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**VISIONS OF A SPORTING CITY:
“SHADOWBALL” AND BLACK CHICAGO, 1887-1952**

By

Daniel J. Lerner

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of History

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ABSTRACT

VISIONS OF A SPORTING CITY: “SHADOWBALL” AND BLACK CHICAGO, 1887-1952

By

Daniel J. Lerner

For more than sixty years, African Americans in Chicago seized upon black professional baseball as a way to establish a presence as “respectable” citizens of Chicago and enhance their social, economic, and political position in the city. This dissertation examines the development and institutionalization of the sport in the city of Chicago. It explores the intersection of several crucial urban issues that have heretofore been examined separately: African-American migration, the politics of race as a component of political machines, the development of a segregated economy and culture, and competing visions of what the city ought to be and do to ensure an egalitarian, prosperous existence for its inhabitants.

Barred from major league baseball because of their skin color, Chicago’s race men built black professional baseball into a celebration of black culture and achievement in the most “American” of sports. The process was embedded within a political, business, and cultural context framed by the harsh realities of urban segregation. Issues of self-identity for African Americans developed in this context -- as individual citizens of Chicago denied the full rights of citizenship, as members of different groups within black Chicago, and as a marginalized group in the broader urban community. From 1887 to 1952, African Americans in Chicago cultivated the longest-running, uninterrupted

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tradition of black professional baseball in the United States. Chicago's race men carefully and deliberately developed professional baseball as a sport, as a business opportunity, and as a vehicle for racial progress. They did this despite severe segregation, a horrible racial riot, huge challenges arising from the influx of southern migrants, and the many economic, social, and political pressures produced by two world wars, the great depression, and the eventual integration of major league baseball. Whether control of the sport was in the hands of businessmen, politicians, or criminals, black Chicagoans used professional baseball as a vehicle to express a distinct vision for Chicago: as a city in which race would not predetermine the fate of a person, an institution, or an entire group of citizens.

Black professional baseball's history in Chicago reveals a great deal about the ways that groups within urban communities, and in cities at large, used specific institutions (baseball teams), events (games), and urban spaces (ballparks) to build an internal community as well as insert themselves into the larger city environment. It also demonstrates that the cityscape, like baseball and its values, has been historically contested and reconfigured precisely because of the influence of African Americans. Because the development of black professional baseball and the emergence of the "national pastime" are coincident with one another, the process of baseball's rise to dominance while excluding blacks is intimately entwined with African American attempts to stake a claim to "American-ness."

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**For my parents,
Fran and Warren Lerner**

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that journey, and later shepherded me through the city of Chicago and gave me a place to live while I researched this dissertation. I also wish to thank other colleagues and friends from Michigan State who kept me on the path to completion: Jeff Janowick, who always asks me the hard questions, Mark Hoolihan, who understands so well the importance of balancing scholarship with humor, and Carl Raymond, for his generous gifts of office space and the computer with which this dissertation was completed. Two-thirds of the way through my doctoral program, Karen Wayland, Kimberly Ludwig, Heather Holtzclaw, Kristy Wallmo, and Jerry Hovis helped me to rediscover life's many joys, and for that I am most grateful.

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INTRODUCTION

Baseball, Race, and the City

“Anyone who wants to know the heart and mind of America,” Jacques Barzun wrote, “had better learn baseball.”¹ Barzun’s provocative statement illuminates the significance of American society’s long love affair with a child’s game. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, Americans have played baseball, have invested it with a range of meanings, and have written voluminously about it. Baseball is a sport whose simplicity on the diamond is belied by its complicated cultural resonance off of it. For generations baseball’s special place in the American experience has been lauded by individuals and by institutions from a wide range of American life: athletes, business people, advertisers, social reformers, politicians, authors, filmmakers -- even the United States Supreme Court.²

In the history of baseball, historians have mined a great deal of knowledge about key historical issues in American history. One of the most poignant is the issue of race. From the late 1880s until 1947, major league and minor league baseball uniformly barred African American athletes. African Americans formed their own professional baseball clubs, and eventually leagues, in the shadow of the white clubs. This gave rise to a popular term which encapsulated segregated baseball: “shadowball.”

Visions of a Sporting City uses black professional baseball as an analytical tool to examine the historical problem of race in urban America, specifically Chicago, and how urban residents seized upon this sport as a way to establish a presence as “respectable” citizens of Chicago and enhance their social, economic, and political position in the city. It

¹ Jacques Barzun, *God’s Country and Mine: A Declaration of Love Spiced With a Few Harsh Words* (Boston, 1954).

² In the 1922 case *The Federal Baseball Club of Baltimore, Inc. vs. The National League of Professional Baseball Clubs and the American League of Professional Baseball Clubs*, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld an antitrust exemption for baseball. The high court ruled that although the sport was a business its special character meant it was not “commerce or trade as commonly defined.” Cited in Steven Riess, *Touching Base: Professional Baseball and American Culture in the Progressive Era* (Westport, CT, 1980), p. 57. See also G. Edward White, *Creating the National Pastime: Baseball Transforms Itself, 1903-1953* (Princeton, 1996), p. 70-83.

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is important to note here at the start the institutional focus of this study. While it would be interesting to know how the average spectator at the games, or indeed the average member of Chicago's African American community, perceived baseball or why they attended games, this is not the purpose of this study. Moreover, the evidence for such analysis is not known to exist. Rather, this is an examination of the institutionalization of black professional baseball in Chicago. It is a primary contention of this study that the history of black professional baseball in Chicago provides a unique opportunity to explore the intersection of several crucial urban issues that have heretofore been examined separately: African-American migration, the politics of race as a component of political machines, the development of a segregated economy and culture, and competing visions of what the city ought to be and do to ensure an egalitarian, prosperous existence for all of its inhabitants. All of these issues were fluid across the first half of the twentieth century. Examining how they were negotiated and mediated through baseball reveals important insights into the role of racial thinking and racism in U.S. urban development throughout the period. It also relocates the position of black cultural institutions from the periphery of urban history to the center.³

From 1887 to 1950, African Americans in Chicago cultivated the longest-running, uninterrupted tradition of black professional baseball in the United States. Despite severe segregation, a horrible racial riot, huge challenges arising from the influx of southern migrants, and the many economic, social, and political pressures produced by two world wars and the great depression, Chicago's "race men" carefully and deliberately cultivated professional baseball as a sport, as a business opportunity, and as a vehicle for racial progress. They used baseball as a vehicle to express a distinct vision for Chicago as a city in which race would not predetermine the fate of a person, an institution, or an entire group of citizens.

³ Kevin Mumford, *Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York, 1997), does this for interracial sexuality and thereby provides a model of sorts.

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“Shadowball” in Chicago: A Brief Historical Sketch

The development of black professional baseball in Chicago began in the late nineteenth century, when a handful of socially distinguished African American men organized baseball teams for social interaction and healthful exercise. Semiprofessionals soon supplanted these gentleman amateurs. By the close of the new century’s first decade, black baseball in Chicago was a well-organized professional endeavor. It was also the site of an aggressive conflict between two divisions of a lofty group of African Americans known as the “Elite 400”: the city’s “old settler” elites, and the recently-arrived leaders of the growing black professional class. Old settler elites were men and women whose presence in Chicago generally predated 1890. The young professionals, many of whom shared class standing but not social rank with the old settler elites, were more recently arrived in the city, mostly from the south.⁴

Members of the Elite 400 fielded several competitive baseball teams whose battles on the diamonds followed the contours of the battles for control of the sport and status within the Elite 400: the Unions (1887-1901), Columbia Giants (1889-1901), Union Giants (1901-1905; 1911), Leland Giants (1905-1911), Chicago Giants (1910-1911), and the American Giants (1911-1950).⁵ By 1912, one dominant professional club emerged victorious: the Chicago American Giants, headed by Andrew “Rube” Foster. Foster positioned this baseball club as a respectable race enterprise on par with other race-specific businesses, civic institutions, and social clubs founded in the city in the 1910s. In 1911 he secured a permanent home for his new team: South Side Park at 39th and Wentworth,

⁴ Some of the key works which examine these divisions in Chicago’s black community are Allan Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920* (Chicago, 1967); St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (New York, 1945); James Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago, 1989).

⁵ On the succession of teams, see *Frank Leland’s Chicago Giants Base Ball Club*, a promotional brochure, published by Major Robert R. Jackson’s Fraternal Printing company. A copy resides in the Vivian Harsh collection, Chicago Public Library, Woodson Library Branch, and Negro Leagues File, National Baseball Hall of Fame (hereafter HOF), Cooperstown, NY.

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which the team used until it was destroyed by fire in 1940.⁶ Foster quickly shaped the American Giants into a nationally famous icon of the city's black community. In 1920, he set Chicago at the core of his revolutionary Negro National League. Foster relinquished control of the club and the League in 1926, when he became seriously ill. He was soon institutionalized in the state sanitarium in Kankakee, Illinois, where he died in 1930.⁷

After Foster's departure, ownership of the American Giants moved into the hands of two white men. The first was John Schorling, a tavern keeper and Foster's longtime silent partner. The second was William Trimble, a florist and gambler whose neglect of the team nearly crippled it. With the collapse of the economy in the early 1930s, control of the American Giants returned to an African American: Robert Cole, a mortician whose intimate connection to Dan Jackson, king of the South Side policy rackets in the 1920s,⁸ was well-known. Cole revived the decaying American Giants and made Chicago the home for the hugely successful annual East-West Game, a mid-summer matchup of all-stars from across the world of black professional baseball.⁹ He accomplished this in the shadow of Chicago's *Century of Progress and World Exposition*, which largely ignored the progress of African Americans in any facet of city life, including sport, despite concerted efforts by the city's black leadership to include African Americans.¹⁰

⁶ On South Side Park, see Larry Lester, Sammy Miller and Dick Clark, *Black Baseball in Chicago* (Chicago, 2000), p. 53; Donn Rogosin, *Invisible Men: Life in Baseball's Negro Leagues* (New York, 1983), p. 8; Robert Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White* (New York, 1970), p. 108.

⁷ The precise cause of Foster's illness is unknown. Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White*, p. 114-115; Lester, Miller, and Clark, *Black Baseball in Chicago*, p. 126; Rob Ruck, *Sandlot Seasons: Sport in Black Pittsburgh* (Urbana, 1987), p. 134.

⁸ Harold Gosnell, *Negro Politicians: The Rise of Negro Politics in Chicago* (Chicago, 1935), p. 57, 130-133.

⁹ Robert Weems, *Black Business in the Black Metropolis: The Chicago Metropolitan Assurance Company, 1925-1985* (Bloomington, 1996), p. 62-64.

¹⁰ John E. Findling, *Chicago's Great World Fairs* (Manchester, 1994), p. 112-113, 127-130; Barbara Holt, "An American Dilemma on Display: Black Participation at the Chicago Century of Progress Exposition, 1933-1934," Report for the Chicago Urban League Research and Planning Department, n.d., 1986 (at Chicago Historical Society); August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, "Negro Protest at the Chicago World's Fair, 1933-1934," *Journal of Illinois State Historical Society*, LIX (Summer 1966): 166-167.

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In 1935 Cole's business partner, Horace Hall, bought the American Giants. Hall sold the club in 1942 to a pharmacist from Memphis, Dr. J.B. Martin.¹¹ Martin was distinguished in his profession and he was a well-known baseball entrepreneur. Before coming to Chicago, Martin co-owned the Memphis Red Sox (with his brother, B.B. Martin), a team in the Negro Southern League. J.B. Martin was also an important figure in Memphis politics. In 1940, however, disputes with Ed Crump, Memphis' political boss, drove Martin out of the city.¹² He resettled in Chicago, became President of the Negro American League (which Hall helped found in 1937), and was the first African American elected to Chicago's influential Metropolitan Sanitary Commission. After Jackie Robinson integrated major league baseball in 1947, Martin reoriented the American Giants into a "farm club" of sorts for the major leagues. He oversaw the end of the franchise, selling it in 1950. The American Giants completely folded in 1952, a sad but perhaps inevitable by-product of integration.

Visions of a Sporting City

The history of black professional baseball in Chicago raises many historical questions that will constitute the heart of this dissertation. Among the salient issues that it explores are how and why African Americans employed baseball to advance their goals for municipal power and equality; what the history of black professional baseball reveals about the challenges of life inside Chicago's black community; and how African Americans used cultural strategies, such as baseball, to combat the growing urban institutional segregation in the north. To address these questions, *Visions of a Sporting City* is organized around several important historical themes. Foremost among these themes is that *black professional baseball was a very special building block in an ongoing process of*

¹¹ Weems, *Black Business in the Black Metropolis*, p. 64. *Defender*, November 2, 1935. Horace Hall interview with Robert Peterson, HOF, Horace G. Hall folder.

¹² Sharon Wright, *Race, Power, and Political Emergence in Memphis* (New York, 2000), p. 33.

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community formation.

At the start of the twentieth century, Chicago was a highly segregated city. The African American population grew quickly over sixty years -- 14,271 in 1890; 44,103 in 1910; 233,903 in 1930; 492,265 in 1950 -- but nearly all black Chicagoans were residentially confined to a strip along the city's south side and to a few enclaves west of the downtown Loop district.¹³ Inside the "black belt," African Americans developed a wide range of dynamic cultural and civic institutions to cultivate the many assets of the community and to combat segregation. This trend was present in other areas of the state as well. In the small city of Alton, Illinois, for example, African American leaders formed community institutions, such as churches, schools, and clubs, which they used as building blocks in the process of forming a vibrant community which vigorously resisted segregation at the turn of the century.¹⁴

The process of the formation of Chicago's black community was brought to light over the course of three decades by the pathbreaking work of Harold Gosnell, *Negro Politicians*, St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, and Allan Spear, *Black Chicago*. These books probed the creation, character, and perpetuation of Chicago's black ghetto. They introduced several important historical issues to the literature: Chicago's African American community was very heterogeneous; the great migration exacerbated the conflict between "old settler" black elites and newly arrived migrants of the professional and working classes; blacks often forged uneasy alliances with white philanthropists and

¹³ Spear, *Black Chicago*, p. 12, Table I; Roger Biles, *Richard Daley: Politics, Race, and the Governing of Chicago* (DeKalb, IL, 1995), p. 86. The black belt ran along State Street, south of the Loop. By 1920 most African Americans were clustered between 22nd street to the north and 39th Street to the south, between the lake and Halsted Street. A narrow band stretched south of 39th street to 63rd St, between State and Stewart Ave. Spear, *Black Chicago*, Map 4.

¹⁴ Shirley Portwood, "'We Lift Our Voices in Thunder Tones': African American Race Men and Race Women and Community Agency in Southern Illinois, 1895-1910," *Journal of Urban History*, 26:6 (September 2000): 740-758. See also William Howard Kenney, *Chicago Jazz: A Cultural History, 1904-1930* (New York, 1993).

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white politicians, even when developing social and civic institutions that were ostensibly all-black.¹⁵

The rich details these seminal works offer about community formation inside Chicago's African American community -- now called the "ghetto synthesis" by many urban historians — provide a basic foundation for *Visions of a Sporting City*.¹⁶ Gosnell's *Negro Politicians* painstakingly connects Chicago's African American political leaders to various threads of the black community. *Visions of a Sporting City* demonstrates that many of these same black politicians were deeply involved in the world of black professional baseball. Drake and Cayton's *Black Metropolis* exhaustively documents the extensive quarreling between old settler elites and young professionals. This dissertation expands that knowledge by revealing the Chicago American Giants as an effective and heretofore unexamined means for measuring the depths of this important conflict. Whereas Spear's *Black Chicago* presented an African American community whose leaders were generally uninterested in Progressive Era reform, examining the development of black professional baseball in Chicago demonstrates that this sport was not only a key element of black urban progressivism, but a reform instituted from within the African American community for its own purposes.¹⁷

While *Visions of a Sporting City* rests upon the framework constructed by Gosnell, Drake and Cayton, and Spear, it pushes beyond the ghetto synthesis to explore *the impact of the great migration on black professional baseball's role in the formation of Chicago's black community*. Analyzing the formation of a community consciousness around institutions like professional baseball both reveals the visions and strategies expressed by different groups of blacks in the community while focusing attention on the cultural forms

¹⁵ Gosnell, *Negro Politicians*; Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*; Spear, *Black Chicago*.

¹⁶ On the ghetto synthesis see Joe Trotter (ed.), *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender* (Bloomington, IN, 1991); Kenneth Goings and Raymond Mohl, "Toward a New African American Urban History," *Journal of Urban History*, 21:3 (March 1995): 283-295.

¹⁷ Gosnell, *Negro Politicians*; Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*; Spear, *Black Chicago*.

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that bound African Americans together as they reinforced the dividing lines between classes.¹⁸

The success and nature of community formation depended upon the ability of different constituencies within the African American community to work together. This was not an easy process in Chicago where consensus among black leaders of different class and social standing was frequently fleeting at best. The most poignant divisions between groups in Chicago's African American community were often arrayed along these lines, which in turn were heavily influenced by the migration. James Grossman's *Land of Hope* explored this situation, greatly expanding the older body of work by emphasizing the migrants' southern roots as a crucial component of grass-roots community formation in the northern industrial ghetto.¹⁹ The involvement of southern migrants was also a central component in the organization and promotion of black professional baseball in Chicago, as this dissertation will reveal.

The tension between settled black populations and southern migrants was not unique to Chicago. Gilbert Osofsky pinpointed the importance of a seeded black community which existed in New York before 1890, and which feared the torrent of southern migrants would mean losing freedoms and civic gains made prior to the migration. In similar fashion, Kenneth Kusmer revealed that Cleveland's pre-1870 black community enjoyed a substantial degree of integration which declined precipitously in the migration and post-migration years. In Pittsburgh, Peter Gottlieb and Rob Ruck both found a community of city-savvy southern migrants who prized independence and community self-reliance,

¹⁸ Earl Lewis describes similar challenges concerning race advancement in a heterogeneous African American community in *In Their Own Interests: Race, Class, and Power in Twentieth Century Norfolk, Virginia* (Berkeley, 1991).

¹⁹ Grossman, *Land of Hope*.

despite the class distinctions in that city's African American community, and who brought a bevy of traditions and cultural practices from the south to the north.²⁰

The historiographical emphasis on the transplantation of black 'southernness' -- particularly its potential to disrupt the fragile state of race relations in the city prior to the migration -- is an important part of the history of black professional baseball in Chicago. The 1909-1911 war for control of the sport was a conflict in which old settler elites fought bitterly for control with the young professionals, many of whom were southern migrants. In the end, the men who wrested control of Chicago's black baseball world from the old settler elite and delivered it into the hands of the upstart professional class were a Georgian (Beauregard Moseley) and a Texan (Andrew "Rube" Foster).²¹

Community leadership was sharply contested within the institution of black professional baseball. Examining the contours of this long conflict -- which began as an element of the old settler/young professional schism of the Progressive Era, then became the province of the working class in the late 1920s and during the Depression, then swung back to the middle class in the 1940s -- points to the many complexities of baseball's role in black Chicago. This complexity is a component of a broader urban context composed of municipal politics, civil rights activism, business development, vice, and voluntary associations.

On these important issues, this dissertation grows from the recent work of scholars examining the city of Chicago. The political histories of Chicago written by Roger Biles, William Grimshaw, Dianne Pinderhughes, and Richard Keiser emphasize the structures of the city's decentralized system of governance in helping to perpetuate its history of

²⁰ Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto* (New York, 1964); Kenneth Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape: Black Cleveland 1870-1930* (Urbana, 1976); Peter Gottlieb, *Making Their Own Way: Southern Blacks' Migration to Pittsburgh* (Urbana, 1987); Ruck, *Sandlot Seasons*. Also see Christopher Linsin, "Point of Conflict: Twentieth Century Black Migration and Urbanization," *Journal of Urban History*, 21:4 (May 1995): 527-535; Earl Lewis, "The Beginnings of a Renaissance: Black Migration, the Industrial Order, and the Search for Power," *Journal of Urban History*, 17:3 (May 1991): 296-302.

²¹ Michael Lomax, "Black Entrepreneurship in the National Pastime," *Journal of Sport History*, 25:1 (Spring 1998): 43-64.

segregation.²² Their books created a framework for understanding the position of African Americans in the city. Here the recent work of three scholars of African American history -- Christopher Robert Reed, *The NAACP in Chicago and the Rise of Black Professional Leadership, 1910-1966*; Robert Weems, *Black Business in the Black Metropolis: The Chicago American Metropolitan Assurance Company, 1925-1985*; and Anne Meis Knupfer, *Toward a Tender Humanity and Nobler Womanhood: African American Women's Clubs in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago* -- warrant discussion. Reed's analysis of Chicago's NAACP branch revisits the quarrels between old settler elites and the professional class so strongly emphasized in the earlier generation of scholarship on black Chicago. He argues that they were not always so dramatic nor as binary as presented by Drake and Cayton, et al. While not rejecting Reed's interpretation, *Visions of a Sporting City* lends new support to the older thesis (particularly for the turn of the century) by using the experience of black professional baseball in Chicago to highlight the very clear, strident divisions within the Elite 400. Weems' insights into the common problem of raising capital through legitimate means, that numerous black businessmen experienced in the interwar period, offers an interesting (if Machiavellian) paradigm for explaining the shift in control of black professional baseball from the fading "respectable" entrepreneurs in the 1910s and 1920s to Chicago's well-financed black policy kings in the 1930s. Knupfer's book analyzes the central strategy of racial uplift and self-help which "respectable" African American women pioneered within their civic and cultural organizations during the Progressive Era. Leading club woman Fannie Barrier Williams encapsulated the importance of the strategy very plainly when she described Chicago's black aristocracy as

²² Roger Biles, *Big City Boss in Depression and War: Mayor Edward J. Kelly of Chicago* (DeKalb, IL, 1984) and Richard Daley; William Grimshaw, *Bitter Fruit: Black Politics and the Chicago Machine, 1931-1991* (Chicago, 1992); Dianne Pinderhughes, *Race and Ethnicity in Chicago Politics: A Reexamination of Pluralist Theory* (Urbana, 1987); Richard Keiser, *Subordination or Empowerment? African American Leadership and the Struggle for Urban Political Power* (New York, 1997).

“better dressed, better housed, and better mannered than almost anywhere else in the wide west.”²³

Importantly, the oft-cited mantra of the National Association of Colored Women’s clubs, “lifting while we climb,” served as a model for race progress which African American men in the same era also embraced. As historian Richard Thomas described it, “self-help was the spirit that galvanized the entire community.” Thomas was writing about Detroit, but the same held true in Chicago. There the struggle to develop, control, and maintain black professional baseball rested squarely on male applications of the concepts of self-help, uplift, and respectability.²⁴

A third theme of this work, then, grows from the importance that black professional baseball’s promoters placed on respectability: *black professional baseball was a statement of race achievement and thus, a path to improving civil rights*. In the early twentieth century, black professional baseball’s advocates, all of whom wore the label of race men, saw respectability as the *sine qua non* for racial progress. Old settler elites, working in what is best described as a DuBoisian mode, pushed for a program of immediate integration led by a vanguard of capable, respectable leaders who would bridge the racial chasm. Leaders of the professional class (mostly southerners), operated in a more Washingtonian framework by looking inward, concentrating their efforts on developing race enterprises such as black professional baseball within the boundaries of the black community. Despite these important differences, both groups prized respectability for baseball’s owners, players, and fans, a fact loudly trumpeted in the pages of the black press. They positioned their

²³ Christopher Robert Reed, *The NAACP in Chicago and the Rise of Black Professional Leadership, 1910-1966* (Bloomington, IN, 1997); Robert E. Weems, *Black Business in the Black Metropolis*; Anne Meis Knupfer, *Toward a Tender Humanity and a Nobler Womanhood: African American Women's Clubs in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago* (New York, 1996). Williams is cited in Willard Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920* (Bloomington, 1990), p. 121.

²⁴ Richard Thomas, *The State of Black Detroit: Building From Strength. The Black Self-Help Tradition in Detroit* (Detroit, 1987), p. 3.

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sport as a means to obtaining it. In the 1920s, Rube Foster's well-known prohibitions on smoking, drinking and carousing solidified the American Giants' reputation as a respectable outfit.²⁵ That position faltered in the 1930s, when control of the club fell to the black gamblers, but was resuscitated in the 1940s under the aegis of Dr. J.B. Martin.

Visions of a Sporting City emphasizes the gender dimension of this cultural strategy for racial self-help and uplift. An important body of recent scholarship about black women's social clubs, civic groups, and political organizations illuminates African American women's powerful use of "respectability" in their many self-improvement and reform activities.²⁶ Additionally, in some black churches, women had important roles broadening the public arm of the church and making it a powerful institution of racial self-help in the African-American community. On some occasions, however, their efforts angered the black male clergy. In 1906, for example, Ida B. Wells-Barnett battled with Reverend Archibald Carey over a fund-raiser at the Pekin Café, a nightclub owned by Robert Motts. Carey and Motts were political rivals, but Carey made respectability the public issue. He attacked the Motts' "low morals," casting similar aspersions over his supporters (Wells-Barnett) in the process.²⁷ More commonly, black clubwomen promoted a strategy of using the black educated elite as a conduit for introducing the values of white middle-class America to the masses of the black working class. As Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham points out, they

²⁵ John Holway, *Rube Foster: The Father of Black Baseball* (unpublished, Chicago Historical Society); Charles Whitehead, *A Man and His Diamonds: A Story of the Great Andrew (Rube) Foster, the Outstanding Team He Owned and Managed, and the Superb League He Founded and Commissioned* (New York, 1980).

²⁶ Knupfer, *Toward a Tender Humanity and a Nobler Womanhood*; Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA, 1993); Stephanie Shaw, *What a Woman Ought to Be and Do: Black Professional Women Workers During the Jim Crow Era* (Chicago, 1996); Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994* (New York, 1999).

²⁷ Patricia Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill, 2001), p. 184-187.

“envisioned their colleges as assimilating apparatuses that would render the black elite ‘thoroughly homogeneous’ with white middle-class culture.”²⁸

Club women of the black elite prized individual and group respectability in all their efforts. As Fannie Barrier Williams said, “we are trying our best to be the real gentle folks in the highest and best sense of the term.”²⁹ Respectability, however, could be a troubling concept to some in the African American community. Kevin Gaines has argued this push for respectability was typically a pursuit which embodied an implicit understanding that the standard to which African Americans were aspiring was set by middle-class whites. Respectability, Gaines writes, could not be considered “an independent black perspective.”³⁰ Critics chastised some black women’s clubs for their class bias and their apparent complicity with whites. In the case of the Frederick Douglass Center, an interracial settlement house co-founded by Ida B. Wells-Barnett and Celia Parker Woolley, this perspective eventually led Wells-Barnett to condemn the Center’s focus on the needs of middle-class blacks and whites at the expense of working class blacks. She abandoned the Center and founded the Negro Fellowship League.³¹

In the male sphere of black professional baseball, however, no such inner conflict over respectability vis-a-vis white standards of behavior appeared. For African American men the calls for respectability, for self-help and racial uplift, revolved around a more

²⁸ Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent*, p. 28.

²⁹ Williams quoted in Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color*, p. 121.

³⁰ Kevin Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill, 1996), p. xiv.

³¹ Knapfer, *Toward A Tenderer Humanity and a Nobler Womanhood*, p. 97. On tensions among club women, see Deborah Gray White, “The Cost of Club Work, The Price of Black Feminism,” in Nancy Hewitt and Suzanne Lebsack (eds.), *Visible Women: New Essays on American Activism* (Urbana, 1993), p. 247-269.

tangible set of economic concerns.³² Did whites control the bookings and leasings of ballparks? Would whites prohibit blacks on their teams? Would whites bar black teams from their leagues? Before the 1909-1911 black baseball war, the answers to these questions were very frequently “yes.” African American men’s push to develop black baseball was therefore presented to the public as a self-supporting race enterprise (despite various levels of white involvement), with respectability and self-help the goals.

Issues of respectability, social standing, and class lay at the heart of the battle for control of black baseball in Chicago. This frames the arena in which a fourth central theme comes to light: *black professional baseball was a very special forum for African American men to exert their masculinity and embrace a sense of manhood*. Baseball’s dual role as a maker of men and a key to financial success resonated in Chicago’s black community. In this rigidly segregated city, racism routinely stripped African American men of their dignity. Middle-class and wealthy blacks with the financial means to escape the ghetto were unable to do so; banks commonly refused credit to black businessmen. Working class blacks frequently found the doors to labor unions closed.³³ All of these problems occurred in a context where men’s ability to provide for themselves and for their families were commonly held as the measure of manhood. For old settler elites, baseball was another step towards parity with whites as well as an elevating mechanism in the African American community. To the recent migrants of the black professional class, baseball was a manifestation of heightened expectations about freedom of opportunity in an industrial city which motivated

³² This complements Maureen Flanagan’s analysis of white Chicago men in “The City Profitable, the City Livable: Environmental Policy, Gender, and Power in Chicago in the 1910s,” *Journal of Urban History*, 22:2 (1996): 163-190 and of the critical gendered differences in visions of the city in *Seeing With Their Hearts: Chicago Women and the Vision of the Good City, 1871-1933* (Princeton, 2002).

³³ On blacks in Chicago’s unions see, for example, Rick Halpern, *Down on the Killing Floor: Black and White Workers in Chicago’s Packinghouses, 1904-1954* (Urbana, 1997); Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge, 1990), esp. p. 35, 42, 45, 165-167, 335-336; James Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle: Chicago’s Packinghouse Workers, 1894-1922* (Urbana, 1987), p. 188-239.

the majority of them to migrate north in the first place.³⁴ For working-class blacks, baseball was a source of manly pride in which they could share for the price of a ticket.

The pursuit of manly identity and masculine pride through sport is a well-developed thread in the sport history literature, particularly by Elliott Gorn, Warren Goldstein, Donald Mrozek, and Peter Levine.³⁵ Gorn and Goldstein's work on nineteenth century sport illustrates the importance of sport vis-a-vis a class-bound set of beliefs grounded in Victorian ideals. Foremost among them was muscular Christianity, which justified manly sport by equating character development among genteel society with organized, regulated recreation. This was a determining factor which shaped the development of sport into a distinctly male province. By the turn of the century, Mrozek found, sport was widely embraced as a means for developing values and morals which would guide individuals through life in a world increasingly complicated by industrialization, immigration, and urbanization. Levine's book rounds out this group by demonstrating how the children of Jewish immigrants used sport to construct a tough, virile, male identity for Jewish-American men in the twentieth century.³⁶ *Visions of a Sporting City* extends these arguments by analyzing the ways in which black baseball's promoters deployed the rhetoric of masculine righteousness to validate their baseball activities and to battle one another for control of the sport. In so doing, this study refocuses historical attention on the Progressive Era as a

³⁴ Peter Gottlieb, *Making Their Own Way*; James Grossman, *Land of Hope*.

³⁵ This is less true in black urban historiography. This dissertation addresses Joe Trotter's call for more studies which will "conceptualize the black male's experience in explicitly gender terms." Trotter, "African Americans in the City: The Industrial Era, 1900-1950," *Journal of Urban History*, 21:4 (May 1995): 438-475. Quote is on 452.

³⁶ Elliott Gorn, *The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Prize Fighting in America* (Ithaca, 1986); Warren Goldstein, *Playing for Keeps: A History of Early Baseball* (Ithaca, 1989); Donald Mrozek, *Sport and American Mentality 1880-1910* (Knoxville, 1983); Peter Levine, *Ellis Island to Ebbetts Field: Sport and the American Jewish Experience* (New York, 1992). Similar issues of gender identity distilled through sport and leisure are examined in Roy Rosenzweig, *"Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920"* (Cambridge, 1983); David Nasaw, *Children of the City: At Work and at Play* (Garden City, NJ, 1985); Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Class Women and Leisure in Turn of the Century New York* (Philadelphia, 1986); John Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (New York, 1978); Gunther Barth, *City People: The Rise of Modern City Culture in Nineteenth Century America* (New York, 1980).

formative historical moment in the formation of a level of race and gender consciousness usually attributed to the “New Negro” of the 1920s.³⁷

A fifth and final theme flows from exploring masculinity as it was defined and contested in the world of sport: *black professional baseball was an emblem of urban reform and resistance which originated within the African American community*. From its origins, Chicago’s world of black professional baseball was a feature of the city’s cultural, political, and economic landscapes. It is evidence of an important reform impulse present in the African American community at the turn of the century. In recent years, several important books about Progressive Era reform and its legacy have followed in the footsteps of Allan Spear’s thirty-four year old assessment of blacks as a group essentially uninterested in urban reform. Of particular note are Alan Dawley, *Struggles for Justice: Social Responsibility and the Liberal State* and Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age*. Dawley’s study generally ignores African Americans as active, participatory agents in an age of reform. *Struggles for Justice* largely relegates blacks to the victim’s role, the unfortunate recipients of the worst racism the era had to offer. In linking the development of social politics across the Atlantic Ocean, Rodgers’ study frames a two-way transmission of cultural and political ideas which privileges those in the highest seats of power as the catalytic forces driving reform and thus excludes African Americans. His discussion of “municipalization” is an especially curious example of an almost complete erasure of the black presence in urban reform.³⁸

Visions of a Sporting City argues that African Americans were directly involved in urban Progressive Era reform, that black professional baseball is a most illustrative example of the reform impulse among leaders in the African American community. Furthermore, the

³⁷ See, for example, Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load*.

³⁸ Alan Dawley, *Struggles for Justice: Social Responsibility and the Liberal State* (Cambridge, MA, 1991); Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, MA, 1998). On municipalization, p. 112-159.

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actions taken in the Progressive Era set in motion a powerful ideology of uplift and self-help coupled with a sense of resistance -- manifested through baseball -- which continued past World War II. The sport's success in the 1920s was a statement of defiance in the wake of the 1919 riot, and its ability to survive the Depression further illuminates the convictions, determination, and creativity of its many supporters. In the 1940s, black professional baseball's advocates positioned its rejuvenation (prior to Jackie Robinson's Brooklyn Dodger debut) in a context of renewed, aggressive activism for racial equity across the nation. Chicago's race men used creative tactics such as a campaign for a state-level version of the Federal Employment Protection Commission to attempt to force the integration of all parts of life in the city, including professional baseball.³⁹

Ultimately, integration proved to be a two-edged sword for African Americans in Chicago. Black leaders in the city experienced something akin to Jackie Robinson. Although advancement for some individual blacks (e.g., J.B. Martin) was possible in the city's postwar order, group benefits were far more difficult to attain. Because whites controlled the integration of major league baseball, integration destroyed the Chicago American Giants, the entire Negro League system, and all that they represented about race pride and accomplishment in the face of overwhelming adversity.

Baseball's History and the Urban Context

The reasons Chicago's race men used professional baseball for these many purposes lay first in the nineteenth century history of the sport and later in the social and economic changes of the Progressive Era. Baseball's magnates successfully promoted the sport as a cure for the many maladies of America's cities by drawing on the ideological tradition of muscular Christianity. Although baseball was an urban sport, its promoters used a narrative of rugged masculinity mixed with gentlemanly dignity to invoke a

³⁹ Chicago *Bee*, "The Case for State FEPC," May 26, 1946, "Chicago Observes Fair Employment Day," June 30, 1946, and "FEPC 'Died' With Warning, July 14, 1946.

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romanticized agricultural past in which successful men were independent, masculine, and hard-working. Concerns about baseball players' masculinity haunted the sport, however, likely a result of its origins as a derivation of Rounders, a British game favored by children. Grown men playing an imported child's game -- while dressed in costumes -- cultivated images of frivolity and immaturity, not American rugged masculinity. Baseball's magnates addressed this problem by developing rules which dramatized masculine prowess. The most illustrative example is the *fly rule*, by which a batter is ruled out only if the batted ball is caught on the fly rather than off the bound. The fly rule demanded much more skill than the bound rule, and debates over its adoption highlighted widespread concerns about "soft" men and their un-manly behaviors.⁴⁰

In late nineteenth century America, baseball's top magnates, Chicago's Albert Spalding foremost among them, worried about declining masculinity, threatened democracy, and harbored an uneasy sense of sinking "Americanism." These were contested concepts, to be sure, issues that reflect a common late nineteenth century bourgeois obsession with overcoming the "softness" associated with Gilded Age affluence rooted in cities.⁴¹ To many, the perils of the dazzling, dizzying, polyglot city where anonymity defined a modern life so very different from the peaceful and simple "island communities" of the past were an especially easy target for critics of modernizing America.⁴²

Through the nineteenth century, baseball and other sports (especially boxing and football) developed into distinctly male activities. Sports became gendered (male), and racialized (white). The few women who were active in sports found themselves moving within a context which drastically limited competition as it cultivated fears of sport's

⁴⁰ Goldstein, *Playing For Keeps*, p. 43-66. On the fly rule see p. 48-53.

⁴¹ See, for example, T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago, 1994) and Mark Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (New Haven, 1989).

⁴² On island communities see Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York, 1967).

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⁴³ Susan Cahill, *Baseball and the American Dream* (New York, 1994).

⁴⁴ On the importance of boxing in the nineteenth century, prizefighter James F. Curran, "Boxing: The Emblem of the Middle and Working Classes," *The American Gleaner*, 1880, 1881, 1882, 1883, 1884, 1885, 1886, 1887, 1888, 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025.

⁴⁵ For baseball's role in the American sports industry, see Robert Voigt, *American Sports: A History* (New York, 1994); Alexander, *White: Jules*; American M; American S; Sports (New

⁴⁶ On baseball's role in the American sports industry, see Robert Voigt, *American Sports: A History* (New York, 1994); Alexander, *White: Jules*; American M; American S; Sports (New

masculinizing consequences.⁴³ African American men were commonly segregated from participation with whites; by the mid-1880s, they were barred from baseball altogether. Importantly, baseball's role as a cauldron of manliness helped position it as the national pastime. Furthermore, its genteel origins and careful promotion as a gentleman's game (even after it became professional) helped baseball steam into the late nineteenth century American consciousness as a respectable sport for the urban middle class. This situated baseball in sharp contrast to boxing, whose support lay mainly with the working class, and as an alternate to college football, the pride of northeastern elites.⁴⁴ Like so many other Americans, African Americans in Chicago embraced the national game because it seemed to confer masculinity, offered a deep connection with American identity, and nourished respectability. They also gravitated to baseball because it was a way for African Americans to partake in the city's rapid economic growth.⁴⁵ This was a logical determination because baseball was an urban phenomenon from its origins, despite over a century of popular myth to the contrary, and it occupies a distinct role in the history of America's cities.⁴⁶

Baseball developed differently in different cities; the "New York game" was

⁴³ Susan Cahn, *Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Women's Sport* (New York, 1994), p. 7-30.

⁴⁴ On the importance of the influential new middle class in the Progressive Era, see Wiebe, *The Search for Order*. Boxing was hyper-masculine but it never attained "respectable" status. For most of the nineteenth century, prize fighting was illegal. It constantly attracted gamblers, thrived in saloons, and was a solid emblem of the urban ethnic working class. At the end of the century the adoption of the Marquis of Queensbury rules, which introduced gloves and timed rounds, gradually expanded boxing's appeal to the middle and upper classes, but never on par with baseball. By the turn of the twentieth century, baseball was secure in its role as the undisputed national pastime, a position it enjoyed until long after World War II. Gorn, *The Manly Art*.

⁴⁵ For baseball's unique role as a man-maker and a cauldron of quintessential "American" values see David Voigt, *America Through Baseball* (Chicago, 1976); Harold Seymour, *Baseball* (New York, 1960); Charles Alexander, *Our Game: An American Baseball History* (New York, 1991); Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White*; Jules Tygiel, *Past Time: Baseball as American History* (New York, 2000); Mrozek, *Sport and American Mentality, 1880-1910*; Peter Levine, *A.G. Spalding and the Rise of Baseball: The Promise of American Sport* (New York, 1985); Elliott Gorn and Warren Goldstein, *A Brief History of American Sports* (New York, 1993). On women in sport, Cahn, *Coming on Strong*.

⁴⁶ On baseball's urban origins, see Melvin Adelman, *A Sporting Time: New York City and the Rise of Modern Athletics, 1820-1870* (Urbana, 1986); Goldstein, *Playing for Keeps*; Steven Reiss, *City Games: The Evolution of American Urban Society* (Urbana, 1989).

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different from the “Philadelphia game” and the “Baltimore game.” Although this created some confusion when clubs from different cities met on the diamond, it also established localism and civic pride as core features of the sport. Thus, to have a stake in Chicago’s baseball circle, which grew rapidly in popularity in the late nineteenth century, was to have a stake in the city itself. By 1887, white businessmen in the city, some of whom were also local politicians, organized a successful federation of semiprofessional baseball teams called the Chicago City League. The City League barred African American players and teams until 1908 (its history is described in chapter one). This exclusion from city baseball, much like inequities in housing, employment, and political influence, further marginalized African Americans as second-class citizens of Chicago. The importance of this snub was not lost on the windy city’s race men, all of whom understood “getting ahead” in the city meant navigating the rough waters of the urban environment.

Because political patronage was distributed at the neighborhood level in Chicago,⁴⁷ activities such as obtaining a license to run a business or leasing municipal space (such as a park) might require a friendly relationship with committeemen and aldermen. Such relationships were often forged in exclusive social clubs as well. Political, business, and fraternal connections could determine individual and group success. Networks of personal, political, and business relationships governed access to baseball in the city. As chapter one explains, African Americans were usually cut out of such networks, or relegated to the supplicant’s role in them. They had to make their own way in organizing professional baseball, in a segregated orbit, by maximizing their small amount of political capital, limited business resources, and growing fraternal associations.

The city’s race men built professional baseball into a touchstone of race pride, a celebration of black culture and achievement in the most “American” of sports. It was entwined with the shifting sands of self-identity for African Americans -- as individual

⁴⁷ Biles, *Big City Boss in Depression and War* and *Richard Daley*; Grimshaw, *Bitter Fruit*; Pinderhughes, *Race and Ethnicity in Chicago Politics*; Keiser, *Subordination or Empowerment?*

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citizens of Chicago denied the full rights of citizenship, as members of different groups within black Chicago, and as a marginalized group in the broader urban community. The sport's history therefore reveals a great deal about the ways that groups within urban communities, and in cities at large, used specific institutions (teams), events (games), and urban spaces (ballparks) to build an internal community as well as insert themselves into the larger city environment. It also demonstrates that the cityscape, like baseball and its values, has been historically contested and reconfigured precisely because of the influence of African Americans. Last, the development of black professional baseball and the emergence of the "national pastime" are coincident with one another. The process of baseball's rise to dominance while excluding blacks is intimately entwined with African American attempts to stake a claim to "American-ness."

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CHAPTER ONE

Black Baseball in an Age of Elites

In the spring of 1910, an African American family rented a home in Chicago's Douglas neighborhood, at that time a white area along Vernon Avenue between 32nd and 33rd streets. This was the fifth black family to move into the Douglas neighborhood in a short period of time. White residents protested vigorously to the white real estate agent who brokered the deal. The agent responded to the criticism by saying that he rented to the family simply because the property owner had instructed him to do so. There was no law allowing the agent to dismiss the family out of hand, he added. But in the absence of such a law, the agent suggested a path whites might take to maintain residential segregation in the future. White property owners ought to take better care of the properties they owned on the south and west sides of the city, he grumbled, areas inhabited predominantly by African Americans. Blacks would then not want or need to move to well-kept white neighborhoods such as Douglas. The unpleasant episode was reported in the *Chicago Tribune* under the headline, "To Repel Negro Invasion."¹

Why did such blanket hostility arise? To many white Chicagoans, the rapid growth of the city's black population -- from 14,217 in 1890 to 44,103 in 1910 -- seemed to threaten a social, economic, and political upheaval.² Racial tensions came to the fore on a daily basis in turn-of-the-century Chicago. Housing was a common flash point for these tensions. Black Chicagoans were frequently unable to rent or buy property outside of these segregated residential areas, and venturing outside of black neighborhoods could have

¹ The agent's exact words were: "If they have the money to pay for property and are willing to pay it, I cannot prevent them from doing so. If you wanted to keep the negroes on Dearborn street, why didn't you see to it that the white property owners from whom they rented erected attractive buildings for their tenants?" "To Repel Negro Invasion," *Tribune*, April 7, 1910.

² In 1890, the African American population in Chicago was 14,271, in 1900 it was 30,150, and in 1910, 44,103. U.S. Census Reports, 1850-1930. Cited in Allan Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920* (Chicago, 1967), Table I, p. 12.

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consequences that were at best uncertain and at worst dangerous.³ The law was on their side, namely the Illinois Civil Rights Law of 1885 which prohibited discrimination in all city services. Yet African Americans were routinely denied access to desirable neighborhoods and could not usually access jobs outside of the service industries. They were barred from most labor unions, and were commonly employed as strike-breakers. This wide range of informal social practices produced de facto segregation in the city.⁴ Furthermore, the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, which seemed to legitimize and sanction segregation, encouraged even more division of the races in Chicago.

The Elite 400 and “respectability”

The few African Americans who were able to succeed despite such a climate of adversity were the leading lights of Chicago’s black community at the turn of the century, the Elite 400. They constructed a small, exclusive circle of businesses, political groups, and social clubs which catered to financially and socially successful families. To distinguish themselves from the young professionals, the more established elites formed a fraternal organization, one of many in the city, called the “Old Settlers” club. In time, the term *old settler* came to mean older, established elites whether or not they were actually members of this club.

Chicago’s old settler elite were frequently college-educated and most had lived in the city for decades by the turn of the twentieth century. As a group they were very self-conscious of their social status. In 1885, *The Colored Men’s Professional and Business Directory of Chicago in 1885* was published by Isaac Harris, an old settler elite. This volume provided a way for “everyday” African Americans to locate and patronize African

³ Spear, *Black Chicago*, p. 41-42.

⁴ St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (New York, 1945), p. 15. On employment opportunities: Fannie Barrier Williams, “The Frederick Douglass Centre,” *Voice of the Negro*, 1:12 (December 1904): 602. On strike-breaking: “Strike Lessons for Colored People,” *Voice of the Negro*, 2:6 (June 1905): 375.

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American businesses but equally important, the directory enabled the old settler elite to identify and elevate themselves.⁵ The drive to do this was born of a twofold desire to be taken seriously by the white elite of the city and to be respected by all African Americans.

Leaders of the other part of the Elite 400, the young professional class, ranged in their professions. Some were businessmen, lawyers, newspaper editors -- positions that might also have been held by the old settler elite. Others, however, were barbers, morticians, and nightclub owners, positions not commonly held by old settler elites. The ranks of the professional class included individuals such as Robert S. Abbott, founder and publisher of the *Chicago Defender*, and Beauregard F. Moseley, businessman, lawyer, political aspirant, and baseball entrepreneur. Some of the young professionals were college-educated, others were not. For most of them, personal upward mobility was often coupled with a strong commitment to racial uplift and self-help.

Numerous clubs and fraternal associations provided a means through which the Elite 400 were able to organize social and civic activities in the 1890s. Black businessmen and politicians organized their clubs around an agenda of social engagements and racial advancement. A wide variety of women's clubs also formed around literary, settlement, political, and social agendas. Black women proudly hosted the national convention for the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs (NACW) in 1899.⁶ Male or female, the clubs and associations fostered a dual message of race pride and economic prosperity, and had the common goals of racial uplift and self-help. "Blacks in Chicago," one historian

⁵ Isaac C. Harris, *The Colored Men's Professional and Business Directory of Chicago and Valuable Information of the Race in General Containing Many Biographical Sketches of Eminent Colored Men, and Historical Events, Important Facts and Grand Achievements Which Demonstrate the Remarkable Progress of the Colored Race During the Past Twenty-five Years* (Chicago, 1885).

⁶ By 1929, there were nine black women's clubs in Chicago that belonged to the NACW. For a comprehensive study of African American women's clubs in Chicago at the turn of the 20th century, see Anne Meis Knupfer, *Toward A Tenderer Humanity and a Nobler Womanhood: African American Women's Clubs in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago* (New York, 1996).

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noted, “shared a tradition of viewing economics coupled with racial solidarity and self-help as components of their strategy of racial advancement.”⁷

Churches in the black belt, primarily Olivet Baptist and Quinn Chapel, functioned as houses of worship and as centers of the community. Provident Hospital, founded in 1891 by the black surgeon Daniel H. Williams -- the first physician to successfully suture the human heart -- served the black community as a hospital and as an important touchstone of race pride. The Chicago Lightfoot Infantry, founded in 1882 as an attachment of the Seventh (later Eighth) Regiment of the Illinois National Guard, was a powerful symbol of African American patriotism, masculinity, and civic duty.

The political, social, and business activities of the Elite 400, whether they were old settlers or young professionals, dominated the pages of the black press. Chicago was home to many African American newspapers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Twenty-six African American newspapers were founded between 1878 and 1920. Most, such as the *Eagle*, *Observer*, *Busy Bee*, and the *Standard* appeared for a few years but floundered in the shadow of the larger papers, as Chicago’s African American community was not yet large enough to support many papers simultaneously.⁸ The *Conservator*, founded in 1878 and published for many years by Ferdinand Barnett, was the first black newspaper in the city. The most influential papers were the *Broad Ax*, published by Julius Taylor (who brought it to Chicago from Salt Lake City) and Robert Abbott’s *Defender*, founded in 1905. Generally, the black press functioned as the mouthpiece for the concerns of the Elite 400. The *Defender* and the *Broad Ax* in particular highlighted the various activities and concerns of “race men and women” on a weekly basis.

⁷ Christopher Robert Reed, *The Chicago NAACP and the Rise of Black Professional Leadership, 1910-1966* (Bloomington, IN, 1997), p. 12, 36.

⁸ “Chronological List of Negro Periodicals,” Illinois Writers Project (hereafter IWP) Papers, “The Negro in Illinois,” Box 42, folder 2. Vivian G. Harsh collection, Carter G. Woodson branch of the Chicago public library.

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It was in the pages of the black press that the many collaborations and divisions within the Elite 400 came to light. Although they were able to work together on some issues, such as church activities and fraternal societies, old settler elites and young professionals quarreled about many things of varying significance. The areas in which they disagreed the most were typically the most important, in which the stakes were highest: race relations, segregation, and civil rights. Although old settlers and young professionals identified the same problems -- inadequate access to housing and jobs, closed unions, limited business opportunities, etc. -- they differed on the proper course of action to remedy these problems.

Old settler elites generally embraced a race ideology built around a concept of respectability, self-help and uplift. Among the old settlers the “politics of respectability,” as Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham has termed it, stressed the importance of improving behaviors and attitudes among individuals which would in turn provide a framework for institutional reform in black communities.⁹ In their view, the most successful and influential African Americans in the city could and should work together with whites to raise the economic, political, and social standing of the African American community. This process of uplift would elevate the community and improve the image of African Americans in the eyes of their white counterparts. Certain tenets of middle-class Victorian America -- particularly restraint, patience, piety, sobriety, and gentility -- resonated with them, and peppered the pages of Chicago’s black newspapers.

This perspective led the old settler elites to center their race reform efforts on a handful of high-profile, affluent individuals whose work frequently put them in contact with leading white Chicagoans. People such as the writer and orator Fannie Barrier Williams, who delivered two addresses at the 1893 Columbian World Exposition; Ferdinand Barnett, the lawyer, politician, and newspaperman; and Daniel Hale Williams of Provident Hospital

⁹ Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women’s Movement in the Black Baptist Church 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), p. 187.

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led the way. These elites had access to important white reformers: Julius Rosenwald, the Sears Roebuck tycoon and philanthropist; Jane Addams, of Hull House fame; and Clarence Darrow, the attorney made famous nationwide for his liberal defenses of civil rights issues.¹⁰ In short, the old settlers fought segregation by rejecting segregated businesses, institutions, and organizations at every turn.¹¹ Through it all, respectability for individuals, and for the race as an interest group in the city, was the paramount aim. They were integrationists who firmly believed the path to racial equality began with competence and propriety, which would generate acceptance by whites.

A potential obstacle in the pursuit of respectability was the migration of southern blacks to Chicago. To many old settlers, the influx of African Americans from the south in the 1890s, slow but increasing, was a mixture of good and bad news. Increasing the size and influence of the black community in a city dominated by whites (native or foreign-born) was a boon but it also could be a problem. Although many of the migrants were professionals, they were not of the same social standing and did not possess the same social graces as the old settlers. Apprehensions that the fragile relationship forged with influential and wealthy whites would be sullied by the arrival of too many uncouth southerners also nagged the old settler elites. Thus, they did not always readily welcome the members of the new black professional class, at times restricting membership in key community institutions such as churches and social clubs. Over time, as migrants of the professional class were joined by the working class and the poor, old settlers became more fearful of the effect on race relations, and more reluctant to open their institutions to migrants.

¹⁰ Industrialists George Pullman, Phillip Armour, Gustavus Swift, and Potter Palmer were also high-profile whites commonly known to be “friends of the Negro.” Addams and Rosenwald were founding members of the Chicago branch of the NAACP in 1910. Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, p. 57. Fannie Barrier Williams, “The New Method of Dealing With the Race Problem,” *Voice of the Negro*, 3:7 (July 1906): 505.

¹¹ Spear, *Black Chicago*, p. 57, 60, 69. Elites did see the utility of segregated institutions as temporary measures toward integration.

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Many of the southern migrants who formed the young professional class were attracted to Chicago by the promise of opportunity experienced in visits to the 1893 Columbian Exposition. Although the Fair generally erased African Americans from its grand presentations of “civilization,” it positioned Chicago as a world city, a center of progress and opportunity.¹² To many visitors, the city presented an opportunity for advancement not possible in the south, whether or not the old settler elite welcomed them wholeheartedly. For working class migrants, the draw was industrial employment opportunities (occasionally as scab laborers) and an escape from the poverty and cruelty of the rural Jim Crow south. Chicago’s reputation as a wide-open town lifted hopes beyond the very real limitations imposed by segregation. To men and women fleeing the harsh world of sharecropping, lynching, violence, and disfranchisement the range of possibilities in Chicago seemed enormous. Although the young professionals frequently lacked the wealth and education of the old settler elite, some were experienced in politics, (usually not as office-holders). Most importantly, they brought a different approach to solving the problems of race relations, segregation, and civil rights.

The leaders of Chicago’s growing black professional class embraced an ideology of self-help, solidarity, and racial uplift by creating a host of organizations and institutions inside the physical and psychological boundaries of the black belt for the exclusive use of African American Chicagoans. Some may have thought alliances with whites were unnecessary and perhaps counterproductive. Christopher Robert Reed has argued that to many budding African American business people and to the working-class men and women of black Chicago, simply assuring non-interference in black affairs was all that was expected from whites.¹³ Some ambitious blacks, however, saw twofold opportunity in this segregated community: to develop and cultivate black institutions for the black community

¹² Christopher Robert Reed, *All The World Is Here: The Black Presence at the White City* (Bloomington, IN, 2000); James Gilbert, *Perfect Cities: Chicago's Utopias of 1893* (Chicago, 1991).

¹³ Reed, *The Chicago NAACP*, p. 13.

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and to empower that community economically, and politically, eventually bringing an end to segregation. The experience of black professional baseball bears this out.

Many young professionals believed that the key to obtaining respectability and ultimately integration was to construct a strong base of black-owned and black-operated businesses, churches, fraternal organizations, baseball teams -- "race enterprises" -- whose success would improve the life of African Americans and perhaps hasten the end of segregation. This approach, which antagonized old settler elites, was present in African American communities of other northern cities as well. In Cleveland, debates over the mission of the Phyllis Wheatley Association highlighted tensions between settled elites and southern migrants. In Detroit, the local Phyllis Wheatley Association became a symbol of both black self-help and elitism. It was founded by upper class women of color, many of whom distanced themselves from the community it served, fearing too much contact would damage their position vis-a-vis upper class whites. Middle-class black women filled the void, recognizing the "link between their class interests and the welfare of the black community."¹⁴

Concerns among settled elites in Cleveland and Detroit were the same in Chicago: they wanted to be respected as leaders of their community but feared too many all-black institutions would amount to self-imposed segregation. A racially defined city-within-a-city would be antithetical to the integration cause they championed. This tension over the different paths to respectability and race progress exacerbated the existing rifts between the old settler elite and the emerging professional class. The very different approaches to solving the race problem polarized African American leadership among the Elite 400. Whereas the old settler elites reached across the boundaries of segregation, the new professional class concentrated on working within those boundaries. Old settlers advocated immediate integration in all endeavors; young professionals worked to strengthen the

¹⁴ Kenneth Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape: Black Cleveland 1870-1930* (Urbana, 1976), p. 150-151; Richard W. Thomas, *The State of Black Detroit: Building From Strength: The Black Self-Help Tradition in Detroit* (Detroit, 1987), p. 10.

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economic and political base within the segregated confines of black Chicago. One point on which the old settlers and the new professional class agreed, however, was that institutionalized racism and segregation made African Americans a highly visible group in the city regardless of their actual numbers.¹⁵

Crime, Vice, and Respectable Enterprises

Old settlers and young professionals alike fretted over the presence and influence of highly visible African American criminals, whose activities, they believed, obstructed the road to respectability. Black vice lords and policy kings provided well-patronized “services” without requiring African Americans to leave their neighborhoods. None was more successful at the turn of the century than John “Mushmouth” Johnson. From 1890-1907 his gambling house at 464 S. State (in the first ward) made him king of the black gambling underworld. Johnson relied on political protection to stay in business, routinely donating up to \$10,000 to both the Republican and Democratic parties’ mayoral campaigns. In return when his club was to be raided -- a rare occurrence -- he even received advance notice. When the white Democratic committeeman “Hinky Dink” Kenna and alderman “Bathhouse John” Coughlin took control of the ward, Johnson dealt with them directly and the raids ceased altogether.¹⁶

Although he was an underworld figure, Mushmouth Johnson was something of a folk hero in black Chicago. He had access to large amounts of capital which he frequently dispersed to needy individuals in the community. Johnson contributed to the Baptist Church (through his mother), founded an old folk’s home, and was known to be a generous

¹⁵ African Americans in Chicago increased by 209% from 1890-1910, but because the city’s overall population was booming at the same time, blacks constituted only 2% of the entire population. Spear, *Black Chicago*, Table I, p. 12.

¹⁶ Kenna and Johnson’s lucrative arrangements with vice men were notorious, and carried Mayor Harrison’s blessing. Edward R. Kantowicz, “Carter H. Harrison II: The Politics of Balance,” in Paul Green and Melvin Holli (eds.), *The Mayors: The Chicago Political Tradition* (Carbondale, IL, 1995), p. 22, 26. Dempsey Travis, *An Autobiography of Black Politics, Volume I* (Chicago, 1987), p. 38-40.

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donor to a variety of other causes. He even had a reputation for dissuading the sons of prominent black families from coming to his establishment, prompting one historian to describe him as “a hard-headed businessman and...something of a sentimentalist.”¹⁷

Because the African American presence in city politics was generally dispersed into appointed offices -- until 1915, when William H. Thompson’s mayoral campaign courted black voters for the first time, and Oscar DePriest was elected second ward alderman -- enterprising individuals such as Johnson mastered forms of ‘extrapolitical’ behavior. Through their activities, Johnson and his cohorts mimicked the supposed functions of organized political parties in the city.

Mushmouth Johnson was also something of a mentor, training a protégé named Robert (Bob) Motts, who ran a gambling den and saloon in the black belt called the Pekin Theatre. Motts’ contribution to Chicago’s political system included paying customers five dollars per day to help the aldermen of the second ward register African Americans and get them to the polls on election day. Motts’ associate Henry “Teenan” Jones, a black saloonkeeper and gambler in lilly-white Hyde Park, perfected the relationship between vice and city hall. Jones’ arrangements with several mayoral administrations completely protected him from raids for sixteen years. In fact, it was the Hyde Park Improvement Association, not the police, which finally drove Jones out of the neighborhood as part of a 1910 attempt to purge *all* African Americans from Hyde Park. Jones relocated his clubs (Elite #1 and Elite #2) to the 3000 block of S. State, in the heart of the black belt. An organizer in the Republican party, Jones’ influence was cut short in 1917 when he was indicted for conspiracy alongside alderman Oscar DePriest. The alderman, however, did not lose his influence. DePriest’s connections to enough respectable members of the African American community (much was made of his support from the ministerial community in 1915) enabled him to enlist the legal services of Edward H. Morris, an old settler elite, and Clarence Darrow, the famed white attorney (and charter member of the NAACP). DePriest

¹⁷ Harold Gosnell, *Negro Politicians: The Rise of Negro Politics in Chicago* (Chicago, 1935), p. 125-127.

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¹⁸ Travis, *American Cultural History*

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beat the charges and continued his political career. In 1928, he was the first African American elected to Congress from Chicago.¹⁸

The success of black organized crime to alternately subvert the law or enlist its members in their cause made the reform efforts of African American leaders increasingly difficult. When supported by the white political machinery of the city, black organized crime further developed a racially-bound “economy within the economy.” Old settler elites were alarmed because this was not the sort of relations they wanted to cultivate with white Chicagoans. Young professionals were also irked by Johnson’s successes, not because they opposed race enterprises, but because their own sense of respectability was injured by the prominence of black vice. Leaders of both groups took action in the press. In the integrationist journal *Voice of the Negro*, Fannie Barrier Williams observed ominously, “the colored race is not yet sufficiently aroused to its own social perils.”¹⁹ Robert Abbott of the *Defender* and Julius Taylor of the *Broad Ax* frequently used their newspapers to decry the immorality and social evil of black vice. Although Mushmouth Johnson’s good deeds may have pre-empted complaints about social decline from the man on the street, individuals bent on race reform believed vice cultivated moral decrepitude and fueled a dangerous characterization of African Americans as wanton and irresponsible. In 1911, a Chicago Vice Commission report confirmed these fears:

The history of the social evil in Chicago is intimately connected with the colored population. Invariably the large vice districts have been created within or near the settlements of colored people. In the past history of the city every time a new vice district was created downtown or on the South Side, the colored families were in the district, moving in just ahead of the prostitutes.²⁰

¹⁸ Travis, *Autobiography of Black Politics*, p. 38-41. William Howland Kenney, *Chicago Jazz: A Cultural History* (New York, 1993), p. 6, 9-10. Gosnell, *Negro Politicians*, p. 129-130, 172-174.

¹⁹ Fannie Barrier Williams, “The Club Movement Among the Colored Women,” *Voice of the Negro*, 1:3 (March 1904): 101.

²⁰ Chicago Vice Commission, 1911. Cited in The Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot* (Chicago, 1922), p. 343.

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The confounding issue of vice placed an unusual burden on black baseball's advocates to use this newly emerging race enterprise as a remedy for the problem of respectability in the increasingly segregated city. Black baseball's entrepreneurs understood this, and they seized upon the opportunity to make their mark as sportsmen, businessmen, and racial reformers. Timing was on their side, for it was at this moment that baseball's popularity and perceived social utility was at its zenith.

The National Pastime at the Turn of the Century

Professional baseball was an appropriate venue for the struggle over respectability because it enjoyed a position as the uncontested national pastime by the start of the twentieth century. During the Civil War, baseball was a common relaxation activity among soldiers and prisoners. After the war, thousands of former combatants returned to their hometowns and formed new teams and leagues. Baseball's exploding popularity was most prevalent in America's urban centers where population density and access to newspapers and magazines fed the sport's promotion.²¹ Led by Albert Spalding, a Chicago baseball legend of the nineteenth century and sporting goods tycoon of the twentieth, Organized Baseball's promoters exalted the game with the rhetoric of rugged masculinity and gentlemanly dignity.²²

In the Progressive Era, baseball promoters found a receptive audience for the "national game." Reformers of every stripe sought solutions to societal problems stemming from the close of the western frontier, rapid industrialization, immigration, and urbanization. One feature of these changes, promulgated by sports magnates and social reformers alike, was a perceived crisis of masculinity for which athletics was often touted as

²¹ Warren Goldstein, *Playing For Keeps: A History of Early Baseball* (Ithaca, 1989), p. 4-5. Phil Dixon and Patrick J. Hannigan, *The Negro Baseball Leagues: A Photographic History* (Mattituck, NY, 1992), p. 32. Elliott Gorn and Warren Goldstein, *A Brief History of American Sports* (New York, 1993), p. 98-99.

²² From the 1880s to the 1950s, the term "Organized Baseball" referred to the white major leagues. In the context of discussing black professional baseball, the term was commonly deployed as a means to differentiate and denigrate black teams and their leagues.

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the panacea. Reformers concerned about a new generation of men whom, they feared, were growing “soft” working at their desks rather than in fields or shops, embraced sport.

Writing in support of the “Colored Men’s Department” of the Y.M.C.A., W.A. Hunton lamented the loss of physical development through daily work in *Voice of the Negro*:

the physical development of the passing generation of men was greatly advanced by the homely exercise of sawing wood, tilling the small garden...and other out-door work...the loss of these occupations has created a demand for some other means whereby a healthy, robust, physical life may be founded in youth and sustained with vigor throughout the years of manhood.²³

Baseball was promoted as an answer to this call.²⁴ It built strong bodies, demanded clever applications of strategy, and taught valuable lessons about teamwork and self-sacrifice.

More importantly, baseball was touted as a leveler of men, a remedy for declining ‘Americanism’ and a spark for fledgling democracy -- although it was a segregated enterprise. Baseball even spawned national periodicals solely devoted to its national significance: the *Sporting News* and *Baseball Magazine*.

The national pastime, however, was a product of an American society formally and informally structured along divisions of color, and it was haunted by the specter of segregation. Racial exclusions in the form of an unwritten “gentleman’s agreement” kept African Americans out of the highest ranks of professional baseball after 1884.²⁵

Chicago’s own Adrian “Cap” Anson, a superstar of the nineteenth century Chicago White

²³ W.A. Hunton, “Colored Men’s Department of the Young Men’s Christian Association,” *Voice of the Negro*, 2:6 (June 1905): 388.

²⁴ The literature on the special role of baseball as a man-maker and a cauldron of quintessential “American” values is voluminous. A few of the key works are David Voigt, *America Through Baseball* (Chicago, 1976); Harold Seymour, *Baseball* (New York, 1960); Charles Alexander, *Our Game: An American Baseball History* (New York, 1991); Robert Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1970); Jules Tygiel, *Past Time: Baseball as American History* (New York, 2000).

²⁵ In 1884, African Americans Moses Fleetwood Walker and his brother Weldy played major league baseball on otherwise white major league teams. This was the year Organized Baseball’s club owners settled upon an unwritten policy which barred African Americans. The Walkers were the last African Americans to play major league baseball until Jackie Robinson re-integrated the majors in 1947. Their story is best captured in David Zang, *Fleet Walker’s Divided Heart: The Life of Baseball’s First Black Major Leaguer* (Lincoln, NE, 1995).

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Stockings, spearheaded the crusade to bar African American ballplayers from the highest ranks of white professional baseball. In addition to denying them access to the social and cultural benefits of the game, racial exclusion prevented African Americans from partaking in professional baseball's enormously expanding financial rewards.

There were thirteen professional baseball leagues operating across the nation in 1899. By 1912 there were forty-four. Players, team owners, and ballpark operators reaped the benefits of a very popular sport set amidst expanding urban populations. Players in the National League, the top major league of the time, drew salaries ranging from \$1,500 to as much as \$6,000 per year in the 1880s. Most veteran players, however, averaged \$1,500-\$2,500. Salaries spiked in the 1890 war with the rival Players League (which the National League won), and were eventually capped by club owners at \$2,400 in 1892. National League club owners usually made money, although some of the franchises closed (and others replaced them) in the 1890s. Chicago was an especially lucrative city for baseball. Albert Spalding's success with the National League Chicago White Stockings (later renamed the Chicago Cubs) drew enough revenue for him to launch a sporting goods empire in the nineteenth century. Spalding sold the team in 1905 for \$105,000; the new owners took in \$165,000 in revenues the following year. From 1907-1913 another \$810,000 poured into the Cubs' coffers.²⁶ Across town, Charles Comiskey earned over \$700,000 with his American League Chicago White Sox between 1901-1911, enough to finance an enormous new stadium at 35th and Shields in 1910. Comiskey Park, dubbed the "Baseball Palace of the World," was as much a hallmark of modern stadium architecture (concrete and steel) as it was a testament of the wealth baseball could bring to club owners.²⁷ Professional baseball put enormous sums into the hands of white Chicagoans but systematic segregation cut African Americans out of the picture. Chicago's leading race

²⁶ Steven Riess, *City Games: The Evolution of American Urban Society and the Rise of Sports* (Urbana, 1989), p. 196-197.

²⁷ *Tribune*, July 1, 1910. G.W. Axelson, *Commy: The Life Story of Charles A. Comiskey* (Chicago, 1919), p. 150.

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men, both old settler elites and young professionals, understood this. They set out to secure a share of baseball's bounty for themselves and for their community. The key, they believed, lay in the city's semiprofessional baseball circuit.

Baseball: The Chicago Way

By 1885 professional, semiprofessional and industrial leagues were operating in cities across the nation. Chicago was particularly flush in this regard, featuring a mixture of teams playing in organized professional, semi-professional, industrial, amateur, and church baseball leagues. Beginning in 1870, a large number of baseball teams ranging in stature from professional down to amateur flourished in the windy city. The Blue Stockings, Chicago's first all-black baseball team, appeared in that year, almost two decades before black baseball became a significant presence in the city.²⁸ Through the 1880s, city baseball matured and became increasingly profitable for the few individuals who owned and leased the ballparks. City-wide baseball was so popular by 1887 that a group of ball clubs answered a rate hike from park owners by forming the *Chicago City League* for semiprofessional baseball clubs. After two months of tangling with the park owners, the new City League struck a deal which allowed them access to the parks at the old rates. Subsequently teams and leagues seemed to sprout from the ground, especially after 1900. Chicago was also home to a Fire Insurance League, a Bible Class League, and numerous other baseball associations. One estimate placed the number of Chicago-area teams at 1,000

²⁸ Ray Schmidt, "The Golden Age of Chicago Baseball," *Chicago History*, (Winter 2000): 40. "Amateur" refers to players who took the field for no pay, such as church teams and the teams fielded by fraternal organizations. "Semiprofessional" refers to players who received some pay for play, but whose primary source of income/employment was elsewhere. Semipros were frequently financed by companies, so industrial teams and some "independent" ballclubs fit into this category. "Professionals" were players whose primary source of income was the pay received for their play. There are degrees of professionalization which can cloud this formulation, especially regarding the semipros and particularly as applied to black teams. Even the very best black professional teams were often tabbed "semipros" to distinguish them from the white minor leagues and the white major leagues of Organized Baseball.

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in 1910. Averaging twelve players a team, an astonishing 12,000 men were playing organized baseball in Chicago that year.²⁹

In 1890, Chicago's successful, well-organized semipros set a schedule of City League games and saw it through the entire season. League teams were members of the Park Owners Association, a collection of ballpark owners which governed bookings for local as well as traveling teams. Despite some early success, pressure from independent clubs who scheduled games with League teams and unsuccessful efforts to stave off the corrupting influence of wildcat "professionals" caused the City League to fold in 1895. Ten years of somewhat loosely-organized competition between the numerous local amateur, semipro, and professional teams followed. Clubs that controlled their own ballparks were able to cultivate a loyal fan base over these years. One group that tried to corral semipro baseball in the absence of the City League was the Inter-City Association, founded in 1901. This was a coalition of businessmen which handled ballpark bookings of so-called freelance semiprofessional teams from Chicago and the suburbs.³⁰

Early Black Baseball in Chicago

Throughout the growth and development of Chicago city baseball, African Americans fielded amateur, semipro, and eventually professional teams. Little evidence survives about the state of black baseball in Chicago from the 1870 Blue Stockings club until the mid-1880s. References to black teams in the press are infrequent and undetailed.³¹ In the mid-1880s, however, African American baseball players responded to their banishment from major league baseball (and most of minor league baseball) by accelerating

²⁹ *Spalding's Official Chicago Baseball Guide, 1911* (Chicago, 1911), p. 5. All 1,000 teams were "uniformed and playing at least one game a week."

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1910 (Chicago, 1910), p. 19. Michael Lomax, "Black Entrepreneurship in the National Pastime," *Journal of Sport History*, 25:1 (Spring 1998): 47.

³¹ One example is the 1882 Chicago Uniques, likely an amateur club. *Chicago Conservator*, December 23, 1882 makes an oblique reference to this team.

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the formation of local all-black baseball clubs.³² Some were amateur teams, such as the four which comprised socialite Julius Avendorph's Chicago Society Baseball League, the first black baseball league in the city, in the 1890s.

Julius Avendorph was the special assistant to the president of the Pullman company, a position in which he became "personally acquainted with more millionaires than any other colored man in Chicago." He first came to Chicago in 1884 at the age of fifteen. Despite his youth, Avendorph had been educated in his home city of Mobile, Alabama and at Fisk University before his arrival in the city. From 1886-1910, Avendorph was commonly heralded as black Chicago's "undisputed social leader," a distinction bolstered by his position atop the prestigious Columbia Club, which he founded in 1891.³³ Avendorph chose fellow clubman and noted black physician A.M. Curtis to be the Society League's president. Curtis was not a baseball man, and his presidency indicates the League may have been genteel, but it was neither professional nor even semiprofessional. In fact, each player had to supply his own uniform. Games were played at the field at 37th and Butler, inside the black belt.

The Society League was mostly a venue for the black elite to rub elbows with one another. As a leader of the black elite, Avendorph likely intended it to be an expression of solidarity and race pride as well as a social event. "Social contact," he wrote many years later, "means moral uplift and social betterment."³⁴ Because the Society League played exclusively in the black belt and fielded very few teams -- amateur ones at that -- it was essentially invisible to white Chicago and thus did little to improve African Americans' image outside the black belt although it elevated Avendorph and supported his lofty position

³² Schmidt, "The Golden Age of Chicago Baseball," p. 40.

³³ *Intercollegian Wonder Book: The Negro in Chicago, 1779-1927, Volume II* (Chicago, 1929), p. 281. Vivian G. Harsh collection, Carter G. Woodson branch of the Chicago public library. Hereafter known as ICWB. *Defender*, August 10, 1918 and May 12, 1923 (obit.). *Appeal*, December 4, 1897 and October 6, 1900. Cited in Spear, *Black Chicago*, p. 66 fn 41.

³⁴ *Broad Ax*, December 22, 1917.

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³⁵ ICWB, Vol.
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in a very status-conscious community. In the 1910s, Avendorph created a position for himself at the *Defender* as the society editor. On at least two occasions, he used the power of the press to reflect on the state of black social affairs, extolling the old settler elites and bemoaning the 'lack of class' showed by the rapidly growing new generation of African Americans in Chicago.³⁵

African American Semiprofessional Baseball

Chicago's first significant semiprofessional black baseball team was the Unions, later renamed the Chicago Unions, founded by Frank C. Leland in 1887. Leland was not as flashy as Julius Avendorph, but he too was a good representative of late nineteenth century black Chicago's business and political elite. Leland came to Chicago as a graduate of Fisk University, a person who loved sport and nursed an interest in race-specific business opportunities. Prior to his arrival Leland had been a member of the Washington (D.C.) Capital City Club, a baseball team in the very short-lived National League of Colored Baseball Clubs. This attempt to form an all-black major league in the spring of 1887 failed soon after it began, whereupon Leland moved to Chicago, hoping to establish professional black baseball there.³⁶ In addition to his baseball activities, the other dimensions of Leland's public life were in keeping with the old settlers' approach to race progress and race pride. He held several high-profile political positions, all of which demanded interaction with whites. Leland was a clerk in three Cook County courts: Criminal, Circuit, and the Board of Review, and later served as Deputy Sheriff. Leland's political career

³⁵ ICWB, Vol. 2, p. 281. "The Columbia Club," souvenir leaflet 1899, IWP, Atkinson folder, 158. *Illinois Record*, January 7, 1899, p. 1. Julius Avendorph, "Chicago Men are Chided for Not Being Gallant," *Defender*, February 27, 1915 and "Chicago's Social Condition Today as Compared with Twenty-Two Years Ago," *Broad Ax*, December 22, 1917.

³⁶ Lomax, "Black Entrepreneurship," p. 48.

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peaked when he was elected Cook County Commissioner in 1908.³⁷ A college education and political activity ensured Leland's "respectability" and enabled him to make contacts with other important black Chicagoans. His Unions were managed briefly by old settler elites -- first Abe Jones, then Robert R. Jackson -- before settling into many years of helmsmanship by William S. Peters (1890-1899). By contrast, one of Leland's founding partners from D.C. was Teenan Jones, whose career as a saloonkeeper and gambling king in Chicago led him to move in different circles.³⁸

Because African American players were barred from the ranks of major league baseball the very best athletes (many of whom could have played major league baseball if not for their skin color) suited up for the semipro teams like the Unions. Baseball is one example in which segregation actually helped blacks by giving the Unions a competitive advantage over other Chicago-area semipro teams. This fact, combined with the expansion of Chicago's black community, benefited Frank Leland greatly. He secured a lease on the Unions' first "home" ballpark in 1889, a small field located at 76th and Langley Avenue, well outside the black belt. The Unions played there through the 1893 season, after which time Leland shrewdly relocated the team inside the black belt to the field at 37th and Butler. The Unions remained at this park until 1900.³⁹

Leland filled his baseball organization with men who had important social and business connections among the city's black elite. Foremost was Robert Jackson, a towering figure in black Chicago. Born in the city in 1870, Jackson rose from humble beginnings. He left school in the eighth grade, working as a newsboy and bootblack for years. At eighteen, Jackson joined both the post office and the Illinois National Guard, choices which foreshadowed a long life of public service. He gained prominence in the

³⁷ *Frank Leland's Chicago Giants Base Ball Club* (Chicago, 1910). This promotional brochure was published by Major Robert R. Jackson's company. Harsh collection and National Baseball Hall of Fame, Cooperstown, NY. Gosnell, *Negro Politicians*, p. 83.

³⁸ Lomax, "Black Entrepreneurship," p. 48. *Frank Leland's Chicago Giants Base Ball Club*.

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Eighth Illinois Infantry in the early 1890s. Service in the Spanish-American war solidified his reputation as a soldier and leading citizen. Jackson retained the dignified moniker “Major” for the rest of his life. After the war, Jackson established the Fraternal Press, a successful printing and publishing business. In addition to being Leland’s partner, Jackson secured his place in black society’s inner circle by joining approximately fifteen fraternal organizations.⁴⁰

Within the city’s borders, the most noteworthy of Jackson’s club memberships was the Appomattox Club, created in 1900 by Edward H. Wright. Wright was a budding power broker in the Illinois Republican party who came to Chicago from New York in 1884. He was a delegate to the Illinois state convention in 1888, where his savvy voting earned him the first clerical position in state government ever held by an African American the following year: bookkeeper and railroad incorporation clerk in the Secretary of State’s office. In the 1890s Wright worked his way up the ranks of the state Republican party with a job in the city clerk’s office and elections as clerk of the town of South Chicago (1895) and finally county commissioner (1896). Wright was unafraid of political wrangling; historian Harold Gosnell describes his behavior as “shrewd, forceful, and highly race conscious.”

Commissioner Wright used his influence to secure many appointments for notable African Americans. Among them were Ferdinand Barnett (Assistant State’s Attorney), Louis B. Anderson (Assistant Cook County Attorney who in 1910 became corporate counsel for a new Frank Leland baseball team), and the nationally-renowned Dr. Daniel H. Williams, founder of Provident Hospital.⁴¹

In 1900, when Wright organized Appomattox as a “rendezvous for professional politicians,” he lost his bid for re-election to the county board. Despite the setback, ex-commissioner Wright’s social club quickly became the most prestigious fraternal

⁴⁰ Jackson was elected Major of the Knights of Pythias of the World. By 1927, that group had 225,000 members. ICWB, Vol. 1, p. 97. Louis Harlan (ed.), *The Booker T. Washington Papers*, Vol. 12, (Urbana, 1982), p. 30, n. 2. Gosnell, *Negro Politicians*, p. 111.

⁴¹ ICWB, Vol. 1, p. 103. Gosnell, *Negro Politicians*, p. 154.

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organization in black Chicago (Appomattox operated for fifty years.) Wright was the club's first president. In keeping with the black elites' focus on integration, the club's first location was at 3134 Wabash, at that time a white neighborhood. Although Appomattox was at first a place where black Republican businessmen met socially, it soon became the hub of all social life among the city's black elite. Robert Jackson was proud to count himself among the founding members and served as its first secretary.⁴² When Jackson left the post office in 1909, he drew upon the connections made in Appomattox to launch his political career. In 1912, with assistance from Wright, Jackson was elected to the State Legislature where he served until 1916. In 1918 Jackson won election as alderman from the second (later third) ward and held the position for twenty years.⁴³

Frank Leland's Chicago Unions enjoyed support from some of the most prestigious and formidable members of Chicago's black elite. Despite this, they faced stiff competition from another African American team in 1899, the newly-formed Columbia Giants. This club was formerly the Page Fence Giants of Adrian, Michigan, a well-known independent black baseball team sponsored by the Page Fence Company. When the team collapsed, Avendorph's Columbia Club purchased it, brought it to Chicago, and reorganized the club. Avendorph himself played third base.⁴⁴ The Columbia Giants leased the ballpark at 39th and Wentworth from Charles Comiskey, home field of the American Association Chicago White Sox. The location put the Giants at the edge of the black belt and just a few

⁴² Spear, *Black Chicago*, p. 79, 109. *Appomattox Club Yearbook*, 1947. This is the only known documentary evidence from this important club; it is held at the Chicago Historical Society. Although he was not involved with Leland and Jackson's baseball operations in the 1890s, Beauregard Moseley was also a charter member of the Appomattox Club. He and Jackson served as club President at various moments in the club's first fifteen years.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 79. Gosnell, *Negro Politicians*, p. 67-68, 75-77. *Frank Leland's Chicago Giants Base Ball Club*. Reed, *The Chicago NAACP*, p. 41. Dick Clark and Larry Lester, *The Negro Leagues Book* (Cleveland, 1994), p. 197. Ward lines were re-drawn in 1921, creating two wards (2nd and 3rd) out of the old 2nd ward.

⁴⁴ *Illinois Record*, February 11, 1899. *Frank Leland's Chicago Giants Base Ball Club*. Larry Lester, Sammy J. Miller, Dick Clark, *Black Baseball in Chicago* (Chicago, 2000), p. 11-13.

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blocks from Leland's club.⁴⁵ For two years the Chicago Unions and the Columbia Giants competed for the support of black Chicagoans and for player personnel. A battle over players' inflated salaries dramatically, badly damaging the finances of both clubs. Fearing ruinous competition, Leland merged the rival clubs in 1901, naming the new squad the Chicago Union Giants. He leased a new ballpark for the new team at 61st and St. Lawrence, the southern outskirts of the black belt at the time. The next year he relocated the Union Giants to Auburn Park, at 79th and Wentworth, which was owned by a white tavern keeper named John Schorling. Although the park was completely outside the black belt, it was in better condition than the previous fields and was accessible by a combination of streetcars and/or elevated trains. Furthermore, Schorling owned multiple parks and was tapped into the city's white baseball circuit. Leland likely assumed an arrangement with Schorling would help secure bookings with quality white teams.⁴⁶

In 1902, Leland also acquired pitching "phenom" Andrew "Rube" Foster. Just 23, Foster was already something of a legend. He left school in Calvert, TX after the eighth grade to become a professional baseball player. Foster rose to stardom very quickly, establishing his reputation as the greatest of all black pitchers. Testaments to Foster's amazing ability are numerous, and are supported by the fact that he took the mound for a majority of his teams' exhibition games against white clubs, winning 51 of 55 such contests. Additionally, many baseball writers speculate Foster taught white baseball legend Christy Matthewson the famous "fade-away pitch" while employed as a pitching coach for John McGraw's New York Giants.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ *Illinois Record*, February 11, 1899. Lomax, "Black Entrepreneurship," p. 49.

⁴⁶ David Wyatt, "Baseball War for Chicago," *Freeman*, December 4, 1909. "Notes of the Semi-Pros," *Freeman*, June 18, 1910. Lomax, "Black Entrepreneurship," p. 50.

⁴⁷ For details of Foster's exploits see Donn Rogosin, *Invisible Men: Life in Baseball's Negro Leagues* (New York, 1983), p. 8.; John Holway, *Rube Foster: The Father of Black Baseball*, p. 6 (unpublished manuscript at the Chicago Historical Society.); Art Rust Jr., "Get That Nigger Off the Field!": *A Sparkling, Informal History of the Black Man in Baseball* (New York, 1976), p. 15.

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Foster stayed in Chicago for part of the 1902 season, leaving the Union Giants in mid-spring for the east coast where African American baseball was better-organized and more lucrative. There Foster joined the best black talent in the nation, astounding fans in the two other cities with the biggest African American markets of the day: New York (1903: Cuban X-Giants), and Philadelphia (Philadelphia Giants, 1903-1906). He also got a taste of the business of black baseball. The black east coast teams were owned by whites who controlled all of the bookings. Black players routinely jumped from club to club, lured by ever-higher salaries. To control salary inflation, the white club owners formed a league, called the National Association of Colored Professional Baseball Clubs, under the leadership of the top magnate in black baseball, Nat Strong, who was white.⁴⁸

Foster's departure hurt the Union Giants in 1902, but not as much as the treachery of Jim Williams, one of Leland's partners in the 1901 merger. Williams abandoned the Union Giants in 1905 with longtime Leland compatriot William S. Peters in tow. Together they formed another new baseball club, also under the name Union Giants, then successfully enjoined Leland from using that name for his team.⁴⁹ Leland's club took the name "Chicago Giants" for two months before switching again, this time to "Leland Giants." Leland and Peters now divided the modestly sized African American fan base between them.⁵⁰

Although Leland's and Peters' teams played white semipro clubs across the city for years they were barred from official membership in a league and were thus classified as "independents." When a rejuvenated Chicago City League reappeared in 1905 neither African American club received a franchise. The Inter-City and Park Owners Association, however, continued to operate by facilitating contests between freelance semipro teams in

⁴⁸ Lomax, "Black Entrepreneurship," p. 53. David Wyatt, "Baseball War for Chicago," *Freeman*, December 4, 1909. "National Association of Colored Professional Baseball Clubs Meet," *Indianapolis Freeman*, March 21, 1908.

⁴⁹ David Wyatt, "Chicago to Have New Baseball Club," *Freeman*, October 30, 1909.

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Chicago and nearby communities. This arrangement included the black teams as well. After years of tangling with one another, the Inter-City and POA finally merged in 1908.⁵¹ The City League and POA/Inter-City were the top governing bodies of city baseball (League teams were members of the POA) but no black team was formally admitted to the prestigious City League until 1908, a year in which the League couldn't make it through an entire season due to scheduling and financial problems.⁵²

Despite its many troubles, the City League was the best-organized and most highly respected urban baseball league in the United States from 1906-1911. In 1909, players on City League teams drew salaries equaling players in three minor leagues and even some in the American League. At the peak of its success, the quality of play in the City League was high enough to lure many members of the major league Cubs and White Sox to play under assumed names. Some of these players left the Cubs or White Sox permanently; they earned as much in the City League as they did in the majors. Black teams seemed to have fared well in this climate. In 1910, the Indianapolis *Freeman* reported that the POA and City League were fighting with one another for the rights to book their games.⁵³ The success of city-wide baseball sparked an explosion of other Chicago teams, clubs of every origin imaginable. Teams representing businesses, churches, and fraternal organizations came from all over Chicago and its environs. Even the Catholic Foresters fielded a team.⁵⁴

The Politics of City Baseball

From the start, municipal politics was a part of Chicago baseball because games were scheduled through the municipal park system. Park usage required teams and/or

⁵¹ *Spalding's Official Chicago Baseball Guide*, 1909, p. 5.

⁵² Frank Leland, letter to the editor, *Freeman*, August 1, 1908. Schmidt, "The Golden Age," p. 39-59. *Spalding's Official Chicago Baseball Guide* for 1909, 1910, 1911.

⁵³ David Wyatt, "Semi-Pro Baseball Season Open in Chicago," *Freeman*, April 30, 1910.

⁵⁴ "Leland's Chicago Giants on Tour," *Freeman*, April 2, 1910. *Spalding's Official Chicago Baseball Guide* for 1909, 1910, 1911.

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leagues to develop relationships with the city's political system, specific to the area of the city where each park was located. The mechanism for this was Chicago's three distinct park districts, each serving a particular set of neighborhoods in the north, south, and west sections of the city.⁵⁵ Club owners were typically businessmen, professional politicians, or influential friends of politicians. Political connections were valuable because issues directly relevant to the business of baseball -- laws banning Sunday games, liquor regulations, property taxes, and police for crowd control, to name but a few -- were filtered through city politics. Furthermore, the municipal codes of Chicago maneuvered baseball teams into the political system. The codes required teams to obtain a license from the city by filing all the names of a ballclub's incorporators in the mayor's office. Ballparks had to pass regular city safety inspections and teams had to obtain city permits to sell alcohol. They also had to obtain consent from neighboring businesses before making any changes in a ballpark's frontage. Teams could not locate ballparks near churches, hospitals, or schools unless they could demonstrate that doing so did not create a nuisance. Further appeal came from the fact that the sport attracted graft and patronage. Available baseball jobs ranged from ticket sellers and concessionaires to more lucrative opportunities such as site excavation or building contracts. In many cities, the city police provided traffic control and prevented scalping outside the ballparks. Chicago had this too, but windy city club owners also exchanged patronage and favors for police presence *inside* the ballpark. New York outlawed this practice in 1907; Chicago kept it for decades.⁵⁶

Municipal politics and semiprofessional baseball were entwined in additional ways. Beyond the business and political connections wielded by the many men who filled the ranks of the City League, Inter-City Association, and POA, the top teams in the city represented different constituencies in Chicago's white ethnic political spectrum. For

⁵⁵ In 1934 the city merged the park districts into one entity, the Chicago Park District, and consolidated control of the system in city hall.

⁵⁶ Riess, *City Games*, p. 197, 199.

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example, Charles F. Gunther, a son of German immigrants, was an influential businessman by the end of the 19th century and an alderman from the second ward when he founded his City League team, the "Gunthers," in 1899. Gunther also served as city treasurer from 1901-1903, during which time his club became one of the top teams in the City League. They opened their own ballpark in 1904 at Clark and Leland (presently Chase Park), well north of the Loop.⁵⁷ Another example was the struggling POA team from Rogers Park, which got a breath of new life when a group of "wealthy and influential political and business men" took over the team in 1909.⁵⁸ A somewhat pathetic example is Cap Anson, who retired in 1898 after twenty-two legendary years for the Chicago White Stockings of the National League. The enormously popular Anson won election as city clerk in 1905. In the wake of an employee payroll scandal, however, Anson fled the clerk's office for redemption on the diamonds of the City League. "Anson's Colts" took the field in 1907. In a bit of delicious irony, Anson occasionally found himself on the diamond playing against -- and at times losing to -- the all-black Leland Giants.⁵⁹

In 1907, Chicago's black elite controlled the world of black baseball as they had for two decades. Men such as Frank Leland, the college-educated politician and baseball entrepreneur, and Robert Jackson, living proof of Horatio Alger's prescriptions for success in America, were hallmarks of the ideal of respectable male leadership in Chicago's growing black community. In sports, business, politics, and social affairs, Leland, Jackson, Wright, and Avendorph were practicing the politics of respectability by demonstrating African Americans' abilities and worthiness to be productive members of the society. Success in the public realm of business, politics, and sport were proof of such worthiness; coming together to assist one another in lodge halls was evidence of self-help. Their work

⁵⁷ Schmidt, "The Golden Age," p. 49. According to Schmidt, Gunther was also a well-known collector whose dime museum collection became the core of the collection at the Chicago Historical Society.

⁵⁸ David Wyatt, "Chicago to Have New Baseball Club," *Freeman*, October 30, 1909. *Spalding's Official Chicago Baseball Guide 1910*, p. 19.

⁵⁹ Riess, *Touching Base*, p. 54. Schmidt, "The Golden Age," p. 54-55.

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counterbalanced the influence that vice lords such as Johnson, Motts, and Jones wielded over public opinion inside the African American community and among whites. Yet in baseball, these elites faced intense competition and betrayal from within their own ranks. Their inability to build a strong foundation for black professional baseball meant they were unable to retain superstars such as Rube Foster. As the first decade of the new century came to a close, however, the dynamics of race and sport in the urban landscape were changing. New challenges came to the fore, pitting the elites and young professionals of the black community directly against one another. The situation demanded new solutions and new leadership, both of which arrived in the form of Beauregard Moseley and Rube Foster. With their ingenuity the name “Leland Giants” became a household name in black communities nationwide in 1907.

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CHAPTER TWO

Beauregard Moseley and the Triumph of the Professional Class

One of the key members of the young professional class was Beauregard Fritz Moseley. Moseley was born in Lincolnton, GA in 1868. His path to Chicago included time spent in New Orleans, where he was a committeeman in the Republican Party (1888-1890) and secretary of the Republican League of Louisiana (1888-1892). In 1892 he moved to Montreal where he ran a restaurant for a year, then relocated to Chicago in 1893. By 1896 Moseley was admitted to the Illinois bar; he opened a law practice which grew very rapidly. Within ten years the practice was generating an annual income of \$15,000 per year. He briefly published a newspaper, the *Chicago Republic*, and acted as chief counsel for Olivet Baptist church, the largest black congregation in Chicago.¹ Moseley epitomized the new professional class of African Americans in Chicago: a recent migrant from the south, educated, very race conscious, and savvy in business.

Moseley realized that building a black city-within-a-city not only lined the pocketbooks of those who led the effort, but also advanced race progress. Establishing and expanding black institutions in the black community provided options that were positive, self-empowering, tangible signs of progress. Respectable race enterprises such as barber shops, funeral parlors, newspapers, banks, or baseball teams concentrated black capital in the black belt, created jobs for African Americans, and over time would produce a 'rising tide to lift all boats.' Their presence also counteracted the damaging influence of the gambling dens, pool halls, and houses of prostitution clustered in the black belt.

¹ Transcript of an interview with Bertha Moseley Lewis, Moseley's daughter, Illinois Writers Project (hereafter IWP) Papers, "The Negro in Illinois," Box 26, folder 34. *Broad Ax*, September 9, 1916. Michael Lomax, "Black Entrepreneurship in the National Pastime," *Journal of Sport History*, 25:1 (Spring 1998): 51.

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The Leland Giants Baseball and Amusement Association

By 1907, Moseley was an established and successful leader of the professional class. In that same year, Frank Leland faced a number of difficulties. Competition from the Union Giants eroded his bottom line; bookings were run through white agents in the Park Owner's Association and Inter-City Association; ballparks were leased from white men rather than owned or operated by African Americans. Attendance was good, but not high enough to offset the large expenses involved in running a baseball team. Although Leland was a man of some means, his pockets alone were not deep enough to keep the Leland Giants afloat. Fearing the worst, Leland approached Moseley for assistance in 1907.²

Moseley offered Leland a solution for his business problems which would address the financial issues at hand and make important strides toward race progress: a capital stock company. He planned to modernize Leland's baseball club by rationalizing its operation, bureaucratizing its management, and expanding its ownership to other members of the African American community. The stock company could raise large amounts of capital by selling shares of its stock, thereby distributing liability across many different parties and dividing responsibilities among company officials to maximize efficiency. In keeping with the tenor of the Progressive Era, it would require a modern system of bureaucratic management headed by an expert (Moseley). Together with other key race men holding stock in the company, Moseley and Leland dissolved the Leland Giants Base Ball Association and incorporated the new Leland Giants Base Ball and *Amusement* Association. The team was Leland's realm; the Association's many other activities fell to Moseley. In one swift move, the Leland Giants became a piece of a modern, diversified corporation. In so doing, they elevated black baseball in Chicago from the catch-is, catch-can world of the semiprofessionals to a much more sophisticated, well-organized, professional status. By

² As related by Beauregard Moseley, complainant, in "Leland Giants Baseball and Amusement Association vs. Frank Leland's Chicago Giants Baseball Club *et al.*," Circuit Court of Cook County (hereafter CCCC), March 21, 1910, p. 1-3.

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creating this new Association, the city's African American leaders both promoted a race enterprise and situated themselves squarely into one of the important organizational components of progressive urban reform. The Association was not a rejection of white middle-class reform, as Allan Spear has suggested was the norm among black leaders of the era. Rather, the Association was an alternative route toward reform, which, like so many reform organizations (black, white, or interracial), promoted respectability, community obligations, and social justice.³

Leland and Moseley filled the Association's ranks with high-profile men who enjoyed high social and political standing in black Chicago such as Robert Jackson, the Association's first President. Moseley served as Secretary and Treasurer. From the start, the Association was praised by the black press whose pages created a space where the linkage between the business of sport and the world of politics came to the fore of public consciousness. "The owners and managers of the Leland Giants Amusement Company," the *Broad Ax* declared, "are some of the best colored people in the state of Illinois commercially, politically, and professionally."⁴

The most important addition to the Leland Giants, however, was Rube Foster. In 1907, Leland lured Foster back to Chicago on the promise that he would play and co-manage the club. Leland may have envisioned an arrangement in which he and Foster split the on-field managerial duties but in practice, Leland handled the bookings while Foster pitched, managed the team on the diamond, wrote promotional columns for the local black newspapers, and ran all of the teams' other day-to-day operations. Furthermore, Foster brought the nucleus of his Philadelphia Giants team to Chicago, displacing the majority of Leland's players with individuals loyal to him. Frank Leland's role in what used to be his own corporation was becoming increasingly marginalized. Reducing Leland's influence may have been in Moseley's mind all along. When forming the Association, Moseley

³ Allan Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920* (Chicago, 1967), p. 121-122.

⁴ *Broad Ax*, July 25, 1908.

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divested Leland of his tangible “interest” in the team -- equipment, uniforms, the lease on Auburn Park, even the name of the club -- for \$500 worth of Association stock. Leland very quickly found himself increasingly ‘on the outs’ of the very baseball club and corporation which bore his name.⁵

The Leland Giants were a huge success in 1907, winning 110 of 120 games. They repeatedly drew capacity crowds at Auburn Park, outside the black belt, where ticket prices ranged from fifteen to thirty-five cents. Although the Leland Giants continued to lease Auburn Park from their white landlord, John Schorling, Chicago’s black press embraced the Leland Giants, the Association, and the ballpark in which they played as a highly respectable race enterprise. Newspaper columns consistently praised the stadium as a decent place where ladies might be comfortable. The Association plied this theme as well, advertising its games with the simple rejoinder, “best of order maintained at all times.”⁶

In addition to being the toast of black Chicago, the Leland Giants were a tremendously successful touring team. In 1907, Foster took the team south for a spring training tour. The trip was a first for an African American baseball team, and most unusual for a non-major league club regardless of race. Spring training was further evidence that the Leland Giants were now a finely-tuned, professional, respectable squad. Furthermore, their success served notice to whites in Chicago that African Americans were capable and worthy of a degree of respect routinely denied them by segregation.⁷

The great success of 1907 encouraged Moseley to expand the scope of the Association’s operations. When the Association was first incorporated its capital stood at a paltry \$2,500. Moseley convinced the Association’s officers to expand its capital by selling

⁵ Phil Dixon and Patrick J. Hannigan, *The Negro Baseball Leagues: A Photographic History* (Mattituck, NY, 1992), p. 97. Moseley details the exchange of Association stock for all of Leland’s other assets in his bill of complaint, “Leland Giants Baseball and Amusement Association vs. Frank Leland’s Chicago Giants Baseball Club *et al*,” March 21, 1910, p. 1-3, CCCC.

⁶ *Broad Ax*, October 5, 1907. This advertisement ran weekly in the *Broad Ax* for over a year.

⁷ John Holway, *Rube Foster: The Father of Black Baseball*, p. 8-9 (unpublished manuscript at the Chicago Historical Society).

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\$100,000 of stock to the public at \$10/share. Raising this money would fund the construction of a permanent home for the Leland Giants, a new stadium outside the black belt (69th and Halsted), which the Association would own and control. This was an important statement of independence and competence. No longer would black teams have to rely on white park owners. Plans also called for an amusement park boasting a roller rink, a theater for light opera, a dance pavilion, a restaurant, and a summer resort hotel big enough to accommodate 1,000 guests. These facilities would be inside the black belt, at 53rd and State. Professional baseball was providing the impetus for Moseley to construct more separate institutions catering to cultured African Americans.⁸

Promotion of the new venture highlighted important issues of personal and group identity for the Association and its leaders: as businessmen and as race men. The Association aroused the entrepreneurial sensibilities of the public in newspaper advertisements: "The public is Base-Ball mad, and amusement crazy. Stocks have doubled in value in a single season. Millions can be made by those who take stock in this new enterprise." It also carefully framed the stock offering in the language of self-help:

"Are you in favor of the Race owning and operating this immense and well paying plant where more than 1,000 persons will be employed, between May and October of each year, where you can come without fear and enjoy the life and freedom of a citizen unmolested or annoyed...think of it, shares only ten (10.00) dollars each. You squander more than this amount any holiday around amusement parks and public places where you are not wanted and never welcome."⁹

Although it is unclear how much of the \$100,000 was actually raised, there was enough to build the amusement park. The *Chateau de la Plaisance* opened for business on November 2, 1907 at 53rd and State.¹⁰ Anointing the park with a French title imparted a sense of refinement to the establishment. The launching of the *Chateau* was marked by concerted

⁸ *Broad Ax*, June 27, 1908. Lomax, "Black Entrepreneurship," p. 51.

⁹ *Ibid.*, October 5, 1907 and recurs in the paper every week through October 24, 1908.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, November 16, 1907.

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¹¹ *Broad Ax.*

¹² *Ibid.*, Janu

¹³ *Ibid.*, May

efforts to present it as a respectable enterprise. The front page of the *Broad Ax* cried, "It Will Become the Rendezvous for the Leaders of the Four Hundred in Afro-American Society." Julius Taylor ignored the divisions between elites and upstarts in the process:

"Jacob L. Parks, B. F. Moseley, and others like them, could not afford to be connected with the management of this new pleasure resort, unless it was understood that it is to be conducted in first class order...every enterprise which is not intended to degrade the Negro, conducted by Afro-Americans, tends to raise every worthy member of the race up in the business world, and as long as the managers of the Leland Giants Base Ball and Amusement Association conducts the Chateau de la Plaisance and all its departments in a first class and orderly manner, it should receive the patronage of the decent amusement loving public."

The following week, the paper heaped enormous praise on the Association, labeling the park's opening an outrageous success. Editor Taylor emphasized the Association's success depended on maintaining a high level of *morality* and *respectability*. "...As long as the Chateau de la Plaisance [is] conducted on high moral plane," he wrote, "where saints and sinners both [can] pass an enjoyable evening it deserve[s] the hearty support of all good citizens."¹¹

Taylor's *Broad Ax* was a consistently good friend to the Association. When stockholders met in January 1908, the paper reported the company was "a profitable enterprise and that the stock of the company [is] well worth the money."¹² Coverage in a regular *Broad Ax* column called 'Chateau Rink Notes' ranged from a listing of black notables visiting the *Chateau* (most were familiar names: Moseley, Foster, Jackson, *et al.*) to praise so lavish it constituted free advertisement: "Roller skating season is very near over. Why not meet your friends at the Chateau and have a good time."¹³ Taylor called the *Chateau* "[t]he best place in the city to spend the evenings. All good people are welcome...I came to the conclusion that the Chateau is the *only* live place of amusement in

¹¹ *Broad Ax*, November 2, 1907 and November 16, 1907.

¹² *Ibid.*, January 25, 1908.

¹³ *Ibid.*, May 1, 1909.

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the city.”¹⁴ The *Chateau* illustrates the two complementary objectives which inspired early black baseball entrepreneurs in Chicago. It was an opportunity to demonstrate business acumen to white Chicago as well as a means to solidify a position of status and leadership in black Chicago. At the time, it seemed this cooperative venture would muffle the conflicts between the old guard and the new. The Association seemed to be bridging the divide between old settlers and young upstarts by linking individuals such as Moseley, Jackson, and Leland under one roof. Ultimately this was not the case.

The National Colored League of Professional Baseball Clubs

Buoyed by the huge success of the 1907 campaign, Frank Leland set out to expand the realm of black professional baseball and (re)secure his role in the Association. In the winter, he spearheaded an effort to form an all-black baseball league for the 1908 season. Leland’s proposed *National Colored League of Professional Baseball Clubs* began soliciting investors in November 1907. Hoping to spark investment and solidify his leadership role in the new League, Leland promised the Association would take the lead role in buying stock in the League “as early as it is needed.”¹⁵ Central to the plan was the professional status of the League. In practical terms, that meant that League rules would govern the clubs who, in turn, would govern the players. Here Leland took a cue from club owners in white Organized Baseball, realizing the importance of a league structure to set rules, keep teams and players in check, and control player salaries. This last point was especially important in black baseball, where club owners had far less reserves than their white counterparts and much less access to credit. Spiraling player salaries could quickly bankrupt a team. In symbolic terms, professionalism was a marker of competence and respectability -- an indicator of race progress.

¹⁴ *Broad Ax*, April 16, 1910. Emphasis mine.

¹⁵ “A National League of Professional Negro Base Ball Clubs for Next Season,” *Freeman*, November 9, 1907.

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To enter the League, clubs had to be backed by a stock company incorporated under the laws of the state where the team resided, and give a bond to be settled by the League's board of directors. Each club had to have a ballpark in its own city in an "appropriate" location and had to secure the support of the black press in that city. Finally, each club was required to pay a \$50 franchise fee to meet the League's operating expenses.¹⁶ In December 1907, the League set about its business. The Board of Directors elected Leland President and filled the other offices with notable black businessmen from Louisville and Indianapolis.¹⁷ One of them was Carey B. Lewis, a newspaper man from the Louisville *Courier-Journal*. Lewis later moved to Chicago, where he met and married Beauregard Moseley's daughter, Bertha, in 1917, and became managing editor of the *Defender*. Robert Abbott's newspaper was a key player in black Chicago, largely responsible for, among other things, the influx of working-class migrants during the war years. Managing editor was a prestigious and respectable position for Lewis, one which elevated his opinions and observations in the city's African American community.

In keeping with the spirit of integration that motivated Chicago's old settler black elite, the proposed League was in some ways a biracial endeavor. The Indianapolis *Freeman's* very first coverage of the League reported that it was open to "white and colored capitalists." Furthermore, the League expected to draw white fans because in most of the cities involved (although not in Chicago), there was only one white team. "Our organization would have the patronage of many liberal minded white fans," the *Freeman* insisted, pointing out that the hugely successful 1907 Leland Giants drew white fans to their games.¹⁸

¹⁶ "A Successful Meeting is Sighted," *Freeman*, January 25, 1908.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, "To Organize a Colored Baseball League," December 21, 1907.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, December 7 1907, "Sees no Reason why a League Should not be Launched," December 21 1907, "To Organize a Colored Baseball League," February 15 1908, "Last Season Greatest for Baseball."

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League officers faced significant obstacles. Establishing a uniform salary structure for players was one thing, but securing ballparks in many cities -- each with its own set of political and racial obstacles -- was quite another. The Indianapolis A.B.C.'s, for example, fell victim to a particular current of Progressive Era reform which was being debated in many cities: Sunday baseball. A municipal law barred Sunday baseball in Indianapolis. Since weekend games were expected to be the core of League play, the A.B.C.'s, a well-run and successful team, could not enter the League.

The trouble in Indianapolis was repeated in other cities. Reformers and Sabbatarians in Chicago, New York, and Atlanta all wrestled with this issue. Chicago ended its ban on Sunday games relatively quickly, mainly because other amusements -- like the beer gardens patronized by the city's Germanic populations -- were allowed on Sundays. In New York, state and municipal politicians clashed swords over sport on the Sabbath. Conservative Republicans in Albany successfully fought Sunday baseball, despite the best efforts of Democrats in Manhattan to legalize it, for many years. A more homogeneous population and stronger evangelical tenor prohibited Sunday baseball in Atlanta for many years as well.¹⁹

Other problems plagued the League. Deciding how to cover transportation costs was a very serious issue for teams with little capital. Thus, when representatives from only two teams showed up at a League meeting in mid-February 1908, the League was in serious trouble. Trying to revive the increasingly moribund effort, League officers met again in early March. This time Leland was conspicuously absent; League officials decided players would be paid on a percentage of the gate receipts, umpires would work on salary, and each club would tend to its own transportation costs. This was not a workable scheme because it placed enormous pressure on the ability to draw crowds. Low attendance would mean little or no pay for players, which made securing talented players very difficult. Railroad costs

¹⁹ Steven Riess, *Touching Base: Professional Baseball and American Culture in the Progressive Era* (Westport, CT, 1980). See chapter 5, "Professional Sunday Baseball and Social Reform," p. 121-149.

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were also very high; teams with less cash reserves would have to cancel some games, reducing gate receipts, and further alienating players.²⁰

The Leland Giants were the best-financed of the interested clubs, but even they balked at the amount of money and risk required to participate in the League. In late March, Leland resigned the presidency, citing ill health, and was replaced by Conrad Kuebler of St. Louis. Through the spring of 1908, more teams withdrew from the League. Several cited the large travel costs and distances between cities as the main reason. Ultimately, the *National Colored League* died with no games scheduled and no games played. Yet expectations for “next year” still ran high. In June, the *Freeman* held out hope for forming a national league in 1909, pointing to a host of regional semiprofessional leagues as the nucleus of a future league. But in October, the paper cast a cynical pall over the prospects of a new league: “the time is about ripe for another colored baseball league bee to start buzzing in the bonnet of some enterprising dreamer.” The great Sol White of the Philadelphia Giants tried to counteract the malaise with a hopeful column and a letter to the editor in the *Freeman* later that month. Citing the importance of self-help and racial uplift, White praised the dejected *Freeman* for providing support that is “the true spirit that ‘help us to help each other.’” He continued optimistically:

After 22 years of professional life colored baseball has taken a firm hold on the hearts of the sport-loving public and in every section of the U.S. one or more professional teams are being organized and efforts put forth to form a national league of colored baseball clubs.²¹

Like Leland, Sol White had a vision for the future of black professional baseball. In Chicago, however, optimism about the future was secondary to concerns about the present.

²⁰ *Freeman*, “Last Season Greatest for Baseball” and “An Understanding About the League” both February 15, 1908. “League Determined to Open This Season” and “League Rules Brought Into Effect” both March 7, 1908. “League Rules to be Distributed,” March 14, 1908. “Withdraws from League” and “National Association of Colored Professional Baseball Clubs Meet,” both March 21, 1908.

²¹ *Ibid.*, June 20, 1908, “Some Sporting Comment,” October 15, 1908, “Baseball Comment.” “A Treatise on Baseball” and “Sol White and Baseball,” both on October 31, 1908.

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War in the Black Belt

1909 was a difficult year for the Association, although all seemed to be well on the field. The Leland Giants were outstanding. With Rube Foster at the helm, the Leland Giants, the only black team in Chicago's City League, dominated the competition by posting a record of 31-9 in City League games. Their runaway success earned the respect of the League's organizers who praised their triumphs in the face of embedded race prejudice:

While undoubtedly it is galling to many persons to see a colored nine take honors from five white teams, the Leland Giants are entitled to a place in the league by their drawing powers, for the public which supports semi-pro ball demands their presence. The colored men played the best ball, were entitled to win, received a fair deal from unprejudiced umpires, and did win.²²

Meanwhile, Beauregard Moseley was running the Association's other businesses (i.e., the *Chateau*) with no apparent input or interference from Frank Leland. This fact, combined with Leland's embarrassing failure with the 1908 League, damaged his credibility with Moseley and Foster and seemed to be an indication that Leland was becoming expendable. Soon enough, factionalism and infighting divided the Association. Moseley and Foster, the young upstarts, were at one pole. Leland and Jackson, the elites, were at the other.²³

Late in 1909, at precisely the moment when the Association's popularity crested, Frank Leland, Robert Jackson, Al Garrett, and Nathan Harris bolted the Association and formed a rival baseball team which they named *Frank Leland's Chicago Giants Baseball Club*. In mid-November Rube Foster tried to mend fences and perhaps prevent legal action with a public gesture of seemingly good will. In a letter to the *Freeman*, Foster urged the public to support Leland's new team. Explaining that he would not "tear down the

²² *Spalding's Chicago Baseball Guide 1910* (Chicago, 1910), p. 33. Larry Lester, Sammy J. Miller, Dick Clark, *Black Baseball in Chicago* (Chicago, 2000), p. 23.

²³ Lomax, "Black Entrepreneurship," p. 52.

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reputation of the club I sacrificed so much to make,” Foster added, “I only hope the new club will maintain in every respect the reputation, and of all succeed in winning the pennant.”²⁴ Most importantly, Foster wrote, unity among the leaders of black community was the key to success: “unless the men who control the clubs get together and quit trying to put each other out of business, the ball player can no longer speak of his profession with pride.” Foster then explained, somewhat disingenuously, that Frank Leland’s Chicago Giants were the only black team in the Chicago City League and needed the support of all African Americans. He claimed to have withdrawn the original Leland Giants from the League of his own accord, implying this was a noble, self-sacrificing action. Foster’s appeal to the public failed to acknowledge what everyone connected to the world of city baseball knew: the City League only allowed one African American team and beginning in 1910, would bar all League teams from playing games against any non-League club.²⁵ From the birth of black professional baseball, barnstorming tours and home games against freelance independent teams were the backbone of a team’s revenue. The Leland Giants might play a few dozen League games on weekends and perhaps a hundred or more games against clubs the League now classified as “outlaws.” Non-League games were the financial cornerstone of black professional baseball. Staying out of the City League may have been risky, but it meant Foster was unfettered by its prohibitions.

Freeman Sportswriter David Wyatt realized a war for control of black baseball was in the offing. Citing jealousy and rivalry among Chicago’s black baseball magnates, he bemoaned the timing of the conflict. Why should the Association be plunged into chaos now, he wrote, when “their efforts as athletes have brought so much praise and honor to bear upon us as a race.” Wyatt blamed Leland and Jackson for tearing asunder the most successful black baseball enterprise to date:

²⁴ Rube Foster, “Come, Fans, Rally Around the Flag!” *Freeman*, November 13, 1909.

²⁵ “Sportsman Says the Chicago League Makes Bad Ruling,” *Freeman*, September 24, 1910.

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It is a deplorable state of affairs to have some of our most loyal and influential baseball men promoting a plan of warfare upon a club that has just begun to pierce the dense cloud that has hung over our heads for years.²⁶

Wyatt's columns detailing the conflicts in Chicago's "Negro baseball world" evoked a passionate response from Robert Jackson. Jackson denied there was a baseball war in Chicago. He explained that Leland had been recognized by the City League and POA/Inter-City Association; that Leland obtained the City League franchise and renewed the lease on Auburn Park; that there was no salary war in evidence; and furthermore, "the entire city press is with Leland." Jackson also pointed out that since Foster's club was not in the City League it would be a traveling outfit whose only Chicago-area games would be against independent clubs. Jackson concluded the lengthy letter by dismissing Wyatt's references to a "Negro baseball world" with a statement befitting his approach to race issues: "I long ago stopped parading the fact that I am a Negro, and am now competing in the baseball world as a man, not a Negro."²⁷

Wyatt replied in two *Freeman* articles in which he carefully positioned his identity as a baseball man and as a working man. Wyatt insisted a baseball war was in progress and wrote that he supported baseball, not a particular "class of baseball magnates." He went to great lengths to establish his credentials as a baseball player, scorekeeper, observer, and reporter, identifying himself as a member of the growing professional class. While "Major" Jackson was "issuing out money orders for Uncle Sam" at the post office, Wyatt was "eeking out an existence as a baseball player." In one especially poignant article, Wyatt sought to discredit Jackson's lack of experience in baseball and illuminate the class distinction that was splintering Chicago's African American leadership at that time:

²⁶ David Wyatt, "Baseball War for Chicago," *Freeman*, December 4, 1909.

²⁷ Robert Jackson, "No Baseball War in Chicago," *Freeman*, December 8, 1909.

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I will say that if the writer is ever so lucky as to reach the high social standing that Mr. Jackson now occupies, there are no inducements in this world that could cause him to come down for the purpose of taking part in a cheap baseball argument.²⁸

David Wyatt and Robert Jackson argued the merits and the symbolic value of the baseball war in the court of public opinion. Soon after, Beauregard Moseley argued the case in the circuit court of Cook County.

"The Leland Giants Baseball & Amusement Association vs. Frank Leland's Chicago Giants Baseball Club, et al"

In March 1910, Leland sued Moseley for \$100,000 for copyright infringement, citing the common use of the terms "Leland" and "Giants." Moseley counter-sued in April, seeking an injunction to prevent Leland from using the name "Leland Giants" or any variant thereof.²⁹ Whether Leland left of his own accord or was forced out is unclear. Moseley's side of the story, related in the bill of complaint filed in April 1910, was that an unhappy Frank Leland behaved traitorously when he started the new club while still employed by the old. Leland was summarily dismissed as the Association's booking agent on September 20, 1909 and was replaced by Rube Foster. Sportswriter David Wyatt, a former ballplayer and scorekeeper whom Leland drafted to manage the new club, tried to rescue Leland's honor by claiming he had been forced out ungraciously and rather than slink away in shame, gallantly formed a new team.³⁰

²⁸ David Wyatt in the *Freeman*, December 25, 1909, "The Bulls and Bears of the Base Ball Market" and January 1, 1910, "Baseball Articles Defended."

²⁹ "Leland Giants Baseball & Amusement Association vs. Frank Leland's Chicago Giants Baseball Club et al," CCCC. Lomax, "Black Entrepreneurship," p. 54. Lester, Miller, & Clark, *Black Baseball in Chicago*, p. 23.

³⁰ "Leland Giants Baseball & Amusement Association vs. Frank Leland's Chicago Giants Baseball Club et al," CCCC. Charles Marshall, "Mr. Leland and Chicago Baseball," *Freeman*, October 30, 1909. David Wyatt, "Chicago to Have New Baseball Club," *Freeman*, October 30, 1909.

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Moseley's complaint underscored the masculine presence in the business ethos by deploring Leland's actions as dishonorable.³¹ He charged Leland, Jackson, *et al* with conspiring with each other, and with the Chicago City League, to defraud the Association and confuse the African American public. The specific allegations were: Leland and the City League were promoting the new team as the "Leland Giants;" Leland was printing advertisements and stationery referring to "Leland's Chicago Giants;" the forthcoming City League schedule would refer to Leland's new team as "Leland's Giants;" and that the resulting confusion would be disastrous for the "real" Leland Giants (the Association) who had just invested \$3,000 in the new ballpark at 69th and Halsted. Moseley emphasized the urgency of his motion by humiliating Leland, insisting once Leland's printed materials went out, there would be no way to contain their costly damage and moreover, no way to obtain redress from Leland. He charged Leland was practically insolvent, possessing "practically nothing except his wearing apparel."³²

Leland and Jackson defended their masculinity and their business honor by dismissing Moseley's accounting of events. They rejected his charges that they deliberately obscured public perception about which "Leland Giants" team was which. Leland and Jackson retained the distinguished Edward H. Morris as their defense counsel. Morris was a member of the old settler elite. He was a very well-known lawyer (Attorney for Cook County), politician (elected to the state legislature in 1890 and 1902), and club man (Grand Master of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows). The key to Morris' political success was his ability to work within the mainstream of the Republican party, courting the support of whites for his own advancement. An avid supporter of integration, Morris enthusiastically backed the Niagara movement. He was a vigorous critic of Booker T.

³¹ On masculinity in business, see Anthony E. Rotundo, "Learning About Manhood: Gender Ideals and the Middle-Class Family in Nineteenth Century America," in J.A. Mangan and James Walvin (eds.), *Manliness and Morality: Middle Class Masculinity in Britain and America* (Manchester, 1987), p. 35-51.

³² Amended complaint, "Leland Giants Baseball & Amusement Association vs. Frank Leland's Chicago Giants Baseball Club *et al*," CCCC.

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Washington's brand of accommodationism and separatism. Washington, Morris once told the white Chicago *Inter-Ocean*, was "largely responsible for lynching in this country." Although his rhetoric was more bombastic than Leland's and Jackson's, Morris' background and political sensibilities matched theirs perfectly.³³

Despite formidable representation, the defendants did not counter Moseley's charges with any direct, contradictory evidence. Rather, they met each charge with simple calls for "strict proof" and declared that their intentions to operate a competitive club were honorable.³⁴ Not too surprisingly, Moseley and Foster won the lawsuit. Leland, Jackson, Garrett, and Harris were enjoined from any use of the name "Leland" to describe their team. The *Broad Ax* reported this as a "signal victory" for the Association. At the start of the 1910 baseball season, the "Leland Giants" opened their own new stadium, Normal Park, at 69th and Halsted. Leland's club, the "Chicago Giants," continued at Auburn Park, 79th and Wentworth. Neither park was in the black belt, though both were accessible by streetcars and elevated trains. To further dramatize the split between the two clubs and the divergent views of their respective owners, both teams claimed the Chicago City League championship from the previous year.

Indeed, it was the Leland Giants who won the 1909 League title, but now Frank Leland, Robert Jackson, Al Garrett, Nathan Harris, and the many players they brought to the new team -- all of whom were with the Leland Giants in 1909 -- were on the *Chicago Giants* in 1910. A somewhat confusing struggle over the identity of the true champions ensued, complicated further when both clubs arranged for the traditional flag-raising ceremony on opening day, a ritual in which the previous year's champions started a new season by hoisting a pennant in celebration of the past victory. The City League awarded its

³³ Spear, *Black Chicago*, p. 61, 67, 77. Harold Gosnell, *Negro Politicians: The Rise of Negro Politics in Chicago* (Chicago, 1935), p. 66, 111.

³⁴ "The Answer of Frank Leland's Chicago Giants Base Ball Club, Frank C. Leland, R.R. Jackson, A.H. Garrett and Nathan Harris, Defendants to the Above Named Complainants Bill of Complaint as Amended," CCCC.

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official pennant to the Chicago Giants (Leland and Jackson). Meanwhile the Leland Giants (Moseley and Foster) also received and raised a pennant presented by a former City League official. To add “legitimacy” to their pennant-raising, Moseley got first ward alderman “Bathhouse John” Coughlin to throw out the first pitch. Four thousand fans, including Mayor Fred Busse, were in attendance at the Leland Giants’ new park. The City League may have recognized Leland and Jackson as champions but the city, represented by the Republican Mayor and the Democratic alderman, gave the nod to Moseley and Foster. Moseley was a staunch Republican, and this may explain Busse’s presence at the game. Coughlin’s attendance was likely linked to his notorious role as protector of black vice in the first ward. This positioned him as a political “friend” of a segment of the black population not likely to be found amongst the old settlers (i.e., the Chicago Giants). Amidst these arguments over the 1909 championship, the *Broad Ax* christened Moseley and Foster’s opening day a “splendid showing and magnificent park, clean and accessible to the car lines” and above all, “a credit to the race.”³⁵

Thus, in the spring of 1910 there were two high-profile professional black baseball teams in Chicago competing for African Americans’ support. The black press mostly threw its support behind Moseley and Foster. Julius Taylor’s *Broad Ax* repeatedly employed language highlighting a community obligation to racial self-help through race endeavors. Taylor reminded readers that the Moseley and Foster’s baseball park was a race enterprise, completely owned and operated by African Americans: “Every dollar that’s paid goes into the hands of the Leland Giants and not some middleman.” He unabashedly helped Moseley promote racial self-help through racial separatism:

Don’t forget that the Leland Giants Park, 69th and Halsted Streets, is the only park in the city owned and controlled by our people and that if you stand for anything and want to see a good ball game you will go there. Enough said.³⁶

³⁵ David Wyatt, “Weather Man Plays Havoc With Baseball Magnates,” *Freeman*, May 14, 1910. *Broad Ax*, “Chateau Rink Notes,” April 16, 1910, May 14, 1910, “The Leland Giants, The Black Stars of the Baseball Firmament Outshine All Competitors,” May 21, 1910.

³⁶ *Broad Ax*, April 23, 1910, “Honor to Whom Honor is Due,” May 14, 1910, and July 2, 1910.

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Clearly the war for black baseball wasn't limited to club owners and players, it also included a fight for the support of "respectable" fans. Coverage in the *Broad Ax* repeatedly referred to the "better sort" of fans who attended Leland Giants games, notable because Frank Leland stocked the rival Chicago Giants with a coterie of high-profile elites and advertised their impressive character.

Using Jackson's Fraternal Press, Leland printed a promotional brochure for the 1910 Chicago Giants which touted the prestige of its management and players. The esteemed Major Jackson was club secretary; Al Garrett, formerly on the board of directors of Avendorph's lofty Columbia Club (and Columbia Giants), "one of Chicago's staple and substantial citizens," was club Treasurer. Louis B. Anderson, Ed Wright's appointee as Assistant Attorney for Cook County, was the club's permanent legal adviser. Leadership in distinguished fraternal organizations furthered their respectability. In addition to Jackson's many memberships and his Fraternal Press printing company, Anderson was "Grand Legal Adviser for the Colored Elks of the World, and General Counsel for the National Colored Men's Railway Association."³⁷

Leland also presented his players in terms which indicated their social refinement and dramatized their athletic prowess. Center fielder Harry Moore was a powerful hitter and talented fielder, and "as a gentlemanly ball player he has few equals on the diamond today." Star pitcher 'Steel-Arm Johnnie' Taylor was a college man who played and coached at Biddle University before joining Leland's club. Taylor was educated and refined, and "never used tobacco in any form and does not indulge stronger than soda water or lemonade."³⁸

Because this information appeared in a game program, and because nearly all of the fans at black baseball games were African Americans, this posturing was aimed at the black

³⁷ "The Columbia Club" souvenir leaflet 1899, IWP, Atkinson folder 158. *Frank Leland's Chicago Giants Base Ball Club. Appeal*, April 29, 1899.

³⁸ *Frank Leland's Chicago Giants Base Ball Club*. Biddle University is now called Johnson C. Smith University.

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³⁹ "Frank Leland

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community. Despite a dugout full of players with impeccable character, however, Frank Leland could not boast of independent ownership of a ballpark. Still dependent upon white park owners and park managers, Leland found himself without a stadium in the middle of the 1910 season when Auburn Park was sold and divided into lots. Although John Schorling controlled the lease of Auburn Park, he did not own the property. The park owner died; in April, the property was sold. Leland's Chicago Giants played their last game at the venerable park in mid-June. Leland and Jackson were forced to secure a lease at another ballpark and chose the former home of the "Red Sox," a white semipro team. The park was their old field at 61st and St. Lawrence, where Leland's ancient Chicago Union Giants had played in 1901. It was still outside the black belt, but closer to downtown and easier to access by streetcar or elevated train.³⁹

Moseley and Foster likely knew Auburn Park was not a secure location before Leland ever left the Association. It was owned by one white party and operated by another. Relying on Auburn Park to be the home field for an all-black baseball team was not a solid strategy considering the lack of reporting about black baseball in white newspapers and the City League's severe limits on black teams. Moreover, they believed strongly that a race enterprise's success required race ownership and control. These convictions, combined with Auburn Park's questionable future, was more reason the Association had pushed to open its own ballpark at 69th and Halsted in time for the 1910 season.⁴⁰ The symbolic value of the demise of Auburn Park is poignant. Leland and Jackson, the old settler elites, retreated to an old park owned by whites. Moseley and Foster, the young professionals, built a new ballpark owned and operated by the race. This signaled an important shift in the balance of influence among Chicago's black male leadership from the old settler elites to the young professionals.

³⁹ "Frank Leland's Chicago Giants," *Freeman*, June 18, 1910.

⁴⁰ The Leland Giants were 123-6 in 1910. Dick Clark and Larry Lester, *The Negro Leagues Book* (Cleveland, 1994), p. 40. "The Leland Giants," *Freeman*, October 8, 1910.

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Beauregard Moseley's National Negro League

Moseley understood the obvious problems posed by two black professional teams in the city. Each would have to compete for the fans' allegiance and money. Serious competition threatened the solvency of the Leland Giants and the entire Leland Giants Base Ball and Amusement Association. It also clouded the issue of who, exactly, among Chicago's black leaders was providing baseball entertainment to the community in the process. Frank Leland's Chicago Giants posed a very real threat to what had become an important, highly-visible expression of African American business acumen from the upstart professional class. In a sequence of events which dramatized the rift amongst leaders of the black community, Moseley worked to preserve the Association and destroy Leland in the process.

At the close of the 1910 baseball season, Moseley proposed the formation of a national, professional, all-black baseball league with Chicago at the center. This was not a new idea; Leland himself had failed in the winter of 1908-1909 to do the very same thing. The erstwhile David Wyatt also had visions of such a league. His winter 1910 columns in the *Freeman* presaged Moseley's effort later that year. Traveling black baseball clubs were a thing of the past, Wyatt argued, and those clubs not involved in League play of some sort (e.g., the Chicago Giants in the City League) would soon find themselves unable to survive. Moreover, Wyatt's articles directly equated league formation with race progress. An article titled "Let's Organize" urging magnates to form an all-black league made his stance very simple and clear: "accept opportunities to advance and uphold the rapid progress of our race."⁴¹

⁴¹ David Wyatt, "Time Now Ripe for Formation of a Colored League," *Freeman*, January 22, 1910 and "Let's Organize," March 5, 1910.

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Both positions rang true with Moseley and Foster. Newly-formed leagues around the country *were* closing their doors to African Americans (the Chicago City League only allowed one black team). Furthermore, an all-black professional baseball league was surely an expression of race pride, self-help, business acumen, and respectability. At the annual Association banquet in November 1910, Moseley delivered a seventeen-point address announcing the formation of the *National Negro Baseball League of America*. He outlined a 10-team league in which all players had to be under contract with a team and a list of those players filed with the League; expelled players could not sign with a club without first obtaining League approval; players would be subject to a salary classification system in which the best received 'A' level pay, the next 'B' level pay, and so forth; player salaries could not exceed 80% of a club's total earnings; ticket prices would be set by the League on a standardized sliding scale keyed to age and available seating; and at least half of the umpires would be African Americans. Moseley closed by calling for a December meeting of interested club owners to finalize the details.⁴²

Moseley's plan mirrored the structure of Organized Baseball. The National League and American Association had used the "classification" system of player salaries for years to control profits and prevent salary wars. Like the major leagues, Moseley's plan also situated the League as the controlling authority over players and over clubs. Capping payrolls at 80% of earnings increased the likelihood of maintaining a club's solvency, thus keeping the League intact. Granting the League lordship over wayward players wishing to rejoin a League team also protected owners against contract-jumping and bidding wars, either of which could destroy a team or the entire League. One important point of departure from the white major leagues, of course, was the race-based hiring policy for umpires. For two decades there had been a scarcity of African American umpires working black baseball

⁴² "Banquet and Reception in Honor of Rube Foster and His Leland Giants," *Broad Ax*, November 26, 1910.

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games. Umpires are the authority figures on the field; in a racially-charged environment the significance of whites umpiring blacks was lost on no one.

In mid-December Moseley issued a call for a League-forming conference to be held at the Chateau at the end of the month. The *Broad Ax* printed, in full, Moseley's stiffly-worded resolution. Through this document Moseley the "professional" and Moseley the "race man" emerge. It bears full reproduction here:

WHEREAS, the undersigned having been and still are interested in the National Pastime, Baseball, and

WHEREAS, the Professional Negro Ball player is compelled under present conditions to live and die a Semi Pro there being no other field open to him, thus compelling veteran players to be classed and pitted with amateurs, and

WHEREAS, the Capital invested in the Semi Pro parks and players can be utilized for the active formation and operation of a Negro National Baseball League,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the undersigned and such other persons who may be interested in the formation of such a League meet at the Chateau De La Plaisance, 5324 State street, Chicago, Illinois, Wednesday, December 28th, 1910

at 12 M. noon, in National conference for the purpose of organizing, securing Park franchises, creating a circuit and appointing a schedule committee, etc.

RESOLVE that the tentative plan heretofore issued by Beauregard F. Moseley, be the nucleus or basis upon which the organization shall be formed. This 30th day of November, 1910. Signed

Beauregard F. Moseley, representing Leland Giants of Chicago, Illinois.
Frank Polambo, representing New Orleans B.B. Club of New Orleans, La.
Ralph Clemmons, representing Dixie Park Baseball Club of Mobile, Ala.
S.R. Gibbs, representing Fall City Stars of Louisville, Ky.
S.M. Cohen, representing Cohen Baseball Club of New Orleans, La.⁴³

Moseley's formality courted a perception of competence and respectability integral to the professional class' role as race leaders. The proposed League, like the Association itself, was an expression of race reform which privileged "professionalization" as a stepping stone to respectability.

Rube Foster supported Moseley with a long letter to the *Freeman* denouncing Frank Leland and highlighting the race consciousness of the League issue. Foster accused Leland of smearing the Leland Giants, and Foster personally, in an effort to discredit the club. He insisted Leland was trying to destroy the Association with slander, an effort which

⁴³ "Call for a Conference of Persons Interested in the Formation of a National Negro Baseball League," *Broad Ax*, December 17, 1910.

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⁴⁴ Rube Foster, "Baseball," *Freem*

⁴⁵ *Broad Ax*, Dec

reaffirmed charges that the Chicago Giants were “only representing the white man’s interest.” Positioning himself as a race unifier, Foster continued: “no other team ever organized has been as beneficial to the Negro race...the Leland Giants, have, through adverse conditions, been able to bring our race to the notice of thousands who are interested in the game.” A black league was urgently needed to protect the interests of black teams shut out of white leagues. Foster believed African American businessmen and other “friends of the profession” supporting the National Negro League would counteract the influence of divisive men like Leland. The very premise of self-help and uplift required that black baseball’s magnates “build up and not tear down clubs.” Charles Mills, manager of the St. Louis Giants, agreed with Foster. Writing for the *Freeman*, he urged the League’s teams to “cater to the best people in the community.” Fans needed to comport themselves respectably, and gambling (the scourge of baseball since its inception) must be prohibited.⁴⁴

Representatives of African American baseball teams from New Orleans, Memphis, Kansas City, and a host of other cities came to the conference on December 28 at the Chateau. Moseley was selected temporary chairman of the League. He expanded his original League proposal by first identifying the financial incentives for forming the League. He emphasized the problem of new white leagues severely restricting participation by black teams or barring them altogether. He pointed to the example of the City League allowing just one black team to participate (the Chicago Giants) and only then on precarious terms, thus rendering the future of that franchise uncertain. Moseley’s League could solve these problems, but it required each city in the new League be restricted to one franchise. This effectively cut out all the other competition in Chicago, namely Frank Leland’s Chicago Giants.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Rube Foster, “A Few Facts Relative to the National Negro League,” and Charles Mills, “An Epoch in Baseball,” *Freeman*, December 24, 1910.

⁴⁵ *Broad Ax*, December 31, 1910. *Tribune*, December 29, 1910.

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Thus the attorney straddled a fine line between arguing for an open marketplace for black baseball teams *between* cities while advocating a League which would restrict competition *within* cities. Moseley was constructing a new, regional system for black baseball -- despite the appellation 'National Negro League' -- that would at once elevate the Leland Giants beyond the level of a Chicago-area institution while simultaneously protecting the Association's interests and status in that city. Moseley and Foster placed Chicago, the Association, and themselves at the helm of this high-profile race enterprise. Their success would elevate Chicago's black professional class far above the old settler elites.⁴⁶

At the League conference, club owners agreed to incorporate the League in Illinois with \$2,500 in capital. It would be headquartered in Chicago. Each team was required to pay a \$300 franchise fee. Eight cities were represented by a franchise: Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City (KS), Kansas City (MO), Louisville, New Orleans, Columbus, and Mobile. All agreed African Americans would comprise most of the fan base, but they expected to see some white fans as well. They agreed to meet again at the end of February in New Orleans. As the meeting drew to a close Moseley warmly welcomed Mushmouth Johnson's protégé, Bob Motts.⁴⁷ Moseley's connection to the notorious club owner (Pekin Theatre) and gambling king casts aspersions onto the respectability issue surrounding the League. It is likely that Motts' access to capital and political connections in the second ward were factors in their friendship. The historical record is inconclusive on this point. Whether Moseley made a conscious decision to form alliances with known criminals or simply found no harm in business relationships with them is unclear. In either case, Moseley presaged the heyday of black baseball in the 1930's, when African American baseball entrepreneurs nationwide (including Chicago) forged relationships with vice lords and policy kings because only they

⁴⁶ *Broad Ax*, December 31, 1910.

⁴⁷ "Form Negro Ball League," *Tribune*, December 29, 1910. "Big National Baseball League Formed," *Broad Ax*, December 31, 1910. *Freeman*, "A League of Colored Players," January 7, 1911 and "Greater Negro Baseball," January 14, 1911.

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had the necessary capital.⁴⁸ Motts' friendship with Moseley and role as a friend of the League, whatever that may have entailed, was an important point of departure from the old settler elite's approach to business.

Moseley used the black press to try to drum up more support for individual franchises and for the League. He repeatedly invoked the rhetoric of self-help, race progress, and masculinity in an aptly titled article "A Baseball Appeal of a Worthy Undertaking by a Worthy Man to Worthy Men":

Let those who would serve the race assist it in holding its own back up and encourage the national movement for with it goes the hopes of the race in more than one direction, for be it known that there is no greater leveler of men than manly sport, such as baseball, which is admired by black and white alike, appeals to their pride as athletes and to their senses as the best test of physical and mental superiority, and here on the diamond before the frenzied anxious populace the Negro has the best opportunity of his present day advantage to display ability....men of the Race this appeal is to you for you and yours....

An unmistakable sense of urgency runs through prose which addressed issues of race advancement as much as it did the League. Moseley continued, "hesitancy means ruin and the Negro comes to his own rescue by organizing and patronizing the game successfully."⁴⁹ However compelling Moseley's League may have been on financial and racial terms, it never became a reality. Insufficient capital and transportation costs prevented its launch. The League's failure prompted individuals such as Jack Johnson, the controversial African American heavyweight champion of the world (who ran the *Caf  de Champion* in Chicago), to publish letters and articles advocating a professional black baseball league in 1911 and 1912. "Fortune" Weaver, a park owner in Kansas City,

⁴⁸ See, for example, the role of policy kings and vice lords in "legitimate" black businesses during the Great Depression in Rob Ruck, *Sandlot Seasons: Sport in Black Pittsburgh* (Urbana, 1987) and Robert Weems, *Black Business in the Black Metropolis: The Chicago Metropolitan Assurance Company* (Bloomington, IN, 1996).

⁴⁹ Beauregard Moseley, "A Baseball Appeal of a Worthy Undertaking by a Worthy Man to Worthy Men: Read and Respond," *Broad Ax*, January 21, 1911.

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announced his intent to form a League in the summer of 1911 and again in the winter of 1912. None of these proposals ever got off the drawing board.⁵⁰

Rube Foster Moves On

Perhaps more than any other individual, Rube Foster wanted a black professional baseball league. Like Moseley, Foster understood the future of black baseball was imperiled without one. Furthermore, as a race man, Foster understood the social utility of the sport as a touchstone of community pride, proof of race progress, and eventually, a vehicle of integration. Moseley's interests, however, were diversified. A lawyer and a businessman, he could fall back on other ways of supporting himself if need be. Foster had baseball, and that was it -- no law practice, no *Chateau de la Plaisance*. This may explain why he was less concerned than Moseley with the divide between black Chicago's old settler elites and young upstarts. Certainly, Foster was of the latter group and even there, far less educated than many. His primary concern was solidifying and expanding black baseball as long as the white major leagues continued to bar African Americans. Although he embraced the progress-through-respectability argument, deploying it in the way he presented and advertised his team, Foster's focus was first and foremost the game and business of professional baseball.

Foster parted with the Association in 1911 in the aftermath of Moseley's failed League attempt. He formed yet another new baseball club in Chicago, called the American Giants. Foster's new club brought the tally of black Chicago teams to *four* (American Giants, Leland Giants, Chicago Giants, and the old Union Giants, now under the direction of Robert Gilkerson) and the African American community could not even support two. Foster wisely made securing a permanent home for the American Giants in the black belt his top priority. Despite the Association's clever management and Frank Leland's political

⁵⁰ Fortune Weaver (possibly a pen name), "Negro League Must be Formed," *Freeman*, June 17, 1911 and February 3, 1912.

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and social connections, neither of the older clubs had ever been able to put down “roots” -- to define an urban space for black baseball in the form of a ballpark -- *inside* the black belt. Rube Foster was able to do this; his race enterprise relied on his ability to partner with a white man, John Schorling.

John Schorling was the tavern owner who held the lease at Auburn Park (79th and Wentworth) for many years, had fielded teams in the Chicago City League, and controlled the lease on the diamond at 39th and Wentworth, just at the edge of the black belt in 1911. This was South Side Park, site of the Chicago Cricket grounds before 1900 and home to Charles Comiskey’s Chicago White Sox from 1900-1910. Comiskey renovated South Side Park in 1900, making it all the more attractive to Foster. The diamond had major league dimensions -- about 350 feet down either line, and as much as 450 feet in center field -- and seating capacity was estimated as high as 18,000.⁵¹ South Side park was in Armour Square, a neighborhood with a diverse population of African Americans and European immigrants. By the mid-1910s, however, this was a predominantly black neighborhood. In 1910 Comiskey left the park when he opened Comiskey Park just four blocks away.⁵²

Schorling’s race, his experience in the City League, and perhaps his business/political connections through the world of Chicago saloons and taverns made him a good choice to manage the property at 39th and Wentworth, which Comiskey still owned.⁵³ Schorling and Foster struck a deal which held for seventeen years, in which Foster’s American Giants would lease the park from Schorling (presumably with

⁵¹ William Foster, interview with John Holway in Holway, *Rube Foster: Father of Black Baseball*, p. 10.

⁵² *Report of the South Park Commissioners to the Board of County Commissioners of Cook County* (Chicago, 1904), p. 8. *Tribune*, July 1, 1910.

⁵³ Schorling probably leased the park at 39th and Wentworth because he knew he could not hold onto Auburn Park. Many sports historians, including Negro Leagues pioneers Robert Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1970) and John Holway, *Blackball Stars: Negro League Pioneers* (Westport, CT, 1988), have repeated what appears to be a myth concerning the Schorling-Comiskey connection. They have written that Schorling was Comiskey’s son-in-law, yet Comiskey had no known daughters. In June 1910, the *Freeman* reported “rumors” that the Chicago Giants would get to sublease from Schorling and conversely, that another white semipro team would get the chance. Neither one did. “Notes of the semi-pros,” *Freeman* June 18, 1910.

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Comiskey's approval). Unlike the Leland Giants, the Chicago Giants, and Gilkerson's Union Giants, Rube Foster's American Giants did not have to endure the difficult process of raising enough capital to build a ballpark while languishing in a decrepit old one. The American Giants were in the black belt, the other clubs were well south of it. Foster was the biggest name in black baseball and able to draw the best talent. For this reason attracting fans wasn't quite the challenge it had been for the other clubs either. The icing on the cake was the Wentworth Avenue trolley car line and the cross-town line along 39th street led fans directly to South Side Park.⁵⁴

Foster's American Giants were an immediate success. Schorling's role was muted, but not hidden. Foster's success, however, meant the demise of the other black Chicago teams. By 1912 the Leland Giants were finished. The Chicago Giants played on under new ownership (Joe Green) from 1913-1917, reappeared 1919-21, and again in 1931. They were never the peer of Foster's club. W.S. Peters'/Robert Gilkerson's Union Giants, also a team of much lesser quality, returned to the scene from 1915-18 and then again in 1930 and 1932.⁵⁵

Despite his success, or perhaps because of it, the partnership with John Schorling seems to have severed Foster and the American Giants from Julius Taylor. The editor had so fervently used the pages of the *Broad Ax* to support the Association a few years before, but now he turned on Foster. Greed, divisiveness, and self-serving business practices, Taylor wrote, had ruined black baseball and profoundly damaged race affairs in Chicago:

"Rivalry and a desire to control brought about the formation of other Clubs to compete for the patronage and prowess of the Leland Giants...now there remains just one Club in Chicago, the American Giants, playing at 39th street in John M. Schorling's Park and paying the money to John M. Schorling that should be received by the Race to which the patrons of the game belong."⁵⁶

⁵⁴ G.W. Axelson, *Commy: The Life Story of Charles A. Comiskey* (Chicago, 1919), p. 150.

⁵⁵ Clark and Lester, *The Negro Leagues Book*, p. 62-63, 68-72, 101-110.

⁵⁶ *Broad Ax*, May 18, 1912.

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Taylor feared black professional baseball, a proud and promising race enterprise, had become a tool of the Chicago's white segregationist power structure. Adding insult to injury, there was no escaping the fact that this crushing defeat came at the hands of an uncouth Texan and a white tavern keeper. Foster was vilified for abandoning what had been a race endeavor in favor of a biracial partnership. In subsequent years, however, the enormously successful American Giants captured the support of black Chicago's growing population. Foster's long partnership with Schorling foretold a near future filled with biracial endeavors of mixed success and of the importance of swelling black migration to the city in the mid-1910s.

* * *

The fervor with which Leland, Jackson, Moseley, Foster and other key individuals leapt into the trenches of Chicago's black baseball war in 1910-1911 demonstrates how important the battle for control of black baseball was. Now quite distant from its amateur and semi-professional roots in the 1880s, black baseball in Chicago was far more than a game. It was a unique business opportunity which also empowered whomever controlled it to have an important role in shaping race reform in the segregated city. It was part of the battle between the old settler elites, who denounced segregated enterprises, and the new professional class, who blended the essence of Booker T. Washington's separatist approach to race relations with DuBoisian notions about leadership in the African American community. All of black baseball's entrepreneurs sought roles as race men, believing the importance of their work would elevate the African American community and ultimately reach beyond the confines of the ballpark and into key hot-button issues of the urban environment: housing, jobs, public health, transportation, and a host of other issues. The fight for black baseball was a struggle over what ideas, which strategies, and exactly who should lead the fight for racial equality in Progressive Era Chicago. It was won by the professional class, but to the Elite 400, the standard-bearer was a most unexpected person.

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CHAPTER THREE

Civic Institutions and Sport in the Black Belt

In the years following the war for control of black baseball, the veterans of the baseball war moved in different directions. Beauregard Moseley and Robert Jackson continued their careers in business, squared off against one another in politics, but often found themselves moving in similar social circles. Frank Leland, the victim of poor health for many years, died in 1914. Louis B. Anderson turned his attention to a long and successful career in city politics. And Rube Foster, the newest leader in the world of black sports and business in Chicago, became a leading ambassador for black culture and race progress through black professional baseball in the 1910s.

Changes in the demographic landscape of the city in the 1910s inspired other members of the Elite 400, old settlers and young professionals alike, to organize many new political, cultural, and civic institutions in Chicago. Census data tell an important part of this story: between 1910 and 1920 Chicago's African American population increased nearly 150%.¹ Many leaders of the black elite remained optimistic about race progress in the city, particularly when it came to politics. Some individuals won election, or were appointed to a variety of political positions at the state, county, and municipal levels of government. Two veterans of the baseball war were among this group: Robert Jackson, elected State Representative in 1912, and second (later third) ward alderman in 1918, and Louis B. Anderson, Assistant Attorney for Cook County, elected second ward alderman in 1920. In 1913, Jackson and Bishop Archibald Carey received appointments to head Illinois' celebration of fifty years of emancipation.

The success of a few individuals, however, did not obscure the fact that life for most African Americans in the city was framed by increasing segregation in jobs, housing, and general lack of economic opportunity. These urban problems required a more complicated

¹ Cited in Allan Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920* (Chicago, 1967), p. 12.

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array of resources to fight than could be mustered by a handful of individuals. In keeping with the optimistic tenor and bureaucratic impulse of Progressive Era reform, members of the Elite 400 created a range of new civic and social institutions in the 1910s. Some of them fit squarely in the realm of the distinguished old settler elites -- the Chicago branch of the NAACP and the Frederick Douglass Center, for example. Other institutions, such as the all-black Wabash Avenue Y.M.C.A. and the Chicago Urban League, were staffed by a broader range of people and resonated more effectively with the black middle and working classes. This pantheon of civic groups was supported by the ongoing work of key fraternal associations, particularly the elite Appomattox club, and by the hugely successful American Giants baseball team. In different ways, each of these institutions participated in the process of pursuing a vision of a more egalitarian city, one in which equality of opportunity was not restricted by race. These civic, social, and cultural institutions -- of which black professional baseball was a highly recognizable example -- are evidence of African Americans inserting themselves into the life of the segregated city.

* * *

The NAACP and the Frederick Douglass Center

While Beauregard Moseley worked to influence the political scene and sharpened his skills as an amusement entrepreneur, other members of Chicago's Elite 400, specifically, old settler elites, worked to develop the Chicago branch of the NAACP. From 1910-1916, this group developed from a vigilance committee to a fully chartered branch of the national organization. It was integrated from its inception. Founding members who shepherded the early development of the branch included an array of influential white Chicagoans: Julius Rosenwald, Jane Addams, Celia Parker Woolley, and Sophonsiba Breckinridge, among

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others. African American leadership in the branch was dominated by old settler elites: S. Laing Williams, Dr. George Cleveland Hall, Dr. Edwin C. Bentley, and others.²

Most of these elite men and women advocated a plan for race progress that would offer a blend of egalitarian ideology with the gradualism of Booker T. Washington. The Chicago branch of the NAACP was far more receptive to Washingtonian ideas and practices than the national organization. This was the general predilection among the city's old settler African American elite -- to work for integration and race progress in measured steps, with whites as partners. It also reflected the priorities of the particular African American elites in the branch's inner circle. Dr. Hall was Washington's personal physician in Chicago and a booster of the local chapter of the National Negro Business League. Assistant U.S. Attorney S. Laing Williams owed his position to Washington, who had used his influence in the nation's capital to secure it. Williams and his wife, the writer, social commentator, and club woman Fannie Barrier Williams, were deeply involved with Washington's work for many years.³

One individual among this group whose approach was more vigorous, and perhaps more unrelenting than others, was Ida B. Wells-Barnett. Wells-Barnett was not a native-born member of the Chicago elite; far from it, she had "escaped" to the city from Memphis in the 1890s following her publication of the *Red Record*, a newspaper which chronicled the horrors of lynching in the south. The antilynching crusader's entry into black Chicago's most inner circle of elites came through her marriage to Ferdinand Barnett. He was the original publisher of the *Chicago Conservator*, a well-known attorney, and longtime scion of the African American social set. At the fledgling branch, Wells-Barnett found it difficult to work with white Progressives at times, frequently tangling with Jane Addams and Mary

² This discussion of the Chicago branch of the NAACP draws heavily from Christopher Robert Reed, *The Chicago NAACP and the Rise of Black Professional Leadership, 1910-1966* (Bloomington, IN, 1997). See also Spear, *Black Chicago*, p. 87-89; St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (New York and Evanston, 1945, 1962), p. 54; and James Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago, 1989), p. 131.

³ Reed, *The Chicago NAACP*, p. 17-43.

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White Ovington (of the national organization). Regardless, Wells-Barnett's pursuit of racial justice was vigilant and constant; she was a driving force in the early years of the Chicago branch.⁴

Another group in which Wells-Barnett had a pivotal role was the Frederick Douglass Center, an interracial settlement house, begun in 1905. The Center offered social services, employment assistance, and educated African Americans on political issues. It was the product of a partnership between Wells-Barnett and Celia Parker Woolley, a white Unitarian minister and activist clubwoman and suffragist. Their intent was to bring leading members of both races together, organized around six committees: social statistics, business opportunities, legal advice and redress, sanitation and housing, club and class work, and civics.⁵

The Center's employment referral bureau was particularly noteworthy for the importance it placed on finding employment for African American women. Other settlement houses founded by women, such as the Negro Fellowship League and the Emanuel Settlement, pushed employment for black men among their other activities. The Center received its share of criticisms, however, much of it was rooted in the interracial composition of the Center, coupled with a perceived class bias. To critics in touch with the incredible challenges poor blacks faced in the segregated city, an interracial organization which supported the aspirations of middle-class whites at least as much (if not more) than African Americans seemed to make little sense. Furthermore, the Center's middle-class focus alienated working class blacks, whose needs were most paramount. Supporters of the Center pointed out the importance of maintaining ties to middle class whites as a means of securing funds. Wells-Barnett was one who could not stomach the direction the Center had

⁴ Wells-Barnett toured Europe, speaking about the evils of lynching, before settling in Chicago. Reed, *The Chicago NAACP*, p. 29.

⁵ Fannie Barrier Williams, "The Frederick Douglass Center," *Voice of the Negro*, 1:12 (December 1904): 601-604.

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taken; she left the institution she had helped to found and formed a new organization to better address the needs of the black working class, the Negro Fellowship League.⁶

The Urban League in Chicago

The primary purpose of the Chicago Urban League was to assist blacks, particularly poor southern migrants, in finding employment in the city. This was a substantial challenge, for many migrants lacked industrial skills or experience, many employers were leery about hiring African Americans, and labor unions frequently barred them.⁷ In a similar fashion to the Chicago branch of the NAACP, the leadership of the Chicago Urban League, founded in 1916, included African American and white notables. Black leaders included George Cleveland Hall, the noted African American physician; Robert Abbott of the *Defender*; Albert B. George, Chicago's first African American municipal judge; and Bertha Moseley (daughter of Beauregard), who spoke on behalf of black women's clubs. White leaders included Sophonsiba Breckinridge, member of the faculty at the University of Chicago and National Urban League Board of Directors; Jane Addams of Hull House; Julius Rosenwald of Sears; Celia Parker Woolley, cofounder (with Ida Wells-Barnett) of the interracial Frederick Douglass Center.⁸

The rationale for this interracial leadership was ideological (emphasizing integration) as well as financial (gaining access to white philanthropy funds). In 1917, the *Defender* urged the prestigious Appomattox club to set an example to other African American organizations by cooperating with white clubs to raise funds for the Urban League. White reformers might support both the Urban League and local NAACP, but members of the Elite 400 generally chose to identify with just one. Historian Arvarh Strickland explains

⁶ Anne Meis Knupfer, *Toward a Tenderer Humanity and a Nobler Womanhood: African American Women's Clubs in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago* (New York, 1996), p. 44, 97, 105-106.

⁷ Arvarh E. Strickland, *History of the Chicago Urban League* (Urbana, 1966), p. 27-29.

⁸ "A Cooperative Venture in the Field of Race Relations," Illinois Writers Project, "The Negro in Illinois" Papers (hereafter IWP), Box 38, folder 3. Strickland, *History of the Chicago Urban League*, p. 47.

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this difference as a question of self-interest among the black elite: "in the case of Negro leaders, their goals of an organization often had to take second place to its public image in their determination as to whether or not to give it active support." Because Chicago's black elite often needed the support of influential whites to advance within their occupations, many chose to back the NAACP or Urban League (but not both) based on how their white benefactors felt about either organization.⁹

The Chicago branch of the NAACP was far less effective in achieving race progress than the Chicago Urban League or any of the other civic groups in the city which were being developed and run primarily by the leaders of the emerging professional class, and key fraternal associations like the Appomattox Club. Unlike the NAACP, these groups were based inside the black belt. In fact, many key figures in black Chicago -- leaders of the professional class in particular -- were cut out of the NAACP loop due to their social standing, or lack of it. Editors Robert Abbott of the *Defender* and Julius Taylor of the *Broad Ax* were in a position to do a great deal to boost popular interest and support for the fledgling branch, had they been involved. NAACP historian Christopher Robert Reed speculated that branch leadership was too small, and perhaps not deeply focused enough on issues directly at hand in Chicago (as opposed to dealing with the national organization), to be successful in the 1910s. Also at issue was the question of whether the branch was "too elite" to really connect with the African American public in the way other important race endeavors -- the Urban League, the Y.M.C.A., the Appomattox Club, and the Chicago American Giants -- were able to do.

The Wabash Avenue Y.M.C.A.

The appeal of a Y.M.C.A. built for African Americans, located in the black belt, was enormous and somewhat unique. The NAACP and the Urban League were focused on issues of law, politics, legalities, and employment, all of which were very important.

⁹ Strickland, *History of the Chicago Urban League*, p. 35.

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Founders of the Wabash Avenue Y.M.C.A. intended to use athletics to enrich the quality of life for black Chicagoans and help the African American community adjust to the influx of migrants from the south. Their distinct approach to these goals privileged recreation and moral development. The Y.M.C.A.'s supporters embraced the value of its dual athletic and evangelizing mission, itself a cultural holdover of the "muscular christian" ideal so widely trumpeted in the nineteenth century. The building of moral fiber through physical development, a British ideological import, had found a home in the upper classes of Victorian America. The Y.M.C.A., especially under the leadership of Luther Gulick, the so-called "chief theorist of play," was the primary organ for spreading this dogma in America. By design, the Y.M.C.A. of the early twentieth century embodied the spirit of middle-class reform. It was a place where boys could develop physically, spiritually, and morally, become decent, capable, respectable members of society -- and all in an organized, supervised environment.

The Wabash Avenue Y.M.C.A. was funded in partnership with three white Chicago business magnates: Julius Rosenwald, Cyrus McCormick and Norman Harris. In 1911, Rosenwald pledged a gift of \$25,000 in start-up funds for the facility if the African American community could provide an additional \$75,000.¹⁰ To leaders embracing the cult of Progressive Era reform -- in a community focused on achieving race progress through respectability -- the Wabash Avenue Y.M.C.A. was a godsend. Its cornerstone was laid at 38th and Wabash in 1912 amidst a huge celebration involving 8,000 onlookers and a parade of African American dignitaries.¹¹ National figures were on hand as well. In a speech that speaks volumes about its perceived utility, Booker T. Washington endorsed the Wabash Y.M.C.A. and the special role it could have in black Chicago:

¹⁰ Carey B. Lewis, "Y.M.C.A. Dedication," *Freeman*, June 21, 1913. Noble Sissle, "New Y.M.C.A. Opened," *Freeman*, July 12, 1913. McCormick (of International Harvester) and Harris (a banker) also pledged \$25,000.

¹¹ "Chicago Has Leading YMCA Building," *Freeman*, January 1, 1916.

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¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1
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The Y.M.C.A. building which is to be erected and properly equipped for effective work in this city will help the black race adjust itself to the new life...I venture to say that when this building is erected and equipped it will have the hearty and constant support of the colored people of Chicago...This movement in Chicago has emphasized the fact that the Negro has consciousness, that he has civic pride and that he will work as enthusiastically as the white man at tasks that assume his citizenship and manhood.¹²

Within a few years the Wabash Y.M.C.A. was functioning as a hub of civic and recreational activity for the men and boys of black Chicago. In 1918, representatives from the Y.M.C.A. went into the Union Stockyards to establish a recreational program for workers during their lunch hour. That effort spawned the Y.M.C.A. Industrial Baseball League, which fielded many teams -- from Armour, Swift, McCormick, and other local industrial giants -- for many years afterward.¹³ The success of the Wabash Y.M.C.A. prompted the founding of an all-black Y.W.C.A. in the black belt (by Eva Jenifer). Like the Wabash "Y," the women's facility at 35th and Indiana offered a range of recreational and educational programs designed to shape the physical and moral stature of its patrons. The committee of management at the black women's Y.M.C.A. included women from different segments of the Elite 400: Mrs. Julius Avendorph, Mrs. Harvey Watkins, and Mrs. Andrew ("Rube") Foster. Avendorph represented the old settler elite; Watkins (real estate) and Foster (sports entrepreneur), the professional class.¹⁴

Gentlemen of Color

An important supplement to the work of new civic institutions was an established fraternal organization, the Appomattox club. Appomattox was one of many, many fraternal associations developed by the men and women of black Chicago in the late nineteenth and

¹² IWP, Box 38, folder 8. Transcript of an article that originally appeared in the Chicago *Inter-Ocean*, May 19, 1911.

¹³ Intercollegian Wonder Book (hereafter ICWB), 1:1, p.77 and 1:2, p. 141-142.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:2, p. 150-151. Unfortunately, this source and others do not provide the first names for these women.

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early twentieth century. Most of these clubs were segregated by gender but were organized around memberships of similar class standing.¹⁵ As the distinction between old settler elites and young professionals blurred in the 1910s, Appomattox became a haven for the men of the Elite 400. Appomattox men were people of some wealth and/or influence in Chicago, and they convened to celebrate one another and blend their talents and resources for the good of the race. Their activities received broad play in black newspapers, whose reporters frequently covered the speeches club leaders made to the membership outlining their goals for race progress. In 1913, newly-elected Appomattox President Frank Hamilton spoke about the special burden club members ought to shoulder, namely, getting involved in civic affairs:

Unquestionably, we must bestir ourselves, representing as we do, the best that the race affords in the membership of this club...to the membership of the Appomattox Club, severally and collectively, it means that we must so let our public conduct and private life exemplify the higher ideals, as will bring to us, not only as individuals, but as a race, to this community the highest degree of respect and helpful consideration from all the citizens of whatever nationality.¹⁶

Appomattox served as a forum for discussing and planning civic race advancement. This took a variety of forms, from hosting distinguished speakers such as the writer Paul Lawrence Dunbar and scholar-activist Kelly Miller, to expanding the scope of the Negro Semi-Centennial Exposition Association.¹⁷

Although Appomattox was an all-black club located in the black belt (by 1909, at 3441 Wabash Ave), its members reached across racial lines to welcome distinguished white speakers who believed in race advancement. Judge Marcus Kavanaugh, hailed by the *Freeman* as "one of Chicago's ablest and fairest jurists," addressed the Appomattox club in

¹⁵ For the especially important role of women's clubs in Chicago at the turn of the century, see Knupfer, *Toward A Tenderer Humanity and a Nobler Womanhood*, p. 1-10.

¹⁶ "Frank Hamilton Plainly Sets Forth His Views Pertaining to His Duties as the New President [sic] of the Appomattox Club," *Broad Ax*, January 11, 1913.

¹⁷ Carey B. Lewis, "Appomattox Banquet," *Freeman*, January 13, 1913.

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November 1913. He encouraged African American leaders to frequent black professionals (lawyers and physicians), whom he praised as highly capable, for in so doing they were helping to advance their race. Kavanaugh also urged club members to make sure whites knew of their many accomplishments. In 1915, congressman Martin Madden (white), "intrepid champion of human rights," spoke at the club. Widely praised for his efforts to defeat a bill which would have illegalized interracial marriage, Madden addressed the membership on the importance of race advancement and interracial cooperation. He shared the speaker's podium that evening with some of the club's (and of Chicago's) most distinguished African American political leaders: Louis B. Anderson, Robert Jackson, and Oscar DePriest.¹⁸

In addition to its political and civic activities, the Appomattox club fostered an interest in black sport. Binga Dismond, track star at the University of Chicago (and nephew of African American Chicago banker Jesse Binga), was honored at a club banquet. In 1914, club members debated installing a ticker in the club house so that they might follow baseball games and boxing matches from the comfort of the club house. Most directly, however, Appomattox drew many of its leading members from the ranks of the men involved in the war for black professional baseball, namely Beauregard Moseley, Robert Jackson, and Louis Anderson, all of whom served terms as the club's President. Rube Foster was not a club member, but his accomplishments were lauded as touchstones of civic and racial pride.¹⁹

¹⁸ The club house's original location was 3134 Wabash Avenue. They moved to 34th and Wabash in 1909, and to a third location, 3623 Parkway, in 1920. *Appomattox Club Yearbook*, compiled by Scott W. Tyler, issued January 1948 (Chicago Historical Society). Carey B. Lewis, "Kavanaugh Day at Appomattox," *Freeman*, November 8, 1913. Carey B. Lewis, "Appomattox Club is Host to Noted Guests," *Defender*, April 17, 1915.

¹⁹ "Appomattox Club Entertains," *Freeman*, July 18, 1914. "Appomattox Club has Jolly Time at Installation," *Defender*, January 16, 1915.

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The Challenges of Sport and Respectability

These new groups' civic accomplishments were lauded in the leading black Chicago papers: *Defender*, *Broad Ax*, and *Freeman*.²⁰ Despite frequent interracial cooperation, the focus of the new civic groups was generally turned inward. They appeared to be "race enterprises" in the mold of the Leland Giants Baseball and Amusement Association. Thus, they seemed to vindicate Moseley's insistence on the importance of race enterprises which he so strongly articulated in the baseball war of 1909-1911. These institutions, however, depended in part upon complicated relationships with wealthy and influential whites, and to white society in general, for some measure of their success. Three individuals deeply involved in the sporting life of the city illustrate the challenges and difficulties African American leaders were facing: Beauregard Moseley, the grizzled veteran of the baseball war; Jack Johnson, the black heavyweight champion; and Rube Foster, whose American Giants dominated the world of black baseball.

By 1912, Beauregard Moseley and the Leland Giants were out of business. Moseley turned his considerable energy to the fall Presidential election, in which Theodore Roosevelt and William Taft were battling for the Republican nomination. For nearly all African Americans in Chicago, the Republican party -- "the party of Lincoln" as it was commonly called -- was the party of choice. This was a position reaffirmed on a regular basis by the black press. The *Freeman* praised the party on two important counts. The GOP's platform protected the rights of African American citizens by upholding the power of state and federal courts. It also encouraged the public to become more civic-minded about issues of great concern to African Americans, e.g., equitable access to housing, jobs, and an end to lynching.²¹

²⁰ Although the *Freeman* was an Indianapolis newspaper, its coverage of Chicago was extremely comprehensive.

²¹ "Will Stand By Old Ship," *Freeman*, June 29, 1912.

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The Republican national convention was held in Chicago in 1912. Along State street, south of the Loop, through the heart of the black belt, decorations and lights commemorated the special occasion. Like many Republicans in this important election year, the members of the Elite 400 were divided in their support of the candidates. Moseley, Robert Jackson and Oscar DePriest supported Roosevelt, setting up the candidate's "black headquarters" at 3522 State Street. The influential Bishop A.J. Carey and Illinois state GOP power broker Ed Wright were for Taft; their camp met at the Keystone Hotel, also located at 35th and State. Taft emerged from the national convention as the party's candidate; Roosevelt took his supporters into a third party, called the Progressive, or Bull Moose party. Moseley stayed with the Roosevelt camp, Jackson did not -- perhaps because he was running for State Legislature as a Republican and needed Ed Wright's support.²²

After failing in the business of black professional baseball and after suffering "defeat" in the 1912 election, Beauregard Moseley resurfaced as a combative and at times influential figure in black Chicago. In 1912, Edward Dunne, a white Democrat and former mayor, was elected governor of Illinois. He rewarded Moseley's old rival Robert Jackson and Bishop Carey for their support in the election by appointing them to head a state commission celebrating fifty years of black progress in Illinois since emancipation (passage of the 13th amendment) to be held in 1915. The Commission was given \$25,000 to complete its task.²³ Illinois was one of many states planning separate, individual celebrations. Moseley and other leaders, Julius Taylor in particular, pushed instead for a *national* celebration to be held in Chicago.

Here again the different approaches to race progress held by competing black elites were clear. Jackson and Carey, old settler elites, received individual appointments from a

²² Carey B. Lewis, "All Eyes on Chicago," *Freeman*, June 22, 1912 and Phil H. Brown, "Bull Moose Meeting!" *Freeman*, September 28, 1912.

²³ Jackson was elected to the state legislature in 1912, and this exchange of electoral support for an appointment that would further elevate him in the African American community was likely an extension of a working political friendship. Richard A. Keiser, *Subordination or Empowerment? African American Leadership and the Struggle for Urban Political Power* (New York, 1997), p. 26.

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white political benefactor without complaint or comment. Moseley and Taylor, the young professionals, saw the state expositions as yet another example of powerful whites shattering the common interests of blacks while seeming to support race progress. In the pages of the *Broad Ax*, Taylor wished the nation's African Americans would unite on this issue, "for once in their lives." Adopting a more respectful tone, Moseley too called for a national event that would link the interests of blacks across America, with Chicago as the hub. It was the same argument he had made a few years before, when he was attempting to form a league of professional black baseball clubs.

Moseley incorporated the rival *National Negro Exposition and Semicentennial Association* in 1913, and was selected President soon after.²⁴ His hopes for the National Exposition ran high. Moseley expected the event would vindicate the race, "checking the spread of race prejudice and of securing for our people a more patient and considerate hearing in their plea for justice and fair treatment."²⁵ Moseley's Association held some of its meetings in the Appomattox Club, and the Seventh Grand Armory hosted a ball for the group. Julius Taylor assisted the effort by attacking the official Illinois commission (Carey, Jackson, and others) on charges of widespread corruption and fraud. In the summer of 1914, Taylor accused the Commission of accomplishing nothing while spending \$7,827 of the allotted \$25,000.²⁶

Moseley revisited the realm of politics in 1915, supporting William Hale Thompson's first mayoral bid. In urging African Americans to vote for Thompson, Moseley used his familiar tactic of privileging racial uplift and self-interest (if not self-help). "A vote for Thompson is a vote for the Party of Lincoln," Moseley wrote in the *Broad Ax*, continuing, "a vote for Thompson means the election of a mayor who will give all our

²⁴ Incorporation meant the state of Illinois formally recognized the group and issued a charter to it. *Broad Ax*, August 9, 1913 and August 16, 1913. "The Negro in America," *Freeman*, September 26, 1914.

²⁵ Beauregard Moseley in the *Broad Ax*, August 9, 1913.

²⁶ Oscar DePriest was the Commission's business manager, but he resigned in 1915. *Broad Ax*, June 27, 1914 and July 18, 1914.

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Republican alderman and especially our representative, Oscar DePriest, the consideration he and his race deserve."²⁷ Moseley's support of Thompson's candidacy is noteworthy because Thompson was allied with William Lorimer's faction of the Illinois Republican party. Moseley was connected to the other, rival faction of the party led by Charles Deneen. As a Deneenite, Moseley was in the minority among black politicians. Most of the professional politicians -- Jackson, DePriest, Ed Wright -- were in the Lorimer-Thompson faction. In 1915, it is likely that Moseley's political pragmatism and enthusiasm for electing a black alderman (i.e., DePriest) led him to support Thompson.²⁸

"Big Bill" won the 1915 election, but soon afterward Moseley used the black press to pressure the new mayor on the issue of unfair housing practices. He urged the mayor to take steps to reform this well-known problem with a simple and condemning observation: "a man's right to live and acquire property in Chicago depends upon his race and color."²⁹ Moseley continued to antagonize the Thompson administration in 1917. He condemned "fusion," a political practice wherein party bosses worked together to put forward a ticket that aspiring candidates had to accept in order to receive party support. To Moseley, fusion yanked control of the political process away from the citizenry. He feared this would eliminate the need for primaries and conventions. Given the state of race relations in the city, African Americans in particular needed to reject the influence of the party bosses and be independent. Late that year, he denounced ill-conceived plans to alter the Illinois State constitution, fearing any changes would bring formal Jim Crow practices to Chicago.³⁰

²⁷ Beauregard Moseley, *Broad Ax*, April 3, 1915.

²⁸ Spear, *Black Chicago*, p. 120-121. Ida B. Wells-Barnett also supported Deneen.

²⁹ Thompson was the first mayor to actively court the city's African American voters. His administrations (1915-1923; 1927-1931) included individual black politicians, such as Jackson, Anderson, and longtime associate Bishop Archibald J. Carey in the patronage system. Beauregard Moseley, *Broad Ax*, May 8, 1915. Harold Gosnell, *Negro Politicians: The Rise of Negro Politics in Chicago* (Chicago, 1935), p. 199. Also see Keiser, *Subordination or Empowerment?*, p. 24.

³⁰ Moseley hailed the 1870 Illinois State Constitution, with its protections for civil rights, as the most progressive in the nation. Beauregard Moseley in the *Broad Ax*, November 17, 1917, December 1, 1917, and August 31, 1918.

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Moseley's last area of political interest, which he pursued in 1918, was the Illinois Senatorial race. Over the course of many months, Moseley published lengthy descriptions of the many candidates. At first, he endorsed Charles Deneen, his longtime ally in the Republican party. Later, when the field was trimmed to Thompson and Medill McCormick, Moseley threw his support to the *Tribune* publisher, not the mayor. The intrafactional spirit of cooperation of 1915 seems to have disappeared by 1918.

Political disagreements within the ranks of the black Republicans haunted Moseley's business dealings through 1919. Despite past setbacks in the field, Moseley was again pursuing a career as an entertainment entrepreneur. He owned the Idlewild Resort Hotel at 33rd and Wabash, inside the black belt. In 1919, he opened a new amusement park next to the hotel. Moseley's *Dixie Land Park and Stadium* offered guests a dance pavilion, a merry-go-round, and booths where candy and soft drinks (not alcohol) were sold. With the hotel adjacent to the park, Moseley's new amusement facility invoked the glorious days of the old *Chateau de Plaisance*, albeit a smaller version. Success did not come easily. A significant obstacle appeared in the form of none other than Robert Jackson, a Lorimer-Thompson Republican, and one of Moseley's key adversaries from the baseball war.

In 1918, Jackson ran for second ward alderman, defeating Oscar DePriest in the primary and general election. Moseley had backed DePriest, fighting Jackson's campaign very aggressively. Jackson used his new position to block Moseley from getting an amusement park license. Moseley began legal proceedings to force the mayor's hand. Dixie Land Park did eventually open, and the *Broad Ax* covered it in the same enthusiastic manner it had done for the *Chateau* ten years before. In a reference to the 1893 Columbian Exposition, Julius Taylor called it "a condensed white city, in the heart of the black belt," urging African Americans to bring their families and "spend your money with your own." Moseley's advertisements for the new park plied the same themes he had used for the *Chateau* and the Leland Giants Baseball and Amusement Association years before: "show

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your race pride and spend your money with your own and are welcome. Furnish employment for your own."³¹

Jack Johnson and the Great White Hope

Beauregard Moseley expended a great deal of money, time and energy as a baseball entrepreneur, political activist, and amusement park operator. Despite the very real limits to his success in any of these pursuits, Moseley always presented his rationale for any undertaking in the uncontroversial language of respectability and community uplift. Baseball was an easy fit because it enjoyed a reputation as a respectable, middle-class sport. In the gritty working-class world of boxing, however, leadership and role-modeling was much more complicated. No figure better represented the difficult position of being a sports celebrity in a community which longed for successful role models than the newly-arrived Chicagoan Jack Johnson, the first African American heavyweight champion of the world.

Johnson traveled a difficult road to becoming champion. White boxing officials repeatedly denied Johnson a chance to fight for the title. Their unease about interracial boxing reflected commonly-held beliefs regarding distinctions between the races. Johnson biographer Randy Roberts captured the racism of the time: "it was commonly accepted that black fighters lacked heart, that they quit in a close fight." If the white fighter should happen to unexpectedly lose, "blacks were sure to misinterpret the result."³² Rebuffed by the racial mores of the early twentieth century, Johnson literally chased his shot at a championship fight around the world. Because he was unable to secure this opportunity in the U.S. Johnson challenged and defeated the white champion Tommy Burns in Australia in 1908. For the next five years, Johnson was the heavyweight champion of the world.

³¹ Gosnell, *Negro Politicians*, p. 75-76. *Broad Ax*, May 25, 1918. Also, *Broad Ax*, "Moseley's Stadium and Recreation Park -- The Newest Thing In Town," June 28, 1919, "Moseley's Stadium at 33rd Street and Wabash Avenue Continues to Do a Rushing Business," July 5, 1919 and July 19, 1919.

³² Randy Roberts, *Papa Jack: Jack Johnson and the Era of White Hopes* (New York, 1983), p. 17, 36.

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By 1910, Chicago was Johnson's home. Backed by an investment from a brewing company, he opened the *Café de Champion* in the black belt (on 31st street, near State), an integrated nightclub which became as much a testament to the liveliness of the city's black night life as to Johnson himself. Johnson's club was located just south of the infamous Levee district, home to vice of every sort. First ward aldermen Hinky Dink Kenna and Bathouse John Coughlin protected Levee establishments in exchange for votes. Johnson was a well-known patron of the "sporting life" in the district, enjoying the endless parade of saloons and brothels there. The Levee district was particularly noteworthy for its interracial clubs and commercial sex districts, urban spaces one historian terms "interzones."³³

As much as he enjoyed thumbing his nose at convention, Johnson's Café was, in effect, a nod toward respectability because of its location. People in search of night life who would not dream of coming to the buzzing Levee district would go to the Café de Champion.³⁴ In other ways, however, Johnson openly scoffed at the respectability issue. Johnson lived in an ostentatious manner: dressing extravagantly, enjoying endless wild nights on the town, drinking and cavorting, driving expensive cars and often wrecking them. He taunted his white ring opponents, frequently asking them to choose the round in which they preferred to be knocked out. Johnson frequently invited press photographers to his workouts. There they saw the champion's bulging genitals, which he had wrapped in gauze to emphasize the threatening stereotype of black male sexual prowess. Johnson and frequented prostitutes, white and black, and was married several times, twice to white women. Johnson personified all the common preconceptions about African Americans. White critics presented him as an animalistic, uncivilized, wild black man. Johnson's very public, very controversial behavior won him few admirers in the white community and

³³ Kevin Mumford, *Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York, 1997).

³⁴ Finis Farr, *Black Champion: The Life and Times of Jack Johnson* (New York, 1964), p. 140-142. Roberts, *Papa Jack*, p. 72.

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confirmed the fears of many African American leaders that a few reckless representatives of black "success" would embarrass the entire race.

To many white Americans, Johnson's relationships with white women signified an emasculation of white men. From the postbellum period, African American men were commonly cast as inherently threatening to the virtue of white women whom, through a system of patriarchy, lived under the "protection" of white men. As Ida Wells-Barnett pointed out in exposes of southern lynching, black men were commonly murdered by racist mobs in the 1890s for "assaulting" white women. Fueled by such hateful cultural assumptions, boxing's white promoters desperately searched for a "great white hope" to reclaim the heavyweight crown from Johnson. Jack London weighed in on the matter by joining the chorus of voices urging Jim Jeffries, a white former champion, to defeat Johnson and "rescue" the white race.³⁵ Jeffries did emerge from retirement for this "noble cause" but was easily dispatched by the champion in 1910. Johnson's victory sparked incidents of racial violence in many cities.

Chicago was Johnson's home, and here, as elsewhere, the black elite struggled with the champion's image. Some may have admired his fierce independence, but Johnson's very controversial lifestyle alienated most of the Elite 400. Johnson's notoriety with white women, Kevin Gaines reminds us, "reinforced the black view that located miscegenation within a seamy underworld of white women prostitutes, white male rapists, and similarly disreputable lower-class black women."³⁶ Yet when the Chicago *Examiner* ran a series of scathing reports about Johnson in 1912, including an attribution that Johnson had claimed he "could get any white woman he wanted," the Appomattox Club rose to his defense. Moseley called a conference at Appomattox to discuss the "Johnson affair," with Johnson present. At the meeting Johnson declared that he was "not a slave" and "had the right to

³⁵ Roberts, *Papa Jack*, p. 68. Jeffries had retired in 1905.

³⁶ Kevin Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill, 1996), p. 124.

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choose who his mate shall be without the dictation of any man."³⁷ Some Appomattox members brushed the issue aside, others sharply criticized Johnson for his behavior. In the end, the club issued this resolution to the press:

We submit:

"That the tone of the daily newspaper expressions regarding this episode manifestly does the Negro race an injustice by impliedly condemning the entire Negro race for the alleged misconduct of one of its members.

That we, as law-abiding citizens, in common with all good citizens of whatever race, condemn any immoral conduct or violation of the law, whether committed by a member of the white or colored race.

That we disavow any and all implied publications that the Negro race, as a race, approve the alleged utterances of Jack Johnson, or any alleged act or acts, which either violate the laws of the land or are repugnant to decent society.

That we unqualifiedly affirm our desire to cooperate with the law-abiding white citizens of Chicago to promote the highest civic betterment along all lines for the moral uplift of all classes, and pledge ourselves to use our highest endeavors to blot out any Negro or set of Negroes whose immoral conduct tends to lower the moral standing or bring into disrepute the entire Negro race.

That Jack Johnson, at the invitation of this conference of representative Negro citizens, appeared in person and unqualifiedly denied that he made the statement, 'he could get any white woman he wanted,' or any statement reflecting upon the womanhood of any race, and being corroborated in such denial by Joseph Levy, a white man who was present at the time the statement was alleged to have been made.

We therefore appeal to the sence [*sic*] of fairness of the public and press alike to discontinue the unfailing disposition to indict the entire Negro race for any infraction of the law by an individual member of the race.

--Louis B. Anderson, Dr. George Hall, E.H. Wright, Julius F. Taylor, Geo. W. Bis, B.F. Moseley, ex-officio.³⁸

The emphasis the Appomattox members placed on being *citizens* with a vested interest in the city is telling. Club members were law-abiding and paid their taxes, yet segregation denied their access to the full rights of citizenship. They seized upon this moment, and upon the struggles of this black athlete in particular, as an opportunity to claim their status as citizens of Chicago.

³⁷ Carey B. Lewis, "Johnson Denies Gilt [*sic*]!" *Freeman*, November 2, 1912.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

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A year later, Jack Johnson's tenure at the top of the boxing world came to an end. He was convicted of violating the Mann Act, colloquially known as the White Slavery Act. This new (1910) law prohibited transportation of individuals across state lines for "illicit purposes." Johnson frequently traveled with white prostitutes, in clear violation of the law. Outraged, editorials in southern newspapers called for him to be lynched. Instead, Johnson escaped to Canada, later to Europe, where he toiled unsuccessfully and spent most of his money. In his autobiography, Johnson claimed to have posed as a member of Foster's American Giants to sneak out of the country. Older biographies of Johnson repeat this tale. Randy Roberts, however, denounces the story as "ridiculous." In 1915 Johnson bargained his way back into the U.S. by agreeing to lose to Jess Willard, who was white, in a bout held in Cuba. The details of the arrangement Johnson struck with boxing officials and the U.S. government are unclear and controversial. Observers claimed to have seen Johnson, allegedly knocked unconscious from a Willard punch, lying on the canvas blocking the sun from his eyes.³⁹

The Chicago American Giants

Until the late nineteenth century, boxing's seamy history as a corrupt and violent sport had rendered it totally unacceptable to the middle and upper classes of society. Changes in rules and concerns about flagging masculinity in an industrializing society helped to hasten its acceptance among the middle class by the start of the Progressive Era, though racism clearly plagued the sport. Concerns about publicly-condoned violence, gambling, and liquor consumption tarnished its image as well.⁴⁰ Baseball, in sharp contrast, suffered its own mix of gambling scandals but did not have the widespread acceptability problem that boxing had. Baseball's turn-of-the-century promoters, led by Albert G.

³⁹ Roberts, *Papa Jack*, p. 138-154. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, p. 124.

⁴⁰ The best explanation for this is Elliott Gorn, *The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Prize Fighting in America* (Ithaca, 1986).

Spalding, worked hard to polish the game's image, often denigrating the wild world of boxing in the process.⁴¹

In much the same manner as Beauregard Moseley had sought to create a counterbalance for the influence of black underworld figures like Mushmouth Johnson through developing "respectable" sport, Foster's American Giants were a foil for the volatile ride that was Jack Johnson's life. The American Giants fit neatly into the crucible of racial self help blended with interracial partnership. Ostensibly a race enterprise, the American Giants relied upon Foster's relationship with John Schorling to make having a "home base" (South Side Park) possible. To be sure, Foster controlled every facet of the American Giants, down to the most minute details. He was a superstar player and brilliant manager, the booking agent, the team accountant, and the top attraction for the fans, even after he retired from active play (around 1915). But it was his handshake agreement with Schorling, whose presence was generally known but usually kept low-profile, which facilitated it all. Securing South Side Park was a coup for Foster, both in terms of location (inside the black belt) and the quality of the facility (renovated ten years before). Without a permanent home for a black team in the black belt, Foster's race enterprise may not have been able to develop and maintain the loyal support it enjoyed for decades.⁴²

Rube Foster was a tremendous competitor who held respectability to be the *sine qua non* for his American Giants. Players were of course expected to perform well and win. Foster paid his players well and guaranteed their services with written contracts.⁴³ The

⁴¹ "A.G. Spalding and the Rise of Baseball," in Peter Levine (ed.), *American Sport: A Documentary History* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1989).

⁴² South Side Park was at times referred to as Schorling's Park. Other examples of Schorling's muted role in the American Giants is found scattered in newspaper coverage, e.g., "Mr. Schorling has been on the diamonds for several weeks overseeing the workmen getting the ground in shape for the first game." Carey B. Lewis, "'Rube' Foster Here Next Sunday," *Freeman*, April 24, 1915. See also Robert Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1970) and Charles Whitehead, *A Man and His Diamonds: A Story of the Great Andrew (Rube) Foster, the Outstanding Team he Owned and Managed, and the Superb League he Founded and Commissioned* (New York, 1980).

⁴³ George E. Mason, "Rube Foster Chats About His Career," *Freeman*, February 20, 1915 and Billy Lewis, "The American Giants!" *Freeman*, March 6, 1915.

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players, in turn, were held to a strict standard of conduct set by Foster: he demanded they "conduct themselves in an orderly way" at all times. That code came largely from Foster's childhood. He was the son of a minister, and briefly trained for the clergy in his youth. The religious influences of his upbringing stayed with him throughout his life, earning him a reputation as a puritanical figure who neither drank nor smoked, a stern but fair disciplinarian. That background, when combined with his competitive fire and managerial genius, led him to create a powerful team that quickly became the toast of black Chicago as well as the best known assemblage of African American baseball players in America in the 1910s.⁴⁴

Rube Foster's success, however, spelled the end of the Leland Giants Baseball and Amusement Association by 1912. The powerful American Giants supplanted the Leland Giants and Frank Leland's Chicago Giants. Within the black baseball realm, old grudges held over from the war for black baseball were mostly put to rest. The fire between key combatants (e.g., Moseley and Jackson) still smoldered, but the African American public and press generally embraced Foster's American Giants by the mid-1910s. One sportswriter even labeled Foster the "greatest baseball teacher-manager of the age."⁴⁵ Fans turned out in very large numbers; on occasion, the American Giants' crowds outnumbered the major league White Sox, who played just four blocks away at 35th and Shields. Foster frequently thanked the public by giving back to the African American community which supported him. In 1914, for example, the American Giants played a charity game at Comiskey Park (because there were more seats and thus, more money raised) to benefit Provident Hospital.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ See Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White*; Charles Whitehead, *A Man and His Diamonds*; John Holway, *Rube Foster: The Father of Black Baseball* (unpublished manuscript at the Chicago Historical Society).

⁴⁵ "'Rube' Foster Praised," *Freeman*, September 26, 1914.

⁴⁶ Carey B. Lewis in the *Freeman*, July 4, 1914. Provident Hospital was founded by Daniel H. Williams, noted black physician and old settler elite.

Throughout the 1910s, Foster's American Giants won -- and won and won. Barnstorming was the way Foster drummed up support for the American Giants (and for black professional baseball in general) outside of the city. Foster's club traveled in style. The team owned a customized Pullman car in which they rode from location to location. Nattily attired in high-quality uniforms, the American Giants squared off against the best clubs in midwestern and eastern cities. They also continued the practice of spring training tours in the south and on the west coast, a tradition Foster had inaugurated with the Leland Giants.⁴⁷

In many towns and cities, the Chicago American Giants received a warm welcome from the local African American community and a grandstand filled to capacity. Some clubs, eager for the windfall of a full ballpark, solicited the American Giants to add games in their cities to the schedule. In Pittsburgh, the manager of the "only colored team" in the city invited the American Giants to come to the city with this special appeal to Foster: "The sporting people among our race are anxious to see the Famous Rube Foster in our city and they are willing to set aside a Rube Foster day and they will suspend business on that date."⁴⁸ Foster was widely hailed as a baseball genius, but his appeal was broader than the ballpark. Favorable press coverage elevated him as a respectable race man, a gentleman ballplayer, who, in the words of one reporter, "has made baseball a business as well as a pleasure, opening up a new vocation for our clean-living young men."⁴⁹

The American Giants' prowess on the diamond was the main reason crowds assembled wherever they were. Foster's team, however, was more than a showcase of baseball skill. The Pullman car and the fine uniforms made the American Giants a symbol

⁴⁷ Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White*; Donn Rogosin, *Invisible Men: Life in Baseball's Negro Leagues* (New York, 1983); Jules Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy* (New York, 1983) and Larry Lester, Sammy Miller, and Dick Clark, *Black Baseball in Chicago* (Chicago, 2000).

⁴⁸ Letter written by Tom Brown, "Want Rube Foster in Pittsburgh at Any Cost," *Freeman*, July 11, 1914.

⁴⁹ George E. Mason, "Rube Foster Chats About His Career," *Freeman*, February 20, 1915.

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of what was possible for African Americans if they worked hard and worked together. They were a race enterprise *par excellence*. To thousands of African Americans in the south -- the migration generation -- the American Giants functioned as a symbol of the better life, the promised land, that lay ahead in Chicago. The black press even referred to Foster as "Moses" on occasion.⁵⁰

Whether his inspiration came from Mt. Sinai or more earthly sources, Foster proved himself to be a person of considerable savvy and vision. Realizing that the success of his own American Giants relied in securing quality competition outside of Chicago, he set out to create new teams and new fans for black baseball in cities which did not yet have high quality clubs. In 1914, Foster established a team in Louisville. He blended two existing black teams, the Mohawk Giants of New York and the Louisville White Sox, into a new baseball club that would operate out of the city under Foster's direction. This move was hailed in the press as a precursor to "the dream of the future, when perhaps a half dozen cities will be linked...."⁵¹ Why Foster chose Louisville is not clear. It is likely, however, that the connection derived in some manner from Foster's friendship with Louisville native Carey B. Lewis, managing editor of the *Defender*. Lewis worked for the Louisville *Courier-Journal* for many years. Foster surely knew Lewis from his work as a sportswriter, but also through Beauregard Moseley, his old partner from the Leland Giants, and Lewis' father-in-law.⁵²

⁵⁰ Billy Lewis, "The American Giants!" *Freeman*, March 6, 1915. Key works analyzing the generation of southern blacks who moved north during the Great Migration which inform this section are Grossman, *Land of Hope*; Joe William Trotter (ed.), *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender* (Bloomington, IN, 1991) and Kenneth L. Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape: Black Cleveland, 1870-1930* (Urbana, 1976).

⁵¹ Billy Lewis, "Rube Foster Invades Kentucky," *Freeman*, August 1, 1914 and "'Rube' Foster Returns to Chicago," *Freeman*, September 19, 1914.

⁵² Long after he moved to Chicago, Lewis continued to travel to Louisville to report on events such as the national convention of the Knights of Pythias. In addition to his journalistic activities, Lewis was a part-time publicity agent for Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute. Alfred Anderson, "Carey B. Lewis, Journalist Essay Prize Winner," *Freeman*, December 25, 1915. Obit: "Carey B. Lewis," *Tribune*, December 10, 1946. "City Pays Final Tribute to Carey B. Lewis, Journalist," *Bee*, December 15, 1946.

Rube Foster's many successes drew criticisms as well, mainly from other baseball magnates in competing cities. One was his longtime rival Nat Strong, a white businessman who operated black baseball clubs in the east. In the midwest, however, Foster's stiffest competition on the diamond and in black baseball's business realm came from an African American source: Charles "C.I." Taylor of Indianapolis. Taylor managed the Indianapolis A.B.C.'s (named for the American Brewing Company). Indianapolis was a regular and frequent stop for Foster's American Giants. Taylor and Foster were rivals, often fielding teams which were very well-matched. In July 1915, however, the rivalry took on a new dimension of intensity in the midst of very unusual events. In the eighth inning of a tied game in Indianapolis, a wind storm began, stirring up the infield dust and obscuring the outfield. The A.B.C.'s stopped play and began sprinkling the left side of the infield with water to keep the dust down. Foster requested they water the entire infield; the A.B.C.'s owner (a white man named Bowser) ordered the umpire to resume play. Foster's appeals to the umpire were met with more calls from Bowser to restart the game. Eventually, the harried umpire awarded the game to Indianapolis by forfeit, prompting players and fans to rush the field. A melee ensued in which white police officers drew their guns and restored order by threatening to shoot into the crowd. The trouble continued the next day, in the third inning. As Foster made his way to the first-base coach's box, he was accosted by a policeman hurling racial insults at him. At the same moment, Foster's assistant manager (a man named Bauchman) was making his way to the third-base coach's box. He stopped to straighten the base and was shoved aside by Taylor himself. Taylor then summoned the police, who ran over and proceeded to beat Bauchman.⁵³

In the following weeks Foster and Taylor related their versions of the unpleasant incidents in the pages of the *Defender* and *Freeman*. Foster described these events dramatically as "the complete humiliation of a life's effort to advance and promote baseball

⁵³ "Rube Foster's Signed Statement of the Giants-A.B.C. Mixup," *Defender*, July 31, 1915. *Freeman*, August 7, 1915, "Rube Foster's Explanation" and "C.I. Taylor Standing Up for His Baseball Integrity," August 14, 1915.

among our people."⁵⁴ He labeled Taylor a "stool pigeon" for the Indianapolis police and an "ingrate" for not acknowledging all the help he had given to Taylor and various A.B.C. players over the years. Taylor, he wrote, had a history of being so objectionable that his own brothers would not play for him and furthermore, his own players physically abused him on a regular basis. Taylor angrily denied these charges as false, malicious, and libelous. He was particularly adamant on the stool pigeon accusation, declaring flatly, "I have never in my life had anything to do with police officers." In this way Taylor fended off Foster's implication that he was acting in concert with the white power structure of his city.⁵⁵

Taylor refuted Foster's claims and then moved the discussion in a different direction in a long letter, published in the *Freeman and Defender*. This letter included copies of two other letters he had written to Foster in the previous year about starting a league of professional black baseball clubs. Like Leland, Moseley, Wyatt, and a host of others who had attempted it in years past, Taylor had urged Foster to expand and secure the world of black professional baseball through league-formation:

We could go and get the colored businessmen of each city together, discuss the organization of the league with them, form a local association...and then call a meeting at some city, say Chicago, and have a representative or a couple of representatives from each local association attend the meeting....⁵⁶

Taylor had even suggested that Foster would be the ideal president of such a league but, by his account, Foster routinely dismissed these suggestions. Taylor took that to mean that Foster wanted to be the one, the only one, who could build and run such an organization.

⁵⁴ "Rube Foster's Signed Statement of the Giants-A.B.C. Mixup," *Defender*, July 31, 1915 and "Rube Foster's Explanation," *Freeman*, August 7, 1915.

⁵⁵ Taylor's brothers, Ben and "Candy Jim," were well-known ballplayers at the time. Candy Jim Taylor played third base for Foster in 1912 and 1913. "C.I. Taylor Standing Up for His Baseball Integrity," *Freeman*, August 14, 1915. Lester and Clark (eds.), *The Negro Leagues Book*, p. 63-64.

⁵⁶ Taylor also described, in great detail, how a league could address key problems in black baseball, e.g., players jumping from team to team to drive up salaries and maintaining competitive parity among teams. "C.I. Taylor Standing Up for His Baseball Integrity," *Freeman*, August 14, 1915.

This was a position later supported by Billy Lewis of the *Freeman* who gently suggested that Foster had "allowed his reputation to get the better of his judgment."⁵⁷ He too called for the formation of a national league for black professional baseball. Reports in the black press suggest Foster did follow this suggestion (or was perhaps already at work on it). In the winter of 1916, the *Freeman* reported Foster was buying ballparks from the defunct Federal League in which he planned to install black baseball teams. St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Chicago were rumored to be his choice cities for a four-team circuit.⁵⁸

In 1916, Foster found himself embroiled in the internal affairs of the A.B.C. club. Taylor and Bowser suffered a public parting of the ways. Both men formed teams using the familiar name "Indianapolis A.B.C.'s." Although Foster's American Giants played a game against Bowser's squad in Chicago, he was generally inclined to avoid the conflict. To that end, his alleged plan for a four-team league did not include Indianapolis, despite its proximity to Chicago. In July, Foster traveled to the city ostensibly to mend fences with Taylor. His ulterior purpose was to try to restore order in Indianapolis by mediating a resolution for Taylor and Bowser's problems. Bowser was not present at the conference; Foster suggested Taylor consolidate his squad with Bowser's into one baseball club. Taylor rejected this solution and instead pushed the league issue. Foster dismissed this, asserting that he had nothing to gain by forming a league, for Chicago-area games paid him best. Although the two magnates could not resolve these issues, they did agree to resume scheduling games against one another.⁵⁹

Not long after the Foster-Taylor conference, the two clashed swords once more. At the end of the 1916 season Taylor's A.B.C.'s met the American Giants in a twelve-game

⁵⁷ Billy Lewis, "Baseball Controversy -- Managers at Loggerheads," *Freeman*, September 11, 1915.

⁵⁸ "A Big League of Negro Players," *Freeman*, February 12, 1916. The Federal League was a short-lived attempt at a third (white) major league. It operated for one season (1914) before folding. Since Foster's personal papers are not known to exist, it is impossible to judge with absolute certainty whether the *Freeman* had this story right. Foster may have investigated the idea without seeing it through. The first Negro National League, which he started in 1920, did not include teams from Philadelphia or Pittsburgh.

⁵⁹ Billy Lewis, "Rube Foster in the City," *Freeman*, July 16, 1916.

series the press dubbed the "World's Colored Championship." Seven wins were needed to crown a champion but neither club reached that mark. When series play was halted, Taylor declared the A.B.C.'s were the champions because they lead the series five games to four. Foster disputed the claim, alleging the teams were tied with four wins apiece. At issue was the status of a game awarded to the A.B.C.'s by forfeit. It came about when Foster, standing in the first-base coach's box between innings, put on a glove which had been left by the base. The A.B.C.'s complained and urged the umpire to order Foster to remove it. The umpire did so, but Foster refused, appealing to the head umpire for a ruling. He too ordered Foster to remove the glove. Marveling at the ridiculousness of the situation, Foster pulled his team from the field in protest, hastening the forfeit. Later he explained this action as justified, since the umpires were not following the rules by insisting he remove the glove.⁶⁰

This bizarre incident indicates the level of disorganization which at times plagued black professional baseball in inter-city and inter-state contests. Nonetheless, Foster's American Giants remained the powerhouse black baseball team in American through the 1910s and was the toast of black Chicago. Leaders of Chicago's African American community continued to support the team. Press coverage was always favorable and attendance was consistently good. Chicago's African American leaders praised the American Giants and hailed them as a successful, respectable race enterprise. They continued to push against the color line in major league baseball. Beauregard Moseley, by 1917 an expert on the business of black professional baseball and the importance of race enterprises in Chicago, cheered Foster's team while deriding its white South Side counterparts, the Chicago White Sox. The Sox were struggling in the 1917 World Series against the New York Giants. At the same moment, the American Giants were filling their stands and playing much better baseball, in Moseley's estimation, just four blocks away. "Baseball belongs to no individual and no particular set of players," Moseley wrote,

⁶⁰ "Rube Wants Championship Without Fighting For It," *Freeman*, November 11, 1916. This article includes a reprint of a letter Taylor wrote to the Chicago *Ledger*, which printed it on September 11, 1916.

"perhaps someday this fact will be so well demonstrated that those who wish to see a scientific game of baseball will demand that those skilled in the art shall be pitted against one another, regardless of racial grouping or color."⁶¹ The White Sox managed to win the 1917 World Series in six games. Moseley celebrated their victory in the pages of *The Broad Ax*, joining the long-running, popular rivalry between Chicago and New York: "There is nothing worth doing that Chicago can't beat New York at, along all lines."⁶² Unfortunately, Chicago's white sports fans did not return the good will and sense of municipal "togetherness." The champion American Giants continued to labor in obscurity outside of the black belt.

* * *

Throughout the 1910s, African American migrants from the south continued to pour into the city, particularly when the need for industrial workers spiked during World War I. The migrants taxed the resources of assistance groups such as the Urban League, the Phyllis Wheatley Home, and the Wabash Avenue Y.M.C.A. These pressures, combined with race-based restrictions on access to housing, public services and facilities, and labor unions lead to the infamous and terrible race riot in the summer of 1919. In the wake of the riot, 38 people lay dead (15 white, 23 African American), 537 were injured, and more than a thousand were homeless. After the riot male leaders of the African American community found interracial civic endeavors increasingly difficult. They continued the process of turning inward, focusing their resources and attention on maximizing the quality of life for people inside the ever-tightening ghetto as well as solidifying their roles as leaders in the African American community. Black women, by contrast, worked cooperatively with white women through the 1920s in groups such as the League of Women Voters. Although the riot marks the end of a period of relative optimism for race progress among African

⁶¹ Beauregard Moseley, "The World Series," *Broad Ax*, October 13, 1917.

⁶² *Ibid.*, October 20, 1917.

American male leaders in Chicago, the age of the New Negro which followed it was an era in which black men reasserted their masculinity through a host of activities.⁶³

Some African American politicians, for example, settled into comfortable roles as procurers of jobs and favors to their constituents. Aldermen Jackson and Anderson served many terms in the second and third wards over the course of many years but never delivered the things which would make a tangible difference in the lives of most black Chicagoans: improved housing, better jobs, and true access to the full rights of citizenship. The American Giants did not deliver these things either, but they did elevate the spirits of African Americans suffering under the city's tightening segregation. Jackson and Anderson may have been symbols of pride to other elites, but the American Giants were more accessible race heroes, a touchstone that resonated more immediately and perhaps profoundly with the public. These old settler elites shaped some degree of race progress but they were more impressive as symbols of success and possibility than true harbingers of a new day dawning for black Chicago.

Other elites, the young professionals, did engage in activities that had a more immediate impact. Certainly Beauregard Moseley tried very hard to be the shining light for the future of the race, despite never quite reaching his full promise. The charismatic young professional whose passion for race enterprises and strident demands of the political system were somewhat anathema to the old settlers, died of influenza in 1919. His Dixie Land Amusement Park was run for a time by Carey B. Lewis, and was later bought by a young African American entrepreneur named Ollie Scales, who renamed the facility "Joyland Amusement Park."

In the murderous context of race relations in Chicago after World War I, professional baseball's color line grew ever stronger. Dominance by the American Giants coupled with total exclusion from white major league baseball led Foster to an inescapable

⁶³ On black masculinity in the 1920s, see Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1884-1994* (New York, 1999), p. 110-141 and Patricia Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill, 2001), p. 215-246.

conclusion by 1920: the realm of black professional baseball would have to grow. A national league of professional black baseball teams, wholly owned and operated by African Americans, was the only way to continually develop the world which his club, the pride of black Chicago, dominated through the 1910s. Foster's challenge for the new decade -- for the age of the New Negro -- was to do that which proved undoable in 1908, 1909, and 1910. It would require large personal sacrifice on Foster's part but the payoff was potentially huge for baseball and for race progress. A national league, with Foster at the helm and Chicago's black community supporting him, would elevate the influence of Chicago's African American community. Rube Foster's *Negro National League*, founded in 1920, had the added benefit of forming an important cultural link between African American communities in many cities.

CHAPTER FOUR

The New Negro, The Negro National League

*The Riot is Over.
Everyone is Doing Business.*¹

In the years immediately following Chicago's racial riot, the city attempted to uncover the sources of the riot (and presumably prevent a recurrence) through the Governor-appointed *Chicago Commission on Race Relations*. While the Commission gathered facts and figures, Chicago's race men poured their energies into race enterprises.² They realized the horror and destruction of the riot, and the spate of home bombings in black neighborhoods that preceded and followed it, were powerful statements. Whites in Chicago were intent on retaining the city's informal, extralegal, and pervasive culture of segregation which denied the full rights of citizenship to blacks. As the *Chicago Whip*, a new and somewhat militant black newspaper, bitterly observed, the awful riot had provided black Chicagoans with "a taste of the southern methods of settling race disputes."³

Through the 1920s, Chicago's segregation accelerated dramatically. As the black population grew from 109,000 to 233,000, the *isolation index* (the percentage of the black population living together, apart from whites) rose from 38% in 1920 to a startling 70%

¹ Advertisement in the *Chicago Whip*, August 15, 1919.

² The Commission published its findings in *The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and Race Riot* (Chicago, 1922).

³ J. W. Johnstone, *Whip*, September 27, 1919.

in 1930.⁴ This was the result of continued violence against blacks and discriminatory practices in housing and employment. Although the city's tradition of political patronage enabled more African Americans to secure political appointments -- particularly under white Republican mayor William H. "Big Bill" Thompson, who distributed patronage positions to blacks through African American alderman Louis B. Anderson and Robert R. Jackson in the second and third wards -- it fell far short of establishing meaningful political power for black Chicagoans.⁵ Moreover, segregated vice (mainly prostitution and gambling) grew rapidly with the help of key race men who supported it, with protection from Thompson's city hall.

An important feature of this segregation was the ascension of race pride in the form of the "New Negro" -- a an image of black political, economic, and cultural success through self-empowerment -- and in the flowering of race enterprises which funded the gamut of black culture: sport, music, nightlife, and vice. In the 1920s, black professional baseball made enormous strides in Chicago. It was an important factor helping to drive the formation of the black community and, unlike vice, it was an above-board means by which African Americans tried, with some degree of success, to gain access to the booming economic growth of the city.

In this context of accelerating segregation and the growing influence of black vice, the American Giants' success in the 1920s positioned the club as one of the most

⁴ Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), p. 24, 31. Allan Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920* (Chicago, 1967), p. 12.

⁵ Ralph Bunche, "The Negro in Chicago Politics," *National Municipal Review*, 17 (May 1928): 261-264. On Anderson and Jackson, see Douglas Bukowski, *Big Bill Thompson, Chicago, and the Politics of Image* (Urbana, 1998), p. 49, 137, 139, 202.

visible rallying points of race pride and respectable business achievement in Chicago's black community. The ballpark's location inside the black belt was important, for it functioned as a beacon of legitimate enterprise, prosperity, success, and community. Furthermore, because Rube Foster organized and ran the Negro National League from his office in Chicago's black belt, the city's African American community sat squarely in the national spotlight. This was especially true after the birth of the rival Eastern Colored League in 1923. At different moments under Foster's stewardship of the NNL, this national role brought either pride (when winning championships) or despair (over Foster's handling of black umpires) to black Chicago.

Ultimately, the success of the American Giants and the NNL could not overcome the problems built into the urban environment: segregated housing, inadequate jobs, minimal political influence. Together, these factors eventually helped to spell disaster for the American Giants. By the end of the decade Rube Foster was dead, the American Giants was being run by white men, the NNL was teetering on the brink of collapse, and the grinding poverty of the Great Depression was quickly taking hold of the black belt.

"We Are the Ship, All Else the Sea"

In the winter of 1919-1920, Rube Foster wrote several articles in the *Defender* detailing plans for a league of professional black baseball teams. He originally envisioned a league mirroring major league baseball, with western and eastern circuits. Foster situated his national league proposal in the context of the New Negro by inserting

baseball into the public discourse about race pride, self-help, and respectability. Lack of response from eastern club owners, however, deeply discouraged him:

It would have been in keeping with the times for such a circuit...to do something concrete as a stepping stone to success; that would warrant the continuance of the patronage that they have enjoyed based solely on their loyalty to the Race.⁶

Foster focused his attention on organizing a league in the midwest where, he wrote, differences between owners could be resolved when the greater good was at stake: "in the West we managers often disagree, yet we eventually come to an agreement...that we will cooperate and stand by any plan agreed on is a moral certainty."⁷ He invoked the respectability argument that was then being formulated by other Chicagoans (such as *Defender* editor Robert Abbott). Foster branded the eastern teams and Nat Strong -- the white booking agent who ruled their scheduling -- as wholly untrustworthy, self-interested, and dishonest, i.e., not respectable. Foster's league would be different.

On February 13, 1920, Foster convened a meeting of midwestern club owners at the Paseo Y.M.C.A. in Kansas City. At his urging, the following owners agreed to form the *Negro National League*: Tenny Blount (Detroit Stars), Lorenzo Cobb (St. Louis Giants), C.I. Taylor (Indianapolis A.B.C.'s), John Matthews (Dayton Marcos, *in absentia*), J. L. Wilkinson, (Kansas City Monarchs and the All-Nations), Joe Green (Chicago Giants), and Foster (Chicago American Giants). Abel Linares later added his Cuban Stars to the League. Several sportswriters were present at the inaugural meeting: Dave Wyatt (then with the Indianapolis *Ledger*), Elwood Knox (*Freeman*), Carey B. Lewis (*Defender*), and C.A. Franklin (Kansas City *Call*). The owners selected Foster as

⁶ Rube Foster, "Pitfalls of Baseball," *Defender*, January 10, 1920.

⁷ *Ibid.*, January 17, 1920.

the first League president and chose Carey B. Lewis to be the League's Secretary. Foster then made an announcement which set the tone for the next six years of his autocratic leadership: he had already incorporated the Negro National League in Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, and Maryland.⁸

The owners chose a motto for the League: "We Are the Ship, All Else the Sea." In so doing, they were highlighting a connection between black professional baseball, race pride, and politics. Nearly sixty years before, Frederick Douglass had urged political and racial unity when addressing a convention of black workers in New Orleans by saying, "the Republican Party is the deck, all else the sea." This phrase then became the slogan of black Republicans, including Chicagoans, who overwhelmingly supported "the party of Lincoln" until the 1930s.⁹

The club owners also agreed to adopt the basic constitution of Nat Strong's eastern circuit, the loosely federated *National Association of Colored Professional Baseball Clubs*. This association was not a league, but rather a mechanism through which Strong orchestrated games between independent teams. By adopting the constitution, the leaders of the new NNL hoped to broaden it into a truly national membership in future years. They envisioned a system that emulated (and shadowed) the

⁸ "Baseball Magnates Hold Conference," *Defender*, February 14, 1920. "Base Ball News," *Whip*, February 14, 1920.

⁹ For the switch of African Americans in Chicago to the Democratic party, see Wallace Best, "The Chicago *Defender* and the Realignment of Black Chicago," *Chicago History*, 24:3 (Fall 1995): 5. On Douglass' 1872 speech see Roger Biles, *Big City Boss in Depression and War: Mayor Edward J. Kelly of Chicago* (DeKalb, IL, 1984), p. 89.

two-league, eastern-midwestern alignment of the white major leagues.¹⁰ After the owners agreed to principles for governing the new League, the sportswriters drafted the League's own formal constitution. Each team paid \$500 to enter the League and agreed to the following rules, many of which reflected a common concern for maintaining respectability. Members would respect player contracts throughout the League (raiding was not allowed); managers and owners would be fined for ungentlemanly conduct; managers could not remove their players from the field during a game under any circumstances; ballplayers had to adhere to a code of conduct on and off the field; players attempting to jump contracts would be suspended from the League; and teams could refuse games with non-League (or non-Association) clubs. As was the case in the white major leagues, the rules also made it clear that players in the NNL had little control over their labor. Owners could trade or sell their players' services, and players could not be 'borrowed' for League games.¹¹

To ensure parity, club owners agreed to let the sportswriters redistribute players among the clubs. They also decided to take a year to prepare for League play, looking to April 1921 as the NNL's launch date. Determined to avoid some of the problems which plagued Frank Leland and Beauregard Moseley's league-forming attempts a decade before, Foster hoped that this interlude would also give club owners time to secure home parks for their teams, either leased or owned.¹² As April 1920 approached, however, the

¹⁰ Janet Bruce, *The Kansas City Monarchs: Champions of Black Baseball* (Lawrence, KS, 1985), p. 13-14. Phil Dixon and Patrick Hannigan, *The Negro Baseball Leagues: A Photographic History* (Mattituck, NY, 1992), p. 123-124. Dick Clark and Larry Lester (eds.), *The Negro Leagues Book* (Cleveland, 1994), p. 17. Rob Ruck, *Sandlot Seasons: Sport in Black Pittsburgh* (Urbana, 1987), p. 124. Donn Rogosin, *Invisible Men: Life in Baseball's Negro Leagues* (New York, 1983), p. 10-11.

¹¹ Bruce, *The Kansas City Monarchs*, p. 13-14.

¹² "Baseball Men Write League Constitution," *Defender*, February 21, 1920.

NNL owners decided to begin play immediately. In Chicago, soaring segregation in the aftermath of the riot primed the black community to embrace Foster's new race enterprise.¹³

The Segregated City After the Riot

Through the 1920s, the shabby landscape of the black belt's residences swelled with southern migrants. The city had no plan to accommodate them, other than to maintain the ongoing, informal scheme of residential segregation that kept blacks bound to the ghetto, paying high rents for poor housing stock. Middle-class African Americans did push for better housing, but commonly encountered substantial hostility from whites. In addition to street violence, the influential *Tribune* served as a forum for white Chicagoans to complain about issues such as "Negro invasions" of white neighborhoods and white suburbs and "Negro brutality" on streetcars.¹⁴ Furthermore, the migration stretched resources of self-help agencies like the Chicago Urban League to the breaking point. This fact, when added to the shock of the riot, declining public interest in race relations through the 1920s, and ever-decreasing income caused some Chicago Urban League officials to consider urging migrants to return to the Jim Crow south.¹⁵

¹³ The excitement over the NNL spawned league-forming efforts in other regions. In March 1920 team owners from Nashville, Birmingham, Knoxville, Chattanooga, Greenville (S.C.), Atlanta, Jacksonville, Montgomery, Pensacola, and New Orleans planned to spend a year operating in conjunction with the white Southern League before joining the NNL in 1921. "Southern Baseball League Formed," *Defender*, March 6, 1920.

¹⁴ *Tribune*, July 17, 1921, "Two Sides to the Race Problem," February 26, 1923, "Shall We Treat 'Em Rough?," March 3, 1923, "Race Irritation."

¹⁵ Arvarh Strickland, *History of the Chicago Urban League* (Urbana, 1966), p. 57, 82.

In addition, most industrial unions still balked at black membership. Meat-packing was an exception, although there was a separate (small) black union in the stock yards. Packinghouse managers decimated it, and divided black workers and white ethnic workers, by setting up an office in the black belt and providing transportation to the Yards. When a meat-packing strike failed spectacularly in December 1921-January 1922, it was partly due to racial strife encouraged by the packers.¹⁶ In other industries such as steel, corporations commonly deployed African Americans as strike-breakers, further polarizing white ethnics who were walking the picket lines and black Chicagoans who needed work.¹⁷ The Riot Commission's 1922 report, *The Negro in Chicago*, identified these labor issues as factors contributing to the riot. It recommended unions accept black workers on equal footing with whites, and that employers stop using black workers as strike-breakers.¹⁸ This plea was to no avail, for even African American veterans, whose service on the battlefields of Europe was the ultimate expression of what the *Defender* called "100 per cent Americanism," fared no better upon their return to the city.¹⁹

Against this comprehensive backdrop of segregation, Chicago's race women and men focused enormous amounts of energy on race advancement and uplift, but in very different ways. Leading black club women such as Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Irene Goins, and

¹⁶ Rick Halpern, *Down on the Killing Floor: Black and White Workers in Chicago's Packinghouses, 1904-1954* (Urbana, 1997), p. 71-72.

¹⁷ James Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle: Chicago's Packinghouse Workers, 1894-1922* (Urbana, 1987), especially p. 188-268. Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 42-45.

¹⁸ Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot* (Chicago, 1922), p. 647. Strickland, *History of the Chicago Urban League*, p. 58.

¹⁹ "100 per cent Americanism," *Defender*, January 3, 1920.

Irene McCoy Gaines, used their positions in political clubs, such as the Ida B. Wells Club, the Third Ward Women's Political Club, and the National League of Republican Colored Women, to pursue socio-economic reforms and municipal office.²⁰ The IFRCWC worked especially hard to develop a place in the Republican party for African American women. Opposition, however, came in many forms. As Deborah Gray White and Patricia Schechter have argued, the sexual revolution of the 1920s, the "underlying machismo" of the New Negro, and the influence of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association — which promulgated a definition of black manhood that promised to provide for black women, protect them from abuse, and "rescue" them from the labor force — subsumed a great deal black women's political activity. This occurred despite the ardent efforts of the NLRCW, the International Council of Women of the Darker Races of the World, and female Garveyites to assert black women's place in the political realm through organizing, voting, and running for office.²¹

Chicago's race men focused their attention on developing more race enterprises and gaining political power in the city. By investing in black businesses in the ghetto, a few middle-class and wealthy blacks enjoyed a degree of prosperity in the post-war period. These businesses were operated by African Americans inside the black belt and were directed at an entirely black customer base. Some individuals, like banker and realtor Jesse Binga, who opened the Binga State Bank in 1921, made a fortune in this

²⁰ Patricia Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill, 2001), p. 233-244.

²¹ Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994* (New York, 1999), p. 110-141, esp. p. 116, 120-122, 135-136, and 140. Five African American women in the Chicago area ran for office in 1930, including Wells-Barnett. All were defeated. Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett*, p. 216-218. For white women's lack of success in gaining public office or for securing their socioeconomic reforms in the same decade, see Maureen A. Flanagan, *Seeing With Their Hearts: Chicago Women and the Vision of the Good City, 1871-1933* (Princeton, 2002).

way but most did not.²² Black political leaders, such as alderman Anderson and Jackson of the second and third wards, found that personal advancement and race progress would be constrained by the city's party politics. Both men became devotees of Chicago's Republican machine and tried, when possible, to distribute patronage to their constituents.

The groundwork for this campaign of conscious investment inside the ghetto coupled with machine politics was laid in the 1910s by the proliferation of new civic and cultural institutions discussed in chapter three. The Riot Commission's influential report further encouraged it by choosing to seek "peaceful accommodation" between white and black Chicagoans by refusing to denounce anything other than *forcible* segregation.²³ An occasional letter in the *Tribune* by an African American agreed with this sentiment,²⁴ but it was specific race men, such as alderman Anderson, who did the most to advance this approach with remarks such as these:

most Negroes would prefer to live in a district exclusively inhabited by people of their own Race... The Colored man has no desire to mix indiscriminately with the whites, but he must have a roof over his head.²⁵

Chicago's politically active black women surely would have disagreed with these sentiments. Interracial cooperation and objectives were a common part of their

²² Massey and Denton, *American Apartheid*, p. 40. *Broad Ax*, January 8, 1921.

²³ The report implicitly accepted non-forcible segregation. Thomas Philpott, *The Slum and the Ghetto: Immigrants, Blacks, and Reformers in Chicago, 1880-1930* (New York, 1978, 1991), p. 210-228.

²⁴ *Tribune*, "For Segregation of the Races," July 21, 1921.

²⁵ Anderson in the *Defender*, February 7, 1920. Cited in Philpott, *The Slum and the Ghetto*, p. 224-225.

experience.²⁶ Nonetheless, after the war and the riot, this “inward turn” in black Chicago, so strongly advocated by Beauregard Moseley and Rube Foster in earlier years, was becoming the norm for race men who focused a great deal of attention on economic issues.

The city’s economy was booming in the 1920s but African Americans could not gain equal access to this prosperity. A telling example is the record numbers of commercial and residential building permits issued in the early 1920s — a building boom for white Chicagoans, not black.²⁷ Not surprisingly, black newspapers found a popular theme in economic self-help. The *Whip* stirred readers by spearheading a “buy where you live” campaign in the 1920s. The *Broad Ax* also took up the call, urging readers to “patronize your race” and to “make the change yourselves.”²⁸ An area in which African Americans could easily do this was sport. There was no finer institution than the American Giants, and no better venue for black sport in the black belt, than Schorling’s Park.

The Golden Age of Sport

The American Giants rode a wave of sport mania in the 1920s, the so-called “golden age” of American sports. Importantly, this “golden age” overwhelmingly celebrated white athletes. Across the nation white sports stars in every field rose to

²⁶ The interracial alliances between Wells-Barnett, Goins, Gaines, Jane Addams, Celia Parker Woolley, to name a few, are well-known and were a factor in the 1928 election of Ruth McCormick (who was white) to Congress.

²⁷ “March Building Permits Break Chicago Record,” *Tribune*, April 3, 1923.

²⁸ *Broad Ax*, November 16, 1918 and December 7, 1918.

unprecedented heights of success and fortune. They capitalized on old technologies (the printed word) and new ones (radio broadcasts) to become larger-than-life celebrities. In college football, Red Grange and Knute Rockne thoroughly dominated all competitors, setting incredible records in the process. Heavyweight boxing champion Jack Dempsey, the “Manassa Mauler,” destroyed all challengers from 1919-1926 and earned millions of dollars. Helen Wills Moody and Bill Tilden claimed title after title in the world of tennis. Bobby Jones blazed through the ranks of the golfing world. Gertrude Ederle stunned the public by swimming the English Channel, besting the male record by more than two hours. And in the national pastime, Babe Ruth, the “Sultan of Swat,” electrified fans with an endless shower of monstrous homeruns.

Most African American athletes labored in obscurity, even in their own cities, as in Chicago, a testament to the power of segregation. There were only a few African American athletes who competed successfully alongside whites: William DeHardt Hubbard, gold medalist in the long jump at the 1924 Olympics; and two all-black basketball teams, the New York Renaissance and the Harlem Globetrotters (of Chicago), who faced white as well as black opponents. Chicago became a haven for African American sport in the 1920s. Abe Saperstein’s Globetrotters was one of several black basketball squads in the city. The Chicago Romas and the Savoy Big Five were the others. The predominantly black Wendell Phillips High School enjoyed a national reputation for its successful sports teams, and Richard Hudlin, an African American, captained the University of Chicago’s tennis team.²⁹

²⁹ Arthur Ashe, *A Hard Road to Glory: A History of the African American Athlete, Vol. 2: 1919-1945* (New York, 1988), p. 5. Gerald Gems, “Blocked Shot: The Development of Basketball in the African American Community of Chicago,” *Journal of Sport History*, 22:2 (Summer 1995): 135-148. Globetrotters on p. 147.

Foster's baseball club was more typical of black athletic success in the "golden age" because, like these examples, it functioned in a sphere apart from whites. Indeed, in the 1920s African Americans were barred from major league baseball; after the turmoil of Jack Johnson, heavyweight boxing's officials refused to give black challengers a shot at the title; the newly-formed National Football League began pushing blacks out by mid-decade (achieving total exclusion by 1934); and the American Basketball League, a new professional basketball league formed in the 1920s, had a whites-only policy.³⁰

White Players, Black Sox

White professional baseball in Chicago began this "golden age" reeling mightily from a scandal. In 1919, eight members of the White Sox conspired with gamblers to lose the 1919 World Series. The ensuing Chicago "Black Sox" scandal sent the major league club owners scurrying for a way to quickly clean up the game and restore public confidence. In many different ways, Chicago swirled at the center of the maelstrom surrounding this incident. First and foremost, it was a windy city team that offended the baseball world and the nation. Worse, the disgraced players were tried in a circus atmosphere in Chicago, the climax of which came when three of the players' written Grand Jury confessions mysteriously disappeared. The purloined confessions secured acquittal, but the players were banned for life by major league baseball's new commissioner: Kennesaw Mountain Landis, a controversial federal judge whose court

³⁰ Ashe, *A Hard Road to Glory*, p. 3-5. Gems, "Blocked Shot," p. 135-148.

was located in, of course, the city of Chicago.³¹

The Black Sox debacle firmly planted the image of Chicago as a wide-open, wild, and dangerous city into the national consciousness. When the scandal broke, the Chicago *Herald-Examiner* printed this legendary (perhaps apocryphal) exchange between White Sox slugger Joe Jackson and a young fan:

Fan: "Say it ain't so, Joe. Say it ain't so."

Jackson: "Yes Kid, I'm afraid it is."³²

Daily coverage of the Black Sox trial in the *Tribune* glamorized the extremes of human behavior bound up in the scandal: the boldness of the gamblers who dared sully the national game, the miserly business practices of Charles Comiskey, the tight-fisted White Sox owner, and the poor character of the star ballplayers who lost their livelihood and self-respect for the promise of a few dollars -- which most of them never actually received.³³ In addition, the Black Sox inquiry exposed baseball betting pools throughout the city of Chicago. Thus the scandal focused public attention on vice in Chicago by linking it directly to sport. A series of raids in the fall of 1920 resulted in the arrest of

³¹ On the Black Sox see, for example, Eliot Asinof, *Eight Men Out: The Black Sox and the 1919 World Series* (New York, 1963), Daniel Ginsburg, *The Fix is In: A History of Baseball Gambling and Game Fixing Scandals* (Jefferson, NC, 1995), and Harold Seymour, *Baseball: The Golden Age* (New York, 1971), especially chapter 15.

³² *Herald-Examiner*, September 30, 1920. Cited in Asinof, *Eight Men Out*, p. 121.

³³ Some particularly poignant *Tribune* articles from this extensive coverage include September 12, 1920, "Gambling Blot Smirches Game as Moguls Dally," July 6, 1921, "State Looks to Burns to 'Strike Out Black Sox,'" July 7, 1921, "Defense Likens Baseball Stars to Harem Slaves," July 12, 1921, "H.C. of Laundry Keeps White Sox Uniforms Dirty," July 18, 1921, "'Black Sox' Meet Their Accusers But Gain Nothing," July 19, 1921, "Called 'Jumper,' Comiskey Rages at Trial of Sox," July 20, 1921, "Burns Reveals Shame; Gives Cicotte Boast," July 22, 1921, "Sale of Series Players' Idea, Burns Asserts," July 23, 1921, "Sox Waivers of Immunity Are Missing," July 28, 1921, "Series Played Honestly, to be Defense of Sox."

numerous bookies, bettors, and bootleggers.³⁴ The scandal lingered on through the 1920s, as some of the banned players brought suit against the White Sox for back salary and lost bonuses.³⁵

The Black Sox scandal brought the respectability of white professional baseball in Chicago into serious question. The crime, the trial, and revelations about baseball gambling pools in the city jeopardized the White Sox franchise as well as the future of the sport. In sharp contrast to major league baseball's crisis in Chicago, black professional baseball boomed in the windy city. Because they were excluded from major league baseball, the Chicago American Giants were untouched by the Black Sox debacle. To further distance the American Giants and the Negro National League from the scandal enveloping white professional baseball in the city, Foster always promoted both as respectable and professional race enterprises. An important part of that effort was setting a high standard of performance and character for himself and for his ballplayers.

Playing for Rube in the NNL

The American Giants began the 1920 NNL season with 4,500 people in attendance at Schorling's Park despite poor weather, a figure which the *Whip* observed, "proved the public is hungry for baseball."³⁶ Indeed, they were. The American Giants regularly filled the stands at 39th and Wentworth, where capacity was estimated at 18,000.

³⁴ *Tribune*, September 9, 1920, "Local Bookies Become Wary of Baseball Bets," September 12, 1920, "Seize Walking Baseball Pool in Lop Bar Raid," September 12, 1920, "Baseball Pools Take 50% Toll From Players."

³⁵ "Hap Felsch and Risberg Now Sue for \$406,570," *Tribune*, April 4, 1923.

³⁶ "Foster Raises the Lid," *Whip*, April 17, 1920.

Strong performances from key players, such as veteran third baseman Dave Malarcher, fleet outfielder Jelly Gardner, sure-handed second baseman Bingo DeMoss, and power hitter Cristobel Torriente -- the "Colored Babe Ruth," according to the *Whip* -- complemented Foster's close and careful management of the team. A legendary strategist, Foster insisted all of his players become expert bunters. One of his well-known teaching techniques was to draw a circle in front of home plate and make each player bunt repeatedly into that circle. Harry Salmon of the Birmingham Black Barons recalled witnessing Foster's American Giants bunt for *seven straight innings* en route to winning a game.³⁷

Foster's insistence on bunting expertise helped the American Giants win games, but it was also emblematic of his impulse toward total control of his players, the League, and managing the public image of black professional baseball. Foster expected American Giants players to perform on the diamond by doing *exactly* what he told them. Catcher/pitcher Ted "Double Duty" Radcliffe recalled an incident when Foster instructed a pitcher to walk the great Oscar Charleston. The pitcher ignored Foster's instruction, and surrendered a home run:

when he came in the clubhouse, Rube spit in his face, said, "That'll cost you \$150 you son of a bitch. When I tell you to walk a man, walk him!"³⁸

³⁷ "Giants Seating Capacity Enlarged," *Defender*, June 7, 1919 and Salmon to John Holway, in John Holway, *Rube Foster: The Father of Black Baseball* (unpublished manuscript at the Chicago Historical Society), p. 14.

³⁸ Radcliffe to Holway, in *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Players were also expected to conduct themselves respectably off the field, and they were subject to Foster's reprimands if their off-field activities affected on-field performance.

Jelly Gardner remembered:

Rube never told me what to do after I left the ball park. You can do what you want to do, but when you came to the ball park he wanted you to play or he'd fine you. Like most ball players go out and have a good night and then didn't feel too good the next day, He'd take it away from you, say, "If you can't play go back to the hotel."³⁹

Despite holding players to a rigid social and professional code, Foster paid his players well, approximately \$2,000 per year by his own claims.⁴⁰ The American Giants also had the extra satisfaction of winning, which helped Foster to maintain a position of influence with the public. The team won the NNL championship in 1920, 1921, 1922, 1926, and 1927.⁴¹ Foster's American Giants traveled in high style. Epitomizing the image of respectability and professionalism, they toured the country in a customized Pullman car,⁴² transporting an image of black Chicago as a prosperous, proud, and respectable community across the nation — not a community pummeled into poverty by urban segregation and riddled with vice.

Beginning in 1923, Foster's Negro National League faced competition from a second league of black professional baseball teams: Nat Strong's *Eastern Colored League*. Top independent clubs from the east coast filled the ranks of the ECL: Baltimore Black Sox, Lincoln Giants (NY), Bacharach Giants (NJ), Brooklyn Royal

³⁹ Gardner to Holway, in Holway, *Rube Foster*, p. 17.

⁴⁰ Because Foster's papers are not known to exist, this figure cannot be corroborated.

⁴¹ Clark and Lester (eds.), *The Negro Leagues Book*, p. 21.

⁴² Malarcher to Holway. John Holway, *Voices From the Great Black Baseball Leagues* (New York, 1975), p. 50.

Giants (NY), Cuban Stars (NY; the eastern branch of this club), and the Hilldale Club (PA). The Harrisburg Giants (PA) and Washington Potomacs joined the League in 1924.⁴³ Strong and Foster were longtime rivals, and the emergence of the ECL may have disturbed Foster's desire to control all of black professional baseball. Ultimately, however, the ECL supported Foster's race endeavor in two ways. It boosted the overall popularity of and support for black professional baseball, and provided the impetus for a new, national celebration of black professional baseball: the Negro League World's Series.

From 1924 to 1927, the champion of the NNL faced the champion of the ECL at the end of the season (the ECL folded in 1928). This arrangement mirrored major league baseball's world's series system. The American Giants won two of these championships, in 1926 and 1927. The inaugural NNL-ECL World Series in 1924, however, best illustrates Rube Foster's central, controversial role as the czar of black professional baseball. The final three games of the 1924 Series were played in Schorling's Park, even though the American Giants were not in the Series. The Kansas City Monarchs had beaten the American Giants in the race for the NNL pennant, and the Monarchs were livid at the prospect of losing the attendance revenue from hosting world series games in their own city. Ultimately, several games were held in Kansas City, including a Sunday game (typically, the highest-revenue day of the week). But the final three games of the World Series -- the deciding contests in a close series, which Hilldale won -- were played

⁴³ "The Eastern Colored League 1924 Race." Afro American Museum of Philadelphia (hereafter AAMP), Cash-Thompson Collection, Box 1, Lloyd Thompson, Outgoing Correspondence folder.

at Schorling's Park in Chicago.⁴⁴ As the League's president, secretary, and booking agent, Foster clearly wielded a great deal of influence. Not surprisingly, he also attracted a large amount of controversy. In 1920s Chicago, however, controversy was a fundamental fact of life for race men trying to secure access to the city's power structure for personal and community advancement.

Race Men and Chicago Politics

The spirit of the New Negro in Chicago stimulated widespread optimism for the 1920s to become the age of ascendancy for a more militant, self-sufficient, successful, prosperous, and proud race. Many hoped this flowering of black entrepreneurial, creative, and political energy would build strength in the African American community, thereby enabling blacks to assert themselves in fair and equal pursuit of the Chicago's bounty, as equal citizens of the city. The American Giants were a very successful symbol of that vision amidst the backdrop of segregation.

In the black belt, the growth of race businesses was commonly linked to expanding political opportunities for a few high-profile African American men. Black Republican politicians -- aldermen (and baseball war veterans) Louis Anderson and Robert Jackson, committeemen Ed Wright and Daniel Jackson, and Congressman Oscar DePriest -- became very important figures in black Chicago in the 1920s. Although they delivered a small number of patronage positions to a few influential blacks, their ability to deliver significant benefits to the black masses was limited. Still, their activities in municipal politics, coupled with support for and of race enterprises, was the means

⁴⁴ "The Eastern Colored League 1925 Race." AAMP, Box 1, Lloyd Thompson, Outgoing Correspondence folder.

Chicago's race men used to push beyond the boundaries of the ghetto, to insert themselves and the interests of black Chicagoans into the city's power structure. For most of the 1920s, that structure was dominated by "Big Bill" Thompson's mayoral administrations (1919-1923, 1927-1931). Thompson was a controversial mayor whose support of a wide-open city, disdain for Prohibition, connections to Al Capone, and abuses of the city schools' treasury repeatedly invoked calls for tax relief, vice reform, and general "good government" from the *Tribune's* editorial writers and cartoonists.⁴⁵

In Chicago's so-called "Negro wards" of the 1920s — the second and third — Thompson found an important source of support. By actively courting African American voters, rewarding their support with patronage appointments (administered by black aldermen and committeemen), and allowing black vice to operate unimpeded, Thompson became a "hero," often called the "second Lincoln," in black Chicago. The activities of Thompson's machine, particularly regarding vice, conflicted with ideals of black middle-class respectability. Through the 1920s this helped to create a space filled by a respectable race enterprise, black professional baseball. Still, African American support for Thompson hovered at about 80% in the 1919 election.⁴⁶ Thompson did not seek a third term in 1923, an election in which many African American voters did not go to the polls. The total black vote that year decreased by a third from 1919. Through Louis Anderson, however, Thompson undermined black support for the Republican candidate, Arthur Leuder, of the rival Deneen faction. 53% of the black vote went to the victor,

⁴⁵ Cartoons: see, for example, *Tribune*, August 16, 24, and 28, 1920. Editorials: see, for example, *Tribune*, February 27, 1923, April 1, 1923, and April 3, 1927.

⁴⁶ John Allswang, *A House for All Peoples: Ethnic Politics in Chicago, 1890-1936* (Lexington, KY, 1971), p. 43.

Democrat William Dever.⁴⁷ Anderson and Robert Jackson won re-election as aldermen in the 2nd and 3rd wards. Mayor Dever set about reforming the city.⁴⁸

William Dever restored over 2,000 jobs to civil service status, cleared graft from the city schools, filled the school board with new programs, took on corruption in the city police force, and tried to implement a program of transit reform that would include the city's first subway. In September 1923, Dever began an all-out drive against bootlegging in the city. His office lifted 1,600 business licenses of legitimate places of business that were selling alcohol on the side. This was the start of "The Great Beer War" in Chicago, which brought Dever into the national spotlight but dangerously raised the ante in the city's gangland wars for control of the illegal alcohol trade.⁴⁹

Dever's reform programs took on racial tones. While campaigning for reelection in 1927, his administration focused a disproportionate amount of its Volstead enforcement in the second and third wards. Political overtones likely governed this decision, as Thompson was seeking a third term that year. On March 27, vice raids on the south side netted 1,000 arrests, all of whom were black. Accusations of race-baiting continued to election day (April 5), including the assertion that Dever's forces were planning to instigate a race riot shortly before the election. In a sharply contested campaign that featured kidnappings of poll workers in the primary and police protecting ballot boxes with machine guns in the general election, Thompson emerged victorious.

⁴⁷ John R. Schmidt, *"The Mayor Who Cleaned up Chicago": A Political Biography of William E. Dever* (DeKalb, IL, 1989), p. 73, 102.

⁴⁸ *Tribune*, February 28, 1923, "Aldermanic Vote by Wards" and "Elected Aldermen Yesterday."

⁴⁹ John R. Schmidt, "William E. Dever: A Chicago Political Fable" in Paul Green and Melvin Holli (eds.), *The Mayors: The Chicago Political Tradition* (Second edition, Carbondale, IL, 1995), p. 82-98, esp. p. 88, 89.

He was aided by strong pluralities of 22,474 in the second ward and 23,669 in the third.⁵⁰ Black support for Thompson topped 93% in 1927. Patronage appointments for blacks resumed. By the end of Thompson's reign in 1931, 14% of the city's legal department was African American. There were 137 black patrolmen, an increase of 87 from 1915, when Thompson first took office.⁵¹ Political advancement for blacks thus seemed possible, but always within the context of a white political machine whose mayor cultivated black support. The cultural dimensions of the age of the New Negro were partly linked to white support, albeit in a less direct manner. For example, Foster's American Giants relied on the lease and silent partnership provided by John Schorling. Black nightclubs needed political protection from whites, or from loyal black machine politicians like Louis Anderson, to stay open.

Cultural Life and the New Negro

Black music, namely jazz, thrived in south side nightclubs and cabarets in the 1920s. Jelly Roll Morton and Louis Armstrong were among scores of performers who graced the stages of black Chicago's clubs and cabarets. The fast-moving lifestyle which accompanied this nightlife sparked a good deal of class-based conflict within the African American community. The basic ideas of self-sufficiency, self-respect, political assertiveness, and racial pride were widely palatable. The problems lay in the lifestyles frequently constructed around those ideas. Many black Chicagoans, for example, balanced the sparkle of nightlife with bucolic daytime entertainment, namely black

⁵⁰ Bukowski, *Big Bill Thompson*, p. 180. *Tribune*, February 22, 1927, "Polls Officials Kidnaped [sic]," April 2, 1927, "Guns to Balk Vote Fraud" and April 6, 1927, "The Vote for Mayor by Wards."

⁵¹ Douglas Bukowski, "Big Bill Thompson" in Green and Holli (eds.), *The Mayors*, p. 71.

professional baseball, which thrived at Schorling's Park, 39th and Wentworth, in the heart of the black belt.⁵²

Through the black press, African American leaders voiced a range of opinions about who the New Negro was, and what he/she ought to be doing. In early January 1920, the *Defender* defined the New Negro as simply a fresh interpretation of an old idea. Editor Robert Abbott focused on what he called the ascension of "the same old tinted individual roused into self-consciousness, awakened to his own possibilities, with stiffened backbone, with new ambitions, new desires, new hopes for the future."⁵³ A week later, the *Whip* joined the discussion with more militant thoughts about the New Negro:

It is the task of the New Negro to turn the spotlight of truth on the cowardly conservative compromisers of his own race. To teach self-reliance. To teach that politics is not a lottery but a medium for the expression of the best in them. To teach that morality is not a vapoing ideal but the cornerstone of race achievement... that freedom, liberty, and justice is not the property of one race or class but of those who are willing to fight for it.⁵⁴

Here the *Whip* highlights the importance of municipal political power. Politics is "not just a lottery," but rather the means by race men can take a share of power in their city and distribute justice to their community.

Wherever the New Negro was situated along a spectrum of racial empowerment and self-consciousness, there was clearly consensus that something "new" was happening among black men and black institutions in the city. This was due in part to the

⁵² William Kenney, *Chicago Jazz: A Cultural History, 1904-1930* (New York, 1993) provides a comprehensive study of jazz on Chicago's south side.

⁵³ Robert Abbott, "The Old and the New," *Defender*, January 3, 1920.

⁵⁴ "The Task of the New Negro," *Whip*, January 10, 1920.

experience of African American soldiers in World War I. Race leaders pointed to their service to their country as proof that African Americans were worthy of the full rights of citizenship in America. A *Whip* editorial said it plainly: “the negro has proven his willingness to be a total American.”⁵⁵ The importance of the black war experience resurfaced in 1926, when the South Park District Board voted against erecting a memorial to black World War I veterans. Board President Ed Kelly (later mayor of Chicago) claimed the memorial would create a traffic problem. Aldermen Anderson and Jackson protested to the board, which ultimately reversed its vote.⁵⁶

A strong, recurrent theme in the public discourse over the war and the New Negro was black manhood. Beyond the obvious association of war and manliness, the reception African American soldiers received in Europe highlighted the issue of black masculinity. The *Whip* reprinted a Baltimore *Sun* article containing a column by a French writer who praised the behavior and demeanor of black soldiers:

The Negroes’ very polite, sincere manner, their exemplary conduct among the French civilians and their reckless brave and courageous conduct on the firing line won the hearts not only of the French women, but also of the French people as a whole...many French girls will testify that they received more courtesy and better treatment from American Negroes than from whites.⁵⁷

The title of the article, “France’s Womanhood Respects the Manhood of Colored Americans -- They are Men,” clearly links respectability to manhood. African American soldiers are cast as brave, courageous, courteous, kind, and gentlemanly; they are respectable men.

⁵⁵ “The Cause of the New Negro,” *Whip*, January 17, 1920.

⁵⁶ Bukowski, “Big Bill Thompson” in Green and Holli (eds.), *The Mayors*, p. 79.

⁵⁷ “France’s Womanhood Respects the Manhood of Colored Americans -- They are Men,” *Whip*, November 8, 1919.

Chicago's African American leaders embraced the New Negro by emphasizing respectability. The *Whip* pressed this issue by printing Professor Kelly Miller's "Oath of Afro-American Youth," an excerpt from his book, *Out of the House of Bondage*, in enormous, boxed type on page one. The Oath opens with a very direct statement about manliness:

I will never bring disgrace upon my race by any unworthy deed or dishonorable act. I will live a clean, decent, manly life; and I will ever respect and defend the virtue and honor of womanhood.⁵⁸

Although not a Chicagoan, Miller's sentiments echo those expressed by the men and women of the city's Elite 400 a decade before. To leading race men the "politics of respectability," however, meant elevating a feminine ideal which required male protection. It was rooted more in the Victorian period than in the 1920s, the so-called age of the "New Woman." As Victoria Wolcott has shown, elite black women made similar claims to respectability through a defense of chastity and purity. Protecting and elevating the "virtue and honor of womanhood" was an absolutely fundamental component of black female respectability (as well as male) among elites.⁵⁹ As the 1920s progressed, however, what it meant to live what Miller called a "clean, decent, manly life," became the subject of a debate that spotlighted tension between African American men and women of the old guard and those of the new. Because baseball was always touted as a respectable endeavor that conferred masculinity, the American Giants and the NNL were important parts of this debate. Moreover, black professional baseball sharply contrasted with another high-profile area of race enterprise: gambling.

⁵⁸ *Whip*, January 24, 1920. Kelly Miller, *Out of the House of Bondage* (New York, 1914).

⁵⁹ Victoria Wolcott, *Remaking Respectability: African American Women in Interwar Detroit* (Chapel Hill, 2001), p. 6.

Respectability and Policy

Much of the cultural expression in the age of the New Negro was centered in the south side black belt along the brightly-lit “Stroll” of State Street. Here African Americans could find bustling activity day or night. Most importantly for the southern migrants who flocked to the stores, shops, and nightclubs along the Stroll, blacks here were free of the restrictive social codes which marked the Jim Crow south they left behind.⁶⁰ In the first fifteen years of the century, the old levee district just south of the Loop had been the notorious center of saloons, concert halls, and vice (mainly gambling and prostitution). Pressure from Progressive Era reformers, and the growing black population which pushed the boundaries of the African American district southward, eventually shifted night life further south of the levee district, along State Street, and into an assortment of well-known nightclubs built around 35th and State: Elite Cafe #2, DeLuxe Cafe, Dreamland Cafe, Sunset Cafe, and the Plantation Cafe. By the end of the decade, the heart of the Stroll was even further south, at 47th and State. The legendary Savoy Ballroom, which opened on 47th Street in 1927, helped to solidify this location as a nexus of black cultural life.⁶¹ Schorling’s Park, home of the American Giants, stood in the midst of this black mecca at 39th and Wentworth.

An important feature of the increasingly free and expressive nightlife in black Chicago was *policy*, a type of gambling in which bettors wagered small amounts of money on a number, or several numbers, of a spinning wheel. Policy wheels were found all along the Stroll, and were patronized by a range of black Chicagoans. Politics, and

⁶⁰ James Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago, 1989), p. 86, 117.

⁶¹ Kenney, *Chicago Jazz*, p. 14-16.

the debate over respectability, became entwined in the blend of nightclubs, dance halls, and policy dens, as African American politicians commonly found their chief support in these places. For example, alderman Anderson was co-owner of the Royal Gardens Cafe. His partners were William Bottoms and Virgil Williams, who also co-owned the Dreamland Cafe. In 1923, Anderson's interest in Royal Gardens brought him into conflict with Augustus Williams, Robert Abbott, Julius Taylor, and other investors who were promoting a reinvigorated entertainment venue at 33rd and Wabash, Joyland Amusement Park. Joyland was Beauregard Moseley's last financial undertaking; now, three years after his death, Joyland's boosters advertised the park as a respectable alternative to the cabarets and dance halls of the Stroll: "The Park is protected by a host of young men of the race who are instructed by the management to give every one the best protection available."⁶²

Joyland's backers promoted it as an appropriate venue for church picnics, Sunday school outings, and fraternal organizations. Advertisements proclaimed the park was a place where visitors would enjoy "a clean and healthful amusement for all people who are desirous of visiting a place where they can have pleasure without molestation."⁶³ Furthermore, Williams (of the Urban League) was a political rival of alderman Anderson. He ran, unsuccessfully, for Anderson's seat in 1923. Anderson attempted to block Joyland's license application by drafting a city council order to close the park. Not

⁶² Advertisement in the *Broad Ax*, July 7, 1923.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, August 25, 1923.

surprisingly, Mayor Dever, an enforcer of prohibition and never a friend to urban nightlife in the black belt, vetoed Anderson's order. The park opened.⁶⁴

Joyland's struggle to open reflects the conflict between an older (pre-war) generation of elite black leaders and the young, fast set of black Chicagoans. In the pages of a black society journal called *Heebie Jeebies* (later renamed *The Light*), the former chastised the latter for what they perceived to be reckless, race-damaging behavior. "The Chicago Negro is trying to take off the burden of restraint handed down to him by an earlier generation," columnist Roger Didier wrote. "He has a selfish disregard for others and a tragic lack of respect."⁶⁵ As was the case before the war, elite African Americans confronted with residential segregation and neighborhoods teeming with poor, uncouth southern migrants chafed at the notion that the newcomers — whom the contemporary black scholar Ralph Bunche described as the "ignorant, peasant class" -- would disproportionately represent the race in the city at large.⁶⁶ They urged young blacks to adhere to a certain degree of respectable decorum, to 'pay their dues' by showing the proper deference to those who came before them and made possible the relative prosperity of the era. "How can we boast of the beautiful homes in which we live, the streets on which we stroll," asked *The Light*, "when we daily see them being shoved into disrepute by members of our race who have 'got there' too soon?" This article continued in cruel and damning fashion:

⁶⁴ Kenney, *Chicago Jazz*, p. 19, 28-31 and Mark Haller, "Organized Crime in Urban Society: Chicago in the Twentieth Century," *Journal of Social History*, 5:2 (1971/2): 221.

⁶⁵ Roger Didier, "Sammy and His Nude Cult," *Heebie Jeebies*, September 4, 1926, p. 7.

⁶⁶ Bunche, "The Negro in Chicago Politics," p. 262.

Ragged Negroes, rough Negroes, cursing Negroes, greasy Negroes, dirty Negroes, careless Negroes, moonshiners, thieves, morons, prostitutes, the loud and the dumb, parade and congregate in a maggot-like congress of disgrace.⁶⁷

Even in the confines of church, much less the nightclubs of the Stroll, elite African Americans criticized the behavior of the younger, migrant generation. Caswell Crews posed the question in *The Light*, "What can be done about these good souls who take their religion so noisily seriously?" Crews offered an answer, calling on blacks to control their emotions in public:

Shouting indicates mental aberration. It is not normal. One who shouts and performs gymnastic gyrations, swinging arms, kicking and lunging about, endangering eyesight and corns and what not of others is off his base whether in church, at a political meeting or at a football or baseball game or a prize fight.⁶⁸

Columns in society journals like *The Light* were a measure of the disaffection many settled, elite blacks felt for the growing community of working class southern migrants. Between 1910 and 1920, 65,000 blacks came to the city from Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas and Texas alone.⁶⁹ Folksy manners, rural customs, and inexperience in a huge urban setting seemed to tip the members of this new, industrial working class toward the seamy side of black life in the city. Here a group of enterprising young professionals -- the "numbers men," the kings of policy -- were a significant force in the community. They plied their trade to insert themselves into municipal government.

⁶⁷ "The Curse of 'Don't Care,'" *The Light*, 1927, p. 8.

⁶⁸ Caswell Crews, "Take It or Leave It," *The Light*, March 12, 1927, p. 8.

⁶⁹ Kenney, *Chicago Jazz*, p. 11.

Policy, Politicians, and Respectability

Policy was an integral trait of black cultural life in Chicago in the 1920s. The allure of policy was greater than the mere thrill of illegal gambling and the chance, however remote, to instantly strike it rich. Rather, policy was entwined with nightlife, jazz, illegal liquor, and by the early 1930s, with black professional baseball. For some African Americans, policy was the means by which they became fixtures in the “sporting set” of the black community. Whether they were respectable pillars of that community was, of course, debatable.

Black Chicago’s policy rackets were so well developed that by one estimate, about 6,000 African Americans worked in South Side gambling dens, and at least six million dollars were wagered on policy wheels per year in the 1920s.⁷⁰ Such substantial sums, earned illegally, naturally attracted the attention of police and city politicians to either close policy dens, or to let them continue to operate in return for a share of the profits and/or votes. Because policy-writers were continually floating into and out of the barbershops, stores, and pool halls of the African American community -- taking bets and paying a few lucky winners -- they were extremely useful to politicians. Policy men had extensive contacts in the black belt and were in a position, if properly enticed, to forgive bettors’ debts in return for votes. For enterprising policy kings like Daniel Jackson, policy was a direct avenue to political power.

Daniel Jackson came to Chicago from Pittsburgh in 1892, a graduate of Lincoln University. For many years he was an undertaker in the black belt, running a funeral parlor located at 26th and State. In 1911 Jackson married Lucy Motts, brother of the

⁷⁰ *Defender*, August 18, 1928. Cited in Harold Gosnell, *Negro Politicians: The Rise of Negro Politics in Chicago* (Chicago, 1935), p. 125.

notorious nightclub owner Bob Motts (a former Moseley associate) who died that same year. Through Lucy Motts, Jackson gained control of Bob Motts' estate. With this money Jackson constructed a huge syndicate of bootlegging, cabarets, and gambling dens. Like his predecessors Bob Motts and Mushmouth Johnson, Daniel Jackson understood the obvious value of political protection. As a young man, Jackson knew "Big Bill" Thompson personally, a friendship which helped him considerably in the late 1910s and 1920s. Thompson's first two administrations (1915-1923) protected Jackson in exchange for political support, a successful arrangement which suffered only a brief interruption during the reform-minded Dever administration (1923-1927). For these four years, Jackson took his rackets "underground." With Thompson's re-election in 1927, Jackson's policy dens resurfaced. He also replaced Ed Wright as 2nd ward republican committeeman in 1927, working with alderman/nightclub co-owner Louis B. Anderson. This connection further cemented the relationship between Thompson's city hall and the world of black vice.

Upon his death in 1929, Jackson was widely known to be the top king of Chicago's black underworld. Part of his community legacy was setting up Robert A. Cole in the undertaking business and black Chicago's gambling world. Cole laundered Jackson's money by channeling it through a legitimate enterprise, the *Metropolitan Funeral System Association* (later called the *Chicago Metropolitan Assurance Company*). *Metropolitan* was especially popular with southern migrants because it supplied insurance as well as burial services. As James Grossman and Robert Weems have argued, black southern migrants brought southern black culture to the city. A common feature of that culture -- which took on even greater importance in the segregated, hostile

urban environment -- was obtaining insurance through membership in a mutual aid or fraternal organization. *Metropolitan* pursued the migrants as clients on these grounds. In 1932, Robert Cole invested gambling money in a second legitimate enterprise, the Chicago American Giants, which he renamed Cole's American Giants.⁷¹

Accusations of involvement in policy also haunted Oscar DePriest, black Chicago's greatest political icon to date. In 1928, DePriest was running for a seat from the first Congressional District against Assistant Attorney General William Harrison. The city's Special Grand Jury investigating election crimes indicted DePriest on charges of "aiding, abetting, and inducing" the race men who ran gambling houses in the black belt, and providing police protection in these places. DePriest denied the charges, and the city prosecutor dismissed them shortly before the trial date. DePriest won the election, but the charges might have cost him his congressional seat (on a morals charge) if not for some clever wrangling at the swearing-in ceremony in 1929.⁷²

Policy was a popular and lucrative activity for the young professionals running it as well as a means to political influence. Not surprisingly, many members of the dwindling old settler black elite despised it. To *The Light*, policy was clearly not compatible with the campaign for respectability. Policy, the magazine wrote, was insidious because it not only took money out of the pockets of hard-working poor people,

⁷¹ *The Dark History of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Funeral System Association* (Chicago, published by Alfred Nelson, 1938). On southern culture in Chicago, see Grossman, *Land of Hope*, Robert E. Weems, *Black Business in the Black Metropolis: The Chicago Metropolitan Assurance Company, 1925-1985* (Bloomington, IN, 1996), p. xii, 62-64. Gosnell, *Negro Politicians*, p. 131-132.

⁷² Gosnell, *Negro Politicians*, p. 182-183. DePriest may have in fact been connected to policy. Because this was hardly unique in Chicago (if true), the accusation and its timing were most likely politically motivated. In Washington, a mass swearing-in ceremony of new congressmen helped DePriest avoid a situation where each new congressman is "evaluated" by his peers before taking a seat, when southern legislators could have blocked him.

many of whom had no sense that their odds of winning were extremely low, but also because it corrupted the character of people who played. When policy tainted upstanding black *women*, members of the elite responded strongly. Painting policy as an “addiction,” columnist I. Marie Johnson described a class-bound distinction embedded in a culture of shame surrounding policy:

The women of the lower stratum make no effort to conceal their participation in this favorite indoor sport, but the ladies of social pretensions guard their ventures in this underworld enterprise with strictest secrecy...the policy addict possesses a peculiar psychology which defies explanation and which nullifies staid, cultural backgrounds, intellectual contacts, and college degrees.⁷³

Even respectable women, Johnson argued, fell prey to the inherent evils of this “sport.” Victimization at the policy wheel muted the distinctions between race women of culture and ignorant black women -- precisely the same fear expressed by the previous generation of black elites during the black baseball war. It also undermined efforts to impress the virtues of middle-class respectability upon working-class black women.⁷⁴ For a segment of Chicago’s African American community, such vice was high-profile and damaging to the community, and had to be curtailed. The reaction against policy and other forms of vice created a space to be filled by alternate forms of entertainment such as black professional baseball. Shadowball thus helped counter the trend toward “unwholesome” activities and reinvigorated race pride by bringing the discourse and spirit of the New Negro into the realm of black sports and entertainment. Black professional baseball flourished in Chicago as never before under the leadership of Rube Foster. Through success on the field and force of personality off of it, the American

⁷³ I. Marie Johnson, “Policy Players,” *The Light*, September 3, 1927, p. 8.

⁷⁴ On middle-class black club women and working-class black women, see Wolcott, *Remaking Respectability*, p. 6.

Giants were *his* team, and the NNL was *his* League. When the man finally collapsed, it was only a matter of time before his race enterprises followed.

Umpiring in Rube's League

The Negro National League was founded with no African American umpires at all. The controversial issue of putting white men in charge of black athletes playing for black teams in a black league had been on Beauregard Moseley's mind in 1910. His plan for a league of black professional baseball clubs specified the hiring of a set percentage of black umpires. As discussed in chapter two, at that time it had seemed grossly inappropriate to Moseley, and surely to others as well, that black umpires were so rare in black professional baseball. In 1921 the issue flared up in a series of articles printed in the *Defender* and *Kansas City Call* in which Foster made the case for using white umpires *exclusively* in the NNL. Foster's position on umpires was clear: he would prefer to employ African American umpires in the League, but felt they were too inexperienced and not up to the task. He deployed the respectability argument by declaring that umpire competency and integrity were *absolutely essential* to the success of the League. In Foster's view, the NNL's requirements for its umpires had to connect to the fact that the League was a race enterprise. "Our baseball players are harder to handle than white players," he wrote. "It seems characteristic of our race to act according to the size of attendance....we don't feel that we have had a good afternoon until we can show off to the multitude how bad we can be."⁷⁵ In light of the growing controversy over the corrupting

⁷⁵ Rube Foster, "Future of Race Umpires Depends on Men of Today," *Defender*, December 13, 1921. "Foster Should Have Declared Forfeit," *Kansas City Call*, May 13, 1922.

influence of black urban vice, this message of legitimacy-above-all likely resonated with Chicago's black elite.

Furthermore, reports of unruly behavior in the stands seemed to vindicate Foster's remarks about the volatility of black baseball. In one incident, an unmanageable crowd at Schorling's Park spilled onto the field, forcing the umpires to call the game. When play stopped, a near-riot ensued. In the aftermath, John Schorling secured federal agents to patrol the crowd at future games and alerted fans through the *Defender* that possessing liquor, selling liquor, or gambling at the stadium would result in immediate arrest.⁷⁶

Foster's stinging criticisms of African American umpires and players was a complete reversal from the solid public position that the supporters of black professional baseball had always maintained. Frank Leland, Beauregard Moseley, and Foster himself had gone to extraordinary lengths in the preceding twenty years to repeatedly make the point that race players were distinguished by their *character* -- as symbols of race achievement, pride, and masculinity -- as well as their skills on the diamond. Why Foster would contradict the core ethos of promoting the black athlete in a context of black cultural, political, and entrepreneurial achievement is unclear. Foster may have perceived a decline in the players' character compared to years gone by. Certainly, black professional baseball in the 1920s was far removed from the turn-of-the-century days when college-educated men filled the ranks of gentleman clubs like the Columbia Giants and Union Giants. It may be that Foster's near-fanaticism about controlling the League influenced his actions, or this may have even been a harbinger of the mental instability which lay ahead. Whatever the source, Foster's remarks completely countered the spirit

⁷⁶ *Defender*, May 13, 1922.

and pride of the New Negro. Furthermore, Foster approximated Booker T. Washington's indictments of turn-of-the-century black Americans as not quite ready to embrace full equality in American society. Incredibly, he likened black umpires in the age of the New Negro to freed slaves at the end of the Civil War:

The leading thinkers of the country today admit that it was cruel and unjust for four million slaves, uneducated and ignorant, to be turned loose as a free people without safeguarding the necessary things in life for them, preparing and fitting them for the duties necessary as citizens and a free people; these same conditions confront baseball as far as umpires of the Race are concerned.⁷⁷

This was something of a conundrum. Assuming Foster's assessment was correct (there was by no means consensus on this), how would African American umpires ever get the opportunity to develop their professional skills if they were barred from working in the NNL? In the meantime, there was plenty of complaining about the poor job white umpires were doing. Foster did not blame poor umpiring on race issues. Instead, he indicted the NNL's system for hiring umpires whereby individual teams secured umpires for their League games. The system provided incentive for umpires to favor their employers at the expense of impartiality. Foster's solution was to invest the League president, himself, with full authority over NNL umpires.⁷⁸

Whether Foster was motivated by racial ideology, a pathological need to control black professional baseball's every move, or a mixture of both, he held the line on the umpiring issue for several years. Disputes over umpiring plagued the first three seasons of NNL play. *Defender* sportswriter Fay Young lay the blame for poor umpiring in Chicago at the feet of the Baseball Umpires association, a union which furnished (white)

⁷⁷ Rube Foster, "Future of Race Umpires Depends on Men of Today," *Defender*, December 13, 1921.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

umpires for American Giants games. Young claimed team owners accepted sub-par umpires, and poor umpiring in general, because they feared an umpire strike which could be devastating to black professional baseball.⁷⁹ Young then urged his readers to send their opinions on this issue to the *Defender*, which printed the ensuing letters from fans who demanded black umpires.

A *Defender* reader in Chicago wrote, “Why don’t they have race umpires here...the writer could name any number of men of the Race who are well qualified.” Another Chicagoan added, “Give us brown skins. They can be better and they can’t be worse.” A reader from Washington D.C. wrote, “it is quite disgusting to learn that our professional ball players are playing under the eye of pale skins.” Last, a reader from St. Louis put it very plainly: “A Negro institution and it manned in and out by Negro brain. There is not anything narrow or even selfish about it.”⁸⁰ Foster’s message about preserving legitimacy in umpiring was apparently not reaching as broadly as he might have hoped.

The color line on African American umpires in the NNL held until 1923. At that time Foster signed seven black umpires to work NNL games, an indication that he had in fact secured control over hiring umpires. Black umpires’ presence in the NNL prompted proclamations of their high qualifications and integrity in the black press, presumably to counter the defeatist sentiments raised by Foster in the recent past. An example is the description of umpire Tom Johnson, as a “former pitcher for the American Giants and an

⁷⁹ Fay Young, “Change the Umpires,” *Defender*, August 19, 1922.

⁸⁰ Letters to the *Defender*: T.H. Eron, August 26, 1922; Richard Johnson, August 26, 1922; “A Fan,” September 2, 1922; Benjamin Barrow, September 2, 1922.

officer in the 365th infantry in France.”⁸¹ There were also calls for umpires to be respectable and professional: “he should hold up the dignity of the position...his daily conduct, if good, is going a long ways to add to the future of the Negro umpire. He must be neat, dress like a big leaguer when on and off the field.”⁸² The *Call* praised the good work of the new umpires at the end of the 1923 season. By mid-1924, however, the paper accused Foster of deliberately making life difficult for black umpires so that they would quit (NNL rules prohibited him from firing them outright). The *Call* worried that Foster was “killing the organization which he leads,” a sentiment echoed a year later by former NNL umpire Bert Gholston, and again by Billy Donaldson and Caesar Jamison, two African American umpires who resigned in 1925. Donaldson and Jamison cited an inability “to maintain their self-respect” if they continued working for Foster. Foster remained unflustered. In 1925, he summarily dismissed the remaining black umpires from the League. Facing a mountain of criticism for his handling of black umpires, Foster blithely explained that he was “cleaning up” the NNL’s umpiring system.⁸³

Utter and Total Collapse

Foster’s bold, sudden dismissal of the black umpires in 1925 was a violation of League rules. It may also have been another indicator of the mental breakdown which

⁸¹ “Seven Colored Umps Signed For League,” *Kansas City Call*, April 27, 1923.

⁸² “National League all Primed for Opening,” *Kansas City Call*, April 20, 1923.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, July 11, 1924, “Rube Foster’s Sportsmanship,” August 28, 1925, Bert Gholston, “Gholston Says It’s Hard to Umpire in This League,” September 4, 1925, “Two More Umpires Fall By the Way.” “Foster Explains Action in Releasing Umpires,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, August 22, 1925.

felled him in 1926.⁸⁴ The precise cause of Foster's sudden illness is unknown.

Historians have described it in vague terms as a debilitating bout of "mental illness."

One researcher suggests Foster's near-asphyxiation from a broken gas line in an Indianapolis hotel room in 1925 was a contributing factor.⁸⁵ Regardless of the cause, Foster suffered a comprehensive psychological collapse. He was evaluated for a week in a Chicago hospital where was declared insane, and then was sent to the state mental institution in Kankakee. Foster never came out; he died in Kankakee on December 9, 1930. John Schorling, Foster's longtime silent partner, took control of the American Giants.

In 1926 John Schorling had become just the second white club owner in the NNL (J.L. Wilkinson of the Kansas City Monarchs was the other). Unlike Foster, Schorling left the task of managing the team to a veteran player, Dave Malarcher. Under Malarcher's direction, the American Giants won the NNL pennant and the Negro League World Series in 1926 and 1927. Malarcher's championship squads featured some of the finest players in black professional baseball: pitcher Willie Foster (Rube's half-brother), outfielder Lou Dials, and pitcher Webster McDonald.⁸⁶ Schorling maintained a relatively low profile during this period, handling business matters while Malarcher guided the team on the field. By 1928, however, Schorling faced a boycott from other NNL teams who refused to book games in Chicago on the grounds that Schorling took too large a

⁸⁴ Bruce, *The Kansas City Monarchs*, p. 29.

⁸⁵ On asphyxiation, see Dixon and Hannigan, *The Negro Baseball Leagues*, p. 142. There is no known corroboration for this assertion.

⁸⁶ National Baseball Hall of Fame: Negro Leagues File, Chicago American Giants folder: 1926 and 1927 team photograph. Chicago American Giants Photo File: "The Old Gang of 1927" team photograph; "American Giants Baseball Club: Champions of the Negro National League, 1926-1927" team photograph; 1927 "All Pitchers" photograph.

cut.⁸⁷ Schorling's gate receipts dwindled. As the economy slowed, the future of all of black professional baseball became increasingly bleak. The black elite who had developed, supported, and fought to control black professional baseball in Chicago a generation before were gone. White men, and a few members of the rising middle class with criminal connections, now controlled the club.

In 1928, John Schorling sold the American Giants to William E. Trimble, a local white florist and known gambler (Trimble owned a racetrack in Peoria). With no rival eastern league, no World Series games, and sharply declining disposable income among African American fans, the American Giants slumped badly. Little is known of the details regarding Trimble's handling of the team, save a famous salary argument with Malarcher which caused "Gentleman Dave" to bolt the team and form a short-lived rival club called the Columbia Giants.⁸⁸ Trimble owned the club until 1932, when he sold the near-dead franchise to Robert Cole, a leading black mortician and gambler.⁸⁹ The NNL held on until 1931, when it finally disbanded. Most of the clubs reverted to independent status, barnstorming continually, playing wherever they could without any league structure to govern them or secure their livelihood. The American Giants, however, joined the Negro Southern League for the 1932 season and easily won that circuit's pennant.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ James Riley, *The Biographical Encyclopedia Of The Negro Baseball Leagues* (New York, 1994), p. 168, 702.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 507. "Ball Season Opens at Giants Grounds," *Defender*, May 30, 1931 and June 6, 1931.

⁸⁹ Weems, *Black Business in the Black Metropolis*, p. 62.

⁹⁰ Because the NSL had existed for years as a black minor league, this victory was less meaningful than previous NNL championships.

After Foster's departure in 1926, the NNL Presidency fell to Judge W.C. Hueston of Gary, Indiana. Although Hueston was a longtime supporter of black professional baseball, he had no ties to any individual team in the League. This impartiality helped Hueston keep the League going until 1931, despite declining revenues and numerous controversies over contract-jumping.⁹¹ For the first two years he worked with ECL president Isaac Nutter to hold the two-league system together. In the spring of 1928, however, Ed Bolden's Hilldale club -- one of the most solid, reliable, and successful ECL clubs -- abandoned the League. Soon after, the ECL completely folded, destroying the east-west balance the two leagues had enjoyed for five years. A new league sprang up in 1929, the American Negro League, but it quickly folded due to poor finances. Across the nation, black professional baseball as a soaring expression of black entrepreneurship, race pride, and progress so emblematic of the New Negro for most of the 1920s was crashing to earth by the close of the decade.⁹²

Although the optimism and expressive freedom of the New Negro may have seemed a distant memory by 1932, the future of black professional baseball itself was surprisingly bright -- although its moguls were of a different breed. The Negro National League was reborn in 1933 under the direction of Gus Greenlee, the top racketeer in black Pittsburgh. In Chicago, this was the case as well. The old battles between different groups of African Americans for control of this respectable race enterprise became a distant memory. In black Chicago as in other cities, the key to black professional

⁹¹ *Defender*, January 25, 1930, "National Baseball League in 3-Day Meet," April 5, 1930, "League is Okay—Pres. W.C. Hueston," August 23, 1930, "New Faces to be Seen in American Giants Line-Up as Result of Drastic Shake-Up."

⁹² Dixon and Hannigan, *The Negro Baseball Leagues*, p. 143-148.

baseball's revival was in the hands of the one segment of the African American community that had the means to revive it in the Great Depression — gamblers and criminals, such as Robert A. Cole.

CHAPTER FIVE

“Bronzeville” and Baseball

In the winter of 1932-1933, the Great Depression gripped the entire city of Chicago. Unemployment hovered at about 40%, the city's property valuations plunged by \$400 million (since 1929), tax strikes curtailed revenue, and private philanthropies proved to be insufficient. Furthermore, because Chicago was the transportation hub of the nation, transients from all over the U.S. hopped trains to the city in search of work.¹ These pressures hit the black South Side particularly hard. African Americans represented 16% of all unemployed, and 25% of those on relief, despite comprising only 4% of the city's population.² Companies fired thousands of workers, commonly dismissing black workers (mainly men) first, and re-hiring them last. Only late in the decade did unionism among African American workers make significant strides in Chicago.³ The feeble economy of the early 1930s forced many white families to fire domestic workers, many of whom were black women. Furthermore, key race enterprises, such as the Binga State Bank, collapsed in 1930, wiping out the black investors it serviced. Worse, the “respectable” race man Jesse Binga was convicted on charges of

¹ Roger Biles, “Edward J. Kelly: New Deal Machine Builder,” in Paul Green and Melvin Holli (eds.), *The Mayors: The Chicago Political Tradition* (Second edition, Carbondale, IL 1995), p. 112.

² Wallace Best, “The *Chicago Defender* and the Realignment of Black Chicago,” *Chicago History*, 24:3 (Fall 1995): 12.

³ Rick Halpern, *Down on the Killing Floor: Black and White Workers in Chicago's Packinghouses, 1904-1954* (Urbana, 1997), p. 96-166. Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 334-335.

embezzlement.⁴ In both tangible and symbolic ways, the relative prosperity of the 1920s rapidly collapsed under the weight of the Great Depression.

Black professional baseball stumbled but recovered from its troubles of the late 1920s and early 1930s. The Negro National League collapsed in 1931 and no black “major” league was in operation in 1932. After some setbacks, the American Giants became successful once again and were an important part of a national resurgence of black baseball in the mid-1930s. In Chicago, as elsewhere, the linchpin in this process was the group of race men who had the resources to bankroll and maintain a professional baseball team amidst the Depression. These were individuals connected to black underworld of illegal gambling, such as Robert A. Cole. Regardless of the money source, the American Giants played to large crowds, won league titles in 1933 and 1934, and assumed a position as an important feature of a period known as the “Chicago Renaissance.”

Black artists and cultural institutions flourished in Chicago’s black belt during the “Renaissance” of the 1930s. Noteworthy individuals include the writers Richard Wright and Gwendolyn Brooks, and entertainers Nat King Cole and Louis Armstrong. Community institutions such as the South Side Community Art Center, the Savoy Ballroom, and the Regal Theatre also prospered in the 1930s. These efforts were supported by an awakening of economic and political activity. The *Chicago Whip*, for example, organized a “Don’t buy where you can’t work campaign.” This inspired race

⁴ *Defender*, June 10, 1933, “Binga Guilty, Asks New Trial” and March 2, 1935, “Binga Denied New Trial.”

leaders to develop the so-called “double dollar doctrine”: the process of encouraging black consumers to exclusively patronize race businesses in these hard times.⁵

Importantly, the political landscape in the city and in the black belt changed substantially in the 1930s. Anton Cermak, a Democrat, defeated “Big Bill” Thompson in the 1931 mayoral race. Cermak immediately fired thousands of city employees, many of whom were African American. The new mayor then cracked down on vice in the black belt. His reasons were more political than moral: black Republicans dominated the South Side wards (2, 3, and 4) and not surprisingly, had given their votes to Thompson, the Republican candidate. An assassin ended Cermak’s reign in 1933 and his replacement, Ed Kelly, dramatically reversed the city’s draconian policies in the black belt. Kelly committed the city’s public schools to a firm policy of integration, appointed many blacks to important city posts (such as Robert Taylor’s slot on the Chicago Housing Authority), and made numerous goodwill gestures reminiscent of Thompson’s heyday. For example, Kelly banned the showing of “Birth of a Nation” in the city and made black heavyweight champion Joe Louis the city’s “mayor for ten minutes.” Most importantly, Ed Kelly allowed the policy wheels to return to the black belt.⁶

African Americans rewarded Kelly’s policies, gestures, and openness to policy with their votes — for him personally, and for the political machine he ran with Cook County party chief Thomas Nash. Through the decade, African Americans supported Kelly-Nash Democrats in congressional elections (Arthur Mitchell, who was black, over

⁵ “Urges Race to Solve Own Problems,” *Defender*, January 31, 1931. Also see Cohen, *Making a New Deal*, p. 154.

⁶ Roger Biles, *Big City Boss in Depression and War: Mayor Edward J. Kelly of Chicago* (DeKalb, IL, 1984) p. 89-102, esp. p. 89-92. Cohen, *Making a New Deal*, p. 260. “Mayor Kelly Blocks Jim Crow,” *Defender*, October 13, 1934.

Oscar DePriest in 1934), gubernatorial elections (Herman Bundesen over Henry Horner), and municipal elections (in 1935 Kelly gathered 80% of the vote in the predominantly black parts of the south side, wards 2,3, and 4). The *Defender* strongly supported Kelly's machine, and key Republican aldermen did as well. William Dawson (second ward), Robert Jackson (third ward), and Berthold Cronson (fourth ward, who was white) all crossed party lines to support Kelly's bid for mayor in 1935.⁷

By 1940, most black voters and municipal politicians were in the Chicago Democratic party's camp. This transition reflected a by-now familiar willingness to work for race advancement within the complexities of the city's political structure. The trend was most clear in the case of William Dawson, a Republican alderman (1933-1939) and committeeman (1939-1942) in the second ward who repeatedly supported Kelly and finally switched to the Democrats in 1939. Dawson eventually built a "sub-machine" that controlled the black belt for decades.⁸ These political developments were important for black professional baseball because through the Kelly-Nash machine (and with Dawson's enthusiastic support) policy again flourished in the black belt. This revenue was the chief source of capital in black Chicago in the 1930s, and it was this money that backed "shadowball." Thus the many cultural, political, and athletic activities of Chicago's "Renaissance" in the 1930s led to the common use of a new term that recognized black achievement in Chicago as it also described the city's deplorable, pervasive segregation: "Bronzeville."

⁷ Biles, *Big City Boss in Depression and War*, p. 90-94.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 98-102.

In 1930, the city's isolation index was already 70.4%, and it rose throughout the decade.⁹ As discussed in chapter four, intense residential segregation stimulated an "inward turn" among race leaders that focused economic investment and cultural advancements, such as the component pieces of the Chicago Renaissance, on the south side. Much like the other facets of the Chicago Renaissance, the American Giants operated in this segregated context. Outside the black belt, however, African American attempts to tap into Chicago's economic structure and cultural life were thwarted. Furthermore, as William Grimshaw and Dianne Pinderhughes have argued, political advancements gained through association with the Democratic machine were always bounded by a structure that relegated black advancements to tokens of white political expediencies. Small amounts of patronage did not equate to social advancements and did not bring equality. The feelings of community empowerment gained in the 1920s dissipated in the 1930s.¹⁰

An illustrative example is Chicago's 1933-1934 *Century of Progress and World Exposition*, which severely limited black employment at the Expo and generally ignored the progress of African Americans in any facet of city life, including sport. This occurred despite concerted efforts by the city's race men to develop a modern, progressive black presence at the Exposition. Although they were ultimately unsuccessful, the attempt illuminates some of the contours of coalition and dissonance in the African American community, as well as the concerted effort by race men and women to insert the black

⁹ Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), p. 24, 47.

¹⁰ William Grimshaw, *Bitter Fruit: Black Politics and the Chicago Machine, 1931-1991* (Chicago, 1992). Dianne Pinderhughes, *Race and Ethnicity in Chicago Politics: A Reexamination of Pluralist Theory* (Urbana, 1987).

experience into the city's presentation of itself and its history. This experience had direct results for black professional baseball. The sport's chief entrepreneurs responded to the many problems stemming from the Expo by developing the popular East-West Game in Chicago in 1933.

Importantly, black professional baseball's race men were of a new and different breed in the 1930s. The days of the Elite 400, when old settler elites squared off against young professionals for control of a respectable sport, were long gone. Robert A. Cole (and later, Horace Hall) were the top baseball men in black Chicago during the Depression. Through the *Metropolitan Funeral System Association*, they provided important services to the black community — burial and life insurance -- but they made no particular claims to the elite, genteel respectability of a bygone baseball era. Cole and Hall understood that the demographics and the socio-economic realities of the city's south side had changed. The American Giants, and eventually the Negro American League that supported the team, aimed directly at a mass population of poor southern migrants and their children. As a result, the distinctions between "respectable" African Americans and their more "uncouth" counterparts became much less clear in the world of black professional baseball throughout the 1930s.

Against the backdrop of a devastated economy and rigid residential segregation, black professional baseball's special claim to respectability -- which was so important to its success in the 1920s as a counterpoint to the influence of black vice -- was greatly challenged by the underworld influence in the sport. The city's political situation during the Great Depression was the catalytic force because it encouraged the resurgence of policy and the other race enterprises it funded (such as baseball). By the early 1940s,

however, these issues changed yet again. Ownership of the American Giants returned to the “respectable” black middle class at the end of the decade, and Chicago’s complex world of black professional baseball moved into its final phase.

Up From the Ashes

The American Giants were in very poor shape in 1932. The sagging economy depressed the club’s finances, and the collapse of the Negro National League in that year destroyed the primary means by which money was earned. At this moment of crisis, the club’s financial savior appeared in the form of Robert A. Cole. Cole was an early migrant to Chicago, arriving in 1905 from Kentucky at the age of 23 (he was born in Tennessee in 1882). In Chicago, Cole worked as a Pullman porter for twenty years before his passion for gambling connected him with Daniel Jackson, the mortician, politician, and notorious gambling king.¹¹

Dan Jackson’s *Metropolitan Funeral System Association* especially serviced southern migrants by offering them an option for southern burials. Many of these same migrants also frequented Jackson’s gambling dens. The focus on the migrant generation – in funerals, gambling and baseball -- was a lesson in “marketing” on which Cole capitalized in the years to come. Early on, Jackson recognized that Robert Cole possessed business talents that belied Cole’s fourth-grade education. He tapped Cole to run a gambling house at 35th and State. Under Cole’s management this became Jackson’s

¹¹ Robert Weems, *Black Business in the Black Metropolis: The Chicago Metropolitan Assurance Company, 1925-1985* (Bloomington, IN, 1996), p. 3-4.

most profitable gambling establishment. In 1927, “Big Bill” Thompson (Jackson’s ally) returned to city hall; political ambitions quickly subsumed Jackson’s funerary business. Jackson became committeeman of the 2nd ward and he selected Cole to manage *Metropolitan*. Cole accepted the offer, and soon after convinced Jackson to sell him the company for \$500.¹² Under Robert Cole, *Metropolitan* continued Jackson’s practice of collecting weekly premiums from policyholders. This assured a steady cash flow and more importantly, put *Metropolitan’s* agents into direct and continual contact with the community it served. *Metropolitan’s* agents were a daily reminder of Cole’s presence as a businessman and community leader.

By 1932 Robert Cole’s name was very well-known in the black belt, for legitimate as well as illicit reasons. Although it is unclear if gambling money (unmingled with other monies) was the sole source of Cole’s legitimate business activities in the 1930s, there is some evidence to indicate this was the case. Historian Robert Weems has written that Cole’s papers indicate he had a large, undocumented source of income other than *Metropolitan* in the late 1920s and early 1930s.¹³ Moreover, the perception in Bronzeville was that Cole used gambling profits to fund legitimate businesses, and this was perhaps just as important as the reality. The black press, however, cheered his arrival on the baseball scene — perhaps because the black professional baseball situation was so dire -- and did not debate the respectability issue with regard to his ownership of

¹² Weems, *Black Business in the Black Metropolis*, p. 4. In 1947, the company’s name changed from Metropolitan Funeral System Association to the Metropolitan Mutual Assurance Company. In 1953, it became the Chicago Metropolitan Assurance Company.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 10-11.

the team. This is noteworthy because the *Defender* was a consistent critic of diminished black respectability throughout the 1930s.¹⁴

Robert Cole was surely grateful for the support of the black press. When he purchased the ailing American Giants from William Trimble, the team was in poor shape and the Negro National League was defunct. Cole immediately announced a series of measures to rejuvenate the team. Rebuilding the American Giants' ballpark was the top priority. The old wooden bleachers were torn down, replaced with a new grandstand built on a concrete base (for fire safety), new box seats, and dugouts.¹⁵ Cole persuaded the popular Dave Malarcher to return to Chicago as the manager. Cole asked Malarcher to secure the best talent he could find, regardless of cost.¹⁶ Malarcher signed several players destined to become legends of black professional baseball, such as pitcher Willie Foster (Rube's half-brother), and power hitters Norman "Turkey" Stearnes, and George "Mule" Suttles. In the NNL's absence the club, now renamed *Cole's American Giants*, dominated the Negro Southern League, normally a black minor league, with this formidable lineup.

Concurrently, the death of the NNL inspired Cumberland Posey, the owner of the Homestead Grays (Pittsburgh), to try to organize a new league for black professional baseball in 1932. Posey's East-West League of Colored Baseball Clubs attracted much attention until financial problems destroyed it midway through the season. The following

¹⁴ See, for example, an editorial titled "The Race of Tomorrow" in which *Defender* editors chastised young African Americans for preferring wild cabarets to a more contemplative, respectable lifestyle. September 5, 1936.

¹⁵ *Defender*, February 20, 1932, "Giants Park is Sold to Local Business Men" and February 27, 1932, "New Giant Boss," "Start Work on Ballpark," and "Old Park Dresses Up."

¹⁶ "Kansas City Players on Market," *Defender*, April 2, 1932.

year, a rival black baseball entrepreneur from Pittsburgh, Gus Greenlee, revived the Negro National League. Greenlee was the king of the black policy rackets in Pittsburgh.¹⁷ Like Robert Cole, Gus Greenlee represented the most common source of capital among the race men of the Depression era: vice, particularly gambling. Amidst the hardships of 1933, Gus Greenlee had enough money to reconstitute the League, build a new ballpark for his team, the Pittsburgh Crawfords, and invest \$10,000 for a brand-new team bus.¹⁸

Gus Greenlee and Cumberland Posey shared a mutual animosity. Posey considered himself to be a refined, respectable sports entrepreneur who had dedicated his life to baseball. He detested Greenlee's policy-making, bootlegging background. Greenlee's club was not invited to join the short-lived East-West League. Gus Greenlee had greater financial resources than Posey and under his guidance, the new NNL survived. Posey's Homestead Grays were in the new League very briefly, but Greenlee removed the Grays when Posey raided two players from the Detroit Stars (this angered Greenlee, although he had raided Posey's team the year before). The Grays did not reenter the NNL until 1935. Interestingly, Greenlee's approval for re-entry at that time only came when Posey formed a partnership with Rufus "Sonnyman" Jackson, another

¹⁷ For a comprehensive history of Posey, Greenlee, and black professional baseball in Pittsburgh, see Rob Ruck, *Sandlot Seasons: Sport in Black Pittsburgh* (Urbana, 1987).

¹⁸ Phil Dixon and Patrick Hannigan, *The Negro Baseball Leagues: A Photographic History* (New York, 1992), p. 157.

black Pittsburgh racketeer.¹⁹

Cole's American Giants abandoned the southern circuit after 1932 and became one of the first teams to join Greenlee's new NNL. To pique the public's attention, the NNL used a split season in 1933. The winners of the first half would meet the winners of the second half in a championship game series at the end of the season. The American Giants won the first half with a record of 21-7, one game better than Greenlee's Crawfords, who finished at 20-8. Due to financial difficulties, the new NNL did not complete the second half of its inaugural season. Based on their performance in the first half, Cole's American Giants claimed the League title. Greenlee, however, used his position as czar of the new League to unilaterally declare the Crawfords as the champions. Disputes such as this one evoked memories of Rube Foster's heavy-handed tactics at the helm of the old NNL. Determined to curb such potentially destructive controversies in the future, NNL owners chose Pittsburgh *Courier* sportswriter Rollo Wilson to be commissioner of the League in 1934.²⁰

Cole's American Giants faced a potentially disastrous challenge in 1933, other than the disputed championship. Since John Schorling's departure in the late 1920s, the American Giants' park had been in receivership. In the spring of 1933, Cole's interest in the park was purchased by a group which, after the deal was made, announced their intention to convert the stadium into a dog track. Just one year after Cole rebuilt the

¹⁹ Dixon and Patrick Hannigan, *The Negro Baseball Leagues*, p. 180-181. G. Edward White, *Creating the National Pastime: Baseball Transforms Itself, 1903-1953* (Princeton, 1996), p. 138. Posey was also the force behind the short-lived American Negro League in 1929. Blank financial statement form, East-West League, AAMP, Cash-Thompson Collection, Box 1, East-West Colored League Baseball Schedule folder, n.d. See also *Defender*, February 6, 1932, "Baseball Moguls Increase Playing Dates," February 6, 1932, "Talk of Starting Midwest Ball League; Picks Chicago," and March 5, 1932, "Wells Signed by Detroit."

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

stadium, the American Giants found themselves playing the interrupted 1933 season in a new “home park” in Indianapolis. The *Defender* denounced this sad state of affairs in several articles. One of these underscored the humiliation of a proud race enterprise being displaced by dogs. It appeared under the sarcastic heading, “puppies will ‘run the bases’ in 1933.”²¹

Clearly, black professional baseball was still a very difficult race business in the 1930s, despite the resurgence of the American Giants and the League. In 1935, the American Giants finally returned from two years of exile to their park at 39th and Wentworth, courtesy of an order issued by Governor Horner of Illinois barring gambling on dog racing in the city.²² The re-awakening of the NNL and the rejuvenation of the American Giants required a great deal of resilience by black professional baseball’s moguls. Beyond the black belt, however, none of these challenges or triumphs resonated in a city busily preparing for the launch of the 1933 World’s Fair.

A Century of Progress?

As the moguls of black professional baseball were working to rebuild the American Giants into the familiar image of race success and pride in a new, re-organized Negro National League, the city of Chicago opened the “Century of Progress World Exposition.” After five years of work, the Expo debuted in the spring of 1933 and ran through 1934. Through an enormous array of exhibit halls and performances, the Expo

²¹ *Defender*, May 6, 1933, “Giants Lose Ballgrounds,” May 27, 1933, “Giants Open Up as Indianapolis Nine,” May 27, 1933, “Owners Keep Trade Promise but It’s Teams and Not Men,” June 3, 1933, “Open in Their New Home Town” (captioned photograph), January 9, 1935, “Bob Cole Can Sympathize With Boston Braves on Dog Question.”

²² “Bob Cole Can Sympathize With Boston Braves on Dog Question,” *Defender*, January 9, 1935.

purported to highlight the progress of the city's first one hundred years since incorporation.

The Expo sprawled over more than 400 acres of Chicago's south side and lakefront, from 12th Street southward to 39th Street, bordered on the west by the tracks of the Illinois Central and on the east by Lake Michigan. Many exhibit areas were near the eastern edge of the black belt, not far from American Giants Park. Expo organizers, however, were almost exclusively members of the city's white business elite. To them, "progress" — scientific, artistic, or industrial -- implicitly meant advancements made by whites. Although Chicago's African American population topped 250,000 by 1930 (and continued to grow rapidly), there were no plans to develop a black presence at the Century of Progress.

Additionally, Chicago's race men pressured organizers for equality in the hiring of Expo workers, but had little success. For leaders of the African American community this was an important and frustrating issue. African Americans were disproportionately represented on the city's relief rolls, but only a small number were employed at the Expo. Most of these were menial jobs, even though organizers had promised to consider blacks for more skilled positions.²³ Angering race leaders further, when additional labor was needed, white workers from other cities were brought to Chicago.²⁴ A February 2, 1935 *Defender* cartoon captured the anger and despair many blacks felt at the hands of local administrators of New Deal relief programs. Under the heading "Still Getting the Bones"

²³ Rufus Dawes, President of the Exposition, to A.L. Williams, Chicago Urban League. Cited in "Race Represented as World's Fair Opens in a Blaze of Glory," *Defender*, June 3, 1933.

²⁴ August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, "Negro Protest at the Chicago World's Fair, 1933-1934," *Journal of Illinois State Historical Society*, LIX (Summer 1966): 166-167.

is a horizontally split image. At the top, whites greedily feast on a pig labeled “\$3,000,000 for U.S. Projects.” At the bottom, two African American men humbly wait for the discarded bones which are labeled “shovel men,” “water boy,” and “flunkey.”

White resistance to African American participation in the content of the Exposition followed the general contours of race relations in the city. African Americans in Chicago were residentially segregated, but their movements through the city were not constrained by the harsh, rigid strictures of the Jim Crow south the southern migrants left behind. As the black elite had feared for generations, however, this massive migration led whites to commonly make distinctions between “good” and “bad” black Chicagoans. An inter-office memorandum from John Sewell, Director of Exhibits at the Exposition, to Lenox Lohr, General Manager of the Expo, makes this clear:

A number of groups of Negroes have been in here from time to time during the last four or five months relative to some sort of participation in the Exposition. We found that among them were some who are known as “smart niggers” in the South which meant that they were looking for easy money for themselves. Among them, however, were some who were natives of Africa and serious students in some of our universities.²⁵

Sewell favored African nationals over the so-called “smart niggers” in the hopes that doing so would avoid all attempts at using a black concession to promote “racial propaganda.”²⁶ Moreover, such virulently racist sentiments validated concerns among race leaders that the presentation of African Americans at the Exposition — Chicago’s bold statement of “progress” to the nation and to the entire world -- had to be handled very carefully.

²⁵ Sewell to Lohr, December 22, 1931, Century of Progress Papers, University of Illinois at Chicago (hereafter COP), folder 11-14.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, February 17, 1932. COP, folder 1-192.

Chicago's race men submitted a blueprint for fair and equal representation at the Exposition that would reflect African Americans' contributions to the city thus far, as well as hopes for the future of the race in Chicago.²⁷ Beginning in 1931, two groups of black businessmen formed agencies to organize and develop the African American presence at the Expo. These were the All-Africa Corporation (AAC) headed by Ross Netherton, a lawyer, and the African Exhibit Society (AES), directed by Modupe Paris.²⁸ The All-Africa Corporation was highly organized, and it drew support from key parts of the African American community. An organizational chart produced by the AAC indicates the support it expected to receive from key institutions in black Chicago. These were Claude Barnett's Associated Negro Press, the Chicago *Defender*, "other colored newspapers," the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools, the Colored Church Federation, the NAACP, the Urban League, and the Appomattox Club.²⁹

Through most of 1932, the AAC and AES worked together on plans for an "All-Africa" exhibit. In August, however, the AES withdrew. Shortly thereafter, Expo organizers informed Netherton's AAC that they there were serious concerns about the group's ability to meet its stated goals. In the ensuing exchange of letters, the AAC angrily complained that a year's work was being needlessly set aside and that the Expo

²⁷ Three excellent studies of the Fair are Barbara Holt, "An American Dilemma on Display: Black Participation at the Chicago Century of Progress Exposition, 1933-1934." Report for the Chicago Urban League Research and Planning Department, n.d., 1986 (Chicago Historical Society); Meier and Rudwick, "Negro Protest at the Chicago World's Fair, 1933-1934"; John E. Findling, *Chicago's Great World Fairs* (Manchester, 1994), especially p. 112-113, 127-130.

²⁸ Key documents of the AAC and AES, including exhibit proposals, correspondence, organizational charts, and contracts, are in the COP files.

²⁹ All-Africa Corporation organization chart, undated. COP, folder 1-192. Republican alderman (third ward) Robert Jackson was the President of Appomattox for most of the 1930s.

organizers were treating the group unfairly.³⁰ To make matters worse, AES leaders approached Expo organizers in the fall, claiming to be the proper (and exclusive) group with whom the Expo ought to do business. The AAC was inadequately financed, they argued, and Ross Netherton was overbearing, corrupt, and not respectable. “We as colored Americans,” they wrote, “will neither tolerate Netherton’s insolence, nor his arrogance and irresponsibility.”³¹

On this last point in particular, Expo organizers were eager to listen. Expo officials had commissioned Hill’s Reports — thorough background checks of finances and character provided by the National Service and Appraisal Company -- on Ross Netherton and Grant Bogart, Netherton’s associate. The Hill’s report on Netherton detailed his business dealings from 1922 forward, and advised “secured dealings only.”³² Bogart’s report chronicled his personal difficulties (he was divorced, kept his address hidden, etc.) as well as his business dealings. “This subject’s character,” the report warned, “is such as to make it advisable to use caution in having dealings with him.”³³

Despite the argument over which group ought to hold the All-Africa exhibit contract with the Expo, and despite the findings of the Hill’s Reports, Expo organizers still continued to do business with Netherton’s AAC. In January 1933, the AAC signed a contract with the Expo that provided for two museums on a site at 39th Street and the lakefront. The AAC would be slotted between the Goodyear Landing Field/Zeppelin

³⁰ Netherton to Cole, August 12, 1932; Kerr to Netherton, August 19, 1932; Bogart (on behalf of Netherton) to Kerr, August 24, 1932. COP, folder 1-191.

³¹ AES to M.L. Kerr, Head of Concessions, November 3, 1932. COP, folder 1-191.

³² Hill’s Report on Ross D. Netherton. March 19, 1932. COP, folder 1-190.

³³ Hill’s Report on Grant Bogart, undated. COP, folder 1-190.

concession to the north and the 'Century of Gold' exhibition to the south.³⁴ One museum focused on African art and culture; it planned to feature a native kraal with fifty Africans living in huts, space for traditional dances and ceremonies, fortune-tellers, and snake charmers. The second, larger museum was the "Hall of American Negro Culture." Plans called for a 'Hall of Fame' showcasing pictures, drawings, models, statues, a library, and a small film theatre, "all to set forth achievements of American colored people."³⁵ For twenty cents, visitors to Hall would see a gallery of black artists, a display on historically black colleges, a section on black professional, religious, and industrial activities, the arts and sciences, music and musicians, and athletics.³⁶

In March 1933, however, just two months before the Expo opened, the AAC's bid unraveled. Unable to raise enough funds to construct the All-Africa exhibit, and unable to meet the deadlines set in the contract, Expo organizers first withdrew frontage from the AAC's allotted space and eventually voided the AAC's contract on April 18.³⁷ Nonetheless, there was an All-Africa exhibit at the Expo, but it did not present images of "progress" by modern African Americans. Instead, "Darkest Africa," produced by the rival AES, presented pygmies and cannibals, hot-coal walkers and fire-eaters -- images that surely countered all fundamental concepts of "progress." There was no Negro Hall of Fame, although various other exhibits at the Expo addressed contemporary issues of

³⁴ Blueprint of the proposed All-Africa concession site. August 25, 1932. COP, folder 1-190.

³⁵ Description of the All-Africa Exhibition, October 10, 1932. COP, folder 1-191.

³⁶ "All-Africa at the Century of Progress." COP, folder 1-191. Description of the All-Africa Exhibition, October 10, 1932. COP, folder 1-191. All Africa Corporation Concession, Exhibit A (description of the concession). COP, folder 1-190.

³⁷ Edward Hughes, Illinois Secretary of State, to Kerr, March 1, 1933. Kerr to Hughes, March 3, 1933. Kerr to AAC, March 7, 1933. Kerr to AAC, March 22, 1933. COP, folder F1-190. Findling, *Chicago's Great World Fairs*, p. 113.

race advancement. One example was the Florida Hall, which featured photographs of classrooms at Florida A&M and Bethune-Cookman college, two historically black institutions.³⁸ Because the thrust of the AES' exhibit was pre-modern Africa, there was no display of black professional baseball, even though its home in the city (since 1911) stood a little over a mile away at the corner of 39th Street and Wentworth Avenue. Despite all of this, a common point of pride was the exhibit of Jean Baptiste Point du Sable's 1779 cabin.³⁹ The *Defender* praised the respectable African American club women who staffed this popular exhibit, but even this presentation rooted fairgoers in stories of the eighteenth century, rather than the twentieth.⁴⁰

When the Expo first opened, the *Defender* joined the spirit of boosterism surrounding the event, and perhaps recognized a self-serving opportunity. The paper invited all visitors to the city to come to the paper's office at 34th and Indiana, and published a shopper's guide for fairgoers. In the first week of the Expo, the *Defender* reported, "all comers are met with the same courtesy and same civility." As the Expo continued its run, however, numerous charges of discrimination came to the fore. Many African American patrons claimed to have been 'Jim-Crowed' at some of the Fair's food stations. By mid-June, the *Defender's* tone changed. The paper urged blacks to report all incidents of discrimination and to "refuse to accept anything other than a citizen's full

³⁸ Meier and Rudwick, "Negro Protest at the Chicago World's Fair," p. 163.

³⁹ Du Sable, a French-speaking man of African ancestry, is thought to be the first permanent settler of Chicago. Meier and Rudwick, "Negro Protest at the Chicago World's Fair," p. 162.

⁴⁰ After the Expo closed, the *Defender* published a letter written by the civic committee of the Chicago and Northern District Association of Colored Women, sent to Mayor Kelly and Robert Dunham (President of the Park Board), requesting the DuSable cabin remain a permanent exhibit. *Defender*, February 2, 1935.

rights” at the fair.”⁴¹ Furthermore, the paper ran a cartoon which featured a slave driver’s whip and a lynch mob’s rope, slung over a tree. This provocative phrase hung atop the disturbing image: “a century of progress?”⁴²

Given the generally unfavorable presentation of African Americans at the Exposition it is interesting that the AES’ planning documents include many of the city’s key race men on a “list of interested persons.” Robert Abbott, Harris Gaines (IL State Representative), A.L. Foster (Chicago Urban League) William Dawson (2nd ward alderman), and the black baseball mogul Robert A. Cole. Although this document does not indicate the precise degree of involvement each of these individuals had, Cole’s presence on this list is especially curious. After all, it was the rival AAC’s original proposal for a Negro Hall of Fame which mentioned athletics. Still, Cole was apparently linked to the AES’ effort that presented “Darkest Africa.” In the absence of a ‘Negro Hall of Fame,’ sport was, not surprisingly, another area in which the Expo erased the African American experience from the history of Chicago.

Beginning in 1928, *Tribune* editor Robert McCormick headed the Expo’s General Sports Committee. He filled it with high-profile representatives of white Chicago sports, each of whom chaired subcommittees in their areas of specialty. William Wrigley (Chicago Cubs) supervised professional baseball, Amos Alonzo Stagg (University of Chicago) ran Intercollegiate Football, and Avery Brundage (Amateur Athletic Union) oversaw the Pentathlon. The Sports Committee did not include any individuals connected to African American sport. The Committee did plan a series of athletic

⁴¹ *Defender*, “To Our Visiting Citizens,” June 10, 1933.

⁴² *Ibid.*

contests for a “Darker Races Group,” but this referred to athletes from abroad, not to African Americans.⁴³ Admittedly, the American Giants were in decline as the Expo was being planned, but Robert Cole took over the team a full year before the Expo opened. Nonetheless, Cole was never among the members of the Sports Committee, nor were any other figures from African American sport, not even Abe Saperstein, the white promoter of the Chicago-based Harlem Globetrotters.

Committed to exclusively promoting white sports, the Sports Committee helped to spawn a major innovation in white major league baseball, the effects of which spilled over into black professional baseball. The first major league All-Star game was held in Comiskey Park on July 6, 1933, and it was scheduled to coincide with the Expo.⁴⁴ Arch Ward, sports editor of the *Tribune*, organized the event. Over 49,000 fans came to the first “midsummer classic.” Inspired by the success of this experiment, and likely angered by the near-total exclusion of modern blacks from the Expo, Robert Cole partnered with other black professional baseball entrepreneurs (Gus Greenlee of Pittsburgh, Tom Wilson of Nashville) to develop an equivalent showcase event for the stars of “shadowball:” the annual East-West game. It was, in the words of one African American sportswriter, “the greatest event that could be put over by anyone for the benefit of promoting interest in Colored baseball.”⁴⁵

⁴³ Allen Albert to McCormick, July 31, 1928; Inter-office memo, Mildred Kelley to J.I. Breen, August 13, 1928. COP, Committees—Sports folder.

⁴⁴ In 1934, the Fair’s second season, organizers scheduled an All-Star football game in Soldier Field. This game pitted the professional champions against the collegiate champions. Findling, *Chicago’s Great World Fairs*, p. 130.

⁴⁵ Nat Trammel, “Baseball Classic—East vs. West,” (journal unknown), 1934 and Jimmie Crutchfield’s Scrapbook, Negro Leagues: East-West Game All-Star Game File, National Baseball Hall of Fame (hereafter HOF).

The East-West Game

From 1933-1950, Comiskey Park, normally the home of the Chicago White Sox, served as the location of the East-West all-star game. Top players from eastern and mid-western black baseball clubs were selected by fan voting, and the running totals appeared in the *Defender* and *Courier*.⁴⁶ The all-star squads met in an annual exhibition display of black baseball talent at Comiskey Park. This was the location of major league baseball's first all-star game, but Comiskey Park was a logical choice for black baseball as well because it was at the edge of the black belt (35th and Shields) and it held upwards of 50,000 people. A capacity crowd could bring in a great deal of revenue for franchises whose margins were typically very small. Although the Negro National League paid to rent the stadium, the game's proceeds, which were divided among the clubs, easily exceeded this expense. Indeed, for clubs suffering through financial difficulties, this single event could raise enough money for each club to cover the losses they incurred during the rest of the season.⁴⁷ Additionally, Chicago's black community became the host for thousands of visiting African Americans. Bronzeville's hotels, restaurants, nightclubs, and other race businesses all benefited from the ancillary income the game generated for the black community.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ See, for example, *Defender*, August 12, 1933, "Here Are the Early Returns," September 9, 1933, "Votes Show Bill is West's Ace Pitcher," August 4, 1934, "How They Stand," and 1935 (undated), "The Vote for East-West Game." HOF, Negro Leagues East-West Game All-Star Game File.

⁴⁷ Horace Hall interview with Robert Peterson, HOF, Horace G. Hall folder. Janet Bruce, *The Kansas City Monarchs: Champions of Black Baseball* (Lawrence, KS, 1985), p. 88. The players, however, received no pay for playing in the game until the 1940s.

⁴⁸ Dixon and Hannigan, *The Negro Baseball Leagues*, p. 163.

As the East-West game became more popular — drawing nearly 20,000 in attendance in 1933, 30,000 in 1936, to as much as 52,000 in the 1940s — it also functioned as a venue for the black elite of Chicago (and other major cities) to mix and mingle with one another.⁴⁹ As the *Defender* noted, “the East-West baseball game has been popularized to a fine social point...rest assured that *society* will be represented at Comiskey.”⁵⁰ The *Courier* reported the event in similar fashion for many years, highlighting the presence of the black elite at the games. Since the black criminal underworld organized this game, it is interesting that the respectable black elite would adopt this particular as a society event. There seems to have been little hesitation on the part of notable black Chicagoans to participate in the pomp and circumstance of black professional baseball in Chicago in the 1930s, despite its unsavory connections. The inability to secure economic, social, and political equality in the city’s institutional structures helped to direct attention to race identification, regardless of shadowball’s management. By the late 1930s, some of the most visible figures of black Chicago’s society, such as Robert R. Jackson, third ward alderman and president of the lofty Appomattox, club regularly attended the East-West game.

Once each summer, the Bronzeville community hosted the biggest black athletic event in the nation. Its success led some owners to organize a second, rival All-Star game in New York in 1938 and 1939. This effort first drew fines from League officials, then received guarded approval, but in the end attracted few fans. This additional all-star

⁴⁹ Dick Clark and Larry Lester (eds.), *The Negro Leagues Book* (Cleveland, 1994), p. 242-254. Dixon and Hannigan, *The Negro Baseball Leagues*, p. 162.

⁵⁰ Emphasis mine. *Defender*, August 15, 1936 cited in White, *Creating the National Pastime*, p. 139, 142-143 and Donn Rogosin, *Invisible Men: Life in Baseball’s Negro Leagues* (New York, 1983), p. 116.

game was shelved after 1939.⁵¹ Through the 1930s, the original East-West game at Comiskey eclipsed the American Giants as the most important feature of black professional baseball in Chicago. The American Giants soldiered on through the Depression, but troubles within the franchise, and in the Negro National League, lingered on.

Horace G. Hall and Dave Malarcher

In 1935, Horace Hall assumed the responsibilities of the Chicago American Giants. Hall was a longtime *Metropolitan* employee (since 1925), and by 1935 he was the Assistant Secretary of the company. Hall worked under Robert Cole for many years, and he had an interest in the American Giants from the start. Hall was the club's secretary and frequently represented Cole at League meetings.⁵² He guided the franchise through 1935 and 1936, two very difficult years. After the dog track debacle that had banished the club to Indianapolis for two years, the American Giants returned to a ballpark in need of major repairs. Cole and Hall improved the park,⁵³ but faced financial difficulties at *Metropolitan* and mounting disagreements with Gus Greenlee. In light of these issues, Cole gave full control of the team to Hall. In November, he sold the franchise to Hall.⁵⁴ Hall then faced another serious challenge: the departure of Dave Malarcher, an American Giants legend.

⁵¹ Bruce, *The Kansas City Monarchs*, p. 90.

⁵² "Hold Annual Baseball Meeting," *Defender*, January 12, 1935, and "Giants Get Redus, Troupe[sic]," *Defender*, March 9, 1935.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Weems, *Black Business in the Black Metropolis*, p. 64. *Defender*, November 2, 1935. Horace Hall interview with Robert Peterson, HOF, Horace G. Hall folder.

In the spring of 1935, Malarcher retired from his position as manager of the American Giants. Cole and Hall surely regretted the loss of a person so skilled at organizing baseball talent. Moreover, Malarcher was revered as a respectable person. In an era when gamblers and criminals were in charge of black professional baseball, individuals like Malarcher provided an important connection to Rube Foster's bygone world of respectability and professionalism. It was Foster who first brought Malarcher to Chicago (shortly after World War I) and Malarcher exemplified the standards of clean living upon which Foster always insisted. Using language that recalled the glorious days of the American Giants in the 1910s, the *Defender* mourned the resignation of "Gentleman Dave":

He neither drinks, smokes, or chews, and never stays out late, regardless of where the teams is playing... many times when you see Dave coming to the park late, he is just from church. He was a perfect model for young ball players – he was a credit to baseball in Chicago and the nation over.⁵⁵

Other Chicago race leaders echoed this sentiment. Archibald Carey, Jr., the high-profile minister of the Woodlawn A.M.E. Church in Bronzeville, and son of the influential Reverend A.J. Carey (Big Bill Thompson's political ally in the 1910s), "eulogized" Malarcher:

As a man, he conducted himself in such a clean and honorable way, both on the playing field and off that his associates honored him with the title 'Gentleman Dave.' That he will always be.⁵⁶

The tone of these remarks suggests a deep reverence for Malarcher's personal qualities, and for what he meant to black professional baseball. After an eighteen-year career in black professional baseball, most of it spent in Chicago, "Gentleman Dave" opened a real

⁵⁵ "Malarcher, Ideal Leader, Quits Baseball for Good," *Defender*, February 16, 1935.

⁵⁶ Archibald J. Carey, Jr., "Pays Tribute to Baseball Mogul," letter to the *Defender*, March 9, 1935.

estate business and became a successful poet.⁵⁷ By the mid-1930s, however, a man such as Dave Malarcher had become a very rare figure in the world of black professional baseball.

Difficult Times, New Solutions

Horace Hall's American Giants faced many difficulties, mostly financial, in late 1935 and early 1936. Reports circulated in the winter and spring of 1936 that Hall owed large amounts of back pay to his players. He did not seem able to fulfill their 1935 contracts, even as he was lining up the 1936 contracts.⁵⁸ Through the *Defender*, Hall made it known that the franchise was struggling financially; a brief article in the paper urged fans to buy tickets so that Hall would not have to shut the team down. To raise revenue quickly and to stimulate interest in the team, Hall's American Giants also offered an exciting new option to fans in 1936: season tickets.⁵⁹ With this clever move, Hall re-solidified the relationship of the team to the black community (particularly important after the exile to Indianapolis). Fans buying season tickets were in effect betting that the franchise would last the season.

Conflicts in the Negro National League, however, further compounded Hall's challenges in Chicago. The power in the new NNL was centered in the east, mainly in New York and Pennsylvania. Gus Greenlee had rebuilt the NNL from his base in

⁵⁷ James Riley, *The Biographical Encyclopedia of the Negro Baseball Leagues* (New York, 1994), p. 507.

⁵⁸ Al Monroe, "Speaking of Sports," *Defender*, February 15, 1936. Many years later Hall claimed to have always paid his players, and to have paid them well, from \$125-\$500 per month (star pitcher Willie Foster earned the most). Horace Hall interview with Robert Peterson. HOF, Horace G. Hall folder.

⁵⁹ "Giants Home Next Week; Field Ready," *Defender*, May 9, 1936.

Pittsburgh, and did so with a northeastern orientation. Questionable finances and the dog-track fiasco of 1933-1934 further weakened Chicago's position in the League. The occasional public embarrassment, such as the widely-reported (but false) rumor that heavyweight champion and black icon Joe Louis might buy the team, did little to further the American Giants' image as a strong member of the League.⁶⁰ By 1936, Chicago's biggest influence in black professional baseball came only once a year, in the form of hosting the East-West game. Even this magnificent event, however, occurred in a white major-league ballpark, not in the American Giants' stadium. In sum, Robert Cole and Horace Hall were unable to recapture the days of Rube Foster, when Chicago was the hub of all black professional baseball activity. The concerns of eastern (and occasionally southern) magnates — Gus Greenlee and Cum Posey in Pittsburgh, Ed Bolden in Philadelphia, Abe Manley in Newark, and Tom Wilson in Nashville — consistently eclipsed those of Hall and the other western teams.⁶¹

In light of these many considerations, Horace Hall removed the American Giants from the NNL in 1936. In the spring of that year, Hall successfully petitioned the NNL for permission to form a "western loop" which would operate in parallel with the NNL. Hall's new circuit included teams from Kansas City, St. Louis, Detroit, Cincinnati, and Columbus.⁶² The NNL's expectation was that if Hall's venture was successful, there would be a championship pitting the top eastern and western teams at the close of the

⁶⁰ Russ Cowans, "Louis Asked to Buy Ball Club in Detroit or Chicago," *Defender*, January 25, 1936.

⁶¹ *Defender*, January 11, 1936, "Baseball Men Meet in N.Y. to Eat, Drink, and Be Seen," January 25, 1936, "Predict Stormy Session at First Mid-Winter Gathering," February 1, 1936, "Newark Gets Brooklyn's League Spot."

⁶² Franklin Penn, "Giants to Join Western Ball Loop; Greenlee Out?" *Defender*, February 8, 1936; "See Revival of Old Giant Battles With Kansas City," *Defender*, February 15, 1936.

season. If he failed, the American Giants could continue as an “associate” (not full) member of the NNL.⁶³ This meant Hall’s club could play against NNL teams and share in the revenue, but could not receive the protection against player-raiding that League membership offered. With this plan, Hall was taking a substantial risk. Because the American Giants were no longer part of the NNL, the League declared that Hall’s players were “free agents.” Any of them were free to abandon Chicago and sign with a team in the NNL.⁶⁴ Although some left, many of Hall’s best players stayed in Chicago.

Replacing manager Larry Brown with Bingo DeMoss, a legendary ballplayer, may have encouraged top players to stick it out with Hall.⁶⁵ In general, Bronzeville received the news of a western circuit well. Several favorable articles appeared in the *Defender*, heralding the dawn of a new era built on classic, old rivalries (mainly with Foster’s nemesis from the 1920s, the Kansas City Monarchs). As the NNL magnates wrangled with issues including the commissionership of the League, contract-jumping, poor umpiring, and scheduling conflicts, Horace Hall’s American Giants enjoyed a respite from these controversial issues as they prepared for the season in the new western circuit.⁶⁶ Several key Chicago race men came to Hall’s aid to get the new League off to a strong start. In so doing, they pushed the American Giants and the new League back toward middle-class respectability.

⁶³ Franklin Penn, “Giants to Join Western Ball Loop; Greenlee Out?” *Defender*, February 8, 1936.

⁶⁴ “Eastern League Season opens on May 9,” *Defender*, April 11, 1936.

⁶⁵ Franklin Penn, “Giants to Join Western Ball Loop; Greenlee Out?” *Defender*, February 8, 1936.

⁶⁶ *Defender*: Jim Taylor, “Owners Are At Fault for Present Plight of Baseball, Says Taylor,” February 15, 1936 and Jim Taylor, “Taylor Says Poor Umpiring, Bad Management Harmful,” February 22 1936. February 29 1936, “Gus Greenlee to Remain at the Head of Baseball,” March 14, 1936, “Ex-Head Advises Baseball House-Cleaning,” April 11, 1936, “Eastern League Season opens on May 9.”

The Negro American League

1936 was a successful season, and it soon seemed Horace Hall's gamble had paid off. On February 28, 1937, Hall formalized the new arrangement of the western circuit at a meeting of western club owners held in Chicago. They named the new circuit the "Negro American League." With the birth of the NAL, black professional baseball reconstructed the two-league system that had flourished in the 1920s. As was the case in the 1920s, the American Giants were the hub of the new league, and "respectable" race men from Chicago controlled it. In 1937 Hall chose a highly-respected former player to manage the team. "Candy" Jim Taylor was an old-timer, a peer of Rube Foster, and the brother of C.I. Taylor (Foster's rival in the 1910s). Although Taylor's playing days were long behind him, he was still an active figure in, and critic of, black professional baseball. In 1936, Taylor wrote several articles in the *Defender* criticizing the current state of affairs in black professional baseball in which he reminded readers of glory days from long ago.⁶⁷ Hall also pursued another figure from a bygone age -- Billy Donaldson, an African American umpire. Hall recruited Donaldson for the NAL because he had been a "star arbiter back in the days of Rube Foster."⁶⁸ Invoking the specter of Rube Foster through Donaldson was ironic, considering Foster's stance on black umpires and the fact that Donaldson quit the NNL in 1925 because he could not stand working for Foster (see chapter four). Last, the Negro American League itself was headed by none other than Robert Jackson, the distinguished old settler elite (who outlived most of his peers), the

⁶⁷ *Defender*, Jim Taylor, "Owners are at Fault for Present Plight of Baseball, Says Taylor" February 15, 1936 and "Taylor Says Bad Management Harmful," February 22, 1936.

⁶⁸ "Ump May Return Here," *Defender*, January 23, 1937.

president of the lofty Appomattox Club for most of the 1930s, the longtime Republican alderman of the third ward, and a veteran of the black baseball war of 1910.

A palpable sense of déjà vu runs through the birth of the Chicago-based NAL. Hall set the future of the club and the success of the new League on the shoulders of figures from the past: Taylor, Donaldson, Jackson, even Foster's ghost. It appears his purpose was to recapture the spirit of highly organized, professional, respectable baseball that made Foster's American Giants so beloved, and made the original NNL a successful race enterprise. Jim Taylor connected the current team to the professional class from which Foster came, and to the pride of black professional baseball in the 1920s. Robert Jackson's role was twofold. He represented the gentleman amateur baseball man of thirty years ago, as well as the political presence (but limited power) of present-day black politicians.

The list of race men and women present at the American Giants' 1937 banquet indicates the team and the NAL (through President Jackson) were linked to municipal politics. Horace Hall and Robert Jackson's guests at this event included the wives of the two most influential people in Bronzeville's politics: second ward alderman William Dawson and the mayor, Ed Kelly.⁶⁹ The historical record is not conclusive regarding Hall's intent concerning these links between the American Giants, the NAL, and the Kelly-Nash machine. Yet it is clear that one very important effect of this "new" (or perhaps old) look of the American Giants and the NAL was reestablishing the connection between black professional baseball and middle-class respectability.

⁶⁹ "Baseball Men Stage Banquet," *Defender*, March 13, 1937.

The American Giants and the NAL finished out the 1930s as successful race enterprises. Although the American Giants did not win a League championship (the Kansas City Monarchs won the first several NAL pennants), they did finish a close second in 1937, won the second half of a split season in 1938, and finished second again in 1939.⁷⁰ Marquee players such as pitchers Willie Foster and Willie “Sug” Cornelius; infielder Alex Radcliffe; and power hitter Norman “Turkey” Stearnes drew strong fan support. The East–West game continued to attract tens of thousands to the south side every summer. Attendance figures hit 40,000 in 1939. Respectable, middle-class professionals ran the new League -- Robert Jackson and Dr. J.B. Martin of Memphis alternated in the top positions of President and Commissioner. Horace Hall, generally credited as the main organizer of the League, served as a League official. Hall owned the American Giants until 1942, when he sold the franchise to NAL President Martin, who had moved to Chicago from Memphis in 1940.⁷¹

Dr. Martin’s interest in the NAL and in the American Giants coincided with a successful career in Chicago politics. In the 1940s, Martin -- a black Republican in an age when black Democrats, led by William Dawson, carried enormous influence in Bronzeville — reinvigorated the club and the League with a strong sense of black middle-class respectability. During the War, Martin brought a national focus to black professional baseball in Chicago by steering the team and the League through the wrenching processes of integration and eventually, toward dissolution.

⁷⁰ Clark and Lester (eds.), *The Negro Leagues Book*, p. 162-163.

⁷¹ Horace Hall interview with Robert Peterson, HOF, Horace G. Hall folder. “Martin Leases Chicago American Giants to William Little,” November 28, 1949 (‘Dr. Martin has run the Giants for seven years.’), ANP clipping, Claude Barnett papers, Box 397, Chicago Historical Society.

CHAPTER SIX

Segregation, Integration, and Collapse

The early and mid-1940s were the heyday of black professional baseball and a time of dramatic changes. Nearly all of the teams made money in the Chicago-based Negro American League and in the Negro National League, its eastern counterpart. During World War II, attendance at the annual East-West Game in Chicago was very high, hovering around 50,000. Additionally, Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, the segregationist czar of major league baseball, died in 1944. His replacement, Albert “Happy” Chandler, was a racial moderate. The following year, Jackie Robinson signed a Brooklyn Dodgers contract. Robinson’s official Dodger debut came in April 1947 and with that, major league baseball opened its doors to black players for the first time since 1884. In the wake of these momentous changes, shadowball’s high-flying days of the war years gave way to a series of new, difficult challenges. Black professional baseball existed because of the color line; what would become of black players, teams, and leagues when the white major (and minor) leagues dropped the racial barrier?

The race men who piloted the Chicago American Giants and the NAL in the 1940s survived the difficult process of integration through careful and considered management. The American Giants changed hands once again when NAL President J.B. Martin bought the team from Horace Hall in 1942. Martin guided the franchise and the League through the brief glory years and then through integration. After 1945, Martin’s goal for the American Giants, and for all of black professional baseball, was to keep the institution alive -- in whatever form was necessary to ensure its survival. In practical

terms, this meant reorienting his team, and the entire NAL, to serve the needs of white major league baseball. A handful of individuals in the world of black professional baseball benefited from this approach, namely Martin himself, but in the long run most did not.

In Chicago, black professional baseball's push for integration fit into a larger context. Through the war years, the race men and women of Bronzeville attacked segregation on a variety of fronts. Three issues in particular -- housing, employment, and sport — illustrate the gendered nature of race activism in the city. As they assaulted the color line in wartime hiring and access to quality housing, Chicago's race women built upon a long tradition of equating their obligation to serve the state (as war workers, or "soldiers of the home front") with the full realization of their rights as citizens.¹ A telling example is the case of fifty African American women whom the Armour Meatpacking Company flatly refused to provide employment applications in 1942. Half of the women filed suit under the auspices of the new Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC), sparking a closed-door conference between the company, *Defender* editors, and the Chicago Urban League.² Race women also targeted organizations such as the partially integrated Chicago YWCA.³ The city's race men followed a similar ideological path, albeit in a different manner. By challenging residential segregation in the courts, supporting the FEPC, serving in the military, and challenging the color line in the national pastime, they too attacked the northern version of Jim Crow.

¹ Lionel Kimble, "I Too Serve America: African American Women War Workers in Chicago, 1900-1945," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 93:4 (2000-2001): 415-434.

² *Ibid.*, p. 421-422.

³ Virginia Boynton, "Fighting Racism at the YWCA," *Chicago History*, 29:1 (Summer 2000): 22-39.

The realities of municipal politics, however, limited the progress made on these important urban issues. Led by second ward alderman (later Congressman) William Dawson, individual gains far outstripped substantive, meaningful economic and social progress for Chicago's swelling black population. The city's African American political leadership, both Democrat and Republican, repeatedly pursued strategies which would enhance their own position and provide a smattering of political plums for a small group of people but did not fully address the key issues facing the bulk of black Chicagoans: housing, jobs, and education. Indeed, by the end of the decade, black gains made in these areas during the Ed Kelly years (1933-1947) were being rolled back by Martin Kennelly's mayoral administrations (1947-1955). As this chapter will show, the context of limited gains — which were later reclaimed by the city's white power structure -- framed the boundaries in which black professional baseball's race men worked: first, to capitalize on the success of the American Giants and the NAL, and after 1947, to salvage what was left of it.

Race, Gender, and Chicago's Political Machine

The war years stimulated Chicago's economy by reinvigorating the city's manufacturing centers. An important by-product of this development was a second mass migration of African Americans from the south. In 1940, the city's black population was 277,731. By 1950, 492,265 African Americans lived in Chicago, an increase of 78%.⁴

⁴ Otis and Beverly Duncan, *The Negro Population of Chicago: A Study of Residential Succession* (Chicago, 1957), p. 300. Roger Biles, *Richard Daley: Politics, Race, and the Governing of Chicago* (DeKalb, IL, 1995), p. 86.

As was the case in the era of the first world war, when the city's black population grew very rapidly to accommodate the demand for industrial workers, Chicago's system of extralegal, informal residential segregation squeezed these thousands of new residents into the black belt on the South Side. Its boundaries slowly grew southward, from about 63rd Street in 1940 to roughly 71st Street in 1950. It also widened several blocks to the east, filling in the area bounded by State Street and Cottage Grove Avenue between 39th and 50th Streets. The African American population in the west side enclaves grew into an area Arnold Hirsch has labeled Chicago's "second ghetto."⁵

As a result, Chicago's block-level isolation index for blacks was a staggering 95% in 1940, and 92% in 1950.⁶ Racially restrictive housing covenants, whether coupled with violence or simple refusals by whites to rent and sell property to blacks, were largely responsible for this pattern of intense segregation. In the 1940 *Hansberry v. Lee* case the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of a black Chicagoan charging racial discrimination based on such covenants. The Court, however, did not void the constitutionality of all such covenants for another eight years – in the landmark case *Shelley v. Kraemer*.⁷ As a result, black Chicagoans were desperate for housing throughout the 1940s. A few housing projects opened which permitted black war workers, e.g., the Ida B. Wells Homes, Altgeld Gardens, and Wentworth Gardens. These provided some measure of relief, but also became hotspots of controversy. The policy of the Chicago Housing

⁵ Duncan and Duncan, *The Negro Population of Chicago*, p. 92 (facing), figures 7 and 8, and 279. Biles, *Richard Daley*, p. 86. Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 194.

⁶ Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), p. 47.

⁷ Wendy Plotkin, "'Hemmed In': The Struggle Against Racial Restrictive Covenants and Deed Restrictions in Post-WWII Chicago," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 94:1 (Spring 2001): 40.

Authority headed by Robert Taylor, an African American, was to provide units solely on the basis of need (not race). Of these new housing projects Wentworth Gardens, which opened in 1946, is of particular interest. Situated close to Wisconsin Steel, Carnegie-Illinois Steel, and the aircraft division of Pullman, this housing project also occupied the very spot on which American Giants park once stood.⁸ On Christmas night, 1940, the ballpark burned. This unhappy event forced the American Giants to lease Comiskey Park for their home games in the 1940s, but with the opening of Wentworth Gardens, the corner of 39th and Wentworth continued to serve the black community.

In political terms, this intense residential segregation meant black majorities comprised the populations of several wards by the early 1950s: the second, third, fourth, sixth, and twentieth (a new ward created by redistricting in 1947). As discussed in previous chapters, electoral politics was a male sphere for black Chicagoans by the 1940s. The most influential black politician in the city was William Dawson, who commanded the black wards. Dawson was born in Albany, Georgia in 1886, graduated from Fisk University with honors, earned a law degree from Northwestern University, and served in World War I. After the war, he settled in Chicago and began a career in law and politics. Dawson was the Republican alderman of the second ward from 1933-1939. In 1939 Dawson lost his reelection bid, switched parties, and served the Kelly-Nash machine as the ward's Democratic committeeman from 1939-1942. In 1942, Dawson won a seat in the U.S. Congress.⁹

⁸ Chicago *Bee*, "Wentworth Gardens Opens: 1st Families Get Keys Tuesday," August 11, 1946 and "First Child Born in Wentworth Homes," August 25, 1946. Kimble, "I Too Serve America," p. 427-428.

⁹ Roger Biles, *Big City Boss in Depression and War: Mayor Edward J. Kelly of Chicago* (DeKalb, IL, 1984), p. 97-102. James L. Cooper, "South Side Boss," *Chicago History*, 19:3/4 (Fall/Winter 1990-1991): 67-81.

In each of these official capacities, William Dawson coordinated the voting drives and controlled the distribution of patronage in African American neighborhoods. His relationship to the Kelly-Nash machine provided many plums to the black community as Kelly made more patronage jobs available to African Americans than had “Big Bill” Thompson, the so-called “Second Lincoln.” Kelly also made many high-profile political appointments of African Americans, including a black member of the school board and a black police captain, and he installed Robert Taylor as Chairman of the Chicago Housing Authority.¹⁰ Taylor’s position was the most substantive of these because it underscored Kelly’s apparent commitment to integrate public housing in the city. The CHA, Kelly hoped, would guarantee that “all law-abiding citizens may be assured of their right to live peaceably anywhere in Chicago.”¹¹

African Americans welcomed Kelly’s political appointments and egalitarian public statements. Many black citizens also appreciated the wide berth the Kelly-Nash machine granted to the operators of black vice. In this area, Dawson served the machine and the black community especially well. Policy wheels spun freely in Bronzeville during the Kelly years, with Dawson’s approval. Dawson, in fact, benefited greatly from the multi-million dollar policy racket controlled by blacks. Large amounts of policy money supported his political campaigns and those of his allies (including the Mayor). Although he always denied that policy money enriched him personally, Dawson did openly admit to taking campaign contributions from policy sources, and to protecting the interests of black policy operators against white competitors. With Kelly’s approval,

¹⁰ Richard Keiser, *Subordination or Empowerment? African American Leadership and the Struggle for Urban Political Power* (New York, 1997), p. 29-30.

¹¹ Kelly cited in *Ibid.*, p. 30.

Dawson removed police officers who attempted to shut down policy wheels in his districts. Clearly, the veil of respectability had been lifted off of black politics by the 1940s, but just as clearly the desire of the Democratic political machine for black votes had brought money and political clout into the community.¹²

The Kelly-Dawson alliance reflects a larger context of African Americans working within the harsh realities of the city's segregation. 1943, for example, was a year of racial riots in many cities, most notably Detroit. Chicago escaped the cycle of urban violence through the Mayor's Committee on Race Relations, a biracial group tasked with finding immediate solutions to the problem of racial discrimination in housing and jobs. Kelly received a great deal of praise for the Committee's activities. In 1944, the Committee sponsored a city-wide conference on race relations, addressing core issues: housing, jobs, education. The absence of truly substantive progress, however, encouraged dissenting voices.¹³ Thus, despite founding this Commission, and despite his numerous political appointments for black officials, and despite the leniency shown to policy operators, black Chicagoans supported Kelly's 1943 campaign at a rate of only slightly more than 50%. While African American voters strongly supported Franklin Roosevelt's reelection bid in 1944 (64%), as William Grimshaw, Roger Biles, and Richard Keiser (among others) have shown, black voters in the 1940s made a distinction between the national party and the local Democratic organization that sought their votes but still refused to pursue total racial equality for the city's African American residents.¹⁴

¹² William Grimshaw, *Bitter Fruit: Black Politics and the Chicago Machine, 1931-1991* (Chicago, 1992), p. 82. Biles, *Big City Boss in Depression and War*, p. 104-105.

¹³ Biles, *Big City Boss in Depression and War*, p. 126-127.

¹⁴ Grimshaw, *Bitter Fruit*, p. 49. Keiser, *Subordination or Empowerment?*, p. 29.

After the election leading black Chicagoans such as Irene McCoy Gaines of the Chicago Council of Negro Organizations continued to criticize Kelly. In 1946 she responded to a lack of progress (and perhaps a lack of sincerity from the mayor) on the issue of racially restrictive covenants, by pointedly denouncing the Committee's failures to act on the issue as "nothing less than criminal."¹⁵

William Dawson, the powerbroker between city hall, the black belt, and Washington, stood in the middle of such incidents but never challenged the fundamental status quo of a black politician laboring within the confines of the white machine. When Party chairman Pat Nash died in 1945, control of roughly half of Kelly's city-wide coalition came into play. Without Nash to placate the various ethnic groups in Chicago's fractious Democratic Party, Kelly's future was uncertain. Because Dawson's power in the Party relied on Kelly's role at the head of the machine, Dawson was not able to ensure the embattled mayor's re-nomination. In 1947, after a great deal of intra-party wrangling, Jacob Arvey, the new Party chieftain, removed Kelly from the ticket and replaced him with Martin Kennelly. Kennelly was a reform-minded candidate who, almost immediately upon winning the 1947 election, set about "cleaning up" the city. Much as William Dever had done from 1923-1927, Kennelly focused his attention on the black wards, which were controlled by Dawson.¹⁶

The Kennelly administrations (1947-1955) assaulted vice in the black belt. His primary targets were jitney cabs and policy wheels. Jitney cabs were unlicensed taxis operated predominantly by African Americans whom the city's white cab companies

¹⁵ Gaines cited in Plotkin, "'Hemmed In,'" p. 49.

¹⁶ Keiser, *Subordination or Empowerment?*, p. 33.

refused to hire. These same cab companies refused to service customers in Bronzeville, so the jitney cabs provided an important service for black Chicagoans.¹⁷ Kennelly's high-profile anti-crime enforcement measures were focused in black neighborhoods, a deliberate attempt to racialize criminal activity in the city. Attacking policy was, not surprisingly, a "reform strategy" which incensed Dawson.¹⁸ Over the course of the preceding decades, through mounting segregation and escalating poverty during the Great Depression, policy had become an integral part of the south side's economy. Kennelly's crackdown drove most of the policy cartel's money out of the city. By most accounts, Dawson detested Kennelly and welcomed the Party's decision to dump him from the Party ticket in 1955 – actions which Kennelly later denounced in racial terms, claiming he was a victim of the "dictatorship from the dark."¹⁹

These many incidents in Chicago's political history in the 1940s helped to determine the fate of black economic and cultural institutions such as the American Giants and the Negro American League. As the story of William Dawson's activities in this period illustrate, African American advancements were limited by the political, social, and economic realities of urban segregation and racism. Although Dawson's relationship with the Kelly-Nash machine helped to secure some benefits for black Chicagoans, Dawson was legendary for his silence on controversial racial issues. As John Cooper, Douglas Massey, and Nancy Denton have argued, Dawson was notoriously *disinterested* in ending segregation, for to do so would end his role as the boss of the

¹⁷ Cooper, "South Side Boss," p. 77.

¹⁸ Arnold Hirsch, "Martin Kennelly: The Mugwump and the Machine," in Paul Green and Melvin Holli (eds.), *The Mayors: The Chicago Political Tradition* (Carbondale, IL, 1995), p. 140.

¹⁹ Grimshaw, *Bitter Fruit*, p. 43.

submachine.²⁰ Rather, Dawson's success was predicated on his ability to deliver the black vote in the five wards he controlled to the white machine in local and national elections -- and to perpetuate an atmosphere in which the Democratic machine needed him.²¹ J.B. Martin, a relative newcomer to the Chicago scene in the 1940s, replicated this very pattern of "leadership" in the world of black professional baseball. His approach to handling the thorny issue of baseball integration mirrors the experiences of black politicians in Chicago in the 1940s.

J.B. Martin

Dr. John B. (J.B.) Martin was born in Holly Springs, Mississippi in 1888. His family moved to the more racially moderate city of Memphis, where he was raised. Martin graduated from MeHarry Pharmaceutical College in Nashville and returned to Memphis in 1910, whereupon he opened his first drug store. In time, Martin controlled a chain of drug stores throughout the south.²² With his brother B.B. Martin, J.B. also co-owned the Memphis Red Sox of the Negro Southern League, of which he was president for several years. The Red Sox club was one of a very few black professional teams that owned its own ballpark (Martin Baseball Park). Beginning in 1939, Martin served as President of the Negro American League. By the fall of 1940, Dr. Martin of was a successful pharmacist, businessman, and black baseball entrepreneur.²³ A Republican,

²⁰ Cooper, "South Side Boss," p. 72-73. Massey and Denton, *American Apartheid*, p. 156.

²¹ Dawson earned praise for delivering more than 50,000 votes from the black wards in Truman's 1948 reelection bid. Truman's victory margin in Illinois was only 38,000 votes. Grimshaw, *Bitter Fruit*, p. 81.

²² "Ex-Sanitary Dist. Trustee Dies at 89," *Tribune*, May 2, 1973.

²³ "Dr. J. B. Martin Outstanding Figure in World of Sports," *Bee*, August 1, 1943.

Martin nursed an avid interest in municipal politics for many years, chairing the Shelby Country Republican Club.²⁴ As the 1940 Presidential election approached, it appeared that the Republican candidate, Wendell Wilkie, posed a significant threat to Franklin Roosevelt's bid for a third term. Martin campaigned for Wilkie in Memphis.

The possibility of a Roosevelt defeat was not lost on Memphis' white leaders either. For decades, Memphis's Democratic machine was run by Edward H. Crump, an authoritarian politician and former mayor. "Boss" Crump was not widely known to be a friend of the city's black population. In the 1920s, for example, a local Ku Klux Klan leader headed Memphis' police force, 70% of which was rumored to be Klan members.²⁵ Despite this, the Crump machine distributed patronage to a few key blacks in black neighborhoods, establishing a pattern of racism peppered with paternalism. Thus, in Ed Crump's Memphis, there was room for members of the small black middle-class such as J.B. Martin to operate economically, politically, and socially — as long as their activities did not clash with the machine. In October 1940, the Crump machine was working to deliver the vote to Roosevelt. Crump clamped down on all dissonant voices in the city, including Martin's.

Through Police Commissioner Joe Boyle, Crump targeted individuals who posed a threat to the Democratic machine's rule in Memphis. Martin crossed Boyle when he defied a Crump edict banning all Republican rallies in the city. Identifying Martin as a person who "fanned racial hatred," Boyle's men swarmed Martin's pharmacy for several weeks, harassing customers by searching them for drugs, including a group of school

²⁴ "Dr. J.B. Martin Wins Race for Sanitary District," *Bee*, December 1, 1946.

²⁵ Sharon Wright, *Race, Power, and Political Emergence in Memphis* (New York, 2000), p. 33.

children buying ice cream at the store.²⁶ Threats of violence against Martin's business and home mounted until he finally decided to flee the city. Martin relocated to Chicago's south side where, as NAL President, he had traveled frequently for business purposes. He purchased a large home in Bronzeville, at 4552 South Michigan Ave.²⁷

In Bronzeville, Martin continued as NAL president. He joined the Board of Directors of the Victory Mutual Life Insurance Company and the prestigious Appomattox Club. In 1942 Martin bought the American Giants for \$2,000.²⁸ He also tried his hand at local politics that year, running for county commissioner. Martin lost, but in 1944 he ran for a position on the Chicago Sanitary District Board of Trustees. He lost again. In 1946, Martin was finally elected to the Sanitary District Board, the first African American ever to do so.²⁹ Because the Sanitary District controlled millions of dollars in city contracts and dispensed thousands of jobs, to hold one of the nine slots on the Board was to wield a great deal of influence. Trustees were elected for a lengthy term of six years during which they were well-paid (\$10,000 annually).³⁰ Through the example of J.B. Martin, it seemed middle-class "respectable" African Americans could access the power structure of the city. But Martin represented a very small segment of Chicago's black population. His ascension to the Sanitary District was another example of advancement for a few, but

²⁶ Wright, *Race, Power, and Political Emergence in Memphis*, p. 33.

²⁷ Larry Lester, Sammy Miller, and Dick Clark, *Black Baseball in Chicago* (Chicago, 2000), p. 86.

²⁸ Horace Hall interview with Robert Peterson. National Baseball Hall of Fame, Cooperstown, NY (hereafter HOF), Horace G. Hall folder. *Appomattox Club Yearbook*, 1947. Chicago Historical Society (hereafter CHS).

²⁹ "Dr. J.B. Martin Wins Race for Sanitary District," *Bee*, December 1, 1946.

³⁰ *Bee*, November 3, 1946, "Dr. Martin Seeks Post As Sanitary Board Trustee," and December 1, 1946, "Dr. J.B. Martin Wins Race for Sanitary District." The Sanitary District is now called the Water Reclamation District.

little in the way of tangible gains for the masses. From this lofty perch, buffeted by wealth, influence, and community prestige, Martin directed the American Giants and the NAL through their most successful, most profitable years since the days of Rube Foster. Because he was a respectable member of the middle class, Martin's ownership of the team and control of the League distanced both from the criminal connections and unsavory reputation of shadowball in the 1930s.

The Glory Days of Black Professional Baseball

From 1941 to 1945, black professional baseball enjoyed an unprecedented level of success. Attendance rose dramatically all over the nation. The American Giants, whose beloved but aging ballpark at 39th and Wentworth had burned in 1940, played most of their home games before large crowds in Comiskey Park.³¹ Some teams (not always the American Giants) booked games in Wrigley Field as well, and often played before crowds of 20,000-30,000. Increased attendance meant higher revenues, and in turn, better player salaries. In the mid-1940s, most players earned approximately \$500 per month. The superstars of black professional baseball made far more than that; the 1945 *Negro Baseball Yearbook* claimed star pitcher Satchel Paige was earning over \$40,000 a year, making him the best paid baseball player in America, black or white.³²

J.B. Martin's American Giants posted an uneven record during this period. Statistical records from black professional baseball are notoriously incomplete, but existing evidence does indicate the team won the second half of the season in 1943. The

³¹ Some games were played in Wrigley Field.

³² Phil Dixon and Patrick Hannigan, *The Negro Leagues: A Photographic History* (Mattituck, NY, 1992), p. 193.

team lost a playoff game to the Birmingham Black Barons (the first half winner), and thus lost the NAL pennant. The next year the American Giants finished dead last in the first half of the season but recovered enough to finish third in the second half. In 1945, the team finished in second place for the second half of the season. In the 1940s the American Giants were never the contenders they had been in the halcyon days of Rube Foster.³³

Chicago's East-West Game, however, was monstrously successful in the glory days of shadowball. Bronzeville's biggest event of the year saw attendance figures of 50,246 in 1941, 48,400 in 1942, 51,723 in 1943, 46,247 in 1944, and 31,714 in 1945.³⁴ The black press strongly supported the East-West "classic," as they called it. Newspaper coverage was commonly split between the goings-on of the players and the presence of respectable figures of the black business, political, and social worlds at the game.³⁵ In 1943 for example, the Chicago *Bee* ran a montage of photographs juxtaposing shots of Satchel Paige in mid-windup with the smiling faces of NAL President J.B. Martin and Alderman Oscar DePriest. At times, however, the praise for this event was laced with difficult questions that pointed to some of the fundamental problems in black professional baseball. *Defender* sportswriter Fay Young wondered why, given the popularity of black baseball in Chicago, the American Giants were unable to build their own ballpark. Young likened renting major league ballparks to renting a tuxedo; a nice outfit worn for a special occasion, but not one's own clothes. "The East versus West game," Young wrote,

³³ League standings compiled from Robert Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White* (New York, 1970), p. 276-288 and Dick Clark and Larry Lester (eds.), *The Negro Leagues Book* (Cleveland, 1994), p. 163-165.

³⁴ Attendance figures in Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White*, p. 298-303.

³⁵ Donn Rogosin, *Invisible Men: Life in Baseball's Negro Leagues* (New York, 1983), p. 116.

“ought to make Chicago folk get busy and have a ball yard of their own.”³⁶ Apparently content with the status quo, Martin never offered a response to that provocative question.

The wild success of the East-West Game led NAL and NNL officials to schedule multiple all-star games in 1946, 1947, and 1948. Comiskey Park in Chicago hosted the primary game during these years, and the secondary sites varied. Griffith Stadium in Washington, D.C. hosted the second game in 1946; the Polo Grounds in New York was the site in 1947; Yankee Stadium in New York hosted the last of these games in 1948. Attendance and revenues were always much higher at the East-West game in Chicago than at these other locations (see figures 6-1 and 6-2, p. 225-226). From 1946-1948, NAL President Martin and NNL Presidents Tom Wilson and Rev. John Johnson (1947-48) split ten percent of the gross gate receipts for the Chicago games, or about \$2,500 each. For promoting the event, the *Courier* and *Defender* split 5% of what remained after the Presidents had taken their cut, approximately \$1,150 each in 1946 and 1947 (in 1948, the *Defender* alone collected \$600). *Defender* sportswriter Fay Young earned \$100 as the official scorer for these games (see figure 6-3 on p. 227).³⁷

With its newfound prosperity, black professional baseball’s magnates decided to revive the Negro League World Series. These games, although they did not rival the popularity of the annual East-West Game in Chicago, attracted large numbers of fans and garnered press attention. Furthermore, World Series games were not restricted to the cities of the competing teams. Rather, the Negro League World Series was a traveling showcase of black baseball, as was the season itself. The 1942 World Series, for

³⁶ Fay Young, “The Stuff is Here,” *Defender*, August 2, 1941.

³⁷ On financial data for East-West Games in Chicago, Washington, and New York, see ledger sheets for those games for 1946-1948, HOF, Negro Leagues File, East/West All-Star Game folder.

example, pitted the NAL Kansas City Monarchs against the NNL Homestead Grays. These teams played the five-game series in Washington, D.C., Pittsburgh, New York, Kansas City, and Philadelphia. The seven-game 1943 World Series between the Birmingham Black Barons and the Homestead Grays was played in no less than six different cities: Washington, D.C., Indianapolis, Chicago, Columbus, OH, Birmingham, and Montgomery.³⁸ The cumulative effect of a barnstorming series was to raise fan support and money from as broad a base as possible, despite a wide range of external and internal problems which constantly threatened shadowball's survival.

The Pitfalls of Prosperity

Black professional baseball's golden years, however, were plagued with serious problems. Two in particular were keyed to the war effort: transportation and player personnel. The Office of Defense Transportation's (ODT) limits on gas and rubber consumption directly affected shadowball. Since the teams traveled by bus — a far cheaper and more flexible option than rail — the rationing of these vital goods threatened the ability of the NAL and NNL to operate. In March 1943, Martin called a meeting of NAL club owners in Chicago to discuss the issue. Martin's NAL and Tom Wilson's NNL then requested a special exemption, which the ODT denied. Major league baseball, by contrast, did receive such an exemption.³⁹ The black press praised major league baseball for its foresight in championing the cause for over a year, and accused Martin, *et*

³⁸ Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White*, p. 277, 279.

³⁹ The year before, Roosevelt formally endorsed white baseball's continuation in the famous "green-light" letter. Roosevelt to Landis, January 15, 1942, HOF.

al of moving too slowly, too late, essentially “fiddling while their Rome burned.”⁴⁰

Ultimately, a petition-circulating campaign in several cities coupled with political pressure (applied by Martin and Syd Pollock, owner of the Cincinnati Clowns) encouraged the ODT to rescind its order -- an example, perhaps, of a slowly changing climate regarding race relations and public entertainment in the war years.⁴¹

The second war-related issue, player personnel, was much more difficult to handle. As was the case in major league baseball, when the draft boards called, many ballplayers abandoned the diamonds for military service, leaving nervous club owners with an uncertain future. “Negro owners,” the *Bee* observed, “are not anxious to lose the stars who proved drawing cards in an unprecedented successful season last year.”⁴² Beyond the obvious concerns about losing top players to the war effort, however, lay an interesting opportunity. Military service depleted rosters in the white major leagues as well, creating an unprecedented opportunity for black players to integrate the major leagues as substitutes. Although all of the leading black sportswriters pushed this angle in their columns — particularly Fay Young of the *Defender*, Wendell Smith of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, Sam Lacy of the *Baltimore Afro-American*, and Joe Bostic of the *New York People’s Voice* -- this, in fact, did not happen.⁴³ Rather, white major league

⁴⁰ *Bee*, Don Deleighbur, “Behind the Play,” April 18, 1943, J.C. Chunn, “Black Crackers Use Own Cars to Play Ball,” April 18, 1943, Frank Ward, “Pro and Con in Sports,” April 25, 1943, and “Outlook Dark for Summer Baseball,” May 2, 1943.

⁴¹ Dixon and Hannigan, *The Negro Leagues Book*, p. 204-208. On the changing climate of race relations: Joe Louis, the black heavyweight champion, served in the military throughout WWII, raising large sums of money and generating a great deal of public support for the war effort.

⁴² *Bee*, “Outlook for Baseball – Good?,” April 4, 1943, and Richard Robinson, “Says Negro Owners Muffed Chance to Crash Big League,” April 25, 1943.

⁴³ The experiences of African American sportswriters during the era of integration is best captured in Jim Reisler, *Black Writers/Black Baseball: An Anthology of Articles from Black Sportswriters Who Covered the Negro Leagues* (Jefferson, NC, 1994).

teams chose to make due with aging veterans and prematurely promoted minor leaguers. Some teams tried more unusual means of maintaining fan support and raising revenues. Philip Wrigley of the Chicago Cubs sponsored the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League;⁴⁴ the St. Louis Browns signed outfielder Pete Gray, who only had one arm.

Throughout the course of the war, the black press spearheaded the “Double V” public relations campaign. Writers urged African Americans to support an American victory abroad against fascism as well as a victory at home against racism. The idea was for African Americans to contribute fully to the war effort and in so doing prove their loyalty as citizens deserving an equal place in society. Black professional baseball was an important part of the campaign. As the *Bee* correctly observed, baseball was a morale-builder which, in a time of national crisis, could be especially useful. And Chicagoans, the paper was quick to point out, “have always gone in strong for the game.”⁴⁵ Race men like J.B. Martin understood this. Of course, Martin also understood (as William Dawson did in politics) that through black professional baseball some African Americans could maximize the economic and social limits imposed by segregation, without which there would be no black professional baseball at all. Shadowball’s contentious ranks were rife with divisions that threatened to rend it apart, even in times of prosperity.

Internal problems also plagued black professional baseball in the mid-1940s. Mediocre salaries encouraged some players to enlist in the army, or quit baseball in favor of a job in a defense-related factory, or play in Mexico. Furthermore, on many occasions

⁴⁴ On the AAGBL, see Susan Cahn, *Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Women’s Sport* (New York, 1994), p. 140-163.

⁴⁵ “Outlook Dark for Summer Baseball,” *Bee*, May 2, 1943.

club owners wrangled with one another, and often with their players, over the sanctity of player contracts. Angered by what he termed the “raiding” of several American Giants players by NNL teams (the Philadelphia Stars and the Homestead Grays), Martin began the 1943 season by threatening to terminate “all working agreements” with the NNL and cancel the East-West Game.⁴⁶ Martin was chastised in the *Bee* for such heavy-handedness by sportswriter Don Deleighbur, who encouraged black professional baseball’s magnates to stop assaulting each other. Instead, Deleighbur pointed out, they ought to notice that “real baseball enthusiasts” would easily abandon their interest in the “spade version of the pastime” in favor of major league baseball games in the same cities, where the color line may have applied on the field, but not at the turnstiles.⁴⁷

The black press’ coverage of black professional baseball in the mid-1940s offers a great deal of insight into popular perceptions of the shadowball’s social utility. Deleighbur, a frequent contributor to the *Bee*, described black professional baseball as a “public trust” and urged the magnates charged with its governance to “strive for dignity.” “There is no kidding ourselves,” he wrote, “Negro baseball is but a shadow of the real thing.”⁴⁸ Deleighbur often chastised leading baseball men like J.B. Martin for spending their profits frivolously rather than reinvesting in the business of baseball. In many articles, Deleighbur summoned images of fat-cat owners, sarcastically referencing popular winter resorts where the owners would cavort: Hot Springs, Saratoga Springs, and Florida. Better relations with the black newspapers, more planning with one another,

⁴⁶ *Bee*, Frank Ward, “Pro and Con in Sports,” May 9, 1943 and Don Deleighbur, “Behind the Play,” May 16, 1943.

⁴⁷ Don Deleighbur, “Behind the Play,” *Bee*, May 30, 1943.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, August 29, 1943.

hiring a Commissioner to oversee the NAL and NNL, and better pay/more security for the players were all common baseball topics in the black press because these were issues that would help ensure the continued success of black professional baseball. Yet black baseball's leading magnates, Martin foremost among them, never rose to meet these challenges. Instead, they weathered each crisis as it came, and then moved on to the next.

The issue of player compensation in this era of prosperity came to a head at the East-West Game in 1944. Players received around \$50 for their appearance in a game that generated tens of thousands of dollars. All-stars from the "East" squad (the NNL) held a caucus in Chicago's Grand Hotel during which they angrily decided to demand more money for their services. They insisted upon receiving \$200 per person or they would not play the game. After four conferences with NNL officials the players and owners finally reached an agreement. The NNL would set aside \$6,600 for the players, -- \$4,000 of it paid in advance -- and the game went on as scheduled. NNL President Tom Wilson, however, did not have the money before the game began. He borrowed it from J.B. Martin. The "West" squad (NAL) got wind of these happenings and also demanded more money. These players received \$100-\$200 each. Through this crisis, the ballplayers showed a remarkable degree of solidarity. None broke ranks, despite numerous attempts of NNL team owners to "talk sense" to the players. One player encapsulated the issue very clearly by complaining to a reporter that he was sick of "paying the salaries" of Martin and Wilson -- a reference, no doubt, to the arrangement which funneled 10% of the East-West Game's receipts to the league Presidents.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Ledger sheets for 1946-1948 East-West games, HOF, Negro Leagues File, East/West All-Star Game folder. Don Deleighbur, "Behind the Play," *Bee*, August 27, 1944.

A host of other issues haunted black professional baseball in the mid-1940s. The NNL's decision to hire a white company to produce statistics, rather than Wendell Smith of the *Courier*, elicited howls of protest and accusations that the NNL was pro-Jim Crow.⁵⁰ Complaints also centered on the presence of white promoters and booking agents like Ape Saperstein of Chicago, who received a sizeable share of shadowball's proceeds. Making matters worse, for a time Saperstein seemed to be working with Gus Greenlee who, in 1944, attempted to lure NNL and NAL players to a new league he was developing (called the United States League). Although Saperstein ultimately did not join forces with Greenlee in this disruptive venture, his flirtation with the idea drew the wrath of team owners and black sportswriters.⁵¹

In addition, the battle over hiring a Commissioner to oversee either of the two leagues pitted sportswriters against owners and players.⁵² Martin had installed Robert Jackson as NAL Commissioner briefly, but his position was little more than a figurehead, and Jackson died in 1942. In 1944 and 1945, the Commissioner issue heated up again. This time the odds-on favorite was DeHart Hubbard of Cleveland -- former Olympic track star, former baseball club owner, and long-time black baseball advocate. Hubbard "believed sincerely in Negro baseball and its future." He advocated eliminating "the booking agent evil" by having the leagues, not the promoters, handle bookings. Don Deleighbur, Hubbard's biggest supporter, backed him by invoking the 1920s language of

⁵⁰ Don Deleighbur, "Behind the Play," *Bee*, March 19, 1944.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, July 9, 1944, September 10, 1944, October 29, 1944, and April 15, 1945.

⁵² *Ibid.*, March 19, 1944.

⁵² *Ibid.*, July 9, 1944 and September 17, 1944.

respectability. In his estimation, “respect [was] the No. 1 consideration.”⁵³ Deleighbur pressed this point on other occasions by linking the need for a Commissioner to demands for respectable fan behavior. The writer denounced “those situations that exist where fans have been selling whiskey out of milk bottles in the stands and conducting crap games in the aisle while the game is in progress.” Rowdy players, he wrote, also needed to be controlled by a Commissioner. For example, several members of the Memphis Red Sox assaulted an umpire in an ugly incident during a game at Wrigley Field. The fallout from the ten-minute melee included the Wrigley family dramatically raising the fee for renting the park.⁵⁴ The Leagues never did choose a Commissioner and by the end of 1945, the issue of fan and player conduct became an important part of the public discourse on integration.

At What Cost Integration?

The December 19, 1943 edition of the *Bee* printed Commissioner Landis’ famous statement on segregation in major league baseball:

There is no rule, nor to my knowledge has there ever been, formal or informal or any understanding, written or unwritten, subterranean or sub-anything against hiring of Negroes in the big leagues!⁵⁵

Landis’ statement was widely known to be false; the so-called “gentleman’s agreement,” which ensured segregation in major league baseball, was legendary by 1943.

Nonetheless, the statement’s appearance in the public realm inspired race men and other

⁵³ Don Deleighbur, “Behind the Play,” *Bee*, June 24, 1945.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, July 29, 1945.

⁵⁵ “Judge Landis’ Stand,” *Bee*, December 19, 1943. The statement first appeared the *Sporting News*, March 3, 1942.

advocates of baseball integration (such as the editors of the *Daily Worker*) to strongly challenge the color line in major league baseball. At the annual conference of major league teams, the status of black players was discussed. Wendell Smith and Ira Lewis (both of the *Courier*) joined Paul Robeson, the international opera star and civil rights activist, in addressing Landis and the assembled white owners on the topic of integration. They received little more than a polite if disingenuous response that there was no color line in baseball.⁵⁶ Soon after, a group called the “Chicago Committee for Integration of Negroes into Organized Baseball” met with Cub owner Philip Wrigley, who indicated an interest in hiring black players, but felt the time wasn’t ripe for major league baseball to shed its Jim Crow heritage. Wrigley did agree, however, to hire a scout to evaluate black baseball players for eventual integration.⁵⁷

J.B. Martin’s response to these developments foreshadowed his approach to integration for years to come. Martin assured the public that he, and all NAL owners, had no objections to their players joining the major leagues. This was a position he repeated on many occasions, such as the 1945 East-West Game, where he spoke about endorsing “any move that will bring Negro players the just recognition they deserve.”⁵⁸ Martin was very clear, however, that if integration ever came to pass, owners of NAL clubs would have to be appropriately compensated:

We do ask that if and when the majors do decide to admit Negro players they will give us the same consideration in regards to buying these players that they give to

⁵⁶ “Baseball’s Unwritten Law Vicious,” *Bee*, January 9, 1944.

⁵⁷ *Bee*, Don Deleighbur, “Behind the Play,” January 9, 1944 and “Cubs May Hire Negroes,” January 23, 1944.

⁵⁸ Luther Townsley, “Negro Baseball Owners Will Back Equality for Negro Players,” Associated Negro Press (hereafter ANP). Claude Barnett Papers, Box 397, folder 397-16, CHS.

the minor leagues. We have considerable money invested in this league and our teams. If the majors want any of our players we will expect them to be purchased on the same basis and standards that are applied when minor leaguers are purchased.⁵⁹

With this statement Martin positioned the League as a willing supplier of personnel to the white major leagues. The NNL, by contrast, refused to entertain any ideas about integration. Don Deleighbur captured popular disappointment at the NNL's stand on integration when he wrote, "it looks as though the NNL will go down fighting for white supremacy and Jim Crow in our national pastime."⁶⁰

Over the next several years, this difference of strategy between Martin's NAL and Tom Wilson's NNL morphed into a larger split along the axis of *respectability*. The NNL was commonly cast as the more unsavory of the two leagues. The gambling element that reinvigorated the NNL in the 1930s still controlled the League on the eve of integration (although Greenlee himself was no longer part of it).⁶¹ Their stance on integration further isolated them as friends of the players, and of the race. NAL team owners, by contrast, featured leading members of the black middle-class (such as Martin) who argued for integration *as well as* the rights of owners. Martin staked out the high ground, prompting leading black sportswriters such as Deleighbur to describe him in terms befitting the respectable middle class: "business-like," "prompt-acting," and "capable."⁶²

⁵⁹ Don Deleighbur, "Behind the Play," *Bee*, January 9, 1944.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Jules Tygiel, *Past Time: Baseball As History* (New York, 2000), p. 137. Rogosin, *Invisible Men*, p. 107.

⁶² Don Deleighbur, "Behind the Play," *Bee*, September 24, 1944.

The base of support for integration grew wider at the close of the second world war. Integration advocates realized the FEPC, which had been used by black workers to protest racial discrimination in war-related industries, could be an effective tool for forcing the integration of major league baseball. A. Philip Randolph's threat of a march on Washington in 1941 had pushed Roosevelt into creating the FEPC as a wartime measure. Although it lacked enforcement power, its existence signaled the federal government's regulatory presence in the world of industrial labor. The FEPC's future after the war was uncertain, but race men reasoned that if one could file suit under the auspices of the FEPC when denied a job application based on race, why not do the same when denied a chance to play major league baseball on the same basis?

This strategy first took root in New York, which had a state-level FEPC and a governor (Thomas Dewey) who demanded integration in employment, and three major-league baseball teams in a city whose mayor (Fiorello LaGuardia) was of like mind.⁶³ Mayor LaGuardia formed a committee to study the issue of segregation in baseball. In October 1945, the Committee on Baseball released its report urging the integration of major league baseball. In the report, LaGuardia's committee revealed important financial information that prior to the report, only baseball insiders had known. One, black professional baseball grossed over two million dollars a year in the mid-1940s. Two, major league teams earned hundreds of thousands of dollars a year renting their stadiums to black teams, suggesting a strong incentive (one of many) for keeping the color line in

⁶³ "Don Deleghur, "Behind the Play," *Bee*, August 5, 1945, August 26, 1945, and September 30, 1945.

place. The New York Yankees, in fact, grossed nearly \$100,000 annually renting their stadium to black teams.⁶⁴

The report also identified the presence of player contracts in the NAL and NNL – important, since many of shadowball’s critics maintained no such contracts existed -- but it also criticized the loose organization of the two leagues. The report concluded by calling for an end to segregation in “organized baseball” and placed the responsibility for desegregation on the white major leagues. “The only equitable solution to this problem,” the report reads, “is that individuals be treated alike and with relation to their abilities throughout organized baseball.”⁶⁵ For all its important work, however, LaGuardia’s committee was late. Several days before it was released Branch Rickey, President of the Brooklyn Dodgers, signed Jackie Robinson, ending sixty-one years of segregation.

Illinois did not have a FEPC and Mayor Kelly was not as committed to forcing integration through it, or any other measure, as Fiorello LaGuardia. Nonetheless, Chicago’s race men took their cue from New York. As the federal agency approached its end (it expired June 30, 1946), they pushed for Illinois to adopt a state-level FEPC. While campaigning for re-election as Governor of Illinois in 1945, Dwight Green expressed support for the principles of fair employment. In the summer of 1946, Chicago’s FEPC advocates called on Green to keep his word by introducing legislation for a state-level FEPC. Such laws, the editors of the *Bee* argued, would deliver

⁶⁴ Albert “Happy” Chandler Papers, University of Kentucky (hereafter HCP). Box 162, Important Papers, 1945-1947 folder. “Report of the Mayor’s Committee on Baseball to Mayor F.H. LaGuardia,” October 31, 1945. HOF, Race and Ethnicity File, Integration folder, p. 6-9. “Report of Major League Steering Committee for Submission to the National and American Leagues at Their Meeting in Chicago,” August 27, 1946, p. 18-20. Jules Tygiel, *Baseball’s Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy* (New York, 1983), p. 81-86.

⁶⁵ *Bee*, August 19, 1945 and “Report of the Mayor’s Committee on Baseball to Mayor F.H. LaGuardia,” October 31, 1945. HOF, Race and Ethnicity File, Integration Folder, p. 6-9.

“economic democracy” to the race whereas refusing to support a FEPC was “the clue to put the Negro and other minorities back into their economic places by the old formulas of race hate.” As black Chicagoans were pushing to force open the doors barring race advancement, Mayor Kelly sponsored “Fair Employment Day” in Chicago, on which African Americans were encouraged to protest discrimination. The day, however, amounted to little more than another example of biracial cooperation and “race progress” which was more symbolic than tangible.⁶⁶

The *Bee* offered a more substantial approach in a series of articles published in the fall of 1946. The paper’s prescription for race progress clearly expressed a race-neutral vision for Chicago’s future built on equality of access in very specific areas:

By seriously attempting [sic] to make living conditions healthy and attractive for the city’s polyglot population, Chicago’s leaders and citizens can perform a really great service. Basic to the attainment of this end is the need for breaking the bottleneck in housing and thoroughly democratizing Chicago’s institutions.⁶⁷

Subsequent articles emphasized the power of integrated athletics, where the democratic spirit” would hopefully spread “from the athletic field to all areas of life.”⁶⁸ For African American college students, whose number increased with the advent of the G.I. Bill, the paper urged integration, “not only in athletics but myriad other activities including publication personnel, dramatics, discussion groups, debating societies, and various specialized clubs.”⁶⁹ In the aftermath of World War II, the integration of baseball,

⁶⁶ *Bee*, “The Case for State FEPC,” May 26, 1946, “Chicago Observes Fair Employment Day,” June 30, 1946, and “FEPC ‘Died’ With Warning, July 14, 1946.

⁶⁷ “Making Chicago the Greatest City,” *Bee*, September 15, 1946.

⁶⁸ “Growing Gridiron Democracy,” *Bee*, October 6, 1946.

⁶⁹ “Opportunity for Integration,” *Bee*, October 27, 1946.

America's national pastime, clearly fostered optimism for the integration of society beyond the confines of the diamond.

Integration and its Consequences

When Jackie Robinson broke baseball's color line, black Chicago was jubilant, and the city's race leaders were very clear on the broader importance of this historic act. "Democracy has finally entered baseball," the *Defender* declared.⁷⁰ Mindful that many people in major league baseball did not welcome the statement of equality and race progress Robinson represented, middle-class race men encouraged the black masses to present themselves respectably when the Dodgers came to town. Walter White of the NAACP put it very plainly:

May I plead with that minority of Negroes who appear to believe a baseball game can be seen only through a haze of alcohol to postpone their drinking until after the games in which they go to see Jackie (or any other player or team) play.⁷¹

Defender editorials furthered White's point about propriety and self-control with pleas for black fans to "restrain [their] emotions." "Above all," the paper continued, "let us not hold up the game -- in a ludicrous ceremony -- to present him with a box of southern fried chicken."⁷² Integration advocates were keenly aware that it was a white baseball executive, Branch Rickey, who instigated the process of integrating major league baseball. Remarks such as these reminded readers that until baseball's interracial

⁷⁰ Fay Young, "End of Baseball's Jim Crow Seen With Signing of Jackie Robinson," *Defender*, November 3, 1945.

⁷¹ Walter White in the *Defender*, April 26, 1947.

⁷² *Defender*, April 26, 1947.

experiment succeeded, the Race's position in major league baseball was precarious at best.

Managing black baseball's future through the integration process fell to shadowball's moguls. J.B. Martin took the lead role in Chicago and on the national level. Martin had always supported integration as long as black team owners were properly compensated for their losses. Upon hearing the news of Robinson's signing in 1945, Martin had praised Rickey for his "moral courage" in helping to provide "Negro ballplayers a chance to participate in the major leagues in this, our great democracy."⁷³ Now, facing the loss of his best players to the white major leagues, Martin moved to protect his own interests and the interests of black professional baseball.

From the first moment that integration appeared to be at hand, critics raised the specter of the collapse of black professional baseball as an inevitable consequence. "It is doubtful if the colored game could survive," the *Sporting News* wrote. "Instead of gaining anything, Negro baseball would lose everything."⁷⁴ This quote is an excellent example of the common "soft" critique (as opposed to overt racist objections) concerning integration: bringing black players into the major leagues would necessarily destroy the world of black professional baseball. Many months after the Dodgers signed Robinson, a confidential report submitted to Commissioner Chandler by major league baseball's steering committee confirmed this sentiment:

These Negro leagues cannot exist without good players. If they cannot field good teams, they will not continue to attract the fans who click the turnstiles...if the

⁷³ Luther Townsley, "Club Owners Jubilant but Want Brooklyn to Pay for Robinson," October 31, 1945, ANP. Claude Barnett Papers, Box 396, folder 396-33, CHS.

⁷⁴ "No Good From Raising Race Issue," *Sporting News*, undated. HCP, Box 164, Spink—*Sporting News*, 1945-1946 folder.

major leagues and big minors of Professional Baseball raid these leagues and take their best players – the Negro leagues will eventually fold up – the investments of their club owners will be wiped out – and a lot of professional Negro players will lose their jobs.⁷⁵

There seemed to be some evidence for this assertion. The Dodgers gained Robinson but the Kansas City Monarchs lost one of their top players, and without proper compensation.⁷⁶ Effa Manley, owner of the NNL Newark Eagles, denounced Rickey loudly (and often) for “stealing” players from black teams. Still, J.B. Martin did not accept the integration-equals-the-end-of-shadowball paradigm. Instead, he worked to develop a way for integration to occur without destroying shadowball.

The key to Martin’s plan was to reorient the NAL, and the Chicago American Giants, as a talent source for the integrating major and minor leagues. Black teams would recruit and develop talented African American players. When a major or minor league team wished to purchase the rights to that player, it would have to honor the contract already in place between the player and the team. Toward that end, the NAL and NNL embraced the bylaws of the major leagues as their own, adopted standard major league contracts, and announced the creation of a reserve clause in black professional baseball (the bane of every player’s existence, black or white). Martin hoped these changes would formalize business dealings with the major leagues and protect the interests of black owners.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ “Report of Major League Steering Committee for Submission to the National and American Leagues at Their Meeting in Chicago,” August 27, 1946, p. 19. HCP, Box 162, Important Papers, 1945-1947 folder.

⁷⁶ Some critics of integration suggested this was a good excuse for returning Robinson to the Kansas City club. Thomas Richardson, President of the Eastern League (a minor league operating in New York and Pennsylvania), to Commissioner Chandler, October 24, 1945. HCP, Box 150, General Correspondence, 1945-1946 folder.

⁷⁷ *Defender*, January 26, 1946 and Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, p. 89.

This process did not always work smoothly. Martin himself stumbled when he filed a complaint against San Diego of the Pacific Coast League for “stealing” one of his players. Commissioner Chandler requested a copy of Martin’s contract with the player, but Martin — team owner, NAL President, and “fair integration” advocate -- could not produce it. Without documentation, Chandler refused to act.⁷⁸ Despite such missteps, Martin positioned himself as a conduit between the major leagues and black clubs. When Branch Rickey sought a club where he could temporarily place black players who needed more training before joining the ranks of “organized ball,” *Courier* sportswriter Wendell Smith offered the American Giants. “Mr. Martin looks favorably upon the idea,” Smith wrote to Rickey, “and I am sure something could be worked out with him on a confidential basis.”⁷⁹

The decision to position individual teams, and entire leagues, as suppliers of talent for major league baseball, rather than attempting to insert a black franchise (or two, or three) on equal footing into a revamped, integrated major league baseball system, sealed shadowball’s fate. Through the late 1940s, African American fans “voted with their feet,” preferring to watch Robinson, Larry Doby, Roy Campanella, Monte Irvin, Sam Jethroe, and a host of other race pioneers play with and against white major leaguers rather than see the remnants of black teams square off against one another. Attendance plummeted. In the NNL, the loss of key teams such as Manley’s Newark Eagles, which folded in 1948, hastened the League’s demise. Effa Manley, however, continued her role

⁷⁸ Wendell Smith, “So, There Was No Contract!” *Courier*, January 12, 1948.

⁷⁹ Wendell Smith to Branch Rickey, June 3, 1948. HOF, Wendell Smith Collection, folder 1.

as an outspoken critic of Rickey and the inequitable integration process.⁸⁰ Other teams (e.g., the Homestead Grays and the New York Black Yankees) failed as well. In December 1948, the NAL absorbed what was left of the NNL into a single ten-team circuit. Nonetheless, Martin appeared optimistic about the future: "I am positive that the Negro fan is not deserting us when we are continuing our program of schooling men for advancement in baseball at large."⁸¹ This confidence may have been inspired by a verbal agreement he and former NNL head Tom Wilson first secured from Chandler in 1945, that the major leagues would continue to honor NAL contracts when purchasing the rights to a player in that League.⁸²

Martin's optimism, however, may have been ill-placed. Fan support for the American Giants was very poor in 1949. By July, crowds were only averaging 3,000 fans per game in a stadium at the edge of the black belt (Comiskey Park), which held roughly 50,000 people. By contrast, as one reported noted, more than 42,000 fans – one third of whom were black – watched Robinson's Dodgers fall to the Cubs at Wrigley Field, in a white north-side neighborhood. R.S. Simmons, who managed the team's daily affairs under Martin, advised black fans, "Don't kill the goose that lays the golden eggs."⁸³ Soon after beseeching the public for more support, the American Giants sold

⁸⁰ Manley tried to gather more support among other team owners and black sportswriters. See "Statement of Mrs. Effa Manley to the Negro Publishers Association, 1949." HOF, Effa Manley File, Baseball folder.

⁸¹ Wendell Smith, "Negro National Loop Folds; AL Takes Over," *Herald-American*, December 1, 1948. "Martin Asserts Negro Baseball is Not on a Comeback, but 1949 Will Be its Greatest Year," ANP, April 20, 1949. Barnett Papers, Box 397, folder 397-16, CHS.

⁸² Chandler, "Decision No. 26," May 13, 1949, p. 1. HCP, Box 162, Decisions folder.

⁸³ Luix Overbea, "Question of Support of Negro Baseball Brought Up By American Giants' Official," ANP, July 6, 1949. Barnett Papers, Box 397, folder 397-17, CHS.

their best player, Art “Superman” Pennington, to the Portland Beavers of the Pacific Coast League.⁸⁴

At the close of the difficult 1949 season, longtime Kansas City Monarchs owner J.L. Wilkinson told the *Courier* that what black professional baseball needed was another Rube Foster. “It’s too bad we don’t have a man like him around today. He would bring baseball out of this rut and put something into it.”⁸⁵ Wilkinson’s wistful remark evoked images of the days of black professional baseball long gone by – of train travel, world series match-ups, big crowds, and profits. The success and pride of this most unique race enterprise was just a memory in 1949, and it was this memory of better times which marked the twilight of black professional baseball in many ways. Even as shadowball seemed poised to collapse completely, Wendell Smith filed an article while on assignment in Chicago in which he claimed that what the NAL needed to survive was to be put “on a more dignified basis.”⁸⁶

Such tired calls for respectability and race progress were, at this point, largely useless. The NAL did stumble through the 1950 season with diminished fan support. The East-West Game – the final one – drew 24,614 people to Comiskey, about two thousand less than in 1949, and tens of thousands less than just a few years before.⁸⁷ In November 1949, J.B. Martin leased the American Giants to his associate William Little,

⁸⁴ “Art Pennington Sold by American Giants to Portland of Pacific Coast League,” ANP, July 18, 1949. Barnett Papers, Box 397, folder 397-17, CHS. The American Giants managed to win the western division of the NAL in 1949.

⁸⁵ Wendell Smith, *Courier*, August 3, 1949.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, February 18, 1950.

⁸⁷ Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White*, p. 309-310.

who owned the Monarch Tailoring company on State Street.⁸⁸ Little guided the team through two lackluster and incomplete seasons replete with game cancellations and collapsing franchises. In 1951, the White Sox informed Little that Comiskey was no longer available to the American Giants. Little's team folded in 1952. For the first time since 1887, there was no black professional baseball in Chicago.

Martin continued to run the NAL through the 1950s (and served on the Sanitary District Board of Trustees until 1958). Efforts to drum up support were sparse and not very successful, but followed a familiar theme: "they must come see us play...we are developing future big league talent."⁸⁹ In 1952 Martin told a reporter for the Baltimore *Afro-American* that as long as black players weren't fully accepted in the major leagues -- that is, as long as they maintained "novelty" status -- there would be a pressing need for black professional baseball to continue.⁹⁰ Until 1960, when the last four teams comprising the Negro American League finally stopped play, Martin was the head of the withered League.⁹¹ At this final juncture in black professional baseball's long history, however, no one called for Rube Foster or the ghost of any other savior. Shadowball was simply over.

⁸⁸ "Martin Leases Chicago American Giants to William Little," ANP, November 11, 1949. Barnett Papers, Box 397, folder 397-17, CHS.

⁸⁹ Wendell Smith, *Courier*, June 1, 1951.

⁹⁰ Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, p. 300.

⁹¹ Lester, Miller, and Clark, *Black Baseball in Chicago*, p. 86. Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, p. 302.

CONCLUSION

Sixty-Five Years of Shadowball

It is doubtful that when Frank Leland organized the Unions in 1887 he envisioned the economic power and the cultural potency black professional baseball would eventually have in Chicago, and in the nation. His actions then were a function of necessity proscribed by urban segregation in housing, education, employment, political access, and the national pastime. Through more than six decades, however, shadowball developed through many stages in Chicago. What began as a pastime enjoyed by a handful of gentleman amateurs became, over the course of many years, a high-profile expression of African American community pride, business acumen, and demands for a fair and equal city.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, an era which this dissertation describes as an “age of elites,” black Chicago’s population was small and recent legislation (the Illinois Civil Rights Law of 1885) supposedly guaranteed fair and equal access to the many facets of life anywhere in the state.¹ Still, African Americans in Chicago suffered from the city’s system of informal, extralegal segregation in important areas such as housing and employment. As chapter one reveals, the race men and race women pushing against these restrictions were involved in a battle for *respectability* for members of the race. Shadowball was born in this context. Baseball’s popularity grew quickly at this time, and African Americans — barred from major and minor league baseball by the early 1880s -- found themselves excluded from Chicago’s new City

¹ Harold Gosnell, *Negro Politicians: The Rise of Negro Politics in Chicago* (Chicago, 1935), p. 14.

League as well. Unable to access this new part of the city's prosperity and social life (until 1908, when the Leland Giants forced the door open), Chicago's race men founded a succession of baseball teams ranging from amateur, to semiprofessional, to professional (under Frank Leland).² By taking their cue from the leading race women of the day, baseball men like Frank Leland, Robert Jackson, Beauregard Moseley, and a host of others promoted baseball as a means of providing racial uplift and self-help.

Chapter two demonstrates by 1907, black professional baseball was so popular that Chicago's race men were able to attract the best player in the nation (Rube Foster) and build a modern diversified corporation (Leland Giants Baseball and Amusement Association) around the team's success. Moreover, shadowball's moguls moved to expand their race enterprise, first by Frank Leland and later, Beauregard Moseley. Tensions among the two groups of Chicago's black elites — the old settlers and the young professional newcomers — ran through these League-building efforts and came to a head in the 1909-1910 war for control of black professional baseball. Here, shadowball's history offers new insights into this famous schism by helping to explain the triumph of the new professional class as well as the importance of the growing migration from the south on Chicago's African American community.

Servicing the needs of this first wave of migrants from the South, as well as solidifying the position of elites in a community whose demographics were changing quickly, led to the growth of important civic and social institutions in the black belt in the 1910s. Chapter three examines how these institutions -- the NAACP branch, Frederick

² Michael Lomax, "Black Entrepreneurship in the National Pastime," *Journal of Sport History*, 25:1 (Spring 1998): 43-64; *Frank Leland's Chicago Giants Base Ball Club*, a promotional brochure, was published by Major Robert R. Jackson's company. Vivian Harsh collection, Chicago Public Library, Woodson Library Branch, and Negro Leagues File, National Baseball Hall of Fame, Cooperstown, NY.

Douglass Center, Urban League, Wabash Avenue YMCA, and Appomattox club -- were respectable race enterprises that promoted self-help, racial uplift, and race pride at a time when the promise of individual and group advancement seemed possible, and seemed to rest on these concepts. While these institutions are traditionally acknowledged for their importance in this regard,³ Rube Foster's fantastically successful American Giants have not been so recognized. But, the American Giants, in fact, offered a distinct image of black sport as a prosperous, professional, and respectable institution through which black Chicagoans could work to secure the respectability that they believed would enhance their position in the city. This phase of black professional baseball stood in sharp contrast to other developments in the black community: the growth of vice in the 1910s and the highly controversial life of black boxing champion and south side cabaret owner Jack Johnson. Yet, on the eve of Chicago's great riot, the flourishing of so many cultural institutions, including a respectable sport enterprise, had obviously tapped into a desire of black Chicagoans for both social respectability and respectable cultural institutions at a time when segregation was worsening, but race leaders remained optimistic about the future.

The decade following the riot proved a crucial one for black Chicagoans. Migration from the south continued at breakneck pace. The African American population not only more than doubled in the 1920s, the socio-economic profile of the newcomers in this wave sharply differed from that of pre-World War II migration. As chapter four argues, this development, the foundation laid by the civic and social

³ See, for example, Christopher Robert Reed, *The Chicago NAACP and the Rise of Black Professional Leadership, 1910-1966* (Bloomington, 1997); Anne Meis Knupfer, *Toward a Tenderer Humanity and a Nobler Womanhood: African American Women's Clubs in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago* (New York, 1997), p. 97; Arvarh Strickland, *History of the Chicago Urban League* (Urbana, 1966).

organizations of the 1910s, and accelerating segregation, helped to foster an “inward turn” among the city’s race men that emphasized the gendered nature both of black public and sporting life in the city. Black women were kept on the margins of political life as black men secured a certain measure of power within the Thompson machine.⁴ In this context, the expressive power of the age of the “New Negro” flourished on the south side. Rube Foster’s new Negro National League capitalized on this civic, economic, and cultural energy of black male leadership. Because baseball was a male province, Foster’s endeavors drew extra support from the masculine qualities embedded in the black nationalism of the age.⁵

Furthermore, as the operator of a respectable race enterprise, Foster seized upon the opportunity provided by the Black Sox scandal to focus public attention on black male respectability and race progress as cultivated through sport. For elites concerned about the ramifications of the migration, the American Giants and the Chicago-based NNL provided a cultural antidote to the poisons of urban vice. Unprecedented political opportunities in the Thompson years also helped to accelerate the career (and the fortunes) of individuals who resuscitated the American Giants after the NNL’s demise in the late 1920s and rebuilt the franchise amidst the economic collapse of the early 1930s.⁶

⁴ See, for example, Douglas Bukowski, *Big Bill Thompson, Chicago, and the Politics of Image* (Urbana, 1998), p. 49, 137, 139, 202; John Allswang, *A House for All Peoples: Ethnic Politics in Chicago, 1890-1936* (Lexington, KY, 1971), p. 43.

⁵ Patricia Schechter, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill, 2001); Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994* (New York, 1999).

⁶ Particularly Robert Cole, linked to Thompson through Daniel Jackson. See Robert Weems, *Black Business in the Black Metropolis: The Chicago Metropolitan Assurance Company, 1925-1985* (Bloomington, 1996) and Gosnell, *Negro Politicians*, p. 130-133.

Although the devastating effects of the Great Depression hit African Americans especially hard, shadowball was revived by Robert Cole, who, like so many other black baseball entrepreneurs in the 1930s, used gambling money to fund the team. After a brief hiatus during the Cermak years, policy and vice returned to the black belt with the election of Ed Kelly, and over time became one of the most important factors in the black community's economy.⁷ Chapter five demonstrates that this was Robert Cole's world, and his presence at the helm of the American Giants meant black professionals' claims to respectability were few and far between. Such claims, which were so frequent in the 1920s, essentially disappeared with Dave Malarcher's retirement.

Internal public debates over black Chicagoans' role in the city, often spearheaded by the *Defender* and advocates of the old "respectability" crusade, did not lose steam. Yet, the Century of Progress World Exposition's efforts to erase the African American presence in the city — in favor of offensive approximations of life in "Darkest Africa"⁸ — poignantly demonstrated that the mid-1930s was perhaps the lowest point of race relations in the city since the 1919 riot. From this insult, however, came the East-West Game, another example of the important role black professional baseball played in the economic and cultural lives of the segregated urban underclass. The birth of the Negro American League at the end of the Depression — with Robert Jackson and J.B. Martin at the helm -- signaled the return of the influence of the black middle class over the community's cultural institutions.

⁷ Roger Biles, *Big City Boss in Depression and War: Mayor Edward J. Kelly of Chicago* (DeKalb, IL, 1984) p. 89-102, esp. p. 89-92.

⁸ August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, "Negro Protest at the Chicago World's Fair, 1933-1934," *Journal of Illinois State Historical Society*, LIX (Summer 1966), p. 163.

Through the war years, shadowball enjoyed its greatest prosperity and soon after, its greatest pitfalls. At the same time, black Chicagoans came to grips with the limits of machine politics. Although the ascension of William Dawson marked the advent of a new day for access to municipal political power, Dawson's influence was routed through (and limited by) the white Kelly-Nash machine and later, stymied by Martin Kennelly's "reforms."⁹ As such, gains for the by now enormous black community were greater than in previous years, but still far below that of any other community in Chicago. As chapter six reveals, this is the historical moment when Dr. J.B. Martin -- a well-off businessman and municipal politician -- emerged as the top mogul in black professional baseball, not just the owner of the American Giants, but as President of the Negro American League. Under his guidance, shadowball became a two-million-dollar a year enterprise nationwide. After integration, Martin mirrored William Dawson's political strategies in the 1940s. He took the lead in trying to reorient his team and his League to serve the needs of major league baseball, while supporting players' rights to leave the NAL as well as owners' rights to be appropriately compensated for their losses. As a result, black professional baseball survived integration, for a brief time. Its ultimate dissolution, however, foreshadowed the slow and halting, often inequitable nature of integration in other key American institutions: schools, public accommodations, voting booths, etc.

When the last American Giants finally hung up their spikes for good in 1952, the longest continuous tradition of black professional baseball in America came to an end. No other city matched Chicago's record in this regard. The reasons for shadowball's remarkable longevity in Chicago lie in a blend of urban factors. A long history of

⁹ Richard Keiser, *Subordination or Empowerment? African American Leadership and the Struggle for Urban Political Power* (New York, 1997), p. 33.

informal and extralegal segregation kept black Chicagoans, with their history of striving toward equality, intent upon improving their position within the city. Tremendous economic growth, which began in the late nineteenth century, meant that some segments of the black community could continue to finance and promote a highly visible, and they hoped respectable, “race enterprise.” A ferociously competitive, decentralized municipal government had made it possible for these entrepreneurs to establish a certain amount of influence within the municipal government. Their votes, and those of the black community, generally for the Republican Party, were traded for favors and positions — albeit never for equality -- within the city. Then, when the Democratic Party solidified its hold on Chicago government through its patronage providing “machine,” black politicians reoriented to the new regime and became a more integral part of its workings.¹⁰ This combination of urban realities shaped the complex contours of social position within the city’s black community. These, in turn, strongly influenced the different periods of black professional baseball’s history in Chicago.

Reflecting on the fiftieth anniversary of Jackie Robinson’s major league debut, historian Gerald Early offered this observation about the race men who built, organized, and supported the black version of the national pastime. Black professional baseball, he argued, was never intended to be “an end in itself.” Over the passage of time, its unique ability to demonstrate black independence, community pride, and business acumen in the face of staunch segregation meant that shadowball took on “a compelling racial mission”

¹⁰ See, for example, Roger Biles, *Big City Boss in Depression and War* and *Richard Daley: Politics, Race, and the Governing of Chicago* (DeKalb, IL, 1995); William Grimshaw, *Bitter Fruit: Black Politics and the Chicago Machine, 1931-1991* (Chicago, 1992); Dianne Pinderhughes, *Race and Ethnicity in Chicago Politics: A Reexamination of Pluralist Theory* (Urbana, 1987); Richard Keiser, *Subordination or Empowerment?*

broader than its originators could have imagined or planned.¹¹ Even in the 1950s, J.B. Martin was still endeavoring to tie black professional baseball to race pride and advancement.

As this dissertation has demonstrated, this was surely the case in Chicago. A range of social, economic, and political forces created the framework through which shadowball's advocates repeatedly used their sport as a means of fostering the development of the African American community and as a tool for attempting to access the city's white power structures so that they could tap into Chicago's economic growth machine. The point in all of this was very basic: to gain unfettered access to the American dream of democracy, equality of opportunity, and general prosperity. Black professional baseball became an illustrative example of what Darlene Clark Hine has described as the different strategies for race advancement employed by different generations of black professionals. Prior to the 1930s, Chicago's black professional class, the "first generation" in Hine's parlance, created a "parallel institutional infrastructure" in response to segregation. Through the poverty and despair of the Great Depression and more importantly, the prosperity of the war years, the "second generation" of black leadership focused its efforts on managing the process of integration by, in the case of Chicago, engaging in patronage politics and economic development through race enterprises which could service the demands of white "clients" such as major league baseball.¹² The inequitable process of integration played a large role in dismantling the American Giants. Still, shadowball's supporters could point with pride --

¹¹ Gerald Early, "American Integration, Black Heroism, and the Meaning of Jackie Robinson," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 23, 1997.

¹² "Black History Calls for Distinct Voice," Hine interview in *MSU Today*, Fall 2001.

even at the moment of dissolution -- to their life-affirming struggle in the national pastime to create their own, distinct vision for the city of Chicago: one where race could not, and would not, determine the fate of an individual, a group, or an institution.

APPENDICES

TABLE 6-1

**Attendance at East-West All Star Games in
Years When More Than One Game Was Played (1946-1948)¹**

Year	Chicago Attendance	Alternate City	Alt. City Attendance
1946	45,474	Washington, D.C.	15,009
1947	48,112	NYC/Polo Grounds	34,246
1948	42,000	NYC/Yankee Stadium	14,107

¹ Ledger Sheets, 1946-1948. HOF, Negro Leagues File, East/West All-Star Game folder.

TABLE 6-2

**Gross Revenues for East-West All Star Games in
Years When More Than One Game Was Played (1946-1948)¹**

Year	Chicago Revenue	Alternate City	Alt. City Revenue
1946	\$86,814	Washington, D.C.	\$30,494
1947	\$89,249	NYC/Polo Grounds	\$44,495
1948	\$84,869	NYC/Yankee Stadium	\$20,389

¹ Ledger Sheets, 1946-1948. HOF, Negro Leagues File, East/West All-Star Game folder.

TABLE 6-3

**Division of Profits from East-West All Star Games (Chicago game)
by Key Parties in Years When More Than One Game Was Played (1946-1948)¹**

Year	NAL Pres. (Martin)	NNL Pres.*	<i>Defender</i>	<i>Courier</i>	Scorer (Fay Young)**
1946	\$2,516	\$2,516	\$1,132	\$1,132	\$100
1947	\$2,562	\$2,562	\$1,153	\$1,153	\$100
1948	\$2,593	\$2,593	\$600	N/A	\$100

* In 1946, Tom Wilson was NNL President. In 1947-1948, Rev. John Johnson was NNL President.

** The scorer for 1949 is not identified on the ledger.

¹ Ledger Sheets, 1946-1948. HOF, Negro Leagues File, East/West All-Star Game folder.

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