



*Island Park, Wichita, Kansas, 1925. Courtesy of Photograph Collection, Wichita Public Library.*

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# “PRAISING MY PEOPLE”: NEWSPAPER SPORTS COVERAGE AND THE INTEGRATION OF BASEBALL IN WICHITA, KANSAS

by Brian Carroll

Soon after his marriage, young newspaper publisher Hollie T. Sims found himself no longer welcome in Greenwood, Mississippi, where he had planned to settle down and raise a family. The town’s sheriff and a group of white residents forced Hollie and his wife Virginia out in 1919 in reaction to a tribute the newspaperman had written to the black soldiers who helped defeat Germany in World War I. “You can’t run that kind of stuff in Mississippi,” the sheriff told the family. “Cotton can grow at the North Pole easier than the news you’re putting out could go in Mississippi.” So the family fled to Wichita. “We couldn’t continue to publish our newspaper and live,” Virginia wrote, shortly before her death in 1989. Separately, in a letter to a fellow member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Hollie Sims, editor and publisher of Wichita’s *Negro Star* newspaper, remembered it this way: “The white man of the South attempted to stop me from praising my people.”<sup>1</sup>

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1. Virginia Sims, untitled autobiographical notes, Sims Private Papers, Kansas African American Museum, Wichita, Kansas; Hollie Sims quoted in Gretchen Cassel Eick’s *Dissent in Wichita: The Civil Rights Movement in the Midwest, 1954–1972* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 34; U.S. Census, 1920, Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas; Kansas State Census, 1925, Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas; *Negro Star* (Wichita), May 7, 1920. H. T. Sims is identified as the editor and publisher of what appears to be the first extant copy of the Wichita version of the *Negro Star*, May 7, 1920, although it is volume 12, number 51. Sims founded the Wichita chapter of the NAACP in 1919, six years after the first Kansas branch was established, and by 1920 the chapter counted ninety-three members. Virginia Sims, who helped publish the paper for thirty-four years, died at age 108. “Black leader Virginia Sims dies,” *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, August 6, 1989.

Merchants Who Advertise in a Race Paper, Desire Your Patronage—Give Them a Trial.

# THE NEGRO STAR.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE PEOPLE

(L. 13 NO. 34

WICHITA, KANSAS, FRIDAY, DEC. 17, 1920

PRICE, FIVE CENTS

## BORN A SLAVE, DIED WITH HONORS.

By The Negro Associated Press  
KANE, PENNA., Dec. 17.—Scipio Young, Negro, age 101 years, born in slavery in Virginia prior to the Civil War, died here after a brief illness. When the Civil War broke out Young joined the Union forces at Fredericksburg. He was made a servant to Lieutenant Wilkinson and later served General Thomas L. Kane in a similar capacity. General Kane brought Young to this section when hostilities closed. Young's estate, valued at \$50,000.00 goes to his six children.

## Lawlessness in Georgia Brings Action From The Courts.

(By The Negro Associated Press.)  
ALBANY, GA., Dec. 17.—Judge John R. Wilson of the Dougherty County Superior Court ordered the Grand Jury to investigate the recent reign of lawlessness in the eastern part of the county, where many Negro families have been driven from their homes and some individuals have been whipped. Besides convening the Grand Jury to make a thorough investigation, Judge Wilson instructed Sheriff Tar-

## Political Justice To All.

By The Negro Associated Press  
WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 17.—The resolution introduced in the House of Representatives on the opening day of the short session of Congress by Representative George Holden Tinkham of Massachusetts proposing to cut down the representation in the southern states in order to "do political justice to all the states in the Union, is of much interest to the Colored people throughout the United States since such a resolution is a vital thrust at the flagrant violations of the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the Constitution of the United States.

In a statement with invective against the way, he declares, the Constitution has been defiled, Representative Tinkham threatens that if the House attempts to make a reapportionment under the 1920 census "Which is plainly unconstitutional by avoiding enforcement of the fourteenth amendment," he intends to appeal to the Supreme Court to decide the constitutionality of the election of the next House. He declares his determination to make it his first and principal duty in Congress to work for the "restoration of political equality and justice in the United States." Representative Tinkham explains that "under the Constitution representatives in Congress are apportioned every ten years in accordance with the constitution of

## N. A. A. C. P. ANNOUNCES VICTORY IN ARKANSAS RIOT CASES

Decision of Lower Court In Case of Six Men Condemned to Die.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 70 Fifth Avenue, New York, today announced an important victory in the case of the colored men condemned to death in connection with the Arkansas riots of 1919. The Supreme Court of the State of Arkansas has reversed the decision of the lower courts condemning the men to death. This is the second reversal by the State Supreme Court of Arkansas in these cases and announcement was made by James Weldon Johnson, Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People that the fight will be continued in the courts until justice is had. The Supreme Court of Arkansas in

reversing the decision of the court held:

1. That discrimination against colored men, because barred from the grand jury trying them was unconstitutional under the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution of the Civil Rights act of 1875.  
2. That the lower court in refusing to hear the motion to set aside the verdict of the jury.  
Word comes from the other six men who sentence the Supreme Court to review, will probably be cut pending determination of the cases recently reversed.

## NOW, ISN'T THIS AWFUL

(By The Negro Associated Press.)  
BUFFALO, N. Y., Dec. 17.—The child in the Buffalo Police citizens of Buffalo, have been shaken back to the home of horror, and here she stands

## Morehouse Holds its Own.

ATLANTA, GA., Dec. 17.—Among the strong "grid" teams of the 1920 foot-ball colleges, Morehouse College has figured conspicuously. Fighting from beginning to end of every one of its six scheduled games, the plucky little Atlanta college undi-

## A USEFUL MAN PASSES AWAY.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 17.—John C. Dancy, former Recorder of the district, passed away at his home, 2139 L Street, Sunday, December 5.



Hollie T. Sims, editor and publisher the Negro Star, moved his family and his newspaper from Greenwood, Mississippi, to Wichita, Kansas, in 1919 when, as Sims told it, "the white man of the South attempted to stop me from praising my people." Soon after moving to Wichita, Sims (right) founded the city's NAACP chapter and continued the struggle for racial equality in the pages of the Star and elsewhere for the next three decades.

Stories like the Sims' help explain the period of uplift experienced by black communities in the Midwest and North during the 1920s, during a movement of self-help led by Booker T. Washington that set up dramatic progress toward integration in the 1930s.<sup>2</sup> A key component of this ad hoc movement was the rise in popularity among blacks and whites together of black sports teams. Supported and publicized by bootstrapping black news-

papermen such as Hollie Sims, the athletic achievements of black teams served to chip away at mainstream society's ignorance of and apathy toward segregation and a divided society. This article examines newspaper coverage in Wichita during the first half of the 1930s to show how commentators responded—and sometimes did not respond—to increasingly interracial play in baseball as the decade progressed. These responses reveal some of the changes underpinning and animating integration in the American heartland during the Depression Era, more than a decade before Jackie Robinson and the Brooklyn Dodgers broke major league baseball's color barrier in 1947 and two decades before *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, held that segregation in the nation's public schools was unconstitutional.

2. For much more on this period of uplift and self-help in black communities, specifically as this bootstrapping related to the building of black baseball, see Brian Carroll, *When to Stop the Cheering? The Black Press, the Black Community and the Integration of Professional Baseball* (New York: Routledge, 2007). For broader accounts of the contributions of the black press during both the period of uplift and in the 1930s, see Henry Lewis Suggs, editor, *The Black Press in the Middle West, 1865-1985* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1986); and Juliet E. K. Walker, "The Promised Land: The Chicago Defender and the Black Press," in *The Black Press in the Middle West*, 24.

Specifically, this article looks at sports coverage from 1930 until 1935 in the two big dailies in Wichita, the *Wichita Eagle* and the *Wichita Beacon*, as well as several weeklies, including the city's two African American newspapers at the time—the *Negro Star* and the *People's Elevator*—the *Kansas Courier*, and the *Catholic Advance*. This work is particularly important in that the sports coverage in the *Negro Star* has not yet been fully researched.<sup>3</sup>

As historian Pat Washburn pointed out, because white newspapers refused to cover blacks except as “athletic stars, entertainers, or criminals,” black Wichitans had only the *Negro Star* and *People's Elevator* from which to learn about everyday life in their largely segregated community. In popular accounts of history, African Americans, and in particular southern blacks, are often seen as history's victims, not its makers, underlining the importance of depictions of group life and ideas of racial identity within the black community found in newspapers such as the *Negro Star*. Like accounts of everyday life presented in white publications, such depictions in the black press are often those of a people making their own history, however in the case of blacks such activity happened in a “city within a city,” to borrow Horace Cayton and St. Clair Drake's description. Though they were not covered in white newspapers, blacks too were building up businesses and founding civic and church organizations. They were also engaged in a pursuit that would, perhaps inadvertently, help to introduce black concerns into white mainstream papers, establishing a brand of baseball comparable to white baseball.<sup>4</sup>

Additionally, this research fills a void in the sports narratives of Wichita, the state of Kansas, and the nation by adding the important contributions of the black press and black baseball players to integration of the sport. Harold Evans's “Baseball in Kansas, 1867–1940,” for example, does not mention players of color in any context, while Bob Rives's *Baseball in Wichita* only briefly mentions the all-black Wichita Monroviaans in its only reference to African Americans in the sport. By focusing

3. The paper was included in a 1972 cataloging of black publications in the state and utilized by Jason Pendleton for his 1997 study of interracial baseball in Wichita. William M. Tuttle, Jr., and Surenda Bhana, “Black Newspapers in Kansas,” *American Studies* 13 (Fall 1972): 119–24; Jason Pendleton, “Jim Crow Strikes Out: Interracial Baseball In Wichita, Kansas, 1920–1935,” *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 20 (Summer 1997): 86–101.

4. Pat Washburn, *The African American Newspaper Research Journal* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2008), 5; St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1945), 379.

on newspaper coverage, this article also seeks to build on scholarship outlining Wichita's integration in sport produced by Jason Pendleton in “Jim Crow Strikes Out: Interracial Baseball In Wichita, Kansas, 1920–1935,” and to continue a more exhaustive study by the present author that began by looking at segregation in Wichita in the 1920s. Pendleton's article examines integration in the 1920s and early 1930s, mentioning a June 1925 baseball game between the Monroviaans and a team fielded by the local Ku Klux Klan chapter; this author subsequently placed that game into historical, social, and cultural context in order to better understand racial conditions of the period.<sup>5</sup>

Baseball provides a convenient lens through which to examine integration's contexts because the sport flourished alongside banking, insurance, gambling, and journalism as one of the most successful African American business enterprises during the “bleak decades of racial exclusion.”<sup>6</sup> Culturally, baseball provided one of the important summertime rhythms for black communities throughout the country, from the roaring 1920s through the war-riven 1940s. The sport survived both the Depression and constant bickering and in fighting among black baseball's owners. Demonstrating the importance of baseball to the local black community, the hugely successful Kansas City Monarchs were described as “the life of Kansas City in the Negro vicinity.”<sup>7</sup> This article suggests that the Monarchs—led by one of baseball's and sport's most accomplished players, Leroy “Satchel” Paige—and coverage of the team wherever it barnstormed, contributed as much to the integration of the sport in Wichita and, therefore, in Kansas as any other single factor.

The coverage shows Wichita sports opening up to participation and spectating by blacks, sharply contrasting Wichita's race relations with those of the South, where Jim Crow laws and policies were entrenched. The coverage is a tribute to the black press during the period,

5. Pendleton, “Jim Crow Strikes Out,” 86–101; Brian Carroll, “Beating the Klan: Baseball Coverage in Wichita Before Integration, 1920–1930,” *Baseball Research Journal* 37 (Winter 2008): 51–61; Harold C. Evans, “Baseball in Kansas, 1867–1940,” *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 9 (May 1940): 175–92; Bob Rives, *Baseball in Wichita* (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia, 2004). Rives incorrectly refers to the team as the Monroviaans and places the Monroviaans-Klan game at “Monrovarian Park.”

6. Jerry Malloy, ed., *Sol White's History of Colored Base Ball* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 74. Malloy's edition includes a reprinting of the 1907 volume, *Sol White's Official Base Ball Guide*, by Sol White, a black ballplayer, successful manager, and, later, newspaperman.

7. From the *Kansas City Call* newspaper, quoted in Janet Bruce, *The Kansas City Monarch: Champions of Black Baseball* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1985), 3.

which relied on families like the Sims to overcome financial and logistical obstacles each and every week in order to publish their papers. The *Negro Star*, *Wichita Protest*, and *Wichita Searchlight* provide some of the only records of daily life for the city's black community during the early twentieth century.<sup>8</sup> They also were more than mere chroniclers of the black experience; as records of the activities of business people and social and church leaders in the community, these papers helped to shape that experience, as well.

**B**uilding up Wichita's black community was probably not on the Sims' minds when, after being warned off by the local sheriff, they and two other families who helped publish the *Negro Star* in Mississippi loaded up their printing press and boarded a northbound train to Kansas. Immediately after relocating to Wichita in June 1919, Hollie and Virginia began publishing the paper from a barn behind their home at 1241 Wabash.<sup>9</sup> Newspapering and involvement in the church defined the Sims family. Hollie T. Sims' father, R. T. Sims, published a black church newspaper in Canton, Mississippi, the *Mississippi Baptist*. Hollie T. Sims also became a prototypical black newspaperman, serving as an important voice in and for Wichita's black community and involving himself deeply in the community's efforts to lift itself up out of poverty. "The Negro reporter is a fighting reporter," wrote long-time *Pittsburgh Courier* reporter and editor P. L. Prattis. In his newspaper, the self-proclaimed "mouth-piece of 28,000 in Kansas," Sims wrote that "a newspaperman's duty is to serve the public by giving the truth of all matters touching the interests of the public regardless of his own individual opinions or creed."<sup>10</sup>

Soon after moving to Wichita, Sims founded the city's chapter of the NAACP, and he served as treasurer of

8. The *People's Elevator*, the *Wichita Searchlight*, *Wichita Protest*, *Klan Kourier*, and *Catholic Advance* did not cover sports. These newspapers were read and researched for context; extant copies on the *Searchlight* and *Protest* cover only the 1910s and 1920s.

9. The barn and the house are gone, leaving only a neglected, overgrown vacant lot in a poor, black section of Wichita. Their absences were noted in a January 2008 visit to Wichita. In the 1920s and 1930s, Wichita's black community concentrated along Wichita's Cleveland Avenue, from 3rd to 21st streets. See *Negro Star*, May 7, 1920; *Wichita City Directory*, 1920, 1922, 1951.

10. *Negro Star*, January 27, 1922; the Prattis quotation is in Washburn, *The African American Newspaper Research Journal*, 1. R. T. Sims remained in Mississippi, pastoring the First Baptist Church of Moss Point. He resigned that position in February 1922. He moved to the Spring Hill Missionary Baptist Church in Tupelo, Mississippi, in 1924. See "Expression of Regret," *Negro Star*, April 7, 1922.

the Water Street YMCA, a cultural nexus for Wichita's black community in the 1920s and 1930s. He also served as secretary of the Baptist Young People's Union, an organization that had important political influence in speaking for black Baptists, particularly young blacks. In these roles, Sims fulfilled Booker T. Washington's philosophy of bootstrapping, first by employing six people to publish the *Star*, but also in attempting to expand business and enterprise in Wichita's black community. In early 1922, for example, he joined with his long-time business manager and advertising representative, B. H. Neely, to organize the Kansas Coal and Mercantile Company. The business partners sold shares in the new company, announcing, "We need your and every Race man and woman's \$s and co-operation to make this Company a success." Judging by advertisements in the *Star*, which ran throughout a period of six years, the company was a success, but it is not known on what scale. Neely was a "Race man" himself, organizing with national backing Wichita's Local Porters Union in 1924, while also working at the *Star* and running the mercantile company. So also was Sims's brother, Hugh N. Sims, who moved with the Sims family to Wichita from Mississippi, and was one of Wichita's two black dentists in 1925.<sup>11</sup>

Sports coverage in the *Negro Star* was almost entirely reflexive, or passive, until the middle of the 1934 baseball season, when the paper contracted its first and only sports editor, Bennie Williams. The weekly newspaper solicited and sometimes received reports from teams and clubs in the city's black community, including the Monrovians, the ABCs, the Gray Sox, and many of the city's South Central Athletic Association basketball teams. The paper appears to have published the reports it received in a reactive approach that yielded no comprehensive or systematic coverage of any sport, much less of any one team or organization. The *Star* did briefly experiment with sports coverage in 1922, but the section was entirely dependent on wire service copy and disappeared after only one issue.<sup>12</sup>

Wichita baseball began integrating in 1932 without fanfare, with nothing to mark the occasion or note the

11. Quotation regarding company's success in "Attention!," *Negro Star*, March 17, 1922; see also "B.Y.P.U. Endorses War Policy," *New York Times*, July 17, 1898; Eick, *Dissent in Wichita*, 30; "Local Porter's Union a Reality," *Negro Star*, March 7, 1924; Hugh Sims became Wichita's first black school board member after winning election in his second try in 1949. He later served on the city's advisory council on minority problems in 1957.

12. See *Negro Star*, July 28, 1922; and *Polk's Wichita City Directory*. Bennie Williams was a Wichita city fireman before, during, and after his short stint as *Star* sports editor.



*Demonstrating the importance of baseball to the local black community, the hugely successful Kansas City Monarchs were described as “the life of Kansas City in the Negro vicinity.” The Monarchs, led by one of sport’s most accomplished players, Leroy “Satchel” Paige, and press coverage of the team wherever it barnstormed, contributed as much to the integration of baseball in Kansas as any other single factor. As if following a Hollywood script, the 1934 Monarchs, pictured here, lost the final game of the Denver Post Tournament to the House of David, a Benton Harbor, Michigan, barnstorming team that had hired Satchel Paige as a ringer just for the semi-pro tournament. Paige pitched the “Bearded Beauties” to a 2 to 1 win over his old team to take the \$6,500 prize.*

change. This silence says a great deal about race relations in the city at the time, when society remained largely indifferent towards race, and when integration on its playing fields simultaneously occurred in at least two ways. First, two Mexican teams were allowed to play in Wichita’s amateur leagues for the first time—the Midgets, also called the Mexicans, in the Junior League, and the Aztecs in the very competitive Commercial League. It is unknown why the Mexican teams were allowed or whether anyone noticed or cared about the teams’ racial composition. Few game results for either team appeared in the *Eagle* or the *Beacon*, and no mention is made of the teams’ race or of the social momentousness of the first non-white teams’ entry into the city’s leagues.<sup>13</sup> Unlike Wichita’s African American community, the city’s Mexican community did not have its own newspaper.

13. In one of the few game reports, the *Beacon* commended the Mexicans, losers to North End 7 to 6, for showing “fine form for their first appearance in the league.” See “North End Wins Over Mexicans,” *Wichita Beacon*, June 12, 1932.

Likewise, little mention of race appeared in coverage of the 1932 Kansas state championship baseball tournament, held annually in Wichita since 1930, the second area in which advances toward integration was occurring. The city’s newspapers ignored that for the first time in the history of the tournament an all-black team, Wichita’s Colored Blue Devils, entered the thirty-two-team field. In the story announcing the team’s entry, a story in which the Devils were referred to as “eccentric colored,” “crack,” and “fast,” it was noted that the team had three “Kings”—Raymond, Wilbur, and Herbert King—all outfielders, two of whom had played for Wichita University.<sup>14</sup> The story did not mention, however, the historical significance of the inclusion of the Colored Devils, as they were more commonly known, or that a color ban previously had forbidden black teams. A

14. “Fast Colored Team Entered in Baseball Tourney,” *Wichita Beacon*, July 30, 1932. The team was called a “crack negro club” in “Record Entry List For Baseball Tourney Here,” *Wichita Beacon*, July 31, 1932. See also Evans, “Baseball in Kansas,” 188, for more on the history of the state semi-pro tournament. Now called the NBC World Series, the tournament actually missed one year (1934) in the wake of the Island Park fire.

wrap-up story in the *Beacon* on the tournament describing its “many oddities” did not mention race in any context, settling instead for a mundane list of numbers of balls used, bases stolen, and balks issued.<sup>15</sup>

The *Beacon's* and *Eagle's* seeming ignorance of the historical or societal significance of a black team playing in a previously all-white regional baseball tournament should not be surprising. Glen Bleske and Chris Lamb analyzed variances between white and black press coverage of Jackie Robinson's debut in the major leagues in 1947 and found wide gulfs. The authors found the black press to have been much more cognizant of the historical and social importance of Robinson's membership in major league baseball. Lamb also found that the Associated Press filed several articles about Robinson's signing by the Dodgers, but that none of them included an interview with Robinson or “anything substantive on the social or historical significance of the story.” After the signing, the story basically disappeared from the mainstream press, while the black press “played up the story on their front pages and sports sections for weeks,” according to Lamb.<sup>16</sup>

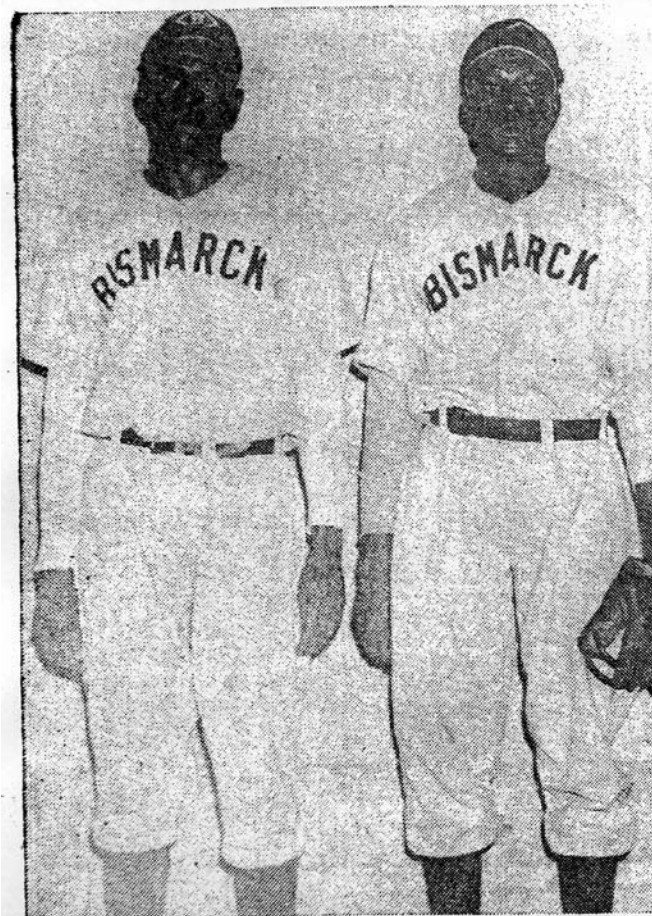
The Devils' entry came at an opportune time for garnering attention. The Wichita tournament was ascendant. When the Topeka Jayhawks semi-pro team chose to play in Wichita in 1932 rather than in the more established Denver Post Tournament, an annual event called by one historian “America's premier baseball event outside the major leagues,” the *Beacon* dedicated a story to the announcement. “The Topekans were at first contemplating entering the Denver Post tournament but believed that the state meet this year would be on par with the Colorado meet,” the *Beacon* wrote in anticipation of the event.<sup>17</sup> Over its ten-day span, Wichita's tournament drew a total of thirty thousand fans and scouts from six major league teams. The winner, the Southern Kansas Stage Lines, pocketed \$7,500, which was \$1,000 more than the purse offered by the Denver Post Tournament.

15. “Fast Colored Team Entered in Baseball Tourney,” *Wichita Beacon*, July 30, 1932; and “State Baseball Tournament Furnished Many Oddities,” *Wichita Beacon*, August 21, 1932 (one balk, five hundred baseballs, and 143 stolen bases).

16. Chris Lamb, *Blackout: The Untold Story of Jackie Robinson's First Spring Training* (Lincoln, Neb.: Bison Books, 2006), 46–47; Chris Lamb and Glen Bleske, “Covering the integration of baseball—A look back,” *Editor & Publisher* 130 (January 27, 1996): 48–50.

17. “Topeka Enters State Baseball Tournament Here,” *Wichita Beacon*, June 9, 1932; “Many Entries for Baseball Tourney Here,” *Wichita Beacon*, June 19, 1932; “premier event” from Jay Sanford, *The Denver Post Tournament* (Cleveland, Ohio: Society for American Baseball Research, 2003), 2.

## Two Reasons Why Bismarck Leads



Wichita's two major dailies, the *Eagle* and the *Beacon*, covered baseball extensively in the 1930s but seldom made overt reference to race or the ongoing integration of the sport. But “Two Reasons Why Bismarck Leads,” published in the *Wichita Eagle*, August 23, 1935, carried the following caption: “Heavy dark storm clouds are hanging over 10 remaining contenders for the national semi-pro baseball title. The black menaces to the tournament teams are Satchel Paige and Chet Brewer, pictured above. Both have pitched masterful ball in the tourney. Brewer looking better than Paige last night when he allowed but two hits and fanned eight.”

The Denver tournament integrated two years later, when in 1934 the Kansas City Monarchs and the ironically named, all-black Denver White Elephants joined the field. As if following a Hollywood script, the Monarchs lost in the 1934 Denver Post Tournament final to the House of David, a Benton Harbor, Michigan, barnstorming team culled from a religious colony that had hired former (and future) Monarch Satchel Paige as a ringer just for the semi-pro tournament. Paige pitched

the "Bearded Beauties" to a 2 to 1 win over Paige's old team to take the \$6,500 prize.<sup>18</sup>

In the 1932 tournament in Wichita, the Colored Devils won only the first round, beating the "colorful" State Reformatory baseball club. Because no game results or recaps were provided of Colored Devils games, the coverage and standings have to be divined to determine that after winning its first game the black team lost in the second round to the Southern Kansas Stage Lines team, then to the Wichita Broadview Hotelmen, the team the Stage Lines club ultimately beat to take the title.<sup>19</sup> The Devils were not being discriminated against in coverage; few teams received more than mere mentions in Wichita's dailies throughout the tournament.

While largely silent on matters of race during summer 1932, the *Beacon* almost daily trumpeted one white Wichitan's efforts to organize an "Old Timers" club, an "army of fans" rallied to support the white Wichita Izzies minor league baseball team. In lending its full support to the recruitment effort and remaining silent on segregation and race questions, the *Beacon* demonstrated its allegiances and priorities: "Fans interested in joining the club can get in touch with Mr. [Howard] Darling or the sports department of The Beacon and they will be enrolled in what promises to be one of the biggest booster organizations in recent years."<sup>20</sup> Further evidence of the *Beacon's* indifference toward race is the fact that columnist Jack Copeland, who wrote a daily column on local and national sports, did not mention race in any context during the period studied.

Segregation was firmly entrenched at a societal level in Kansas in the 1930s, perhaps providing a reason for the pervasive indifference toward racial issues in local

newspapers. State law did not effect this segregation, as it did throughout the Deep South, however. A story in a 1924 issue of the *Star*, for example, offered to "Any Group of Colored Boys" a baseball field at Ninth and Mosley, a field owned by the city but run by the black Water Street YMCA, two afternoons and two evenings each week.<sup>21</sup> This allowed blacks and whites to use the park on alternate days.

**T**hrough 1933, the state baseball tournament was held at Wichita's premier sporting venue, Island Park on Ackerman Island in the middle of the Arkansas River, open to black and white recreationists. The Island was also home to a thirty-four-acre leisure complex that included the Wonderland Amusement Park, which, with its Giant Thriller roller coaster, was built in 1905. Also on the property were a swimming pool, vaudeville theater, dance pavilion and bandstand, roller rink, and a collection of larger-than-life statues acquired from the 1904 World's Fair. After burning down in 1933, the baseball field was replaced for the next season by Lawrence Stadium, which, as Lawrence-Dumont Stadium, still serves as the city's minor league baseball stadium today.<sup>22</sup>

Though the *Eagle* and the *Beacon* followed white baseball with wire-to-wire coverage in 1933, black baseball was almost completely ignored. T. J. Young, who had played for the Monrovia in 1926 and later for the Kansas City Monarchs, among other teams, became the first black in any of the city's leagues when he joined the otherwise white Mulvane team in the city's Oil Belt League in 1933.<sup>23</sup> Thomas Jefferson Young, Wichita's Jackie Robinson, simply was not news for the *Eagle* and the *Beacon*, though occasionally these papers

18. Sanford, *The Denver Post Tournament*, 49. Integration is a problematic term. The Cheyenne Indians, a team of Native Americans, played in no fewer than seven Denver Post tournaments in the 1920s, winning it in 1923 (27). And the first black player in the Denver tournament, Congo Collins, of the Sioux City, Iowa, team, played in 1931, three years before the Monarchs' and White Elephants' entry (77). The White Elephants were one of the top semi-professional teams of any color in the Rocky Mountain West. Army Cooper, who managed in the Wichita tournament in 1934, played in the 1920s for the White Elephants. The second-place Monarchs took home \$5,000 (54). House of David team members did not shave their beards or cut their hair. Monarchs owner J. L. Wilkinson's partner, Tom Baird, served as a booking agent for the House of Davids (50).

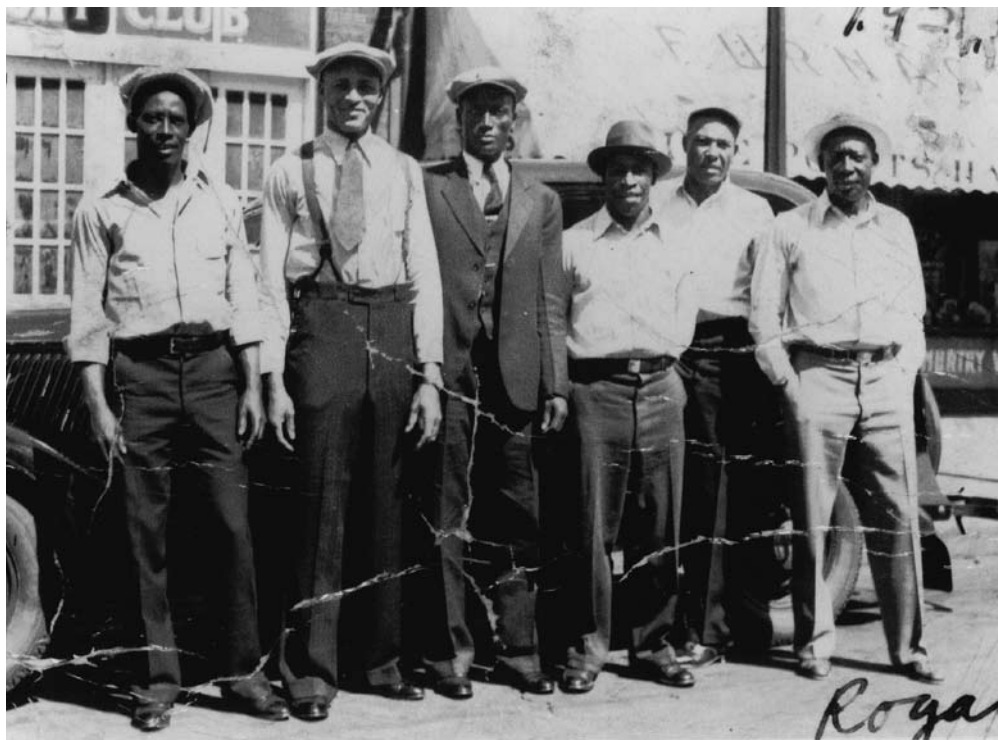
19. "Seven Feature Games Scheduled for Day-Night Program in Kansas Baseball Tourney," *Wichita Beacon*, August 7, 1932. In the 1920s, the Hotel Broadview, which still is one of the city's nicer hotels, annually fielded one of the semi-pro tournament's stronger teams, and was one of the few team owners or sponsors that paid its players.

20. "Old Timers to Organize Club to Aid Baseball," *Wichita Beacon*, June 11, 1932. The next day's *Beacon* celebrated Darling's "enthusiasm" and projected "1,000 rabid supporters" to answer Darling's call; "Expect Many Old Timers To See Izzie Tilt," *Wichita Beacon*, June 12, 1932.

21. After 1879 Kansas law allowed elementary school segregation in cities of the first class. This law, which enabled Wichita officials to opt for segregation in 1906, is evidence of the exception rather than the rule. Eick, *Dissent in Wichita*, 17-25; "Base Ball Field Open To Our Boys," *Negro Star*, July 18, 1924.

22. Jim Cross, "Mid-river Museum Offered; Proposal Calls for Island in Ark," *Wichita Eagle*, April 20, 1995. Ackerman Island is gone; Exploration Place, a \$62 million science center and children's museum, now occupies the land that once was an island at the confluence of the Little Arkansas and the Arkansas Rivers. "Local History Spotlight," *Wichita Eagle*, June 1, 2006. Raymond "Hap" Dumont, a former sports editor for the *Hutchinson (Kansas) News*, founded the National Baseball Congress, which annually organized the Kansas State Baseball Tournament. "Baseball legend Dumont put Wichita on the map; Tourney idea spurred stadium," *Wichita Eagle*, June 10, 1993. See also Craig Miner, *Wichita: The Magic City* (Wichita: Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum Association, 1988), 107, 181-82.

23. "Young to Catch," *Wichita Beacon*, May 21, 1933. Thomas Jefferson Young played catcher for parts of a dozen seasons with the Monarchs. See James A. Riley, *The Biographical Encyclopedia of the Negro Baseball Leagues* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1994), 891.



Thomas Jefferson “T Baby” Young (second from the left), who had played for Wichita’s Monroviens in 1926 and later for the Kansas City Monarchs, among other teams, can be considered Wichita’s Jackie Robinson. In 1933, as a member of the Mulvane team of the Oil Belt League, Young became the first African American to play in any of the city’s leagues. Here, Young was pictured in his civvies with five of his Monarch teammates, who had traveled to Denver for the 1934 Denver Post Tournament. Photograph courtesy of Larry Lester, NoirTech Research, Kansas City, Missouri.

would run a brief item on him. Judging by how these items were written, it is likely they were submitted to the newspapers by Young’s team. For the *Star*, however, in which Jefferson was known as “T Baby” Young, Tom Young was, along with pitcher Andy “Army” Cooper, a local hero. By the *Star*’s account, Young was “one of the greatest catchers that ever lived. Wichitans should be proud of him.”<sup>24</sup>

The entrants into the state tournament held each year in Wichita serve as convenient yardsticks for measuring integration of the sport in the state and region. Two black teams in 1933—the Ninth Cavalry of Fort Riley and the Arkansas City Beavers—doubled the black presence from the year before. Behind the pitching of Andy Cooper, who was two years removed from his four-year stint with the Kansas City Monarchs, the Ninth Cavalry team reached the finals. Because of the successes of the Monarchs, the *Beacon* heralded black teams in the tournament. The same month, the *Beacon* trumpeted for five consecutive days

24. “Eastern Baseball Clubs Just Won’t Let These Western Stars Alone,” *Negro Star*, January 25, 1935.

an upcoming game in Wichita between the Monarchs and the House of David team, which the Kansas City club took 6 to 2.<sup>25</sup>

Sports coverage in the *Negro Star* during the early 1930s was sporadic, sometimes disappearing for weeks and even months at a time, then reappearing without notice. In August 1934, however, a separate and distinct sports page appeared in the *Star* for the first time, coinciding with the paper’s taking on its first sports editor, and it ran through January 1935. The newspaper, therefore, covered the 1934 state tournament, which had no fewer than six black teams in its field: the Arkansas City Beavers, the Kansas City Colts, the Wichita Wolverines, the Topeka Darkies (a.k.a. the Cuban All Stars), Colored Stars, and Wichita Elks. This time Cooper, “a Wichita

25. Cooper was a six-foot-three left-hander who went 13–4 in 1929, when the Monarchs won the Negro National League championship. Riley, *The Biographical Encyclopedia of the Negro Baseball Leagues*, 190; “Outstanding Colored Team To Enter Baseball Tourney,” *Wichita Sunday Beacon*, July 9, 1933. “House Of Davids May Battle Monarchs,” *Wichita Beacon*, August 15, 1933; “‘Bullet Joe’ Rogan Slated to Pitch Game Against House of Davids Here Today,” *Wichita Sunday Beacon*, August 20, 1933.

# AMUSEMENTS AND SPORTS

BY BENNIE WILLIAMS

## K. C. MONARCH TO PLAY AN ALL STAR LEAGUE CAST IN WICHITA



### THE FAMOUS DIZZY DEAN WILL BE WITH THE LEAGUE

The famous K. C. Monarchs will play an all star major League team in Wichita, some time in the early part of October. The ardent baseball fans are fairly alive with rabid speculation and fervent anticipation over this coming event. Dizzy Dean, the Waver boys and several other major league stars will be on the club. Dizzy Dean is the speed ball king who makes warm chills run over the batters when his name is mentioned. When Dizzy is in the pitcher's box, batters stand at the plate and shake like men with the delirium tremens. Dean is a member of the St. Louis Cardinals. He has been a standing back for the New York Giants all of this season. He is the leading pitcher in the National League. However, the Monarchs are not disconcerted; they assert that they are going to teach the major boys some new base ball curricula when they play them in Wichita.

The Monarch Club has added Leroy Taylor and "steel arm" Davis to its outfield and at the same time the club is impregnable in every department. Dean is very effusive, and claims that he will shut out the hitting club and no pitcher can defeat them now. The Monarchs demonstrated their class in the East when they won all their games but one, the Homestead Grays defeated them 5 to 4 in Buffalo, N. Y. The Monarchs played the House of Davids in Wichita Thursday night.

on in a series of downs, thus the pass will become valuable weapon to any team especially Union. We leave the rest to the many who turn out a team each year that finishes near the top.

There were no reserves in 1930 and Union lost only one game. A wealth of reserves enabled Union to repeat this in 1932 and to lose only one more in 1933. It can be done, again.

**THE SCHEDULE:**  
 YUU vs. Lincoln University at Lincoln, Oct. 5th  
 YUU vs. Morgan College, at Baltimore, Oct. 19th  
 YUU vs. St. Augustine, at Richmond, Oct. 26th  
 YUU vs. St. Paul N. & I. L. at Richmond, Oct. 27th  
 YUU vs. Virginia State College, at Richmond Nov. 3rd  
 YUU vs. A. & T. College, at Norfolk, Nov. 12th  
 YUU vs. Burfield, at Burfield Nov. 17th  
 YUU vs. Hampton Institute, at Hampton, Nov. 29th (Thanksgiving)

### MONARCHS LIVE UP TO ALL EXPECTATIONS IN THE EAST

In the East the Monarchs displayed dazzling brilliance. Out of twenty games played they lost one game. Their pitching staff was an enigma to the eastern batters. The Monarch pitchers went well and the supporting cast, combining genius, mastery, courage and superior playing subjected the big bad boys of the East.

The Monarchs returned via Chicago, and defeated the famous Mills team, (white) a double header. Brewer won the first game 5 to 1 and Andy Cooper the second 5 to 3.

MONARCHS PLAY CRAWFORD

the crowd back, the whites continued to yell:  
 "We'll get you on the outside."  
 However, the police escorted the boys to safety.

### Dancers Who Will Make Their Mark

**CHICAGO.** (By Jacob Anderson for ANP)—Norton and Margot—adagio dancers. Will you not permit to predict that if opportunity but gives them a reasonably fair pathway to tread or rather to dance here is a combination which some day is going to make all of us proud of them. These two handsome youngsters, creamy light brown, with the veritable grace of gamblers. Darning now for the 25th week at the Grand Terrace cafe in Chicago, they have literally added a touch of class which lifts the admittedly good show out of the distinctly cabaret class.

While they are performing in a cabaret now it is merely because openings for colored artists are so few. Norton, whose real name is Harold Norton and who is the son of the older dancing team of Lopez and Lopez, made up of Juanita Norton and her husband, is simply following his parent's footsteps. He began dancing when a youth in England where his parents appeared for a number of years and where he studied from the time he was six until he was eight. He is a graduate of White Plains University and studied dancing seriously under Koblitz, the Russian Ballet Master in London for five years. Later he was trained by Monsieur Demas.

Margot, in private life is Margot Love. A graduate of Hunter University, New York, she majored in

The management is giving its best effort to complete the schedule, it is hoped that the first home game will be advertised in the columns of this paper in the near future.

### ON THE AIR AND OTHERWISE

**CHICAGO, Sept. 25.** By Charles I. Bowen (For ANP)—Rudolph Dunbar, the clarinet virtuoso and orchestra leader who is winning success in London, England, was recently heard over the Grammont-British network there. Rudy's eleven piece "AN British Coloured" swing band consists of three brass three saxes, four piece rhythm section and a special vocalist. He uses his own arrangements and the aggregation's performances over the ether have won wide approval.

Alberta Hunter was heard over the British Broadcasting Network from London, recently. Miss Hunter, who is making her headquarters in Denmark these days sang three times over the air in England and was successful. She plans appearances in entertainment places in Edinburgh, and Liverpool before returning to Copenhagen.

Al Johnson was explaining the other day how he happened to become a blackface comedian. Back in 1906 he was a member of the Jolson-Palmer and Jolson trio working in white face. He became a member of the burnt cork performer at the suggestion of his colored dresser. A year later he joined Dockolaider's minstrel continuing to black up and so established his reputation for mimicking Negroes more effectively than they have been able to portray

banned and is making the critics sit up and take notice

Sallie Gooding, who does the blues with fervor is likewise on the brilliant street of Broadway in the new revue "Keep Moving."

Clarence Muse tells an amusing story of an incident at Tandon, where Frank Capra made Columbia's "Broadway Bill." The scene required Clarence to get the worst of a fist fight, emerging with a black eye.

Now Clarence is naturally as dark as the ace of spades. The make-up man despairingly tried every paint he had in his kit on the smiling Muse, but failed to achieve anything resembling a discolored optic. Finally he quit in disgust and the scene was rewritten to read, "a general beating."

### THE SPORTS ROUNDUP

**BY DAN BURLEY (For ANP)**  
**CHICAGO, Sept. 25 (ANP)**—University of Michigan has decided to take low in face of demands of the Ann Arbor institution alarmed that the rampus stirred up by Geor-

Miss Minnie Ruth Solomon of 2277 E. 85th Street, Cleveland, "the only girl I ever looked at twice," as the 21-year-old dash star ruminated. Jesse talked things "over" with Larry Snyder, Ohio track coach, before the trick to the preacher. He has been keeping company with his new bride for seven years and had gone to school with her. "I'm going to stay home, work and help Jesse save his money so that he will have something when he finishes college," the pretty wife announced.—Duke Slater has accepted a position as head coach at Duquesne high school at Tulsa, Okla. Duke is the former Cardinal pro football star and former University of Iowa lineman.

Fitzhugh Lyons, the former star at Indiana university, has taken on his duties as director of Athletics at Wheatley Social center, Fort Wayne, Ind. Out at Detroit, port, Ind., Roosevelt Williams, pitcher for the El Amigos baseball team. Winners of the recent tennis trophy won a non run, so his name from the Bridgerton Blues, white, 2 to 0, recently Central High School at Fort Wayne, Leo Johnson, enterprising sports led of the Indianapolis Recorder tells us, has sixteen Negroes in the football team this year. Six are varsity men, seven are on the second team and three on the third. Nationally known in his field Rice Porter of Lexington, Ky., on the identification of Horace—

Sports coverage in the Negro Star during the early 1930s was sporadic, sometimes disappearing for weeks and even months at a time, then reappearing without notice. In August 1934, however, a separate and distinct sports page appeared in the Star for the first time, coinciding with the paper's taking on its first sports editor, Bennie Williams. Pictured above is a portion of the page for September 28, 1934; the Star continued this feature section through January 1935.

boy," managed the Darkies, and the Elks, who actually were all from Oklahoma City, not Wichita, pocketed \$800 for placing third, according to a short story in the *Negro Star*.<sup>26</sup> The *Star* made no note of the significance of six black teams competing, but previously the newspaper did not—perhaps could not—cover the tournament at all.

To fill its new sports page, the *Star* and its sports editor, Bennie Williams, who also was a full-time firefighter in Wichita, relied on the Associated Negro Press (ANP) wire service out of Chicago. In August 1934 the ANP distributed a story, the first of its kind if the newspapers

under consideration here are taken as definitive, charting progress toward integrating professional baseball. In the article, ANP writer Byron "Speed" Reilly, who also was a sports promoter in California, wrote extensively of the Monarchs' fortunes in the Denver Post Tournament.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to reporting on baseball, Williams, a one-man operation, covered football, basketball, boxing, and tennis. In September 1934, he announced that the King brothers, who previously played baseball for Wichita's Colored Devils, were organizing the city's first "all colored football team," the Wichita Warriors. During

26. The page was titled "Amusements and Sports, by Bennie Williams," *Negro Star*, August 24, 1934. One story, subtitled "Andy Cooper Says He Will Shut Out The Davids," noted that Cooper, who played for the Monarchs and Detroit Stars, began his baseball career on an "old ball diamond at Wabash and 11th Street." Another item heralded "Army Cooper" as the "Hero of State Tournament."

27. "Negro Ball Players Near Big Leagues," *Negro Star*, August 31, 1934; for more on the ANP, see Lawrence D. Hogan, *A Black National News Service: The Associated Negro Press and Claude Barnett, 1919-1945* (Rutherford, Va.: Fairleigh-Dickinson University Press, 1984). See also Adam Green, *The Selling of the Race* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2007), ch. 3, "The Ends of Clientage." Claude Barnett launched the ANP, which peaked in 1945, with 112 newspapers served, in March 1919.

baseball's off season, Williams and the *Star* actually expanded baseball coverage, running ANP wire copy and a weekly "Stove League" column written by local black baseball stars Young and Cooper.<sup>28</sup> ANP coverage of dealings and happenings in the professional Negro leagues in the north abruptly appeared in August and ran throughout the winter, without context or background, as if black Wichitans had been keeping up with Negro league play for the past fifteen years.

Over time, however, the weekly "Stove League" column did provide readers with a fairly robust history of the Negro leagues and, therefore, a context for such enterprises as the Monrovians, Elks, and Monarchs. T. J. Young used the first "Stove League" column on November 2, 1934, to pay tribute to the father of Negro league baseball, Chicago's Andrew "Rube" Foster, who cofounded the first black league of substance in 1920. Young's second column similarly praised another business captain of the Negro leagues, Cum Posey, owner of the powerhouse Homestead Grays in Pittsburgh.<sup>29</sup>

Andy Cooper, who wrote the third through sixth weekly installments, gave readers a sort of clinic on how the sport should be played, providing a history of black baseball along the way. There would have been no other source for this sort of context except perhaps a subscription to the *Pittsburgh Courier* or *Chicago Defender*. This important history should not be undervalued, engendering as it did self-respect and pride among blacks. By placing developments in black baseball at a local level into the context of a national narrative, as part of the success story of black baseball in the United States, the column provided an important source of African American self-definition and identity.<sup>30</sup> In turn,

28. "Wichita Colored Football Club to be Known as the Wichita Warriors," *Negro Star*, September 28, 1934; "Wichita Warriors Tie Trojans in Bitter Conflict," *Negro Star*, October 26, 1934. The latter covered the Warriors's first game, which was played at Lawrence Stadium. "Hot Stove League" and "Stove League" are terms that refer to baseball's off-season, when, at least metaphorically, baseball fans gather around the stove during winter to discuss the sport, player trades, past performances, and predictions. The terms do not, therefore, refer to real stoves or even real leagues.

29. "Stove League," *Negro Star*, November 2 and 9, 1934. Foster founded the American Giants and died in December 1930. The team changed ownership several times in the 1930s.

30. Andy Cooper, "Stove League By Andy Cooper," *Negro Star*, November 16, 1934; the column also appeared in the January 11, 18, and 25, and February 1, 1935 editions. For more on the roles of the *Courier* and *Defender* in writing this history, see Carroll, *When to Stop the Cheering?*. The idea of African American self-definition and identity is a theme of *When to Stop the Cheering?*, which documents the contributions of the Negro leagues to the push toward integration nationally in the 1920s through 1940s.

as a unique source of this kind of history and race consciousness, the *Star* was proving itself important as a paper of record for the black community.

The historical context provided by the *Star* would soon prove useful. In February 1935, alongside reports from Negro league spring training camps, a *Star* article trumpeted "the first time in history that two major Negro clubs have ever played in Wichita." The Chicago American Giants and the Kansas City Monarchs were to play in Wichita in April. The Giants' visit would be the first by the "famous boys from the windy city." Unfortunately, Bennie Williams's sports coverage disappeared from the *Star* in April and with it went meaningful analysis of black participation in Wichita sports. The May 3 *Star* had some sports coverage, but nothing on baseball, nothing on the Monarchs playing the American Giants, and nothing on the Monarchs playing a Chinese team in Hong Kong that month. By May 17, all sports coverage had disappeared.<sup>31</sup>

While Williams was on the watch, however, he had help fueling the extensive off-season baseball coverage. A series of exhibition games in October 1934 featured major league baseball stars squaring off against Satchel Paige and his Kansas City Monarchs in Wichita. St. Louis Cardinals great Dizzy Dean and his "All-Stars," including brother Paul Dean, also a pitcher with the Cardinals, beat Paige and the Monarchs in the first game 8 to 3. As was common in black press coverage of these interracial clashes, Dizzy Dean is lauded as a hero, without any mention of major league baseball's color bar and critical of no one. Though the game presented the *Star* with an ideal opportunity to challenge baseball's segregation, the weekly focused instead on attendance. The 8,500 on hand at Lawrence Stadium proved "the largest crowd ever to attend a baseball game in Wichita." At Kansas City later in the week, Andy Cooper pitched the Monarchs past Dean's All-Stars in a second game 9 to 6.<sup>32</sup>

The Monarchs were the one black team that routinely got more than brief mentions in the *Star*, *Eagle*, and *Beacon*. As Wichita native and baseball historian Tim Rives pointed out, no Negro league team "won more

31. "Chicago to Play K.C. Monarchs at Wichita, April 25-26," *Negro Star*, April 12, 1935; see also *Negro Star*, May 3 and 17, 1935.

32. "All-Stars Defeat Monarchs 8-3," *Negro Star*, October 19, 1934; also suiting up for the Monarchs were T. J. Young and fellow former Wichita Monrovia Newt Joseph. The *Star*'s October 12 issue quoted Young, who had arrived in Wichita a week before the big game, with regard to the upcoming showdown; among other things, he reportedly said "that Dizz and Paul Dean are fine boys and color makes no difference to them." See "Base Ball News," *Negro Star*, October 12, 1934.

# AMUSEMENTS AND SPORTS

BY BENNIE WILLIAMS

## TOPICAL TYPES IN HOLLYWOOD



SPORTS NEWS  
(Compiled by ANP, Sports Dept.)

By FAY M. JACKSON  
(For ANP)  
HOLLYWOOD, Nov. 27—SLEEP 'N' EAT, lazy comic whose laugh contribution was a big feature of the Wheeler - Woolsey picture, "Kentucky Kernal," as well as the Richard Dix pic, "West of the Pecos," is set for another important role in "The Puzzle of the Pepper Tree." This is a murder mystery which RKO will present with Edna May Oliver and James Gleason in leading roles.

BILL ROBINSON, ace of tap dancers, will get his first chance in a Hollywood film in Shirley Temple's next picture. Bill is reported on his way West right this minute.

CLARENCE MUSE gave a dramatic interpretation of "Chloe" at Irving Strouse and Jack Osterman's "Frolics" in the Wilshire Ebell theatre.

FRANCIS LEDERER (who makes all ladies hearts go a-twitter) never owned an automobile while he was the most famous actor in Europe, and now, in Hollywood, where he lives in one of the finest homes, all rugs, chairs and other comforts are removed to prove something or other—maybe that common touch.

LAURETTA BUTLER'S "Pickin'-n' Choir," is scoring in Bay Cities. SINGED with William Morrison

radically. I KNOW lots of prima donnas that would like to hear this a drunker SINGS! And there's no way to get back at them.

Out at Sebastian's Cotton Club, Lionel Hampton, eccentric drummer, worked himself up from the tympani section of the band to orchestra director. Assembling musicians from the best bands of the coast, Lionel nightly broadcasts on a West Coast hookup with a brand of caloric rhymes and stirring hotches that won't don't. Always on the lookout for innovations, the clever Mr. Hampton decided to try his own voice 'out on the air and the result is something of a mixture of Louis Armstrong, Crosby, and Jimmy Durante, if you get what I mean. Oh dash in a bit of Mae West's white and you've got it exactly!

HARVEY BROOKS is now safely housed in Central avenues seclusive Black Derby, the too-bod jern that's under Father Divine's Kingdom. Wherever Harvey goes, Hollywood goes and many big names of filikedom may be seen of a Saturday night listening to the wall of his Moanin' Low.

NO SOONER than Earl Dancer picks a pippin than some tagle-eyed Hollywood producer or nite clubber grabs her right off the limb. This time it's Jennie L'Gon, cocktail cutie, amber hued ana lithe of limb. L'Gon came West with 'som-of-These-

Three States. Reader and see too

### STOVE LEAGUE

BY ANDY COOPER.  
KANSAS C MONARCH PITCHER TO BRING "STEVEDORE"

A few persons are at a loss to understand what the stove league means. Well, in the summer time under a shade tree, one may find some fancy ice skaters; in the winter time around a red hot stove, one may find some brilliant base ball players—I think that explains the stove league. But, however, when sitting by the fire side in the evenings, I may broadcast other reflections over the network of the stove league.

This week will be a brief talk of the Negro race. I have almost circumnavigated the globe, and I believe, that I am eligible to express the Negro race athletically, and otherwise I was in France during the World War; I have been to Cuba, Japan, China, India, and many islands in the Pacific Ocean. I find the Negro race to be the most wonderful of all races. But, I find the Negro to be suffering with an inferiority complex. The Negro is too ashamed of "black." It may be vividly remembered, that the Negro race has yielded some of the world's greatest pugilists. Altho the Negro has never crashed the major leagues, the Negro baseball player is one of the greatest of today. And, take cognizance of the multitude of the famous Negro football players. I trust that the Negro athlete will

the outstanding Alumnis of the University are invited to make short talks, to the student body at chapel services. While on several occasions, the Colored Graduates of Southwestern College have attended this gala day, but Attorney A. P. Woodard, was accorded the distinguished honor of being invited to be on the program, representing the outstanding graduates of the school.

On Saturday, Nov. 3rd, though a dark, dismal day, yet the auditorium of Southwestern College was taxed to overflowing capacity, and standing room was at a premium.

Attorney Woodard was the fourth speaker on the program and, quickly, after a round of great applause, spoke his way into the hearts of his listeners.

While this occasion was a epoch in the life of Attorney Woodard; it served as a memorable occasion to all who heard the learned counsel.

Long may he continue to bring honor to his race, his country and to his Alma Mater, Southwestern College.

**DEAFENED HEAR**  
Without Ear Drums  
New Amplified Acousticon gives a new auditory sense—same production. If you can hear you

### PLATES TO FIT-



WHEN IT'S TOOTH WORRIES  
SEE—  
**DR. HUGH N. SIMS**

1106 Ohio Avenue At Pavement  
For the latest methods in  
ling Teeth, without Pain.  
Do not keep infected teeth a roots  
in your mouth:—

They infect your whole system.  
They give you a bad breath.  
They make you cross and disagree.  
They give you stomach trouble.

**GAINS 25½ LBS.  
IN TWO MONTHS  
COD LIVER OIL—Once a  
Punishment—Now a Treat**

Stop trying to force your children to take nasty-tasting, fish flavored cod liver oil. Give them COCO COD—the cod liver oil with a delicious chocolate taste—and watch their bodies grow daily with vigorous, athletic strength! Mrs. Maudie G. Green says:

"Before my child had COCO COD she weighed 80 lbs. Now, in two months' time, she weighs 105½ lbs, and she has not been ill since." Other cod liver oils have only Vitamins A and D, but COCO COD is also rich in Vitamin B—the appetite and growth promoting vitamin. Start your children with COCO COD today. At all drug stores.

**COCO COD**  
The Cod Liver Oil That Tastes Like Chocolate

During the off season, Williams and the Star actually expanded baseball coverage, running ANP wire copy and a weekly "Stove League" column written by local black baseball stars T. J. Young and Andy Cooper. Pictured here is their inaugural column, written by Cooper and published on November 30, 1934. Over time the "Stove League" provided readers with a fairly robust history of the Negro leagues and, therefore, a context for such enterprises as the Monroviens, Elks, and Monarchs.

pennants, sent more players to the major leagues, or has more members enshrined in the National Baseball Hall of Fame" than the Monarchs.<sup>33</sup> The team barnstormed throughout the Midwest in the 1920s, taking the Negro league leader of baseball and its own brand of comedy to small towns, to black communities in larger cities, and to white fans everywhere. Like Joe Louis and Jesse Owens in boxing and track and field, respectively, the Monarchs won blacks in baseball a measure of credibility and notoriety, and coverage in both the *Eagle* and the *Beacon* demonstrates this. In stories appearing in the big dailies there is no trace of prejudice, antagonism, or institutional bias against the Monarchs merely because of their race, though neither is there recognition of the injustices and

discrimination that gave birth to the Monarchs and the Negro leagues in the first place.<sup>34</sup>

The Monarchs also introduced night baseball to Wichita. The team's white owner, J. L. Wilkinson, developed professional baseball's first reliable portable lighting system and barnstormed with it in the early 1930s in cities such as St. Louis, Dallas, and Wichita. Wilkinson's lights, which he developed with the Giant Manufacturing Co. of Omaha, Nebraska, preceded by five years night baseball in the major leagues, which made its debut at Cincinnati's Crosley Field in May 1935. After the premiere of night baseball in Enid,

34. See, as examples, "Night Baseball to Get Introduction in Wichita for Two Games," *Wichita Eagle*, June 2, 1930; "Night Baseball Proves Success at Island; Monarchs Winning," *Wichita Eagle*, June 3, 1930; "Satchel Displays Brilliant Stuff in Relief Role," *Wichita Eagle*, August 19, 1935; "Monarchs Beat Bismark Boys," *Wichita Eagle*, August 30, 1935. In the *Wichita Beacon*, see, for example, "House of Davids May Battle Monarchs," *Wichita Beacon*, August 15, 1933; "Bullet Joe Rogan Is Slated To Pitch Game Against House of Davids Here Today," *Wichita Beacon*, August 20, 1933.

33. Tim Rives, "Tom Baird: A Challenge to the Modern Memory of the Kansas City Monarchs," in *Satchel Paige and Company*, ed. Leslie Heaphy (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2007), 144.

Oklahoma, on April 29, 1930, the lighting system came to Wichita, where it required fifty workers to install. Noting the importance of the innovation for the sport, both the *Eagle* and the *Beacon* devoted several days to the game, which was played on the night of June 2, 1930.<sup>35</sup>

The coverage highlighted the technological progress the lights represented but made little mention of the Monarchs' race or that the game was between two black clubs. The *Eagle's* June 2 story carried the headline, "Night Baseball To Get Introduction In Wichita For Two Games," and its lead paragraph read: "Between 7 a.m. and 8:15 p.m. today, Island Park will be transformed into a modern electrical plant . . . so fans in this vicinity can view night baseball for the first time." The next day's paper told Wichitans that "Night Baseball Proves Success At Island," and that playing conditions were "almost as perfect as . . . daylight could give." Two years later, when Wichita's white team, the Izzies, staged its first night game, little note was made of the event in either of the big dailies.<sup>36</sup>

The *Eagle's* columnist, Pete Lightner, served as a sort of Monarchs apologist, a peculiar posture for a white writer at a mainstream daily in the 1930s. He remained a Monarchs booster throughout the decade, and he was especially enamored with Satchel Paige, whom he called the "greatest colored pitcher in the country and perhaps the greatest pitcher regardless of race." For Lightner, who with his "Just in Sport" column covered the state baseball tournament wire to wire, Paige was easily worth the \$500 per game his manager said a team would need to be able to afford the star pitcher.<sup>37</sup> Paige's Bismarcks, an interracial team with four blacks on its roster, joined a tournament field in 1935 that included six all-black teams, matching the number from the previous year. These teams included the Blackhawks from San Angelo,

35. "Night Baseball To Get Introduction In Wichita For Two Games," *Wichita Eagle*, June 2, 1930. See also Larry G. Bowman, "'I Think It Is Pretty Ritzy, Myself': Kansas Minor League Teams and the Birth of Night Baseball," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 18 (Winter 1995–1996): 248–57; Larry Lester, "J. L. Wilkinson: 'Only the Stars Come Out at Night,'" in *Satchel Paige and Company*, 123; Janet Bruce, *The Kansas City Monarchs* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1985), 69–70. The light poles were fastened to truck beds; the trucks were positioned along the foul lines behind a canvas fence.

36. "Night Baseball Proves Success At Island; Monarchs Winning," *Wichita Eagle*, June 3, 1930; and "Night Baseball To Get Introduction In Wichita For Two Games," *Wichita Eagle*, June 2, 1930. See "Izzies Open Night Baseball Season," *Wichita Beacon*, April 17, 1932. The Western League Izzies beat Paul Buser Lumber 13 to 1.

37. Pete Lightner, "Just In Sport," *Wichita Eagle*, July 18, 1935; June 3, 1930; July 23, 1935; and July 24, 1935. It is interesting to note that however well the night baseball game in Wichita went, Lightner wrote that he could not foresee lights catching on in football, not "after the newness wears off," nor could he envision a World Series played at night (June 3, 1930).



Another popular Wichita ballplayer, Newt Joseph, formerly of the Monroviens, took the field for the Monarchs against Dizzy Dean's "All-Stars" in October 1934. One of Joseph's teammates, T. J. Young, told the Star "that Dizz and Paul Dean are fine boys and color makes no difference to them." Photograph courtesy of Larry Lester, *NoirTech Research*, Kansas City, Missouri.

Texas; the Memphis Red Sox of the Negro Southern League; the Monroe (Louisiana) Monarchs; Texas Centennials; Denver Stars; and Austin Aces.

Lightner compared the Blackhawks, which featured four former Colored Elks, to a major league ball club, saying they had made plays "no other team in the tournament could make. The colored flashes from Texas can throw that pill with the best," wrote Lightner on July 20, 1935. The team, whose players featured arms as "true as steel," added "considerable class to the tournament

and has drawn a lot of folks to the stadium," according to Lightner, who wrote rhapsodically of the team's slapdash style.<sup>38</sup> He went out of his way to demonstrate the black team's credibility as champion, writing that the Blackhawks had been "praised by tournament management not only for their playing ability but for their sportsmanship and fair conduct on and off the field." Their success, by drawing "a lot of folks to the stadium," benefited all of the tournament's teams, Lightner argued.<sup>39</sup>

After years of quiet integration, in 1935, at the inaugural National Baseball Congress tournament, tournament officials faced a test with the inevitable on-field matchups of southern teams and all-black clubs. Entries from Gadsden, Alabama; Shelby, North Carolina; Rossville, Georgia; and New Orleans, Louisiana, spelled trouble for the tournament, according to Lightner, whose attitudes toward race bubbled up in his daily coverage. Running alongside a story headlined "Japs Play Negro Club," Lightner's August 13 column identified the presence of the southern teams and black clubs as "a real problem." He posed the question: "How to run a tournament without having the southern boys clash with the colored teams. . . . For down south they don't compete. And naturally the Dixie boys would prefer to keep it that way."<sup>40</sup> Absent in Lightner's clinical discussion is any criticism of the color line in baseball or of the attitudes toward race prevalent in the South, or of the inequitable first-round matchup of the Memphis Red Sox and the San Angelo Blackhawks purely because of concerns about race-based conflict.

Five days later, on August 15, the first photo of a black baseball player in any context appearing in either the *Eagle* or the *Beacon* was published: Satchel Paige pictured joyously with an interracial group of fans at Lawrence Stadium. Also pictured were the six major league scouts on hand. Paige was a celebrity.<sup>41</sup> He also was the first player to be referred to routinely in headlines, a measure

of celebrity and an indication that for southern teams to balk at interracial play would reflect poorly on them rather than on their black counterparts. The August 16 edition of the *Eagle* ran the headline, "Satchel Paige Fans 16 For Huge Crowd." The story ran on page one—rare placement for any sports coverage in either the *Eagle* or *Beacon* at the time. Three days later the *Eagle* touted, "Satchel Displays Brilliant Stuff in Relief Role," a headline that did not find it necessary even to note the famous player's last name.<sup>42</sup>

It cannot be known whether Paige's star power mitigated tensions or protestations from southern ball-players, but this ameliorative effect is a possibility. The issue of potential racial tension simply faded from the sports coverage; Lightner did not bring it up again. When Chester Brewer pitched the Bismarcks to a 7 to 1 win over the Shelby, North Carolina, team, the first game to pit an interracial team against an all-white southern squad, there was no report of trouble and race was not mentioned at all in either the *Eagle* or the *Beacon*. In an August 23 column, Lightner noted that several Gadsden players had been offered major league contracts before they left Wichita, but he did not mention that the tournament's best player—Satchel Paige—was not even eligible for such a contract purely because of his skin color. It is also worth noting that almost without exception Lightner referred to black teams as "colored," as in the "colored Monarchs," the "colored Stars," and the "colored Blackhawks." The black teams did not so designate themselves.<sup>43</sup>

Paige was "the elongated, skinny, gangling and gawky pride of the colored race," according to the *Eagle*, which, as many publications were prone to do, seized on Paige's unusual physical appearance. He easily pitched his Bismarcks to the title, 5 to 2, over the Halliburton Cementers of Duncan, Oklahoma, drawing nine thousand fans to Lawrence Stadium for the night game. The crowds Paige generated helped to ensure that the tournament would be a financial success as well as a

38. Pete Lightner, "Just In Sport," *Wichita Eagle*, July 20, 1935; and July 23, 1935; "Arms true as steel" from "Colored Wonders Meet McPherson," *Wichita Eagle*, June 21, 1935.

39. Pete Lightner, "Just In Sport," *Wichita Eagle*, July 23, 1935; see also "Ark City Dubbs Attempt To Stop Blackhawks Victories," *Wichita Eagle*, July 24, 1935.

40. "Japs Play Negro Club," and Pete Lightner, "Just In Sport," *Wichita Eagle*, August 13, 1935.

41. *Wichita Eagle*, August 18, 1935; "Satchel Paige Fans 16 For Huge Crowd," *Wichita Eagle*, August 16, 1935. Paige had just pitched the Bismarcks to a 6 to 4 victory over his former Monarchs. Paige's Bismarck teammates included three other former Monarchs, Chester Brewer, Quincy Troupe, and Ted "Double Duty" Radcliffe. Paige struggled, according to Lightner, "because of hot weather and poor drinking water."

42. "Satchel Paige Fans 16 For Huge Crowd," *Wichita Eagle*, August 16, 1935; see also "Satchel Displays Brilliant Stuff In Relief Role," *Wichita Eagle*, August 19, 1935. Paige helped attract five thousand fans to the Sunday game, the "largest day turnout here in years," then struck out another dozen the very next day.

43. "Brewer Masters Carolina Squad With 2 Safeties," *Wichita Eagle*, August 23, 1935; "Bismarck and Shelby Set to Fight for Lead in Meet," *Wichita Beacon*, August 22, 1935; Pete Lightner, "Just In Sport," *Wichita Eagle*, August 23, 1935. One of the Gadsden players signed was eighteen-year-old Bobby Bragan, who later would become the first-ever manager of the Atlanta Braves. Bragan, who died in 2010, also played and became friends with Jackie Robinson while a member of the Brooklyn Dodgers (historical marker, Lawrence-Dumont Stadium, Wichita, 2008).



Like most African American baseball players of the era, Chet Brewer (far right) played for several different teams. Everyone recognized the box office draw of black talents such as Leroy "Satchel" Paige, Ted "Double Duty" Radcliffe, and Brewer, among so many others. In 1938 Brewer joined the Tampico Alijadores, becoming the first African American to play in Mexico. He is pictured here with teammates Sam Thompson, Cool Papa Bell, and T. J. "T Baby" Young. Photograph courtesy of Larry Lester, NoirTech Research, Kansas City, Missouri.

fan favorite. According to Lightner, "when one visiting manager heard that fans were going to give Satchel Paige a watch, he suggested they spend another ten spot for a horse to put him on" to take him out of town. "Satchel is popular with everyone but the opposing hitters," Lightner wrote. In fact, Paige was awarded a Cadillac for leading the Bismarcks to the title.<sup>44</sup>

After the tournament, Lightner's lionization of Paige continued. For his August 27 column, Lightner interviewed ex-major leaguers such as Joe Hassler, who said Paige ranked with "THE greatest of all time." Lightner did not address, however, why Paige would not be

allowed to play in the major leagues for another thirteen seasons. In his tournament wrap-up column, Lightner wrote that the 1936 tournament would have to separate white and black teams, its "most difficult problem." In his estimation, some southern teams, such as Gadsden and Shelby, were opposed to playing teams with black players. But he offered no solutions and no alternative analyses of the problems behind, as he described it, the purely logistical puzzle race produced.<sup>45</sup>

*Beacon* columnist Jack Copeland simply avoided race in any context, preferring the national sports scene to Wichita's local offerings. In one of his rare discussions of local sports, Copeland referred to Paige as "Brother Paige," writing that Octavus Roy Cohen, creator of the Florian Slappery cartoon series, "would have gotten a great 'hoot' listening to one of the colored lads describing the pitching prowess of Satchel Paige. It went something

44. Pete Lightner, "Just In Sport," *Wichita Eagle*, August 24, 1935; "Bismarck Clinches Title Over Duncan," *Wichita Eagle*, August 28, 1935. The nickname "Satchel" might have been a shortened version of "Satchelfoot," which some white and mainstream publications used to refer to Paige's extraordinarily large size-eleven feet. Black newspapers referred to him only as Satchel, a nickname perhaps originating with a part-time job Paige had carrying luggage—satchels—for passengers disembarking from trains. See Brad Snyder, *Beyond the Shadow of the Senators* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 2003), 125.

45. Pete Lightner, "Just In Sport," *Wichita Eagle*, August 27, 1935; and August 29, 1935.

like this: 'Folkses, yonall lookin' at de best pitchah in de world. Yassah, dats him, ole Satchel Paige. You Wichitaw Watah boys don't need to be discouraged—he mows de best of de big leaguers down just the same as he's a-mowing youall."<sup>46</sup>

Copeland's derision notwithstanding, racial tensions diminished somewhat in the 1930s as both races grappled with the Great Depression. A *Kansas City Call* writer noted this unexpected byproduct of hard economic times, writing, "Oh but! for just a little more of this 'depression.'" The fiscal reality prompted more white teams to barnstorm and, therefore, to be willing to play black baseball teams. Everyone recognized the box office draw of talents such as Paige, Ted "Double Duty" Radcliffe, and Brewer, among so many others. Ray Dumont, for example, a Wichita entrepreneur, developed the National Baseball Congress tournament in the mid-1930s to challenge the Denver Post Tournament, and he regularly invited black teams to participate.<sup>47</sup>

As it did throughout the sport, beginning with the big regional tournaments and continuing with major league baseball and finally with spring training, capitalism proved the catalyst in integrating baseball. The picture of Paige driving out of Wichita in his brand new Cadillac

is a useful image to represent the two-way street paved with money. White ownership was able to give Paige a new car because Paige had helped bring record crowds to Lawrence Stadium.

There was no luxury car or grand exit for the Sims, however. The last *Negro Star* rolled off the presses in January 1953. "Because of Editor Sims continued weak condition, we are giving up printing; it goes into new hands later this week. . . . Now that we are old and can do very little at pulling the load—we are asking every member of the race to get with us and help push."<sup>48</sup> In the tradition of Booker T. Washington and Claude Barnett, the Sims had indeed pushed for thirty-four years, and in their pushing had advanced the dreams and desires of Wichita's city-within-a-city. Forced to migrate and exchange their shared life for another, the Sims helped Wichita's blacks to, as social critic Richard Wright wrote, catch "whispers of the meanings that life could have," and so to share a distinctly black identity.<sup>49</sup> Black Wichitans could point to Satchel Paige, the Monarchs, the Monroviens, Devils, and even the *Star* itself for pride and a sense of accomplishment and cultural identity far richer than the mainstream papers were willing—or able—to acknowledge. The Sims had never stopped praising their people, and Kansas and American history is richer and more complete for it. [KH]

46. Jack Copeland, "Looking 'Em Over," *Wichita Beacon*, August 20, 1935. Between 1917 and his death in 1959, Cohen published fifty-six books, many of them about Florian Slappey, a Birmingham-born detective and stereotypical southern black who spoke exclusively and comically in southern black dialect native to his "Bumminham."

47. Rives, *Baseball in Wichita*, 67; the *Call*, October 9, 1931, quoted in Bruce, *The Kansas City Monarchs*, 75.

48. *Negro Star*, January 16, 1953. The farewell likely was written by Virginia Sims.

49. Wright, introduction to Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, xviii.