, "Comrades Tomorrow . . . Why Not Today?" *Washington Afro-American*, 15 June 1940, 24.
80. Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 45–46.
81. Ibid., 43.
82. 1930 *District of Columbia Census*, roll 295, E.D. 110, sheet 18b, lines 57–63. Cardozo Business High School had been formed in 1928 from Dunbar's business department. At Cardozo, Carter started on the basketball and football teams and received the school's James E. Walker Medal for "the highest record in athletics, military activities, and scholarship." Art Carter, "A Review of Cardozo in Athletics,"

The Nautilus: Cardozo Business High School yearbook, Washington D.C., 1931, box 6, Art Carter Papers.

83. Sam Lacy, taped interview by author, Baltimore, Md., 17 May 1994.
84. Carter's first bylined sports article for the *Tribune*, on April 29, 1932, was about a Baltimore marathon. *Washington Tribune*, 29 April 1932, 12. In July 1932, Carter covered the city's Negro League baseball entry, the Washington Pilots, during a night game at Griffith Stadium. Id., 29 July 1932, 12. In October, Carter wrote about Howard University football and authored a column called "Capitol City Sports Scripts." Id., 21 October 1932, 12. Carter's byline appeared less frequently in the *Tribune* sports section in 1933. He wrote several articles in April and May about the controversy about a high school relay race, some of them under a byline emphasizing his middle name, "A. Mantel Carter." Id., 21 April 1933, 12; id., 5 May 1933, 12. In November 1934, Carter published a "Sports Scripts" column, his first byline in months. Id., 24 November 1934, 12. The city directories from 1933 through 1935 list Carter as a "reporter" for the *Tribune*. 1933 *City Directory*, 336; 1934 *City Directory*, 347; 1935 *City Directory*, 352.
- Before writing for the *Tribune* in 1932, Carter worked as an elevator operator in an apartment house. 1930 *Census*, roll 295, E.D. 110, sheet 18b, line 59. In 1931, he joined the staff of an obscure newspaper known as the *Washington World*. 1931 *City Directory*, 378. An article by Carter in the 1931 Cardozo High School yearbook listed him as the sports editor at the *World*. Art Carter, "A Review of Cardozo in Athletics," *The Nautilus: Cardozo Business High School* yearbook, Washington, D.C., 1931, box 6, Art Carter Papers. The 1932 city directory listed him as an "asst. editor" at the *World*. 1932 *City Directory*, 365.
85. Sam Lacy interview, 17 May 1994.
86. On February 19, 1941, the *Washington Daily News* revealed that the Bruins' weekend contests turned out to be so lucrative—even after paying Turner's Arena 20 percent of the gross gate receipts—that Lacy could afford to put up the team's out-of-town stars in Black Washington's first-rate Whitelaw Hotel and to pay for all their meals. "To date I've spent \$1486 in salaries alone," Lacy boasted to the reporter. "I've paid around \$900 in rent, about \$300 in equipment and the same for advertising. So you see we're doing pretty well." *Washington Daily News*, 19 February 1941, 28.
- Lacy's public comments concerned his immediate boss, the editor of the *Washington Afro-American*, Ralph Matthews, and eventually the paper's boss, Dr. Carl Murphy. Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 41–43.
87. Letter from William B. West to Art Carter, box 1, folder 3, Art Carter Papers.
88. "Season's Passes," box 1, folder 13, Art Carter Papers.
89. Janet Bruce, *The Kansas City Monarchs* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Press, 1985), 49.
90. Wilmer Fields, taped interview by author, Manassas, Va., 13 August 1992.
91. Kerr, *Calvin*, 13.
92. "Season Passes—1945," box 2, folder 17, Art Carter Papers.
93. Posey hired Clark, the former Pittsburgh Crawfords public relations director, in April 1942 to promote the Grays in Pittsburgh. Cum Posey, "Posey's Points," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 18 April 1942, 17. Posey's brother, See, was the team's traveling secretary.

94. Letter from Art Carter to Clark Griffith, 28 April 1938, box 8, Art Carter Papers.
95. Kerr, *Calvin*, 35.
96. Bill Scott, taped interview by author, Washington, D.C., 5 August 1992.
97. As early as 1937, Posey wrote: "For the past few years Negro National League clubs have played at Griffith Stadium in Washington, D.C., and have received great cooperation and much valuable advice from the Washington American League club owner, Clark Griffith, who predicts a great future for Negro League Baseball." Cum Posey, "Posey's Points," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 17 April 1937, 17. In 1941, Posey also wrote: "The owners of Griffith Stadium, Forbes Field, Yankee Stadium, helped to keep organized Negro baseball alive by allowing them to use these million dollar stadiums. The profits they derive from these rentals is small." Cum Posey, "Posey's Points," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 8 February 1941, 17.
98. Cum Posey, "Posey's Points," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 18 April 1942, 17.
99. Balance Sheet, 19–20 April 1942, Homestead Grays v. Newark Eagles, box 1, folder 9, Art Carter Papers.

CHAPTER 5

1. "Grays letterhead," box 2, folder 4, Art Carter Papers.
2. Twelve thousand in New Orleans attended an exhibition against Paige and the Kansas City Monarchs, and eighteen thousand in Newark saw Gibson's eighth-inning homer defeat the Eagles in the Grays' official season opener. Art Carter, "From the Bench," *Washington Afro-American*, 9 May 1942, 27; "18,000 See Josh Drive in All Runs," *id.*, 9 May 1942, 25; Ric Roberts, "Record Crowd in Offing for Games," *id.*, 9 May 1942, 24. The *Courier* reported the Newark crowd at twelve thousand. "Circuit Clout by Josh Wins for Grays," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 9 May 1942, 17.
3. Only five thousand fans watched the Grays drop both games of an April 19 exhibition doubleheader to the Newark Eagles. Ric Roberts, "Newark Takes Twin Bill from Grays," *Washington Afro-American*, 25 April 1942, 29; "Irwin's Hitting Paces Eagles as Grays Fall Twice," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 25 April 1942, 16.

Only 4,253 turned out for the team's official Griffith Stadium opener on May 14, a Sunday doubleheader sweep of the New York Black Yankees. The Grays even admitted five hundred soldiers to that game for free. Judge William H. Hastie, a civilian aide to the secretary of war, threw out the first ball. Ric Roberts, "Partlow Blanks Yanks in Nightcap," *Washington Afro-American*, 23 May 1942, 28; "Grays Down Yanks As Elites Defeat 'Stars,'" *Pittsburgh Courier*, 16 May 1942, 17.

4. Joe Sewall, "Sportin' Around," *Washington Tribune*, 23 May 1942, 24; "Elites Stop Grays," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 23 May 1942, 16.
5. Holway, *Josh and Satch*, xii.
6. Robert Gregory, *Diz: The Story of Dizzy Dean and Baseball During the Great Depression* (New York: Viking, 1992), 334–39; Curt Smith, *America's Dizzy Dean* (St. Louis, Mo.: Bethany Press, 1978), 104–5. Dean may have been pitching with a sore arm at the outset of the 1937 season. Vince Staten, *Ol' Diz: A Biography of Dizzy Dean* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 181–88. Either way, his career never recovered.
7. Wendell Smith wrote after interviewing Dean that the pitcher "seemed to be proud of [the] fact that he had pitched against Satchell [sic] Paige and one time had struck out Josh Gibson." *Pittsburgh Courier*, 12 August 1939, 16.

Posey requesting that the fans be informed that Feller would donate his share of the proceeds to the naval relief fund. "Grays Battle All-Stars in Griffith Stadium Tilt," *Washington Afro-American*, 30 May 1942, 27.

Four days before the game (and two hours after the *Afro's* deadline, according to Art Carter), Feller "was forced to cancel his agreement." Art Carter, "Satchel Paige Called the Joe Louis of Baseball," *Washington Afro-American*, 13 July 1942, 27.

Nearly sixty years later, Feller attributed his absence to several factors. "Some promoter must have misrepresented the whole deal," Feller recalled. "Judge Landis had nothing to do with it. That was the [decision of] the commanding officer at the naval college, Old Red Neck Magruder." Bob Feller, interview with author, Washington, D.C., 10 November 2000. Feller and Paige faced each other in a series of exhibition games in 1946. The two teams, Feller's All-Stars and Paige's All-Stars, flew in planes adorned with their respective teams' names. Bob Feller with Bill Gilbert, *Now Pitching Bob Feller* (New York: Birch Lane Press, 1990), 136–41; Ribowsky, *Don't Look Back*, 233–36; Holway, *Josh and Satch*, 187–88. Paige often referred to Feller as "Bob Rapid." Satchel Paige with Hal Leibovitz, *Pitching Man: Satchel Paige's Own Story* (Cleveland: The *Cleveland News*, 1948), 73–74. Feller is fiercely proud of those exhibitions, believing that they made it easier for Robinson to integrate the major leagues in 1947 and that they led to Paige's 1971 induction in the Hall of Fame. Bob Feller, panel discussion, Washington, D.C., 10 November 2000; Feller, *Now Pitching*, 140.

Feller, however, embroiled himself in controversy in 1945 by publicly declaring that Jackie Robinson (whose Jackie Robinson's All-Stars faced Feller's team) was not major league caliber because Robinson's "football shoulders" prevented him from hitting Feller's inside fastball. Wendell Smith, "The Sports Beat," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 10 November 1945, 14; Feller, *Now Pitching*, 140–41; Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, 76, 160.

21. Ric Roberts, "All Up in Washington," *Washington Afro-American*, 6 June 1942, 25.
22. *Washington Post*, 3 June 1942, 20.
23. Art Carter, "From the Bench," *Washington Afro-American*, 13 June 1942, 25. In July, Carter received no reply to a letter to Judge Landis proposing a major league–Negro League All-Star game to benefit war relief. Letter from Art Carter to Judge Kene-saw Mountain Landis, 3 July 1942, box 8, Art Carter Papers. Landis's role in canceling the third exhibition game between Paige and Dean's All-Stars is well documented and accepted by even the most sympathetic account of the commissioner's racial attitudes. Pietrusza, *Judge and Jury*, 414 ("In 1942, however, we do have solid evidence of the Judge prohibiting in-season games at major league ball-parks"), 417.
24. Others included Cardinals pitcher Johnny Grodzicki; Yankees catcher Ken Sil-vestri; former Phillies second baseman Heinie Mueller; future Dodgers and Reds shortstop Claude Corbitt; former Tigers, Senators, and Browns outfielder George Archie; former Yankees, Browns, and Dodgers outfielder Joe Gallagher; and former Braves pitcher Al Piechota.
25. Francis E. Stann, "Win, Lose, or Draw," *Washington Evening Star*, 1 June 1942, A-10.

26. *Ibid.* Dave Odom, a stocky right-handed pitcher who shut down the Grays for three innings, would be rewarded by the Boston Braves with an unsuccessful call-up (0–3, 5.27 ERA) in 1943. Pitcher Wedo Martini had failed miserably in his 1935 appearances (0–2, 17.05 ERA, eight hits, 11 walks, 6½ innings) with the Philadelphia Athletics. Martini, who relieved Odom in the fifth inning, walked one Grays batter before deciding after two more pitches that his arm was too sore to pitch.
27. There may have been one other exception. Claude Corbitt, who played shortstop for Dean’s All-Stars in Chicago, also may have played for Dean’s team in Washington. There was someone listed as both “Corbitt” or “Corbett” in various box scores as having played first base at Griffith Stadium. Claude Corbitt was stationed at Camp Wheeler along with Cecil Travis, which probably meant that both players received weeklong furloughs to play with Dean’s team. But it is unclear why Corbitt, a top Dodgers shortstop prospect with the Montreal farm club, would have yielded his natural position in order to play first base. At least one newspaper listed Corbitt as scheduled to appear in Washington. “Dean, Travis, Paige Play Here Today,” *Washington Post*, 31 May 1942, sports section, p. 2. The “Corbett” listed in some box scores was not Gene Corbett, a Phillies infielder from 1936 to 1938. But see Francis E. Stann, “Win, Lose, or Draw,” *Washington Evening Star*, 1 June 1942, A-10 (referring to the player as Gene Corbett but also describing him as playing in his Camp Wheeler uniform along with Travis). Gene Corbett was playing for a minor league team in Salisbury, Maryland, at the time. Gene Corbett, telephone interview by author, Salisbury, Md., 7 November 2000. My best guess is that it was Claude Corbitt, who was taking a breather by playing first base for Dean’s team and who played for the Dodgers in 1945.
28. For Williams’s comments as well as the best profile of Travis, see Dave Kindred, “Memories Frozen in Time,” *The Sporting News*, 2 January 1995, 6.
29. Vincent X. Flaherty, “Straight from the Shoulder,” *Washington Times-Herald*, 31 May 1942, 1-B; Vincent X. Flaherty, “Straight from the Shoulder,” *id.*, 2 June 1942, 22.
30. “Travis Gets ‘Hero’ Award,” *Washington Times-Herald*, 2 June 1942, 22, 25.
31. Cecil Travis, telephone interview by author, Riverdale, Ga., 4 November 2000.
32. Buck Leonard, taped interview by author, Rocky Mount, N.C., 20 July 1992.
33. Rogosin, *Invisible Men*, 72.
34. *Ibid.* In the mid- to late 1940s, Grays batboy Billy Coward also wore an old Senators uniform. Billy Coward, taped interview by author, Washington, D.C., 20 August 1992.
35. Holway, *Voices*, 261.
36. Sam Lacy, “Looking ‘Em Over,” *Washington Afro-American*, 24 August 1940, 23.
37. Mickey Vernon, telephone interview by author, Wallingford, Pa., 10 November 1994.
38. “Never even thought about it,” he said. *Ibid.*
39. Pee Wee Covington, “Covington’s Chattering Comments,” *Washington Tribune*, 10 August 1940, 10.
40. Edsall Walker, taped interview by author, Secaucus, N.J., 30 May 1992.
41. Joe Sewall, “Sportin’ Around,” *Washington Tribune*, 27 June 1942, 18.
42. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 141.

43. Ibid.
44. "Dugout Dust," *Washington Afro-American*, 6 June 1942, 25.
45. Gehringer, a famous contact hitter who stood flatfooted at the plate, gave Paige the most trouble. Paige wrote: "I'd rather face a Waner or a DiMaggio or a Williams than a Gehringer." Paige, *Pitchin' Man*, 46.
46. Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*, 771.
47. Art Carter, "Satchel Paige Called the Joe Louis of Baseball," *Washington Afro-American*, 13 June 1942, 27.
48. Robert McNeill, taped interview by author, Washington, D.C., 2 July 1992.
49. "Dugout Dust," *Washington Afro-American*, 6 June 1942, 25.
50. Vincent X. Flaherty, "Straight from the Shoulder," *Washington Times-Herald*, 2 June 1942, 22.
51. Wendell Smith, "'Smitty's' Sports Spurts," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 6 June 1942, 17.
52. Vincent X. Flaherty, "Straight from the Shoulder," *Washington Times-Herald*, 2 June 1942, 22.
53. Cecil Travis interview.
54. Mead, *Baseball Goes to War*, 201; Goldstein, *Spartan Seasons*, 254; Gilbert, *They Also Served*, 226; Frederick Turner, *When the Boys Came Back: Baseball and 1946* (New York: Henry Holt, 1996), 22–23, 83, 85.
55. Kindred, "Memories Frozen in Time," 6.
56. Cecil Travis interview.
57. Jack Munhall, "Paige, Grays Beat Stars, 8–1, Before 22,000," *Washington Post*, 1 June 1942, 17. The *Times-Herald* story was no better, referring to "Russ" Gibson and "Judd" Bankhead. "22,000 See Grays Top Dean's Stars," *Washington Times-Herald*, 1 June 1942, 15.
58. Francis E. Stann, "Win, Lose, or Draw," *Washington Evening Star*, 1 June 1942, A-10.
59. "Dugout Dust," *Washington Afro-American*, 6 June 1942, 25.
60. "Expense Sheet—31 May 1942," box 1, folder 10, Art Carter Papers.
61. Wendell Smith, "Paige Brilliant as Grays Wallop Dean and Team," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 6 June 1942, 16.
62. Francis E. Stann, "Win, Lose, or Draw," *Washington Evening Star*, 1 June 1942, A-10; Vincent X. Flaherty, "Straight from the Shoulder," *Washington Times-Herald*, 2 June 1942, 22; "Satchel Paige Real Iron Man; Pitches 125 Games Year," *Washington Daily News*, 1 June 1942, 27.
63. "Grays Battle All-Stars in Griffith Stadium Tilt," *Washington Afro-American*, 30 May 1942, 27.
64. "Satchelfoots," *Time*, 3 June 1940, 44; Ted Shane, "Chocolate Rube Waddell," *Saturday Evening Post*, 27 July 1940, 20, 79–81; "Satchel Paige, Negro Ballplayer, Is One of Best Pitchers in Game," *Life*, 2 June 1941, 90–92; Ribowsky, *Don't Look Back*, 187–90, 196; Buck O'Neil, *I Was Right on Time* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 107–8.
65. Paige, *Pitchin' Man*, 28–29.
66. Richard Donovan, "The Fabulous Satchel Paige," *Collier's* (1953) in *The Baseball Reader*, ed. Charles Einstein (New York: Bonanza Books, 1989), 101.
67. Ibid., 77–78; Paige, *Pitchin' Man*, 67–68; John B. Holway, "Introduction" in *Maybe I'll Pitch Forever* by LeRoy "Satchel" Paige with David Lipman (Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), vi.
68. Paige, *Pitchin' Man*, 68.

69. Whitey Herzog and Kevin Horrigan, *White Rat: A Life in Baseball* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 53–55. Herzog and Paige were teammates in 1957 with the Triple-A Miami Marlins. Ironically, Herzog was sent down to Miami by the Senators.
70. Paige, *Pitchin' Man*, 26–27; Paige, *Maybe I'll Pitch Forever*, 17–18.
71. Traditionally, the “New Negro” is associated with Howard University professor Alain Locke and other black literati who started a cultural revolution during the Harlem Renaissance. Alain Locke, ed., *The New Negro: An Interpretation* (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1925), 3–16; Nathan Irvin Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 52–65.
72. Paige, *Maybe I'll Pitch Forever*, 16.
73. Holway, *Voices*, 265.
74. James Overmyer, *Queen of the Negro Leagues: Effa Manley and the Newark Eagles* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1998), 154–59.
75. O'Neil, panel discussion.
76. Ed Bolden's papers show Paige receiving 15 percent of the gate at a four-team doubleheader in 1950 at Shibe Park against the Philadelphia Stars. Ed Bolden Papers, “balance sheet—July 21, 1950,” Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Manuscript Division, Howard University, Washington, D.C.
77. Holway, *Josh and Satch*, 141.
78. Buck O'Neil wrote in his autobiography: “Satchel Paige was no Stepin Fetchit . . . and if Satchel had ever run into a writer who called him Stepin Fetchit, that man would have had to battle Satchel. . . .” O'Neil, *I Was Right on Time*, 112. Even the black press was guilty of stereotyping Paige. *Pittsburgh Courier* columnist Chester Washington referred to Paige as the “‘Stepin Fetchit’ of colored baseball.” Chester Washington, “Sez Ches’,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 3 April 1937, 17.
79. Paige, *Pitchin' Man*, 26.
80. O'Neil, *I Was Right on Time*, 100–101.
81. Quincy Troupe, *29 Years Too Soon* (Los Angeles: S and S Enterprises, 1977), 103.
82. Stephen Banker, *Black Diamonds: An Oral History of Negro Baseball* (Washington, D.C.: Tapes for Readers, 1978).
83. Ric Roberts, “Policeman Socks Satchel Paige in Washington,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 18 August 1945, 12; *Washington Afro-American*, 18 August 1945, 27.
84. “Grays Win 2–1,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 27 June 1942, 16. Crowd estimates from the June 18 game varied among the different newspapers: 32,000 in the *Washington Tribune*, 30,000 in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, 28,000 in the *Washington Afro-American*, 26,113 “cash customers” in the *Washington Post*, and 26,000 in the *Washington Times-Herald*. *Washington Tribune*, 20 June 1942, 1; *Pittsburgh Courier*, 27 June 1942, 16; *Washington Afro-American*, 27 June 1942, 26; *Washington Post*, 25 June 1942, 25; Vincent X. Flaherty, “Straight from the Shoulder,” *Washington Times-Herald*, 20 June 1942, 33. I went with the *Afro's* 28,000 figure because it is the median number and because the *Afro's* information is most likely to be accurate with Art Carter running the event. Whatever the exact attendance figure, it dwarfed the crowds of 11,000 who would receive free admission to a June 21 game between Bob Feller's All-Stars and the Senators and 10,000 who had contributed to the war relief effort for a match-up between the Senators and the New York Yankees. Ric Roberts, “Grays Outdraw All Sports Events at Griff Stadium; Battle Newark Sunday,” *Washington Afro-American*, 27 June 1942, 25.

85. "Satchel Paige to Face NNL Champs," *Washington Afro-American*, 13 June 1942, 24 ("It will mark the first time that two colored nines have ever performed under major league arcs"); "28,000 See Grays Nip Monarchs, 2-1, in First Night Game Under Major League Arc Lights in Washington," *id.*, 27 June 1942, 26.
86. The lower number of \$3,253 (\$2,772 rent plus \$481 expenses) is based on the April 19, 1942, exhibition game between the Grays and Eagles. During that game, which drew 4,714 fans, Griffith received 20 percent of \$3,176.66 in gross profits, or \$635.33, for stadium rental, plus \$62.50 in expenses for ticket sales, ushers, and cleanup. Balance Sheet, 19-20 April 1942, Homestead Grays v. Newark Eagles, box 1, folder 9, Art Carter Papers.

The higher figure of \$4,096 total is based on the \$6,337 in park rent and \$1,179 in expenses that Griffith received from the 1946 All-Star Classic held at Griffith Stadium. That game drew 15,009 fans and grossed \$30,494.40. Balance Sheet, box 1, folder 9, Art Carter Papers. But that was four years later, after substantial wartime inflation and increased ticket prices. Nonetheless, \$3,000 to \$4,000 is a safe figure for May 31.

Based on the same balance sheets, on June 18, the lower number comes to \$4,140 (\$3,528 in rent plus \$612) and the higher number comes to \$5,214 total. About the grounds crew, see *Washington Afro-American*, 27 June 1942, 26.

87. See Posey told the *Afro* in June 1941 that "progress has been made on a deal that would allow colored teams to play under the new arcs at Griffith Stadium." "Grays Hope to Close Deal for Night Ball," *Washington Afro-American*, 7 June 1941, 22.
88. "Ray Brown Loses Game to Phillies," *Washington Afro-American*, 10 August 1940, 22.
89. An unsigned article found in Art Carter's papers placed the figure at fifteen hundred dollars. This three-page article, written shortly after Jackie Robinson signed with the Brooklyn Dodgers in October 1945, was a wire story from the National Negro Press Association found in Carter's files. Incomplete Typescripts, box 1, folder 31, Art Carter Papers.

Other Negro League executives, such as Baltimore Elite Giants president Vernon Green, claimed that Cum Posey inflated the cost of the lights to discourage other teams from trying to rent the ballpark. Vernon Green wrote Art Carter in 1949: "I know what the percentage is but don't know the exact cost for the lights. I do know they didn't cost as much as Posey claims they did." Letter from Vernon Green to Art Carter, 22 January 1949, box 1, folder 8, Art Carter Papers.

An expense sheet from a sparsely attended 1948 game between the Grays and the New York Cubans revealed that the lights cost three hundred dollars. Expense Sheet, 12 August 1948—Grays v. Cubans, box 1, folder 10, Art Carter Papers.

Griffith initially charged more than that to defray the installation cost of his lights, probably closer to five hundred to one thousand dollars a game. Calvin Griffith placed the figure at one thousand dollars. Calvin Griffith interview.

90. "Satchel Paige to Face NNL Champs," *Washington Afro-American*, 13 June 1942, 24.
91. Advertisement, *Nite Life*, 14 June 1942, box 2, folder 23, Art Carter Papers.
92. Advertisement, undated, box 2, folder 22, Art Carter Papers.
93. Art Carter, "From the Bench," *Washington Afro-American*, 2 September 1940, 27; Wendell Smith, "Smitty's Sports Spurts," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 14 September 1940, 16.

ington Post, 30 September 1943, 20. Vernon homered to right field off St. Louis Browns pitcher Bob Muncrief on August 1. Shirley Povich, "Nats Wallop Browns Twice, Second, 20-6," *Washington Post*, 2 August 1943, 11. The detailed research on the Griffith Stadium home runs of 1943 was facilitated by the Society of American Baseball Research's Tattersall/McConnell Home Run Log, with the dates of the Griffith Stadium home runs in 1943 compiled by David Vincent.

21. Mickey Vernon, telephone interview by author, Wallingford, Pa., 10 November 1994.
22. Inside-the-park homers (4): Boston Red Sox second baseman Bobby Doerr off Senators pitcher Early Wynn on May 7, Philadelphia Athletics outfielder Elmer Valo off Senators pitcher Dutch Leonard on June 25, Senators second baseman Jerry Priddy off Detroit Tigers pitcher Roy Henshaw on July 22, Tigers outfielder Ned Harris off Senators pitcher Bobo Newsom on October 2. See *Washington Post*, 8 May 1943, 15; *Washington Evening Star*, 26 June 1943, B-4; id., 23 July 1940, A-10; id., 3 October 1943, B-2.

Right-field homers (10): New York Yankees outfielder Charlie Keller off Wynn on May 2, Senators outfielder Gene Moore off Red Sox pitcher Mace Brown on July 18, Cleveland Indians outfielder Hank Edwards off Senators pitcher Mickey Haefner on July 24, St. Louis Browns outfielder Mike Chartak off Dutch Leonard on July 31, Vernon off Browns pitcher Bob Muncrief on August 1, Browns first baseman George McQuinn off Wynn on August 3, Senators catcher Jake Early off Red Sox pitcher Tex Hughson on September 15, Spence off White Sox pitcher Buck Ross on September 27, Indians outfielder Roy Cullenbine off Wynn on September 29, Spence off Indians pitcher Jim Bagby on September 29. See *Washington Post*, 3 May 1943, 13; *Washington Evening Star*, 19 July, 1943, A-13; id., 25 July 1943, B-1; id., 1 August 1943, B-2; *Washington Post*, 2 August 1943, 11; *Washington Evening Star*, 4 August 1943, A-17; id., 16 September 1943, A-18; *Washington Post*, 28 September 1943, 14; id., 30 September 1943, 20.

23. American League home-run totals: 796 in '39, 883 in '40, 734 in '41, 533 in '42, 473 in '43, 459 in '44, 430 in '45, 653 in '46. McConnell and Vincent, *Home Run Encyclopedia*, 164-69.
24. Gilbert, *They Also Served*, 90-91; Mead, *Baseball Goes to War*, 78-79.
25. "Pyle Sets Back Yankees with Lively Sphere," *Washington Evening Star*, 3 May 1943, A-12; James P. Dawson, "Rookie Overcomes McCarthymen, 4-1," *New York Times*, 3 May 1943, 22; Shirley Povich, "Early Wynn Is Pounded in Opener," *Washington Post*, 3 May 1943, 13.
26. *Negro Baseball*, 1945 and 1946 editions, box 1, folder 24, Art Carter Papers.
27. Holway, *Voices*, 251; Rogosin, *Invisible Men*, 72.
28. Holway, *Voices*, 276. Leonard wasn't the only black player who deemed the Wilson balls to be inferior to the Spalding balls used by the major leagues. So did Judy Johnson and Ted "Double Duty" Radcliffe. Holway, *Josh and Satch*, 34.
29. Expense sheets, box 1, folders 8 and 9, Art Carter Papers.
30. Overmyer, *Queen of the Negro Leagues*, 77.
31. *Washington Afro-American*, 18 July 1942, 27.
32. "Gibson Big Gun as Elites Bow to Grays," *Washington Afro-American*, 22 May 1943, 26; "Grays Down Elite Giants Twice Here Sunday," *Washington Tribune*, 22 May 1943, 11.

48. Ric Roberts, "Gibson, Suttles Smash Decisive Round Trippers," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 14 August 1943, 19; "Suttle's [sic] Pinch Homer Gives Eagles Split," *Washington Tribune*, 14 August 1943, 18.
49. Harold Jackson, "Gibson and Suttles Hit Long Home Runs," *Washington Afro-American*, 14 August 1943, 23.
50. Harold Jackson, "Grays Gain 2-1 Margin," *Washington Afro-American*, 21 August 1943, 26; Harold Jackson, "On the Sports Front," *id.*, 27. Although Harold Jackson recounts the near-home run in great detail, the *Pittsburgh Courier* and *Washington Tribune's* brief stories failed to mention it. See Ric Roberts, "Cubans, Grays Split Slugfests," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 21 August 1943, 19; "Grays Down Cubans Twice," *Washington Tribune*, 21 August 1943, 17.
51. *1943 Baseball* (Chicago: Office of the Baseball Commissioner, 1943), 647.
52. Harold Jackson, "Josh Gibson Clouts 3 Homers in Series," *Washington Afro-American*, 28 August 1943, 27; Ric Roberts, "Champs Sweep Elites," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 28 August 1943, 18.
53. "Grays Wallop Yankees, 12-4 in Night Tilt," *Washington Afro-American*, 28 August 1943, 26.
54. Harold Jackson, "Grays Capture Twin Bill," *Washington Afro-American*, 18 September 1943, 26.
55. These figures are from the Grays' season-ending won-loss schedule, which was complete through September 12, plus two World Series games against the Birmingham Black Barons. It does not include the North-South All-Star Game. "Record of Games Played by Homestead Grays—1943 Season," box two, folder four, Art Carter Papers.
56. Edsall Walker interview.
57. Lena Cox interview, 5 August 1992.
58. Buck O'Neil interview.
59. *Ibid.*
60. Harold Jackson, "Josh Gibson Paces Grays in Twin Win," *Washington Afro-American*, 26 June 1943, 26; "Paige Falters as Grays Take Monarchs," *Washington Tribune*, 26 June 1943, 10.
61. "Monarchs Wallop Grays as Paige Again Stars," *Washington Tribune*, 14 August 1943, 16.
62. "Covington's Comments," *Washington Tribune*, 4 September 1943, 17.
63. "Gibson Hits Homer, Doubles Off Paige," *Washington Afro-American*, 4 September 1943, 27; "Josh Clouts Home Run, Double as Monarchs Go Down," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 4 September 1943, 19; "Grays Nip Monarchs; Gibson Beats Paige," *Washington Tribune*, 4 September 1943, 18.
64. Art Carter, "Use of Ineligible Men Belittles World Series," *Washington Afro-American*, 9 October 1943, 26; Wendell Smith, "Smitty's Sports Spurts," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 2 October 1943, 16; Hayward Jackson, "New Orleans Fans Score Cancellation of Series Game," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 16 October 1943, 16.
65. *Washington Afro-American*, 18 July 1942, 27.
66. Haskell Cohen, "Negro Baseball Champs," *Sport*, 14 September 1943, 41-43.
67. "Josh the Basher," *Time*, 19 July 1943, 75-76; Holway, *Josh and Satch*, 166-67.
68. Shirley Povich, "Opener Lost to Chisox by 15-3 Score," *Washington Post*, 27 September 1943, 18.

69. Art Carter, "Joltin' Josh Helps the Grays Hit the Jackpot," *Washington Afro-American*, 24 July 1943, 26.
70. "Clark Griffith Comes Through," *Washington Tribune*, 18 September 1943, 24.
71. Holway, *Voices*, 252. Leonard has told a variation of this story in practically every history of the Negro Leagues. Despite the variations in the dialogue, the gist is the same. See Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 99; Rogosin, *Invisible Men*, 192; Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White*, 169; Holway, *Josh and Satch*, 155; Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, 40; Brashler, *Josh Gibson*, 132. In his own book, Leonard says the conversation took place in 1938, but it may have been later because it was after Gibson got back from the Mexican League. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 99. Gibson returned from the Mexican League in 1942, the year Leonard originally told historian John Holway the conversation took place. Holway, *Voices*, 252. Given that the Grays did not begin playing in Washington until 1940, Gibson did not come back from Mexico until 1942, and Leonard was out much of the 1942 season, I believe that 1942 or 1943 is the accurate date.
72. Holway, *Voices*, 252. Although Washington's black population was around 200,000 in 1943, Washington was not 50 percent black. It did not become a majority-black city until the early to mid-1950s.
73. Herman Hill, "Jackie Robinson, Nate Moreland Barred at Camp," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 21 March 1942, 16. Several Robinson biographies and Negro League histories mistakenly suggest that Robinson and Moreland actually tried out. Holway, *Voices*, 12; Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, 39 (citing Holway); Lester, *Black Baseball's National Showcase*, 173. But see David Falkner, *Great Time Coming: The Life of Jackie Robinson from Baseball to Birmingham* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), 68 (arguing that Robinson failed to mention the tryout because it was organized by the Communist *Daily Worker*; Robinson, however, never mentioned it because it never happened); Arnold Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson: A Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 89 (writing that Robinson was "teased and tantalized by an opportunity to work out in Brookside Park with the Chicago White Sox," but never indicating that a tryout actually occurred). The two players, accompanied by the *Courier's* West Coast correspondent Herman Hill, merely talked with White Sox manager Jimmy Dykes. Dykes mentioned having seen Robinson play in an exhibition game on a previous occasion, but the *Courier* unequivocally reported that the White Sox failed to give him a tryout. *Pittsburgh Courier*, 21 March 1942, 16. This article was reprinted in the *Daily Worker* several days later. In his excellent biographical sketch of Moreland's life, John McReynolds confirmed that no tryout ever occurred. John McReynolds, "Nate Moreland: A Mystery to Historians," *The National Pastime: A Review of Baseball History* no. 19 (Cleveland: SABR, 1999), 57–58.
74. Ric Roberts, "All Up in Washington," *Washington Afro-American*, 25 July 1942, 27; "Commissioner Landis' Emancipation Proclamation—'Negro Players Are Welcome,'" *Pittsburgh Courier*, 25 July 1942, 17; "Landis, Major Baseball Czar, Passes Buck to Club Owners; Denies Bars Exist 'Gainst Negroes," *Washington Tribune*, 25 July 1942, 16.
75. Art Carter, "From the Bench," *Washington Afro-American*, 1 August 1942, 26.
76. Chester L. Washington, "Sez Ches'," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 25 July 1942, 16; Vincent X. Flaherty, "Straight from the Shoulder," *Washington Times-Herald*, 19 July 1942, 1-B.

Notes (Chapter 6)

77. “Griff Says Organize Colored,” *Washington Afro-American*, 25 July 1942, 26.
78. Ric Roberts, “Vic Harris Says Build Own Baseball Leagues,” *Washington Afro-American*, 8 August 1942, 26.
79. “Ball Players Skeptical of Big Leagues,” *Washington Afro-American*, 1 August 1942, 27.
80. Art Carter, “From the Bench,” *Washington Afro-American*, 15 August 1942, 25.
81. “‘Majors Couldn’t Pay Enough,’ ‘Satchel’ Claims,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 15 August 1942, 16.
82. “‘Was Misquoted,’ Says Satchel,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 22 August 1942, 17.
83. *Ibid.*, 22 August 1942, 26; Art Carter, “From the Bench,” *Washington Afro-American*, 22 August 1942, 26.
84. Bob Considine, “On the Line,” *Washington Post*, 15 August 1942, 15.
85. *Ibid.*
86. Holway, *Voices*, 260–61; Buck Leonard interview, 20 July 1992.
87. “H.U. Student Pickets Force Restaurant to Drop Color Bar,” *Washington Afro-American*, 24 April 1943, 1, 14. Pauli Murray, *The Autobiography of a Black Activist, Feminist, Lawyer, Priest, and Poet* (Knoxville, Tenn.: The University of Tennessee Press, 1987), 202.
88. “Sidat-Singh Is One of 4 Flyers Killed in Army Plane Mishaps,” *Washington Afro-American*, 15 May 1943, 1, 24; “Sidat-Singh Given Up as Lost After Crash,” *Washington Tribune*, 15 May 1943, 1. For an excellent recent article on Sidat-Singh, see Luke Cyphers, “Lost Hero: Sidat-Singh a Two-Sport Star, Harlem Renaissance Man,” *New York Daily News*, 25 February 2001, 82, and 30 March 2001.
89. Art Carter, “From the Bench,” *Washington Afro-American*, 27 March 1943, 25.
90. Harold Jackson, “On the Sports Front,” *Washington Afro-American*, 29 May 1943, 26.
91. “Jake Powell Kills Himself as Police Are Questioning Him,” *Washington Post*, 5 November 1948, 1. Wendell Smith wrote an embittered farewell column about Powell: “Jake’s gone. We feel just like the man who when asked if he were going to Huey Long’s funeral said: ‘No, but I’m in favor of it.’” Wendell Smith, “Sports Beat,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 20 November 1948, 10.
92. Harold Jackson, “On the Sports Front,” *Washington Afro-American*, 28 August 1943, 26.
93. Reichler, *The Ronald Encyclopedia of Baseball*, 240–41.
94. Art Carter, “Joltin’ Josh Helps the Grays Hit the Jackpot,” *Washington Afro-American*, 24 July 1943, 26.
95. “Fans Honor Josh Gibson in D.C.,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 11 September 1943, 19; “Gibson Honored by Fans,” *Washington Afro-American*, 11 September 1943, 27.
96. “Grays Enter World Series with .370 Team Average,” *Washington Afro-American*, 18 September 1943, 26.
97. Ribowsky, *The Power and the Darkness*, 254.
98. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 145–48; Brashler, *Josh Gibson*, 133–38; Ribowsky, *The Power and the Darkness*, 261–64; W. Rollo Wilson, “Thru the Eyes of W. Rollo Wilson,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, 10 June 1944, 12.
99. *Ibid.*
100. “Grays Enter World Series with .370 Team Average,” *Washington Afro-American*, 18 September 1943, 26.

101. Art Carter, "Satchel Paige Star of Diamond Classic," *Washington Afro-American*, 7 August 1943, 23; "West Downs East, 2-1, Leonard Homers," *Washington Tribune*, 7 August 1943, 12.
102. Harold Jackson, "Jud Wilson Paces Grays to Twin Bill," *Washington Afro-American*, 11 September 1943, 26; Ric Roberts, "Grays Defeat Kansas City 2-1, 8-1," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 11 September 1943, 19.
103. Cum Posey, "Famous Catcher and Pitcher Selected on Posey's 'Dream Team,'" *Pittsburgh Courier*, 27 November 1943, 16.
104. Wendell Smith, "'Smitty's' Sports Spurts," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 25 December 1943, 14.

CHAPTER 7

1. Young, as Lacy told Jim Reisler, was "rather jealous of his job, a man who made a point that I was not to be writing sports." Reisler, *Black Writers/Black Baseball*, 12. For more on Frank Young, see id., 57-59. Reisler also claims that Young was the first black sportswriter to protest baseball's color barrier, in a 1926 column that said: "the ban against Negro players is a silly one, and one that should be removed." Id., 7.
2. In 1942 and 1943, Lacy's first wife, Alberta, continued to live in their northwest Washington apartment on 722 Park Road along with their young son, Samuel Howe "Tim" Lacy (b: February 8, 1938). 1942 *City Directory*, 940; 1943 *City Directory*, 867. For the birth of Lacy's son, see Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 27. Alberta Lacy worked as a clerk and had been employed as a waiter at the Woodward and Lothrop department store. Id.; 1938 *City Directory*, 741.
3. Sam Lacy, "Looking 'Em Over," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 8 January 1944, 19.
4. In 1955, the group changed the name to the National Newspaper Publishers Association. Armstead S. Pride and Clint C. Wilson III, *A History of the Black Press* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1997), 194.
5. Sam Lacy, "Looking 'Em Over," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 8 January 1944, 19.
6. Sheingold, "In Black and White," 58. Eight members of the NNPA officially attended the meeting: Sengstacke, Lewis, and Murphy; *Amsterdam News* publisher C. B. Powell; *Michigan Chronicle* publisher Louis E. Martin; and *Cleveland Call and Post* publisher William O. Walker; as well as two "advisory members," *Amsterdam News* managing editor Dan Burley and *Pittsburgh Courier* city editor Wendell Smith. "Yankee Boss OKs Colored Players," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 11 December 1943, 30; "Big League Moguls Get Plea for Negro Players," *Chicago Defender*, 11 December 1943, 1, 4. Lacy may have overlooked or simply ignored that *Courier* president Ira Lewis was a former sportswriter who along with the *Defender's* Fay Young sounded the initial calls for the integration of the major leagues among the black press during the 1920s. Fay Young, "Through the Years: Past Present Future," *Chicago Defender*, 1 August 1942, 19.
7. Sam Lacy, "Looking 'Em Over," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 8 January 1944, 19. Lacy did not attend the meeting but could have read the text of Sengstacke and Lewis's speeches and Murphy's recommendations in the black press. *Baltimore Afro-American*, 14 December 1943, 18-19; *Pittsburgh Courier*, 11 December 1943, 14; *Chicago Defender*, 11 December 1943, 1.

17. Stanley Frank, "Negroes Receive Wordy 'Brushoff' from Baseball," *New York Post*, 4 December 1943, 22.
18. Ralph Matthews, "Clark Griffith Won't Budge on Use of Colored Players," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 11 December 1943, 1.
19. Bob Considine and Shirley L. Povich, "Old Fox: Baseball's Red-Eyed Radical and Archconservative, Clark Griffith," *Saturday Evening Post*, 13 April 1940, 14–15; id., 20 April 1940, 18–19.
20. Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 45; Sam Lacy interview, 17 May 1994.
21. Frazier, *Negro in the United States*, 514. According to Frazier, the circulation was as follows: *Pittsburgh Courier*—270,812, *Afro-American*—229,812, *Chicago Defender*—161,009, and *Norfolk Journal and Guide*—77,462. Id.
22. "The AFRO Yesterday," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 15 December 1981, special section, pt. 1, p. 2; Roland E. Wolseley, *The Black Press, U.S.A.* 2d rev. ed. (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1990), 31; Pride and Wilson, *A History of the Black Press*, 133–35.
23. Wolseley, *The Black Press, U.S.A.*, 207.
24. Carl Murphy et al., "The Afro: Seaboard's Largest Weekly," *The Crisis* 45:2 (February 1938), 44.
25. Lee Finkle, *Forum for Protest: The Black Press During World War II* (Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Presses, 1975), 59.
26. From July 1, 1942, to June 20, 1943, the 144 black newspapers (114 weekly) had "a combined average net circulation per issue of 1,613,255." Frazier, *Negro in the United States*, 513–14; Pride and Wilson, *A History of the Black Press*, 153 (discussing the peak year of the black press as being during World War II).
27. Frazier, *Negro in the United States*, 512.
28. Finkle, *Forum for Protest*, 51–52, 60–61.
29. Murphy et al., "The Afro: Seaboard's Largest Weekly," 44.
30. "Did You Know?" *Baltimore Afro-American*, 15 December 1981, special section, pt. 1, p. 2; Wolseley, *The Black Press, U.S.A.*, 75.
31. Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*, 910, 924.
32. Wolseley, *The Black Press, U.S.A.*, 374.
33. For the story of the NNPA and criticism from red-baiting columnist Westbrook Pegler, see Pride and Wilson, *A History of the Black Press*, 185–86, 188; Patrick S. Washburn, *The Federal Government's Investigation of the Black Press During World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 21–22.
34. "Undated Transcript of WBAL Radio Interview—'Afro American War Correspondents,'" box 29, Art Carter Papers.
35. Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 45–46.
36. Sheingold, "In Black and White," 35–36.
37. Sam Lacy, "Looking 'Em Over," *Washington Afro-American*, 1 April 1939, 23.
38. Sam Lacy, "Looking 'Em Over," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 26 February 1944, 14.
39. "Beisboleros," *Newsweek*, 29 May 1944, 90.
40. Sam Lacy, "Looking 'Em Over," *Washington Afro-American*, 8 April 1944, 22. Roberts and Lacy's speculation about Connie Mack as an ardent segregationist turned out to be well founded. During spring training in 1946, Mack "blew his stack" over a Philadelphia writer's suggestion that Rickey would bring Jackie Robin-

Smith had argued unsuccessfully “that if the sports editor of the *Daily Worker*, a Communist paper, was qualified, so was I.” Holtzman, *No Cheering in the Press Box*, 317.

97. Judge, “Writing the Good Fight,” *Washington City Paper*, 17 May 1991, 30–31.
98. Shirley Povich, taped interview with author, Washington, D.C., 12 January 1993.
99. Shirley Povich, “Mo Siegel, Storyteller,” *Washington Post*, 3 June 1994, F8.
100. Shirley Povich interview, 12 January 1993.
101. Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 99–101 (detailing the white writers Lacy liked, disliked, and thought were “ok”).
102. Lacy interview, 15 July 1992.
103. Sam Lacy, “400 Miles of ‘Red Carpet’—for Me,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, 27 June 1998–3 July 1998, A12. Red Smith, although a supporter of integration, never advocated the integration of baseball in his columns and rarely wrote about the Negro Leagues. Berkow, *Red*, 108–9. He certainly did not write about the issues as often as did Povich, who was one of the most outspoken sportswriters about integration.
104. Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 101. When Steadman posthumously received the 2001 Red Smith Award, Lacy said: “John was my No. 1 choice. He had a humane quality unmatched by most writers I’ve known.” Mike Klingaman, “Steadman Wins Red Smith Award; Late *Sun* Columnist 21st Recipient by AP,” *Baltimore Sun*, 2 May 2001, 1D.
105. Povich, *All These Mornings*, 88–89.
106. For an excellent account of how Udall and the Kennedy Administration prodded Marshall to integrate the Redskins, see Thomas G. Smith, “Civil Rights on the Gridiron: The Kennedy Administration and the Desegregation of the Washington Redskins,” *Journal of Sports History* 14:2 (Summer 1987), 189–208.
107. Povich, *All These Mornings*, 88–89.
108. *Ibid.*, 93–96.
109. Shirley Povich, “A Sporting Life,” *Washington Post Magazine*, 29 October 1989, W22.
110. Bob Considine and Shirley L. Povich, “Old Fox: Baseball’s Red-Eyed Radical and Archconservative, Clark Griffith,” *Saturday Evening Post*, 13 April 1940, 14–15; *id.*, 20 April 1940, 18–19.
111. Shirley Povich, “This Morning,” *Washington Post*, 28 October 1955, 46.
112. Shirley Povich, “Can Negro Win Housing Fight in Spring Camps?” *The Sporting News*, 8 March 1961, 10.
113. Shirley Povich interview, 12 January 1993.
114. *Ibid.*
115. *Ibid.*
116. Povich, *All These Mornings*, 99–122.
117. Red Smith’s biographer, Ira Berkow, wrote that during the 1940s Smith “had written sparingly about blacks in baseball” and “didn’t attack the color barrier in print.” Berkow, *Red*, 108.
118. Smith told Jerome Holtzman:

Shirley Povich of the *Washington Post* was another who was very forthright. Shirley was exposed to Negro baseball. The Negro population in Washington was very large and the Negro teams always appeared at Griffith Stadium. I recall once when Shirley,

commenting on the barrier, said that the Washington Senators had a lot of Cubans on their club but no Negroes as such, some of whom were suspect. He wrote that everyone in the ballpark should sing the “Star Spangled Banner” except the Washington squad.

Holtzman, *No Cheering in the Press Box*, 317.

CHAPTER 8

1. *Pittsburgh Courier*, 8 April 1944, 12.
2. *Ibid.* The photograph in the *Afro* caught Lacy with a grim expression on his face. *Washington Afro-American*, 8 April 1944, 22; *Washington Tribune*, 8 April 1944, 30.
3. Dan Burley, “Confidentially Yours,” *Amsterdam News*, 11 December 1943, 4B. The owner was probably the outspoken Newark Eagles boss, Effa Manley. Given the New York location of the *Amsterdam News*, Burley’s source also could have been Jim Semler of the New York Black Yankees or Alex Pompez of the New York Cubans. Whoever it was, Burley’s source was not off base. In April 1945, the *Washington Afro-American* reported that three out of five Negro League owners opposed integration. *Washington Afro-American*, 7 April 1945, 22.
4. Cum Posey, “Posey’s Points,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 1 April 1944, 12.
5. Wendell Smith, “‘Smitty’s’ Sports Spurts,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 18 December 1943, 14.
6. Sam Lacy, “Looking ’Em Over,” *Washington Afro-American*, 9 September 1944, 22.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, 16 September 1944, 30.
9. Ric Roberts, “Redskins’ Owner Ties-Up Stadium,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 23 August 1944, 12.
10. Harold Jackson, “On the Sports Front,” *Washington Afro-American*, 7 October 1944, 30.
11. Cum Posey, “Posey’s Points,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 17 April 1937, 17 (“For the past few years Negro National League clubs have played at Griffith Stadium in Washington, D.C., and have received great cooperation and much valuable advice from the Washington American League club owner, Clark Griffith, who predicts a great future for Negro League Baseball”); Chester Washington, “Pirates’ Owner Would Favor Sepia Players in Organized Baseball; Lauds Gibson, Satchell [sic],” *id.*, 12 February 1938, 17 (detailing meeting with Benswanger, Posey, and Washington); Cum Posey, “Posey’s Points,” *id.*, 5 September 1942, 16 (denying that the Grays paid an “exorbitant price” to rent Forbes Field for a game against the Kansas City Monarchs).
12. Cum Posey, “Posey’s Points,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 27 July 1942, 17.
13. Sam Lacy, “Looking ’Em Over,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, 14 January 1944, 19.
14. Cum Posey, “Posey’s Points,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 9 November 1940, 18; “Posey Exposes Flaws of Sepia Baseball,” *id.*, 23 August 1941, 16; “‘Keep Opportunists Out of Organized Baseball’—Posey,” *id.*, 30 August 1941, 17; Cum Posey, “Posey’s Points,” *id.*, 31 October 1942, 17. For the best discussion of white booking agents, see Ruck, *Sandlot Seasons*, 117–22.
15. Sam Lacy, “Looking ’Em Over,” *Washington Afro-American*, 17 June 1942, 18.

37. "Josh Gibson Hits 3 Home Runs in 3 Days on Trip," *Washington Afro-American*, 22 July 1944, 26; "Josh Hits 2 Homers in N.Y.," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 22 July 1944, 12.
38. "Austin, Philly Rookie Wins NNL Batting Title," *Washington Afro-American*, 16 September 1944, 30.
39. Cum Posey. "The 1944 All-American Baseball Team," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 16 December 1944, 12.
40. Holway, *Voices*, 266.
41. "Leonard Homers as Grays Win 2," *Washington Afro-American*, 6 May 1944, 18.
42. "Grays Top Yanks in D.C. Lidlifter," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 13 May 1944, 19.
43. "Leonard's Homer Wins First Tilt," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 10 June 1944, 12.
44. Ric Roberts, "Grays and Kansas City Split Before 15,000," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 1 July 1944, 12.
45. "Grays and Newark Divide Twin Bill," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 8 July 1944, 12.
46. Holway, *Voices*, 346.
47. Bill Scott interview.
48. Wendell Smith, "'Smitty's' Sports Spurts," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 30 September 1944, 12.
49. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 164–65.
50. "Baseball Owners Talk Trades, But—," *Washington Afro-American*, 23 December 1944, 30.
51. "Composite Box Score of 5-Game World Series," *Washington Afro-American*, 30 September 1944, 31.
52. Lacy speculated that "Buck Leonard's refusal to remain with [the] team for two exhibition games following the Barons series was being interpreted as general dissatisfaction with the conduct of the club." Sam Lacy, "Ousting of Candy Jim Taylor Reported Likely," *Washington Afro-American*, 28 October 1944, 26. Leonard, however, already had left for Rocky Mount and could not be reached for comment. Leonard's autobiography revealed the real reason. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 169.
53. Sam Lacy, "Final Standings in NNL First Half Hinges on Outcome of Eagle Protest," *Washington Afro-American*, 8 July 1944, 27; "NNL Prexy Orders Replay of Grays-Newark Contest," *Washington Afro-American*, 15 July 1944, 26; "Grays Beat Newark, 8–4, for NNL First Half Title," *id.*, 26 August 1944, 27.
54. Sam Lacy, "Looking 'Em Over," *Washington Afro-American*, 30 September 1944, 30.
55. *Ibid.* The following season, the *Washington Tribune's* Al Sweeney would take issue with the Grays' manipulation of the league schedule. Al Sweeney, "As I See It," *Washington Tribune*, 23 June 1945, 21.
56. Sam Lacy, "Looking 'Em Over," *Washington Afro-American*, 16 September 1944, 30.
57. "Baseball Owners Talk Much but Do Little," *Washington Afro-American*, 23 December 1944, 30.
58. "Judge Landis Dies; Baseball Czar, 78," *New York Times*, 26 November 1944, 56; Pietrusza, *Judge and Jury*, 449–52; Spink, *Judge Landis and 25 Years of Baseball*, 288–92.
59. "Griffith Turns 75; 57th Year in Game," *New York Times*, 21 November 1944, 18; Pietrusza, *Judge and Jury*, 450.

123. "His Bat Bears East Hopes," *Washington Afro-American*, 28 July 1945, 26.
124. "Josh Gibson Wins NNL Batting Title," *Washington Afro-American*, 22 September 1946, 30; Sam Lacy, "Looking 'Em Over," *id.*, 18 August 1945, 26; Leonard. *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 172–73.
125. Sam Lacy, "Will Our Boys Make the Grade?" *Negro Baseball Pictorial Yearbook*, 1945, p. 29, box 1, folder 24, Art Carter Papers.
126. "Colored Nine Tops Nat Ace," *Washington Afro-American*, 1 December 1945, 29.
127. Wendell Smith, "The Sports Beat," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 15 December 1945, 16 ("Buck Leonard and Roy Campanella are doing very well," Robinson wrote Smith. "Buck Leonard has two home runs"). Robinson confessed to Gene Benson, his roommate in Venezuela, fears about not making it in the majors. See Holway, *Black-ball Stars*, xi.
128. Sam Lacy, "Will Our Boys Make the Grade?" *Negro Baseball Pictorial Yearbook*, 1945, p. 29, box 1, folder 24, Art Carter Papers.
129. Sam Lacy, "Looking 'Em Over," *Washington Afro-American*, 23 June 1945, 23.
130. Wendell Smith, "The Sports Beat," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 12 May 1945, 12.
131. Bill Veeck with Ed Linn, *Veeck—As in Wreck* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1962), 171–72. Interestingly, among the many great sportswriters and historians who helped promulgate an early version of Veeck's myth was Shirley Povich. Povich, *All These Mornings*, 129–30.
132. David Jordan, Larry Gerlach, and John Rossi, "A Baseball Myth Exploded," *The National Pastime: A Review of Baseball History* no. 18 (Cleveland: SABR, 1998), 3–13.
133. Wendell Smith, "Sepia Shortstop and Dodgers' Boss Meet in Brooklyn," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 8 September 1945, 12.
134. Michael Carter, "It's a Press Victory, Says Jackie Robinson," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 3 November 1945, 1.
135. Sam Lacy, "Looking 'Em Over," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 10 November 1945, 18.
136. Holway, *Voices*, 267.
137. *Ibid.*; Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 176–77.
138. "Paige OK's Jackie," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 10 November 1945, 18.
139. Paige, *Maybe I'll Pitch Forever*, 173.
140. William Marshall, *Baseball's Pivotal Era: 1945–1951* (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 131. For more on Effa Manley and her relationship with Branch Rickey, see Overmyer, *Queen of the Negro Leagues*, 219–22.
141. Wendell Smith, "The Sports Beat," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 3 November 1945, 12; "Montreal Club First to Drop Color Bar," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 3 November 1945, 26.
142. Wendell Smith, "Branch Rickey Tells Courier," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 3 November 1945, 3.
143. "Montreal Club First to Drop Color Bar," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 3 November 1945, 26. See also "Griff Questions Right of Purchase," *Washington Post*, 24 October 1945, 14; "Griff Backs Monarchs in Squawk Against Grabbing Player," *Washington Evening Star*, 24 October 1945, A-18.
144. See, e.g., "Club Heads Give Views," *New York Times*, 24 October 1945, 17; Bus Ham, "Dodgers Should Buy Robinson—Griffith," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 25 October 1945, 24; "Should Pay Him, Says Griffith," *New York Herald Tribune*, 25 Octo-

- ber 1945, 26; "Majors Can't Act as Outlaws—Griffith," *Boston Globe*, 25 October 1945, 8; "Should Pay"—Griffith," *Chicago Tribune*, 25 October 1945, 29.
145. Wendell Smith, "Branch Rickey Tells Courier," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 3 November 1945, 3.
146. Sam Lacy, "Looking 'Em Over," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 10 November 1945, 18.
147. For more on Griffith's profits in 1943, see supra Chapter 6, text accompanying note 86.
148. "The Race Question: The Major League Steering Committee (August 27, 1946)," in *The Jackie Robinson Reader: Perspectives on an American Hero*, ed. Jules Tygiel (New York: Dutton, 1997), 129–31; Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, 82–86; Polner, *Branch Rickey*, 187–91; Congress, House of Representatives, Judiciary Committee, Study of Monopoly Power, Pt. 6, *Organized Baseball*, Hearings Before the Subcommittee on the Study of Monopoly Power, 82nd Cong., 1st sess., 1951, 484–85.
- The origin of the section of the report on the "Race Question" is unclear. Larry MacPhail, the report's probable author, argued against integration—but these sections of the report were not included in the final version unanimously approved by the owners. Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, 85–86; Marshall, *Baseball's Pivotal Era*, 134–35. All of the original copies of the draft report—except one—were immediately destroyed, but some of the material made it into the 1951 congressional hearings. Id.
149. Calvin Griffith interview.
150. "Washington American League Base Ball Club, Inc., D/B/A Minnesota Twins Baseball Club—Financial Statement," 30 June 1961, Mr. Calvin R. Griffith, President (on file with author).
151. Kerr, *Calvin*, 137.
152. Holtzman, *No Cheering in the Press Box*, 317.
153. "The Race Question: The Major League Steering Committee (August 27, 1946)," 131.
154. *Ibid.*, 130.
155. Hi Turkin, "Nats Used 'Negroes,' Says Rickey," *Washington Times-Herald*, 25 October 1945, 38; "No Racial Issue in Cubans Is Griff's Reply to Rickey," *Washington Evening Star*, 25 October 1945, A-16; "Griffith Answers Rickey on Use of Cuban Players," *Washington Post*, 26 October 1945, 27; "Rickey's Thrust at Griff Arouses Cuban Embassy," *Washington Daily News*, 26 October 1945, 38.
156. "What 'Name' Writers Wrote About Signing of Jackie Robinson," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 3 November 1945, 12. The *Courier* listed Smith as writing for the *Philadelphia Record*. Smith began writing for the *New York Herald Tribune* on September 24, 1945, but the *Record* soon after began buying Smith's column in syndication. Berkow, *Red*, 95, 101.
157. "The Sport Note Pad," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 3 November 1945, 22. Other white sportswriters reacted differently. Roger Treat, a liberal voice with the *Washington Daily News*, applauded Rickey's move as an act of "courage." Roger Treat, "This Is on Me," *Washington Daily News*, 26 October 1945, 38. Shirley Povich adjudged Rickey's signing of Robinson to be "sincere." Shirley Povich, "This Morning," *Washington Post*, 27 October 1945, 27.

O'Neill's talk of libel was, of course, preposterous. Even before the Supreme Court revolutionized First Amendment law by protecting nonreckless falsehood in

183. "Partlow First Player Bought from Race Club," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 25 May 1946, 17; W. Rollo Wilson, "Rickey Grabs Partlow; 'Mex' Loop Snatches Ed Stone," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 11 May 1946, 12; Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, 127.
184. Sam Lacy, "Looking 'Em Over," *Washington Afro-American*, 2 February 1946, 26.
185. Overmyer, *Queen of the Negro Leagues*, 230.
186. Roberts, who relayed this quote to John Holway, mistakenly attributes it to Cum Posey's older brother, See. But Roberts was definitely referring to Cum because Roberts described Posey as "almost on his way to the hospital." Holway, *Blackball Stars*, 326.
187. Harry Keck, "Late Cum Posey Was Heart of Homestead Grays," *Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph*, 29 March 1946, 26.
188. "Homestead, Pa. Pays Homage to a Great Sportsman," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 24 September 1949, 23.
189. "What They Said About Cum Posey," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 6 April 1946, 17.
190. Wendell Smith, "'Smitty's' Sports Spurts," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 19 June 1943, 18.
191. Fay Young, "Through the Years," *Chicago Defender*, 13 April 1946, 11. This column also was published in Reisler, *Black Writers/Black Baseball*, 69–70. The *Washington Tribune* described Posey as "unofficial president of the Negro National League" and "one of the most hated, yet most respected, in Negro baseball circles." "'Cum' Posey Buried Monday," *Washington Tribune*, 2 June 1946, 30.
192. Wendell Smith, "The Sports Beat," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 13 April 1946, 14.
193. Overmyer, *Queen of the Negro Leagues*, 264–65.
194. Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, 108.
195. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 181–82; "Cum Posey, Co-Owner of Homestead Grays, Dies," *Chicago Defender*, 6 April 1946, 15.

CHAPTER 9

1. Tiemann and Palmer, "Major League Attendance," in *Total Baseball*, eds. Thorn et al., 107.
2. The Senators drew a club-record 1,027,216 fans. Not to be outdone, the Yankees became the first team to draw more than two million fans that season. *Ibid.*; Reichler, ed., *The Ronald Encyclopedia of Baseball*, 240–41.
3. Brown, who was married to Posey's daughter, probably no longer felt beholden to play for his father-in-law's team.
4. Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White*, 283; "Grays, Boasting 5-Game Win Streak, Play Stars in Finale," *Washington Afro-American*, 21 September 1946, 26.
5. Sam Lacy, "Looking 'Em Over," *Washington Afro-American*, 7 September 1946, 23.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Season Passes—1945, box 2, folder 17, Art Carter Papers.
8. The All-Star Classic Committee consisted of Grays owner Rufus Jackson as chairman, along with See Posey, New York Cubans owner Alex Pompez, Baltimore Elite Giants president Vernon Green, and the Grays' promoters, John Clark and Art Carter. Letterhead, box 1, folder 7, Art Carter Papers.
9. Letter from J. B. Martin to Rufus Jackson, 8 July 1946, box 1, folder 7, Art Carter Papers. In signaling the NAL's acceptance of the game, Martin wrote: "This game is to be played using the same players we use in the East-West Game here in Chi-

28. Brashler, *Josh Gibson*, 189–91.
29. Robert Peterson initially invoked biblical themes, titling Part Two of his groundbreaking book “Way Down in Egypt Land.” Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White*, 52.
30. Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 8, 11.
31. *Ibid.*, 8–10.
32. *Ibid.*, 8–9.
33. Letter from Jackie Robinson to Wendell Smith, October 31, 1945; letter from Wendell Smith to Branch Rickey, 19 December 1945; letter from Rickey to Smith, 8 January 1946; box 1, Wendell Smith Papers, National Baseball Hall of Fame Library, Cooperstown, N.Y.
34. Holtzman, *No Cheering in the Press Box*, 15–16.
35. Jackie Robinson with Wendell Smith, *Jackie Robinson: My Own Story* (New York: Greenberg, 1948).
36. Jackie Robinson with Alfred Duckett, *I Never Had It Made* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1972), 41.
37. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson*, 206–7. Others have discovered evidence of Smith’s rift with Robinson. Michael Marsh, “Writer Helped Robinson Along; Smith Played Key Role in Baseball’s Integration,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, 30 March 1997, 17.
38. Letter from Jackie Robinson to P. L. Prattis, 7 January 1961; letter from P. L. Prattis to Jackie Robinson, 12 January 1961; letter from Jackie Robinson to P. L. Prattis, 17 January 1961; box 144-12, folder 12, Percival Leroy Prattis Papers.
39. Letter from Wendell Smith to P. L. Prattis, 9 January 1961, box 144-13, folder 20, Percival Leroy Prattis Papers.
40. Letter from Wendell Smith to P. L. Prattis, 30 January 1961, box 144-12, folder 12, Percival Leroy Prattis Papers.
41. Lacy, *Fighting for Fairness*, 73. For Robinson’s feud with Campanella and Robinson’s appearing overweight in 1948, see *id.*, 71–73.
42. *Ibid.*, 73–74.
43. In a May 1946 column about his son, Tim, Lacy wrote: “I’d want him to combine the wisdom of Joe Louis with the courage of Jackie Robinson. . . . I’d hope for him Jackie’s ability to hold his head high in adversity, the ability to withstand the butts and digs and meanness of those who envy him.” Sam Lacy, “Looking ’Em Over,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, 18 May 1946, 14.
44. Ronald A. Smith, “The Paul Robeson–Jackie Robinson Saga and a Political Collision,” in *The Jackie Robinson Reader*, ed. Tygiel, 180.
45. *Ibid.*, 183.
46. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson*, 210–16; Falkner, *Great Time Coming*, 197–203; Duberman, *Paul Robeson*, 360–62; Robinson, *I Never Had It Made*, 94–98; Tygiel, *Baseball’s Great Experiment*, 334; Bill Mardo, “Robinson–Robeson,” in *Jackie Robinson*, ed. Dorinson and Warmund, 98–106; Smith, “The Paul Robeson–Jackie Robinson Saga and a Political Collision,” 169–88.
47. Later in his life, Robinson adopted a more sympathetic view of Robeson:

That statement was made over twenty years ago, and I have never regretted it. But I have grown wiser and closer to painful truths about America’s destructiveness. And I do have an increased respect for Paul Robeson who, over the span of that twenty years, sacrificed himself, his career, and the comfort he once enjoyed because, I believe, he was sincerely trying to help his people.

- Robinson, *I Never Had It Made*, 98. Robinson, a lifelong Republican, regretted his 1960 endorsement of Nixon. *Id.*, 147.
48. Robinson, *I Never Had It Made*, 35. Indeed, Harold Jackson claimed that in 1945 he once talked Robinson out of quitting the Monarchs during midseason to become head of a YMCA in Dallas, Texas. Jackson, *The House That Jack Built*, 23. For more on Robinson's unhappiness in the Negro Leagues, see Robinson, *I Never Had It Made*, 35–36; Rachel Robinson with Lee Daniels, *Jackie Robinson: An Intimate Portrait* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996), 33–34; Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson*, 113–19; Falkner, *Great Time Coming*, 92–94; Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, 63.
 49. Jackie Robinson, "What's Wrong with Negro Baseball," *Ebony*, June 1948, 16–17.
 50. *Ibid.* The article shocked Wendell Smith, who claimed that Robinson had written the article "all by himself"—lest anyone thought Smith wrote it. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson*, 203.
 51. Effa Manley, "Negro Baseball Isn't Dead," *Our World*, August 1948, 27; "Mrs. Manley Flays Jackie for Attack on Baseball," *Washington Afro-American*, 22 May 1948, sec. 2, p. 15; Overmyer, *Queen of the Negro Leagues*, 233–34.
 52. "Wright, Thompson Banished by NNL," *Washington Afro-American*, 31 July 1948, sec. 2, p. 11.
 53. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 165.
 54. Daniel Cattau, "Forgotten Champions," *Washington Post Magazine*, 3 June 1990, 28.
 55. "Marquez Paces Grays at Bat," *Washington Afro-American*, 2 August 1947, 19; Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 193.
 56. "'Ches' Washington—Gray Mainstays Top Nats," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 6 September 1947, 14; "'Ches' Washington . . . Vic Rates the Nationals," *id.*, 31 May 1947, 15; Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 194.
 57. Wilmer Fields interview, 13 August 1992.
 58. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 151–53.
 59. Art Carter, "NNL Votes to Limit Club Payrolls to \$6,000 Monthly," *Washington Afro-American*, 24 January 1948, 23.
 60. Holway, *Voices*, 253.
 61. Expense Sheet—9 August 1948, box 2, folder 11, Art Carter Papers.
 62. *Washington Afro-American*, 15 May 1948, sec. 2, p. 15; "Diamond Dust," *id.*, 22 May 1948, sec. 2, p. 13.
 63. "Heavy Hitting Takes Team to Lead in Pennant Fight," *Washington Afro-American*, 12 June 1948, sec. 2, p. 14.
 64. Art Carter, "Easter and Leonard Clout Three Homers in 13–4 Victory," *Washington Afro-American*, 17 July 1948, sec. 2, p. 12.
 65. "Going Strong," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 7 August 1948, 12.
 66. "Leonard, Easter Pace Loop Hitter with High Scores," *Washington Afro-American*, 31 July 1948, sec. 2, p. 11.
 67. "Baseball Scores, Standings and Statistics," *Washington Afro-American*, 11 September 1948, sec. 2, p. 13; Holway, *Complete Book of Baseball's Negro Leagues*, 458.
 68. "Baltimore Club Refuses to Complete Disputed Tilt," *Washington Afro-American*, 25 September 1948, sec. 2, p. 14; "Baltimore 'Stalled'; Grays Awarded Flag," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 2 October 1948, 11.
 69. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 201–2.

70. "Clowns, Monarchs, Grays on Buck Leonard Day Card," *Washington Afro-American*, 28 August 1948, sec. 2, p. 11; "10,000 Expected to See Bill Honoring Buck Leonard," id., 4 September 1948, sec. 2, p. 13.
71. "6,000 Fans Pay Tribute to Grays' Buck Leonard," *Washington Afro-American*, 11 September 1948, sec. 2, p. 12.
72. Ibid.; Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 197–98.
73. Al Sweeney, "As I See It," *Washington Afro-American*, 10 July 1948, sec. 2, p. 8.
74. Advertisement, *Washington Afro-American*, 8 April 1950, 26; "19,000 Watch Dodgers, Orioles to 3–3 Tie, Campanella Clouts Homer," id., 15 April 1950, 23.
75. McNeill interview, 2 July 1992.
76. Kermit K. Wheeler, "Browns Sign Up Negro Stars," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 26 July 1947, 15; "St. Louis Releases Outfielder, Infielder," id., 30 August 1947, 14.
77. Joseph Thomas Moore, *Pride Against Prejudice: The Biography of Larry Doby* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 168. Paige's breaking curfew and his showing up late to the ballpark and for a team train ride to Boston made headlines in the black press. Wendell Smith, "Sports Beat," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 16 October 1948, 10.
78. Moore, *Pride Against Prejudice*, 169.
79. Paige, *Pitchin' Man*, 92.
80. Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, 231–33.
81. Al Sweeney, "As I See It," *Washington Afro-American*, 1 January 1949, sec. 2, p. 10. The *Washington Post's* Morris Siegel confirmed Sweeney's account. Morris Siegel, "Old Satch Shuffles Off to Ovation by 28,058," *Washington Post*, 31 August 1948, 16–17. Satchel's performance garnered the attention of every white daily. See id.; Burton Hawkins, "Paige Draws 265,000 in Five Starts," *Washington Evening Star*, 31 August 1948, A-9; Bob Addie, "28,058 Fans Pack Stadium for Rout," *Washington Times-Herald*, 31 August 1948, 21, 23; Ev Gardner, "Old Satch Demeans Mr. Spink, and How!" *Washington Daily News*, 31 August 1948, 38.
82. Shirley Povich, "Doby Hits 450-Foot Homer; Nats Lose, 6–1," *Washington Post*, 9 May 1948, C-1; Burton Hawkins, "Negro's Wallop Presses Ruth's Record Hit Here," *Washington Evening Star*, 9 May 1948, B-1; Bob Addie, "Nats Baffled by Cleveland Rookie, 6–1," *Washington Times-Herald*, 9 May 1948, sec. 2, pp. 1, 4; Ed McAuley, "Indians Whooping Over Steady Whacking by Keltner, Boudreau," *The Sporting News*, 19 May 1948, 9; Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, 237.
83. "Ches" Washington, "Josh, Ruth, or Doby?" *Pittsburgh Courier*, 22 May 1948, 14. Washington erroneously referred to the magazine as the *Saturday Evening Post*, but it was actually *Time*. The article, which came out July 19, 1943, described "a recent doubleheader at Griffith Stadium, he hit three home runs, one for a distance of 485 ft." "Josh the Basher," *Time*, 19 July 1943, 75–76. Although Gibson homered twice in a Griffith Stadium doubleheader in 1943, he never homered three times that season. He accomplished that feat only during a sparsely attended 1939 Griffith Stadium doubleheader. The only contemporary newspaper account of that game does not mention a 485-foot homer. "Josh Gibson's Slugging Bat Thrills in Split Twin-Bill," *Washington Tribune*, 22 July 1939, 12. The national magazines, as usual, most likely exaggerated Gibson's home-run exploits.
84. "Doby Reminisces Over a 450-Foot Homer," *Washington Afro-American*, 15 May 1948, sec. 2, p. 13; Fred Leigh, "Four Sports Highlighted by Interracial Competition," *Washington Afro-American*, 1 January 1949, sec. 2, p. 10.
85. Ric Roberts, "500 Foot Homer at Washington Seen Longer than Record Clouts by Jimmy [sic] Foxx at Chicago," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 4 June 1949, 14; Shirley Povich,

- “Doby Hits Super Homer Estimated at 500 Feet,” *Washington Post*, 26 May 1949, 4B; Burton Hawkins, “Tribe Is Blasted Before Long Poke Is Hit by Larry,” *Washington Evening Star*, 26 May 1949, C1; Bob Addie, “Kuhel Chased After Beef with Umpire,” *Washington Times-Herald*, 26 May 1949, 32; Dave Reque, “Missing Doby’s Clout Kept Kuhel Warm,” *Washington Daily News*, 26 May 1949, 59; “Hit Longer Drive at Capital,” *The Sporting News*, 1 June 1949, 3.
86. Sam Lacy, “500-Foot Smash Declared Longest by Clark Griffith,” *Washington Afro-American*, 28 May 1949, sec. 2, p. 13; “One of the Longest . . . and Doby Hit It,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 28 May 1949, 1.
 87. Sam Lacy, “500-Foot Smash Declared Longest by Clark Griffith,” *Washington Afro-American*, 28 May 1949, sec. 2, p. 13
 88. *Ibid.*
 89. Veeck, *Veeck as in Wreck*, 210.
 90. Tygiel, *Baseball’s Great Experiment*, 225.
 91. “An Open Letter: Griffs Could Use Colored Players,” *Washington Afro-American*, 13 March 1948, 29.
 92. “Appearance of Colored Players Cited as Reason,” *Washington Afro-American*, 23 July 1949, 26.
 93. Adelson, *Brushing Back Jim Crow*, 35. In 1954, the FBI investigated threats to eight nonwhite members of the Senators’ Chattanooga farm club during spring training in Winter Garden, Florida. The city officials told the Senators to get their nonwhite players out of the city by sundown. The players in question were moved to Orlando. *Id.*, 141.
 94. “Nats Continue to Igg ‘Tan Players,” *Washington Afro-American*, 29 July 1950, 24.
 95. “Minor Loops Snub Colored Applications,” *Washington Afro-American*, 24 January 1948, 23; “Colored Baseball Is Given Rebuff,” *id.*, 28 February 1948, 25.
 96. Clark and Lester, eds., *The Negro Leagues Book*, 255–60.
 97. Sam Lacy, “Ex-Grays Southpaw Ace to Get San Diego Contract,” *Washington Afro-American*, 5 March 1949, sec. 2, p. 11.
 98. Wendell Smith reported that the Triple-A Oakland Oaks purchased Fields’s contract, “but for some strange reason he refuses to report.” Wendell Smith, “The Sports Beat,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 16 July 1949, 22. Fields just felt more comfortable playing in the Negro Leagues and in Latin America, turning down five offers from major league teams over the years. Wilmer Fields interview; Holway, *Black Diamonds*, 177; Wilmer Fields, *My Life in the Negro Leagues* (Westport, Conn.: Meckler, 1996), 31–37. After the Grays folded, Fields played in Canada and Latin America rather than take a salary cut to try to work his way up to the majors. Fields, *My Life*, 31.
 99. Originally, Marquez signed with the New York Yankees and played with the Double-A Newark Bears, Easter signed with the Indians and initially played with their Triple-A club in San Diego, and Thurman left to play in his hometown for the Kansas City Monarchs. “Bad Weather Halts Drills in Danville Training Camp,” *Washington Afro-American*, 16 April 1949, sec. 2, p. 14.
 100. “National Circuit Folds Up,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 11 December 1948, 11.
 101. “Grays Plan to Continue Local Games,” *Washington Afro-American*, 4 December 1948, sec. 2, p. 12.

102. Letter from Seward Posey to Art Carter, 17 December 1948, box 10, Art Carter Papers.
103. Letter from Vernon Green to Art Carter, 22 January 1949, box 1, folder 8, Art Carter Papers.
104. Letter from Seward Posey to Art Carter, 19 January 1949, box 1, folder 7, Art Carter Papers.
105. Art Carter, "Grays' Co-Owner Praised as 'Big Brother to All,'" *Washington Afro-American*, 5 March 1949, sec. 2, p. 14; "Popular Co-Owner of Homestead Grays Dies in Pittsburgh," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 12 March 1949, 12.
106. Ruck, *Sandlot Seasons*, 181.
107. "Grays Join New 8-Team American Association," *Washington Afro-American*, 12 March 1949, sec. 2, p. 12; "Grays Lead American Ass'n," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 25 June 1949, 22.
108. Lena Cox interview, 5 August 1992.
109. "Grays Winning in Spite of Early Handicaps; Face Money Problems on the Road," *Washington Afro-American*, 18 June 1949, sec. 2, p. 13.
110. "Partlow, Southpaw Ace, Bolsters Pitching Staff," *Washington Afro-American*, 30 April 1949, sec. 2, p. 14.
111. "Grays to End Season Here Against Philadelphia Stars," *Washington Afro-American*, 17 September 1949, 27.
112. *Ibid.*; "Partlow's Five-Hit Hurling Triumphs Over Latins, 8-1," *Washington Afro-American*, 6 August 1949, 25.
113. "Cubans, Stars to Play First NAL Bill Sunday," *Washington Afro-American*, 23 July 1949, 25; "Rain Plays Havoc with Grays, 2 Games Delayed," *id.*, 20 August 1949, 13.
114. "Grays Beat Philly Stars, 5-1, in Season's Finale," *Washington Afro-American*, 1 October 1949, 26.
115. Ruck, *Sandlot Seasons*, 181; *Pittsburgh Courier*, 1 September 1951, 1.
116. For example, at a July 2 four-team doubleheader involving the Elite Giants, Stars, Cubans, and Grays at Shibe Park that drew 3,780 fans, each team made only \$357.80. Satchel took home \$547.50. Balance Sheet—24 July 1950, Ed Bolden Papers, Manuscript Division, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, D.C.
117. Holway, *Voices*, 15, 271.
118. "Veteran Hurler to Face Grays for Philadelphia Stars," *Washington Afro-American*, 5 August 1950, 23.
119. "Grays Hit the Road After Beating Philly Stars Twice," *Washington Afro-American*, 12 August 1950, 25.
120. "Grays End Season with 100 Wins," *Washington Afro-American*, 16 September 1950, 26.
121. "Grays Have 8-0 Record on Tour," *Washington Afro-American*, 4 November 1950, 29; Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 194-95.
122. Leonard, *The Black Lou Gehrig*, 210.
123. The official cause of Charlie's death was carcinoma of the stomach, which had metastasized. North Carolina Death Certificates, Charles Delmont Leonard, 10 October 1952, vol. 11B, p. 517, s.123.378, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.; C. D. Leonard interview.
124. Cattau, "Forgotten Champions," 29.

- Posey, claiming that Posey refused to sell him Buck Leonard and Josh Gibson. As Wendell Smith pointed out, Benswanger's post hoc excuses rang hollow. Wendell Smith, "The Sports Beat," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 28 January 1950, 22.
23. Holway, *Josh and Satch*, 154.
 24. Lacy interview, 15 July 1992.
 25. *The Sporting News*, 23 July 1952, 12.
 26. A. S. "Doc" Young, "Inside Sports," *Jet*, 2:15 (7 August 1952), 53.
 27. Dan Daniel, "Griff Sees Yank Pitching Stalling Fifth Flag Drive," *New York World-Telegram*, 17 April 1953, 34. Despite Griffith's confirmation of the proposed Doby-Jensen swap in the *World-Telegram*, Povich wrote the following week that "the published report of the Indians' offer of Larry Doby for Jackie Jensen was a phoney. . . . It was a hypothetical trade broached to Bucky Harris by a baseball writer, not by the Indians. . . ." Shirley Povich, "Griffs Whip Bosox, 4-0," *Washington Post*, 26 March 1953, 18. Not according to quotes in Dan Daniel's article attributed to Griffith.
 28. Dan Daniel, "Griff Sees Yank Pitching Stalling Fifth Flag Drive," *New York World-Telegram*, 17 April 1953, 34.
 29. The *Washington Post* mentioned that Paula was the "first Negro ever to play a regular game for the Nats." Bob Addie, "Nats Whip A's, 8-1," *Washington Post*, 7 September 1954, 18; Burton Hawkins, "Paula and Lemon Show Senators Some Promise," *Washington Evening Star*, 7 September 1954, A-20 (not mentioning Paula as the first black Senator but describing him as the "muscular Cuban Negro"); "Debut Impressive," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 18 September 1954, 17 (running a photograph of Paula and a caption about his 2-for-5 debut). The 1955 Senators yearbook noted that Paula had the "distinction" of the being the "first Negro" to play in a major league game with the Senators. 1955 Washington Nationals yearbook, 30.
 30. Lacy interview, 15 July 1992. Scull (pronounced "School"), a five-foot six-inch outfielder signed by Joe Cambria, never appeared in a major league game. Yet Scull appeared in the team's 1954 yearbook. 1954 Washington Nationals yearbook, 23.
 The Senators apparently brought two dark-skinned Cuban players to their 1953 spring training, Scull and fellow outfielder Juan Vistuer, neither of whom made the team. Lester, *Black Baseball's National Showcase*, 378. In his coverage of the Senators' spring training, Povich wrote of Scull: "The Nats now have a Negro player being seasoned in the Triple A American Association." Shirley Povich, "Harris Sees Yost Hitting More Homers," *Washington Post*, 31 March 1953, 16. Povich, however, did not explicitly refer to Vistuer as a "Negro." He wrote: "All of the Nats Cubans are now in camp with pitchers Sandy Consuegra and Raul Sanchez and outfielder Juan Vistuer reporting today." Shirley Povich, "A's Burn Nats, 7-1," *Washington Post*, 16 March 1953, 11.
 In February 1953, *Jet* magazine wrote about the Senators trying out a "Negro outfielder." It was referring to Scull, whom Joe Cambria boasted was "'faster than Minnie Minoso' of the White Sox." "Senators to Try Out Negro Outfielder," *Jet* 3:18 (26 February 1953), 48. *Jet* did not mention Vistuer.
 31. "'Why No Negro Players?' Dailies in Three Cities Ask," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 29 August 1953, 15; Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, 293.
 32. Clark Griffith file, National Baseball Library, Cooperstown, New York; Kerr, *Calvin*, 15.
 33. For Griffith's ties to Abe Attell, see Seymour, *Baseball: The Golden Age*, 336-37.
 34. Povich, *All These Mornings*, 70-71.

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