

Early Pioneers of the Negro Leagues: Colonel William “C.W.” Strothers



by

Center for Negro League Baseball Research

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and

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Harrisburg Giants (1906)

This photograph is of one of Colonel "C.W." Strothers' early Harrisburg Giants teams. They played an independent schedule during the 1906 season.

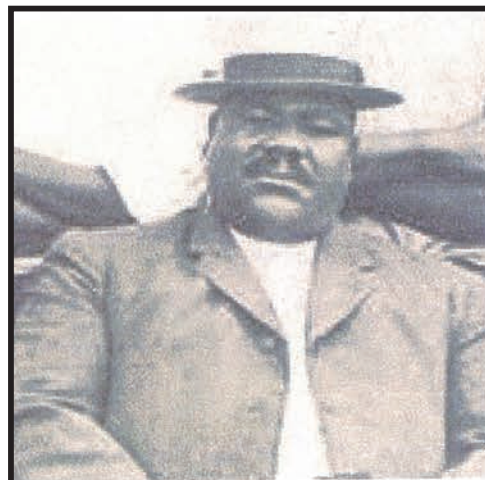


Harrisburg Giants (1906)

(Back row left to right – H. Carter, Gardner, Yeadricks, **Spottswood Poles**, Jack Potter and Samuel Tolliver.
Middle row left to right – J. Mickey, B. Barton, **Colonel William "C. W." Strothers**, A. Baxter
and B. Banks. Front row left to right – Williams, George Moore and Puller).

Colonel William "C.W." Strothers was born in Culpepper, Virginia in 1868 to Willis Strothers and Mary E. Wallace. According his obituary, Strothers got his first name from being named after his parent's employer. When he was 11 or 12 years old he ran away from home to join the railroad as a water boy for a railroad gang in Gary (IN). In 1888 Strothers settled in Harrisburg (PA) and called the city home until his death in 1933.

When he first arrived in Harrisburg, C.W. Strothers went to work in the railroad car shops and held various other manual labor jobs before becoming a policeman. From a newspaper article that appeared in the Harrisburg Telegraph we know that Colonel Strothers became a police officer in 1896. Strothers name and his position as a police officer also appear in a 1897 newspaper article that reports the death of his first wife (Annie Randolph) from pneumonia. The newspaper article also identifies Strothers as a police officer living at 317 Calder in Harrisburg. The couple had only been married one year.



Colonel William Strothers
(1868-1933)

DANCING

GRAND OPENING
YOUNG MEN'S DANCING CLASS
AT
ARMORY HALL
SECOND AND FORSTER STS.,
HARRISBURG, PA.
Monday, September 1
(LABOR DAY)
AND
Thurs. Eve., Sept. 4
AT
FREY HALL
FRONT AND PINE STREETS,
STEELTON, PA.
Continuing Every Monday and
Thursday During the Winter
The two leading and largest
Dancing Academies for Colored
People, where all the latest and
up-to-date dances will be dem-
onstrated.
Private Lessons by Appointment
BOTH PHONES
C. W. STROTHERS
Manager

The Patriot
Harrisburg, PA
8-26-16

As time went on Strothers entered the business world and became very successful. His primary business was a billiard parlor. C.W.'s pool hall was originally located at 432 South Street and then relocated to 423 ½ Strawberry Street in Harrisburg. The billiard parlor also served as the office/headquarters for his baseball team. Over the years C.W. also owned a cigar store, lunch room and barber shop. All three of these businesses were located in close proximity to his pool hall. In addition Strothers owned and managed a dance studio. Harrisburg (PA) newspaper articles from 1919 and 1925 document C.W.'s dance studio business. Reportedly, he even gave dance lessons.

Colonel Strothers was also very influential in Harrisburg politics. He was also involved in numerous community service clubs and organizations. In 1891 Strothers helped form the North Stars Social Club. This was a social club for "colored" men located on Marion Street in Harrisburg. Another example of Colonel Strothers' involvement in civic activities occurred in 1917 when he helped form the Workingmen's Social and Protective Association in Harrisburg. In addition Colonel Strothers was an officer in the Progressive Wage Earners' Building and Loan Association in 1924. Over the years he belonged to the Knights Templar, Elks, Odd Fellows, St. James Commandery No. 17 and Chosen Friends Lodge No. 43.

Regardless of what business interest Strothers was concentrating on at the time, baseball was always a part of his life. Colonel Strothers had a definite passion for the game of baseball even though it appears that the rotund 300 pound owner never played the game himself.

It is important to note that Colonel Strothers was not always a big portly man. In a newspaper article that appeared in the Harrisburg Telegraph on October 6, 1896 the article talked about his impressive physique. Strothers, the newspaper article said, was six feet two inches tall and weighed a muscular 220 pounds. As a person C.W. Strothers was categorized as a friendly, good spirited individual who was always willing to help people.

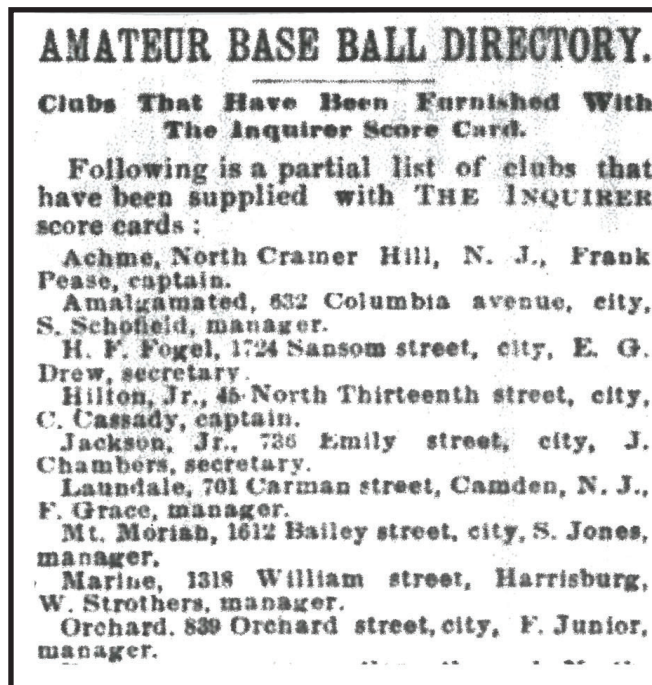
Harrisburg Giants – The Early Years

The history of black baseball in Harrisburg can be traced back to October 20, 1867 when the Monrovia Baseball Club of Harrisburg played the Pythian Club of Philadelphia. The Pythians won the game by a score of 59-27.

In 1889 Harrisburg claimed the title of “Colored Champions” by virtue of their championship series victory over the Cuban Giants.

Researchers disagree on when Colonel Strothers became the owner and/or manager of the Harrisburg Giants. Some of the facts that need to be taken into consideration when trying to come to a decision as to when Strothers became the owner of the Harrisburg Giants are as follows.

1. Negro League researchers Ted Knorr and Calobe Jackson published an article in 2005 reporting that a Harrisburg newspaper ran a classified ad in April of 1890 that a man by the name of Strothers was recruiting ball players for a baseball team he was forming. No mention was made in the newspaper article to the name of the team. Knorr and Calobe believe that this team evolved into the Harrisburg Giants.
2. In the “Amateur Baseball Directory” that appeared in the July 7, 1890 issue of the Philadelphia Inquirer Colonel Strothers is listed as the manager of a team in Harrisburg by the name of “Marine.” This is the earliest primary source documentation that has been found up to this point of Colonel Strothers being associated with baseball.



Philadelphia Inquirer
Philadelphia, PA
7-07-1890

3. The April 3, 1894 issue of the Harrisburg Telegraph identifies Colonel Strothers as the manager of the Harrisburg Giants. The newspaper identified the roster of the Giants as follows: Barton (2B and captain), Burris (P), Harris (RF), Jordan (C), Murray (SS), Porter (3B), Potter (LF), G. William (P), William Williams (CF/C) and Wilson (1B). This team was without question an amateur or semi-professional team.

The Harrisburg Giants have organized for the season. Those desiring games should address the secretary, Geo. Potter, 326 Colder street. Col. Strothers will be manager. The players will include: Barton, 2b and captain; Jordan, of Carlisle, c; Murray, ss; Wilson, 1b; Porter, 3b; Potter, 1f; William Williams, cf, c; Harris, rf; Burris, p; G. Williams, p.

Harrisburg Telegraph
04-03-1894

4. Another alternative date can be found in a story that appeared in the Philadelphia Sunday Item on February 28, 1909. In a newspaper interview C.W. Strothers talked about the 1909 season being the team's seventh season of operation. This would make 1903 the year in which Strothers founded the team. It is important to note that Strothers may have been reporting the year that he felt the team (Harrisburg Giants) was considered professional.
5. Five (5) newspaper articles have been found for the Harrisburg Giants for their 1901 season. C.W. Strothers is not mentioned in any of these articles. In an article that appeared in the Patriot newspaper on May 11, 1901 the management of the Harrisburg Giants team is listed as J. Potter whose office is listed as 328 Calder Street, Harrisburg, PA.
6. On May 3, 1902 a short newspaper article appeared in the Harrisburg Telegraph that listed the officers of a team by the name of the "Harrisburg Cuban Giants." These officers were as follows: Colonel W. Strothers (President), Edward Cumberland (Secretary), Sylvester Burris (Manager), Robert Curtis (Co-Manager) and Thomas Johnson (Captain).
7. Ten (10) additional newspaper articles have been found for the Harrisburg Giants for their 1902 season. An article published in the April 12th issue of the Patriot identifies that Benjamin Smith was the manager of the Harrisburg Giants team and that Ray Wilson who was formerly a first baseman for the Cuban X-Giants was coaching the team. Nowhere in any of these articles is there a mention of Colonel Strothers.
8. On January 29, 1903 the Patriot newspaper of Harrisburg identifies S.E. Burris as the manager of the Harrisburg Giants. In three (3) additional articles that have been found for the Harrisburg Giants during their 1903 season, there is no mention of C.W. Strothers.
9. The Harrisburg Telegraph on May 22, 1905 published a short newspaper article that reports "Manager Cornell (Colonel) Strothers" announcing the 1905 schedule for the Harrisburg Giants. The newspaper also reports the Harrisburg Giants as the "Champions of Colored Baseball." The team's opening game of the season was on Tuesday May 6th against the Reserves of Steelton. The game was played on the Y.M.C.A. field in Harrisburg.
10. Lastly, the Patriot newspaper published a short article on February 23, 1906 that clearly identifies C.W. Strothers as the manager of the Harrisburg Giants. It also lists the address of his pool hall located at 432 South Street as the team's headquarters.



Harrisburg Giants
(c. early 1900's)

From newspaper records the Harrisburg Giants as a team can be definitely traced back to at least 1894. The Harrisburg Telegraph news report identifies Strothers as the team manager in 1894. The 1894 Harrisburg Giants were most likely an amateur or lower level semiprofessional team during this period. There are, however, some gaps from 1895 to 1905 when Strothers isn't identified in the media as being involved with the team. From this researcher's perspective Colonel Strothers took over full control of the Harrisburg Giants as the owner/manager sometime before 1902 and was responsible for the team becoming a professional organization.

Over the years under the ownership/management of Colonel Strothers, the Harrisburg Giants grew from an amateur team to the ranks of semi-professional and ended up becoming one of the top professional black baseball teams in the East.

Strothers Harrisburg Giants

Going into the 1906 baseball season with Colonel Strothers in charge, the Harrisburg Giants were recognized as one of the top teams in the East. Strothers head quartered the team at his pool hall which was located at 432 South Street.

The 1906 roster for the Harrisburg Giants included B. Banks (P), A. Baxter (SS/1B), B. Barton (2B), G. Carter (C), H. Carter (OF), H. Hoggans (1B), J. Mickey (P), G. Moore (3B), Spottswood Poles (OF/3B), Jack Potter (OF), Puller (C), Samuel Toliver (P/OF) and Williams (C/OF).

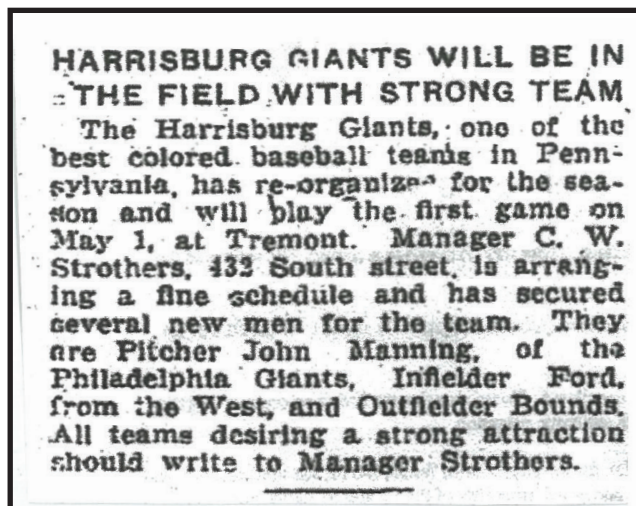
The highlight of the 1906 season for Strothers was signing Spottswood Poles to play in the outfield for the Harrisburg Giants. Poles grew up in the Springdale neighborhood of Harrisburg and played for the Harrisburg Giants from 1906 to the first part of the 1909 season.

In mid-July of 1906 the Harrisburg Giants played the Philadelphia Keystone Giants in what was billed in the newspapers as a game for the "Championship of Colored Baseball of Pennsylvania." Reportedly both teams were undefeated going into the game. The game was played at Island Park in Harrisburg. The game was evidently well attended and Strothers even hired a band to play before, during and after the game. Box scores have been located for twelve (12) games played in 1906 by the Harrisburg Giants and they had a record of 11-1 (.917). Other top teams in the East during the 1906 season were Sol White's Philadelphia Giants (who according to newspaper accounts boasted a record of 134-21 (.866)), Grant "Homerun" Johnson's Brooklyn Royal Giants and Clarence William's Cuban X Giants.



Harrisburg Giants (1906)

The Harrisburg Giants started the 1907 season with basically the same starting line-up that they had in 1906. The roster line-up for the 1907 Harrisburg Giants was comprised of Barnes (2B), B. Barton (1B), Bounds (OF), Locke (OF), John Manning (SS/OF), J. Mickey (P), G. Moore (CF/SS/3B), W. Moore (3B), Spottswood Poles (OF), Jack Potter (LF), Puller (C) and Samuel Toliver (OF/P).



The Patriot
 Harrisburg, PA
 04-05-07

They opened their 1907 season on May 1st at Tremont. In June of 1907 the Harrisburg Giants conducted a western barnstorming tour of smaller towns. On the tour the Giants played in Altoona, Braddock, Brownsville, Connellsville, Greensburg, Jeanette, Johnstown, Irwin, Madison, Myerstown, Newton, Tremont and Westinghouse.

According to an article that appeared in the Patriot newspaper, the Harrisburg Giants were one of the strongest “colored” teams in Pennsylvania during the 1907 baseball season.

HARRISBURG GIANTS WON

Lebanon Team Defeated Before Large Crowd at Little Fair

The Harrisburg Giants' baseball team ended its season yesterday at Little Fair where the Lebanon professional team was met at the fair grounds and defeated by a score of 6 to 2. Jordan, who pitched for the Giants, allowed the Lebanon team but three hits. The score:

HARRISBURG GIANTS					
	R.	H.	O.	A.	E.
James, c.....	0	0	10	1	0
Poles, 3b.....	1	5	2	3	0
Bortom, 2b.....	0	2	2	3	0
Potter, lf.....	1	1	1	0	0
Toliver, rf.....	0	0	0	0	0
Baxter, 1b.....	1	2	10	0	1
Moore, ss.....	1	2	1	3	0
Burruss, of.....	2	2	1	1	0
Jordan, p.....	0	1	0	3	0
Totals.....	6	15	27	14	1

LEBANON					
	R.	H.	O.	A.	E.
Shields, 2b, p.....	2	1	2	2	0
Krouse, rf.....	0	1	2	0	0
Bremer, ss.....	0	0	3	3	0
Locker, 2b.....	0	0	3	2	1
Faas, 1b.....	0	0	12	0	1
J. Carpenter, lf.....	0	0	1	0	0
E. Carpenter, cf.....	0	1	0	0	0
Kurchmars, p, 3b.....	0	0	1	1	0
Smith, c.....	0	0	3	1	0
Totals.....	2	3	27	9	2

Harrisburg Giants.....1 0 2 1 0 1 0 1 0-5
 Lebanon.....1 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0-2
 Two-base hits—Poles, 2; Baxter, 2;
 Moore, 1; Barton, 2; Shields, 1. Bases on
 balls—Jordan, 2. Struck out—Jordan, 12;
 Kurchmars, 4. Time of game—1.15. Um-
 pire—Jones.

Harrisburg Fields a Championship Team

Colonel Strothers fielded a strong team for the 1908 season. Harrisburg's roster included: Banks (SS), W. Banks (C), B. Barton (SS/2B/1B), Baxter (2B/1B), Burris (1B/OF), Butler (P), Giddon (1B), James (C), Jones (P/OF), Jordan (CF/P), Keys (RF), John Manning (3B/OF), J. Mickey (P), W. Moore (3B/SS), Spottswood Poles (CF/3B), Jack Potter (LF), Puller (C), Stewart (RF), Samuel Toliver (P/1B/OF) and Williams (C).

According to an article that appeared in the Patriot newspaper on April 6th of 1909, the Harrisburg Giants were reported as being the "Colored Champions of Pennsylvania" for the 1908 season.

In 1909 the Harrisburg Giants continued to play an independent schedule and also played in the Advocate-Verdict League of which Colonel Strothers was the president. One of the interesting components of Harrisburg's schedule was that Colonel Strothers was known for making side bets whenever possible. Newspaper reports were that C.W. regularly would bet \$ 50 to \$ 500 on games. Strothers also booked games with a winner take all gate of the gate receipts stipulation.

Spottswood Poles
 Goes 5 for 5

The Patriot
 10-10-08

On April 6th the Patriot newspaper published what they promoted as a "first class team" and "colored champion" for the 1909 Harrisburg Giants. The starting line-up for Harrisburg when the 1909 season opened was as follows:

Harrisburg Giants (1909)

Position	Player	Position	Player
1B	George Barton	OF	John Manning
2B	George Moore	OF	Jack Potter
SS	William Moore	OF	Samuel Toliver
3B	Spottswood Poles		
C	Williams/Puller	P	Banks/Jones/Jordan

During the season Colonel Strothers was constantly bringing in new players and releasing others. Some of these players were: Banks (2B), Baxter (2B), Arthur "Buddy" Carpenter (SS), Carter (P), Clay (3B), Foulkes (OF), Hampton (1B/P), Hill (3B), Jones (SS/3B/C), Lee (3B), Locke (P), William Moore (3B/1B), Nichols (SS), Swegert (SS) and Wilson (1B/OF).

The Harrisburg Giants opened their 1909 season on April 17th against Reading of the Atlantic League. In late May and early June the Giants left Harrisburg on an extensive barnstorming trip that started with a three games series against the Baltimore Giants.



Spottswood Poles

The Harrisburg Giants played the “Colored World Champion” Philadelphia Giants in late June of 1909. Not only did Philadelphia beat Harrisburg by a score of 10-5, but it also appears that Philadelphia signed Spottswood Poles who left town with them after the game. With the loss of Poles, John Manning became the leader of the team on the field.

The highlight of the season for Harrisburg came on July 22nd when they were playing their local arch rivals, the Steelton Cyclones. Harrisburg pitchers Henry Jordan and Hampton combined to pitch a no-hitter and struck out 18 Cyclones hitters while posting an 8-0 victory. Giants’ shortstop Jones led the way with three hits and two runs scored.

In August the Harrisburg Giants played a series against Millersburg for the “Championship of Central Pennsylvania.” In a hard fought game that was played at Island Park, the Harrisburg Giants came away with a 10-8 win. The second game in the series was against the Bethany A.C. The Harrisburg Giants won the game by a score of 8-3 and the title of “Champions of Central Pennsylvania.”

Strothers’ Giants played into late September of 1909. At the end of the season the Harrisburg Giants repeated as the “Colored Champions of Pennsylvania.” They also laid claim to the titles of “Champions of Central Pennsylvania” and the “Champions of Eastern Pennsylvania.”

The Harrisburg Giants played an extensive schedule during the 1909 season. According to a newspaper article in the Patriot newspaper, Strothers had the Harrisburg Giants playing practically everyday. They played high level teams like the Baltimore Giants and Philadelphia Giants to low level town teams like Bloomsburg, Freeland, Madison, Milton, Minersville, Northumberland, Pittson, Red Lion, Selinsgrove and Sunbury.

Before the start of the regular 1910 season C.W. Strothers signed longtime player A. Baxter to a contract that called for him to be the team’s player-coach. Baxter was also put in charge of recruiting a team for the 1910 season. According to the Patriot newspaper by January 21st Baxter had already signed twenty-five (25) players. Among the players who made the team were George Barton (1B), Baxter (2B/coach), Arthur Carpenter (SS), Carter (P/OF), Foulkes (OF), Frisby (2B), Gibson (2B), Hampton (P), Jackson (3B), Henry Jordan (P/C), T. Jordan (P), John Manning (OF), Jack Potter (OF), Puller (C), Samuel Toliver and Wiley (P).

EASY FOR LOCAL GL'NTS					
Steelton Cyclones Shut Out Without Hit, Eighteen Men Striking Out					
The Harrisburg Giants scored an easy victory over the Steelton Cyclones on the H. A. C. grounds yesterday afternoon by a score of 8 to 0. Jordan and Hampton divided the pitching honors for the local team, striking out eighteen men and not allowing the Steelton boys a hit. The score:					
STEELTON CYCLONES					
	R.	H.	O.	A.	E.
Rhoebuck, rf,	0	0	0	0	0
W. Pearson, lf,	0	0	3	0	0
Everett, 3b,	0	0	0	2	0
Smith, p, 2b,	0	0	2	2	0
W. Pearson, 1b, p, ..	0	0	10	0	0
Spencer, cf,	0	0	0	0	0
Poles, ss,	0	0	0	4	0
J. Pearson, c,	0	0	6	0	1
Fitzhugh, 2b, 1b,	0	0	3	3	1
Totals. ..	0	0	24	11	2
HARRISBURG GIANTS					
	R.	H.	O.	A.	E.
Tollver, rf,	1	0	1	0	0
Potter, lf,	2	0	0	0	0
Jones, ss,	2	3	0	0	1
Barton, 2b,	1	2	1	0	0
Wilson, 1b,	0	1	4	0	0
Puller, c,	0	0	13	2	0
Foulke, cf,	1	1	0	0	0

Jordan and Hampton

Toss No-Hitter

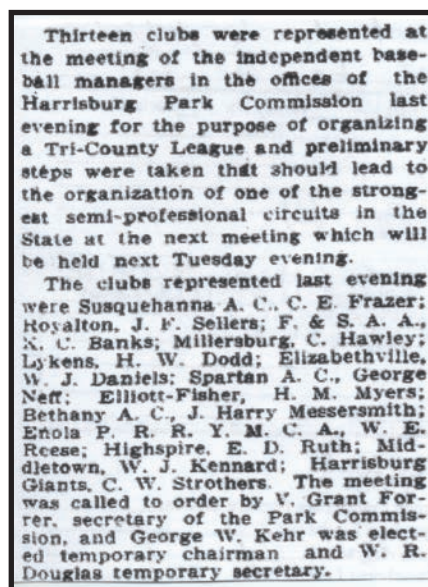
The Patriot

07-23-09



Harrisburg Giants (c. 1910)

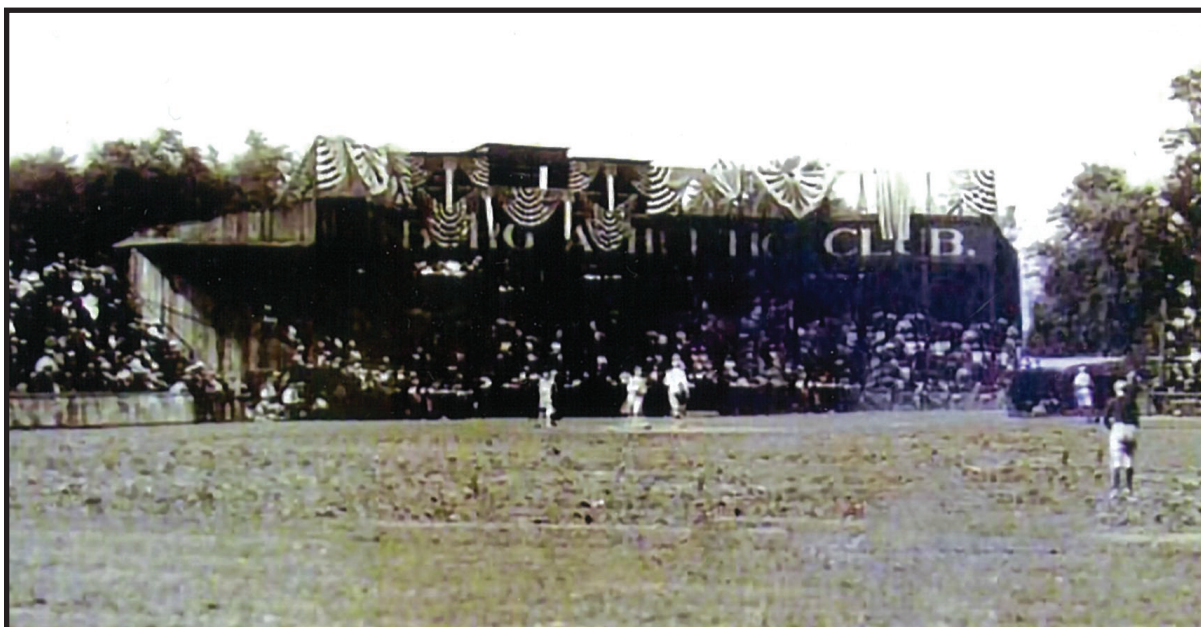
In June of 1910 Colonel Strothers was one of thirteen (13) team owners/managers involved in the organizational meetings for the proposed Tri-County League. The Harrisburg Park Commission was at the forefront of the proposed “league.” The Patriot newspaper reported that if the “league” came to fruition it would be one of the strongest circuits in the country. It is still unclear if the Tri-County League actually played a regular season schedule.



Tri-County League

The Patriot
06-28-10

The Harrisburg Giants went into the 1911 season as the “Colored Champions of Pennsylvania.” They played their home games at Island Park in Harrisburg.



Island Park
Home of the Harrisburg Giants

Strothers signed a mixture of veterans and new players for the 1911 season. Over the course of the season Strothers' roster included: George Barton (1B), Clay (3B), Arthur Carpenter (SS), Carter (P), Folkes (OF), William Gibson (3B), Giddons (1B), Gordon (P), Hall (OF), Hampton (P/OF), Hawkins (C), John Jones (2B), Henry Jordan (C), John Manning (OF), Miller, Porter, Jack Potter (OF), Puller (C), Smith, Stewart (OF) and Sweigert.

From limited newspaper accounts, it appears that the 1911 Harrisburg Giants were not as strong on the field as they had been in years past. Part of the reason for this was that many of Strothers players came and went during the season to play for other clubs.

It seems pretty certain that the Harrisburg Giants fielded a team in 1912. However, no real primary source documentation has been located for Colonel Strothers and the Harrisburg Giants during this season.

HARRISBURG GIANTS WIN												
The Harrisburg Giants defeated the Columbia Giants in an exciting game on the H. A. C. grounds yesterday afternoon by the score of 14 to 2. The game was clinched by the local colored champs in the first inning when four runs were scored on three hits. The local team had a band and many supporters out. Hall fanned eight and Randolph two. The score:												
COLUMBIA						HARRISBURG						
Ross, c.....	1	1	4	0	0	Carter, ss.	2	1	4	4	0	
Molson, 1b..	1	0	0	1	1	Mann'g, cf	2	0	1	1	0	
McPeak, p..	0	1	0	2	0	Hall, 2b, p.	1	2	1	1	0	
J. Wilson, p.	0	0	1	2	0	Jones, 1b...	2	1	5	1	0	
Johnson, ss.	0	1	1	4	3	Clay, 3b...	2	1	3	0	1	
R. Wil'n, rf.	0	1	1	0	0	Potter, lf...	1	1	2	0	0	
Gibson, 2b...	0	1	6	2	1	Banks, rf...	3	0	1	1	0	
T. Wil'n, 3b.	0	1	2	2	1	Braxton, c.	0	0	2	1	0	
T. Wil'n, cf	0	1	0	1	0	Puller, c...	2	2	8	2	0	
Burke, lf....	0	0	0	0	0	Rand'h, p.	0	0	0	1	0	
						Jordan, 2b.	0	1	0	0	0	
Totals...	2	7	24	14	7	Totals...	14	0	27	12	1	
Columbia.....	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2		
Harrisburg.....	4	0	0	1	0	6	2	1	0	15		

The Patriot
06-24-13

Research of old issues of the Patriot newspaper has revealed several short articles and box scores covering the Harrisburg Giants from the summer of 1913. A newspaper article from the June 3rd edition of the Patriot identifies that Colonel Strothers had reorganized the Harrisburg Giants and that they would be playing their first game of the season in a few days against the Hagerstown Giants. Their first game of the season was played at Island Park. The Harrisburg Giants destroyed Hagerstown by a score of 17-0. Harrisburg collected 14 hits in the game. Veteran John Manning got three hits and second baseman Pergon scored four runs. Jordan pitched a three hitter and struck out 13 batters.

During their short 1913 season the following players all appeared for the Harrisburg Giants: Banks (RF), Braxton (C), Arthur Carpenter (SS), Ernest Clay (3B), Giddens (1B), Gordon (P), Hall (2B/P), Hawkins (OF), John Jones (C/1B), Jordan (P/2B), John Manning (OF), Pergon (2B), Jack Potter (LF), Puller (C) and Ben Randolph (P).

Several Giants Play Winter Ball in the Bahamas

Before the start of the 1914 baseball season, four of C.W. Strothers Harrisburg Giants players (Henry Jordan, John Manning, Jack Potter, and Ben Randolph) traveled to Nassau, Bahamas to play winter baseball for the Colonial Giants. According to newspaper reports the players made a good accounting for themselves while playing in the Bahamas. John Jones also made the trip to Nassau but spent the majority of his time on the island in the hospital.



Harrisburg Telegraph
03-07-14

According to an article that appeared in the Harrisburg Telegraph on March 14th the Harrisburg Giants were expected to be stronger than ever for the upcoming season. The Harrisburg Giants played their home games at Island Park in 1914 and according to the Harrisburg Telegraph C.W. Strothers had already booked over 40 games for the team before the start of the season.

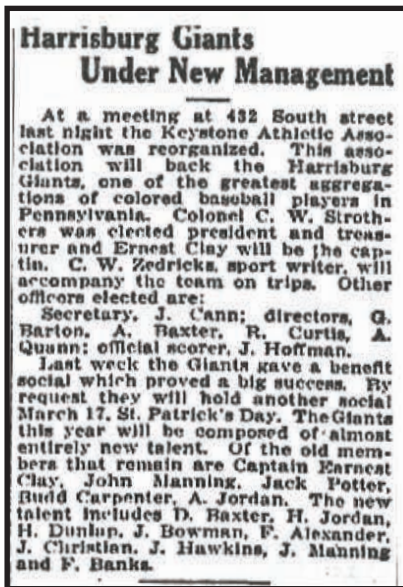
When the season opened for the 1914 baseball season Colonel Strothers had quite a few new faces in the starting line-up for the opening game against Maysville. In a hard fought contest the Giants came back to score 8 runs in the last two innings to register a 9-7 win. Strothers' line-up and batting order for the opening day game was as follows: Wallace (SS), Abram (RF), Bigel (CF), Hall (1B), Pergin (3B), Franklin (2B), Jack Potter (LF), Henry Jordan (C) and T. Jordan (P). Newcomers Wallace, Abram and Bigel each collected two hits for Harrisburg.

The highlight of the 1914 season for Colonel Strothers and his Harrisburg Giants was a three game "championship series" they played against the Pittsburgh Giants in late May at Island Park. The Pittsburg Giants were managed by the legendary black star, Frank Grant. Going into the series the media billed the series between the Pittsburg Giants and the Harrisburg Giants as a fight for the title of "Colored Champions of the East." The winner of the series was mandated to play the Cuban Giants for the title of "Colored Champions of the World." In a slugfest the Harrisburg Giants beat the Pittsburg Giants by a score of 8-7 in game one of the series. Harrisburg collected 10 hits with Carpenter, Hall and Pergin each getting two hits. The Harrisburg Giants got 14 hits in game two to take home a 5-2 win and claim the "Colored Championship of the East." The Pittsburg Giants came back to win game three by a decisive score of 12-5 but it was too little too late for Frank Grant's team. It is still unclear if the Harrisburg Giants ever played the Cuban Giants.

Harrisburg Giants					
Win Championship; Other Games Coming					
Winning from the Pittsburgh Giants yesterday, score 5 to 2, the Harrisburg Giants captured the first leg in the championship series between colored teams in the United States. The final game was the best contest of the week and was full of sensational and brilliant plays. Abrahams was a puzzle to the Smoky City sluggers. His backing was a big factor. Pittsburgh had costly errors. Announcement was made by Theodore Fry, business manager for the Harrisburg Giants that he has secured a lease on the Island Park grounds for the summer for games when the Tri-State team is away. Games will be booked with twenty crack colored teams. The score of yesterday:					
PITTSBURGH					
	R.	H.	O.	A.	E.
Desperet, ss	1	2	1	1	0
Jackson, 3b	0	3	1	1	0
Scott, lf	0	0	4	0	0
Johnson, 1b	0	2	5	2	0
Gatewood, c	0	0	6	3	1
Clay, 2b	0	0	3	0	1
Carter, rf	1	0	1	0	0
McCallahan, cf	0	2	0	0	0
Ford, p	0	0	2	1	1
Totals	2	9	23	8	3
HARRISBURG					
	R.	H.	O.	A.	E.
Carpenter, ss	1	1	0	4	0
Wallace, 1b	0	3	5	1	0
Pergins, 3b	1	1	2	1	2
Potter, lf	1	1	3	0	1
Franklin, 2b	0	1	3	1	0
H. Jordan, rf	0	2	1	0	0
H. Jordan, c	1	2	12	1	0
Forbes, cf	0	0	0	0	0
Abrahams, p	1	2	0	1	0

Harrisburg Telegraph
05-23-14

Strothers Gets New Financial Backing



Harrisburg Telegraph

02-23-15

In February of 1915 C.W. Strothers received financial backing from the Keystone Athletic Association for the Harrisburg Giants 1915 season. Strothers was elected the president and treasurer of the Keystone Athletic Association.

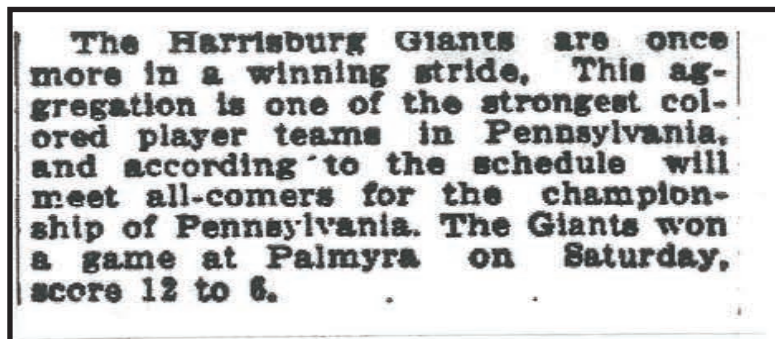
The Harrisburg Giants were led by veterans Earnest Clay (captain and 2B), John Manning (CF), Jack Potter (LF), Arthur "Bud" Carpenter (SS), Henry Jordan (C) and R. Jordan (P). Some of the new players on the team were F. Alexander, F. Banks (RF), D. Baxter, J. Bowman, J. Christian (2B), H. Dunlap, J. Hawkins (1B) and A. Jordan.

During the 1915 season, the Harrisburg Giants were billed in the Harrisburg newspapers as the "Colored Champions" and even the "Colored Champions of the East."

When the 1916 season got underway, gone were veteran players like Earnest Clay, John Manning, Henry Jordan and Jack Potter. These players had led the Harrisburg Giants to numerous "championships" over the years.

The starting line-up and batting order for the 1916 Harrisburg Giants was as follows: Jackson (2B), Carpenter (1B), Banks (P/SS), Buck (LF), C. Banks (C), Bentler (CF), F. Davis (RF), J. Davis (3B) and Keller (P/RF).

In June of 1916 the Harrisburg Telegraph reported that the Harrisburg Giants were one of the strongest teams in Pennsylvania and were willing to meet all comers for the "Championship of Pennsylvania."



Harrisburg Giants
"Colored Champions
of Pennsylvania"

Harrisburg Telegraph

06-19-16

Very little information has been located about Colonel Strothers' 1917 and 1918 baseball seasons. We do know that in 1918 the Harrisburg Giants were challenged by the Keystone Giants of nearby Steelton (PA). The Keystone Giants grew in prominence and into one of the stronger teams in the state then they signed several veteran Harrisburg players (Christian, Bud Carpenter and Smith) to their roster

C.W. Strothers started the 1919 baseball season with Giants standout player, Ernest Clay, as the manager of the team. Strothers and Clay's roster included Banks (C), Brown (P), Carpenter (SS), Ernest Clay (3B), Gordon (P), Hawkins (1B/OF), "Smokey" Joe Jordan (P/OF), Manning (CF), Jack Potter (RF), Price (2B), Reeves (LF), Smith (2B/CF), Taylor (SS/2B), C. Williams (C) and K. Williams (1B) for the 1919 season.

From newspaper accounts it appears that the Harrisburg Giants only had a mediocre season in 1919.

HARRISBURG GIANTS DROP BUT 2 OUT OF 19 GAMES

The Harrisburg Giants have the splendid record so far this season of seventeen games won against but two reverses. During the beginning of the week the local Giants annexed three victories, trimming the Pine Grove nine on the latter's grounds last Sunday and taking a double header from the crack Ajax team of York on the H. A. C. grounds on the Island last Monday. The Ajax aggregation is the only team in this section which has defeated the Giants this season, having downed the locals at York several weeks ago.

The Giants have made a number of trips through this State and New Jersey this season, playing for the first time in this city last Monday. There remains several open dates on their schedule, and the Giants' manager would like to fill them with first

class teams. For games address Manager C. W. Strothers, 423½ Strawberry Street, City.

The Patriot

07-08-20

Harrisburg Giants on the Road to Improvement

Colonel Strothers signed and fielded virtually a new roster for the 1920 season. Banks (C), Carpenter (SS/3B) and Reeves (LF) were the only holdovers in the starting line-up from the 1919 season. After the start of the season veteran Harrisburg players Smokey Joe Jordan (P) and Henry Jordan (C) returned to the team. Ernest Clay served as the captain for the Harrisburg Giants.

The roster for Colonel Strothers' Harrisburg Giants included: Banks (C), Berry (P/OF), Carpenter (SS), Christian (SS), Dickson (3B), Fields (1B), Hall (CF), Henry Jordan (C), Smokey Joe Jordan (P), Reeves (LF), Russell (OF) and Williams (1B) for the 1920 season.

The Harrisburg Giants started the 1920 season strong by winning 17 of their first 19 games. During the summer the Giants conducted a road trip through Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Ohio. On July 21st the Patriot newspaper reported that the Harrisburg Giants had a record of 20-6 (.769).

Colonel Strothers opened the 1921 season with a veteran team headed up by his captain and starting catcher, Henry Jordan. The starting line-up for the 1921 Harrisburg Giants included: Arthur "Bud" Carpenter (SS), Ernest Clay (1B/OF), Crockett (LF), Guy (3B/2B), Hall (CF), Hampton (P/OF), Hawkins (P), Henry Jordan (C), T. Jordan (P), Kemp (RF), John Manning (CF), Perry (1B), Raggs (LF), Reeves (RF), Mervin "Red" (Fernandez) Ryan (P), Smith (C/SS), P. Taylor (2B/RF), Wicks (3B) and Williams (LF).

With an outstanding roster in place, Colonel Strothers' team won the 1921 "Harrisburg City Championship." Mervin "Red" Ryan was the ace of the pitching staff during the season and recorded all three victories in the Giants' "Harrisburg City Championship" title win over the West End Club. Ryan pitched a three hit 6-0 shut out to give the Harrisburg Giants the title. Ryan also pitched for the Harrisburg Giants under the alias "Fernandez."

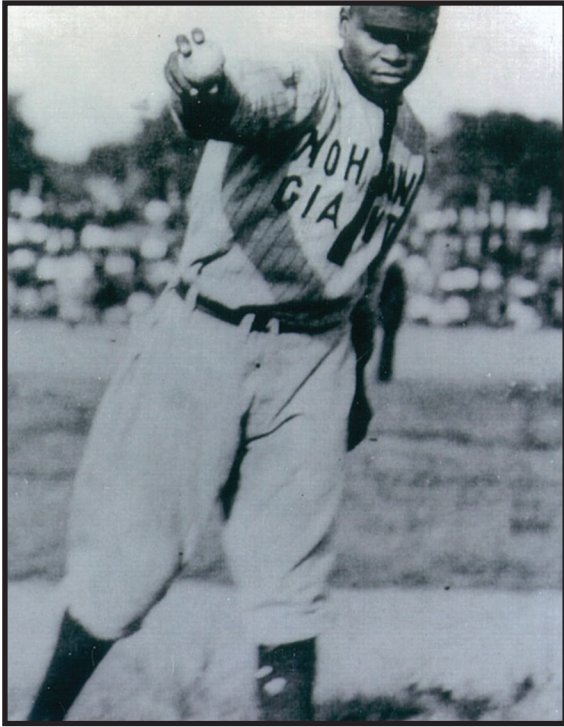
During the 1921 season the Harrisburg Giants also defeated the Colored Monarchs to win the "Colored Championship of Dauphin County."

The Harrisburg Giants made a tour of the Twin County League in August of 1921. They started their tour with a 7-2 win over Lykens. In August the Giants also scored a 23-3 win over the Lebanon American Legion team. During this game they collected 26 hits with Taylor getting four of them. Jordan pitched a five hitter.

In September of 1921 Colonel Strothers recruited former Harrisburg Giants and black baseball superstar, Spottswood Poles, to return to the Harrisburg Giants for a game that they played against the Baltimore Black Sox at Island Park.



Mervin "Red" Ryan



Frank "The Red Ant" Wickware

The Harrisburg Giants faced the West End city champions in a five game series at Island Park for the title of undisputed "City Champions of Harrisburg." To bolster his roster for the series, Colonel Strothers brought in pitchers Dick "Cannonball" Redding and Frank "The Red Ant" Wickware to pitch for Harrisburg. The Harrisburg Giants won the series and were crowned the "City Champions of Harrisburg."

Box scores have been found for eleven (11) games played by the Harrisburg Giants during the 1921 baseball season. Harrisburg had a won-loss record of 9-2 (.818) in these 11 outings.

Colonel Strothers' goal going into the 1922 baseball season was to sign ball players who would elevate the play and stature of the Harrisburg Giants. The key signing for Strothers was a young local ball player by the name of Herbert "Rap" Dixon. Rap would become a star player in Negro League baseball for Harrisburg and several other Eastern teams. The Harrisburg Telegraph characterized Dixon as "the colored Babe Ruth."

Other top hitters on the 1922 Giants team were Jesse Barbour (OF), Scrappy Brown (SS), Buddy Carpenter, Henry Jordan (C), Milton Lewis (2B), Fred "Chick" Meade (3B/coach/assistant manager) and Don Perry (1B). George "Chippy" Britt and Mervyn "Red" Ryan anchored the pitching staff for Harrisburg. Lefty Collins was also signed to pitch for the Giants at the end of the season.

The Harrisburg Giants conducted preseason training for the 1922 season on the Capitol Grounds field located at Fifth and Walnut streets in Harrisburg. To improve the standing of his team Strothers had his Harrisburg Giants join the Philadelphia Baseball Association (PBA) which was comprised of fifty-three of the top teams in the central Pennsylvania area. This would have a dramatic impact on baseball in Harrisburg by bringing numerous top teams to Island Park. The Giants opened their season on May 15th at Island Park against Jack Heiner's Old Timers of Philadelphia.

The series was played in June at the Allison Hill League grounds. Mervyn "Red" Ryan led the way in pitching for the Harrisburg Giants.

In early September of 1922 the Harrisburg Giants squared off against the Japanese All Stars who were touring this country.

Harrisburg won both games. The Giants banded out 21 hits in the first game to score 16 runs. George Britt and T. Jordan combined for a three hitter that limited the Japanese All Stars to just one run. The Harrisburg Giants also played the Indianapolis ABCs in late September.



Herbert "Rap" Dixon

The Harrisburg Giants played an independent schedule during the 1922 baseball season. They took on the best teams that Strothers could book. Some of the top teams that Harrisburg played during the season were the Baltimore Black Sox, Brooklyn Royals, Chester Stars, Chicago



**Jane and Oscar
Charleston**

Giants, Cressona Tigers, Jack Heiner's Old Timers (Philadelphia), Motive Power (Harrisburg), Nashville Giants (Colored Champions of the South), Newark Grays, New York Stars, Pennsylvania Giants, Richmond Giants, Twin County All Stars, Wolmelsdorf and the York ACCO Club.

In September of 1922 the Harrisburg Giants played Motive Power of the West End League for the Harrisburg City championship. The championship series was scheduled for eleven (11) games. The series was hard fought and opened with an eleven (11) inning 0-0 tie. The series continued until early October. Mervyn "Red" Ryan led the Harrisburg Giants during the series. When all was said and done, Strothers' Giants prevailed for the second straight year as the "Harrisburg City Champions."

Another big event that occurred in Harrisburg in 1922 was the marriage of Harrisburg resident Jane B. "Jennie" Howard to Oscar Charleston who was one of the biggest stars in black baseball. Oscar was playing with the Indianapolis ABCs at the time of his marriage.

Formation of the Eastern Colored League

When Rube Foster formed the Negro National League in 1920 his goal was to establish a national black baseball league. Feeling threatened by Foster and the Negro National League, team owners and promoters in the East decided to form their own league and crush Foster's plan of moving his sphere of influence into the East.

Through the leadership of Ed Bolden and Nat Strong, a movement was started to form the Eastern Colored League (ECL). Bolden and Strong were logical choices to bring the proposed league together. Bolden owned the Hilldale team, controlled Hilldale Park in the Philadelphia area and had the respect and trust of Eastern team owners. Nat Strong was not nearly as well-liked as Bolden but as a sports promoter, he controlled black baseball bookings in the East. In addition Strong owned the Brooklyn Royal Giants and Cuban Stars. Nat Strong and his partner Max Rosner also owned Dexter Park which was the home of the Brooklyn Bushwicks.

On December 16, 1922 a meeting of the owners and representatives of top black teams in the East was held at the Christian Street YMCA in Philadelphia. The purpose of the meeting was to form the Eastern Colored League which was officially called the Mutual Association of Eastern Colored Baseball Clubs. Attendees at the meeting included:

Attendee	Team	Attendee	Team
Ed Bolden	Hilldale	Charles Speeden	Baltimore Black Sox
Lloyd Thompson	Hilldale	George Rossiter	Baltimore Black Sox
James Keenan	Lincoln Giants	John J. McDevitt	Baltimore Black Sox
Nat Strong	Brooklyn Royal Giants	Thomas Jackson	Atlantic City Bacharach Giants
Alex Pompez	Cuban Stars	Henry Tucker	Atlantic City Bacharach Giants
		William Weeks	Atlantic City Bacharach Giants

Colonel Strothers was apparently invited to the gathering but chose not to attend the organizational meeting for the “new” league. During the meeting Ed Bolden was elected Chairman of the Eastern Colored League and James Keenan was elected as the Secretary-Treasurer.

Before the start of the 1923 Eastern Colored League season a meeting was held in Philadelphia to approve the inaugural schedule that had been created by James Keenan, Nat Strong, Charles Speeden and Ben Taylor. The “league” held its opening game on April 24th. The teams that competed in the inaugural Eastern Colored League season and their final order of finish were as follows:

Eastern Colored League (1923)

	Games	Record	Pct.
Hilldale	49	32-17	.653
Cuban Stars (East)	40	23-17	.575
Brooklyn Royal Giants	36	18-18	.500
Atlantic City Bacharach Giants	42	19-23	.452
New York Lincoln Giants	38	16-22	.421
Baltimore Black Sox	49	19-30	.388

Harrisburg Giants Play an Independent Schedule in 1923

When the 1923 baseball season started, the Harrisburg Giants were not a member of the Eastern Colored League and played an independent schedule with Island Park as their home field.

In addition to the return of Herbert “Rap” Dixon and Henry Jordan, Colonel Strothers also signed several new key players to bolster his line-up. Some of the other players who were signed by Strothers included George Fiall (SS), Richard Jackson (2B), Clarence “Fats” Jenkins (OF), Zack Pettus (1B) and Burlin White (C/1B). Strothers also replaced his entire pitching roster. Gone were George Britt, Mervyn Ryan, (no first name) Raymond and (no first name) Taylor. They were replaced by a starting rotation that included Harold Treadwell, Dan “Shang” Johnson and Charlie Henry. Lawrence Graves, Amanias Harris, Nate Johnson, Sam Ross, H. Smith and Wade Thompson also pitched for Harrisburg in 1923.

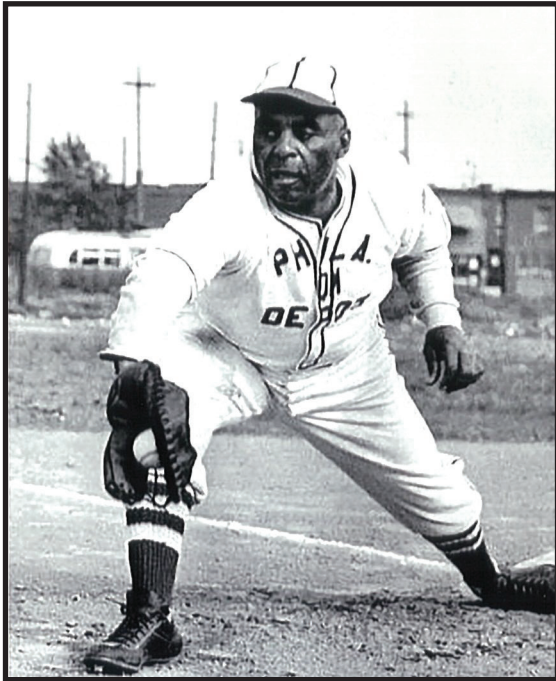
After the season Colonel Strothers awarded his players by holding a banquet for the team on October 2nd at the Odd Fellows Hall in Harrisburg. After the dinner a reception was held and invitations were extended to all of the fans and friends of the ball players.

According to an article that appeared in the Philadelphia Tribune on 12-15-23, the highlight of the season for Strothers’ Giants was beating a very strong Motive Power Club (white team) for the Harrisburg City championship.

Harrisburg Joins the Eastern Colored League

On December 8, 1923 the Eastern Colored League held its annual meeting in Philadelphia at the Christian Street YMCA. One of the primary objectives of the meeting was to evaluate applications from teams wanting to join the “league.” Colonel Strothers attended the meeting with the purpose of having his Harrisburg Giants team join the “league.” Strothers’ application for membership in the Eastern Colored League was accepted. Also added to the Eastern Colored League for the 1924 season were George Robinson’s Washington Potomacs.

Colonel Strothers was determined to take his team to the next level to enable them to compete with the teams in the newly formed Eastern Colored League. To accomplish this objective, Strothers brought in several new players to strengthen his starting line-up for the 1924 season. These players included Oscar Charleston (center field), Leon “Pepper” Daniels (catcher), Edgar Wesley (first base), Daltie Cooper (pitcher), Charles Corbett (pitcher), Nat Rogers (catcher), Fred Bell (pitcher), Slim Branham (pitcher) and Kenneth “Ping” Gardner (pitcher).



Oscar Charleston

With all these high profile player signings, Colonel Strothers knew he would have an exorbitantly high payroll that most likely would be more than he could afford by himself. To address this issue Strothers enlisted the support of an extremely effective booster club from the very beginning of the season. Charles B. Erwin, former manager of the Dunbar Theater in Philadelphia, served as the president of the booster club. The Harrisburg Booster Club was very proficient in their efforts in supporting the team and black baseball in Harrisburg.

Oscar Charleston was by far the most important acquisition for Colonel Strothers. Charleston who was considered the biggest star in black baseball left the Indianapolis ABCs to take over as player- manager of the team from catcher Henry Jordan. Charleston's motivation for leaving Indianapolis and moving to Harrisburg was very simple – Strothers paid him more money than he was making for the ABCs. It didn't hurt Strothers' negotiation with Charleston that Oscar's wife was from Harrisburg and this meant that she was coming home.

The strength of Strothers' "new" line-up was his outfield. The combination of Oscar Charleston, Herbert "Rap" Dixon and Clarence "Fats" Jenkins played together from 1924 to 1927 and formed one of the greatest outfields in Negro League baseball history.

The starting line-up and their batting averages for the 1924 Harrisburg Giants was as follows:

Harrisburg Giants (1924)

Position	Player	Batting Average	Position	Player	Batting Average
1B	Edgar Wesley	.348	OF	Clarence "Fats" Jenkins	.336
2B	Dick Jackson	.287	OF	Oscar Charleston	.410
SS	George Fiall	.207	OF	Herbert "Rap" Dixon	.259
3B	Jake Smith	.257			
C	Henry Jordan	.311	P	Daltie Cooper	12-9
C	Leon "Pepper" Daniels	.294	P	Kenneth "Ping" Gardener	8-8

Rounding out the starting rotation for the Harrisburg Giants in 1924 were Charles Corbett (6-4), Charlie Henry (4-6) and Fred Bell (4-1). Slim Branham (3-2), Bill Haynes (1-0) and Jim Jeffries (0-4) also pitched for the Giants during the season.

According to Seamheads' research team, Oscar Charleston led the team and "league" in hitting during their Eastern Colored League schedule with the following statistics:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1924	Harrisburg	54	205	64	84	23	5	15	63	20	.410	.790

Led by the hitting of Oscar Charleston, the Harrisburg Giants were very competitive in their first year in the "league." As a team the Harrisburg Giants posted a team batting average of .276 which was fourth in the Eastern Colored League and a slugging percentage of .386 which was third highest in the "league."



Harrisburg Giants (1924)

(Back row – left to right – Unknown, **Herbert “Rap” Dixon**, **Colonel “C.W.” Strothers**, Unknown, Unknown, Unknown and **Oscar Charleston**. Middle row left to right – Kenneth “Ping” Gardner, **Edgar Wesley**, Unknown, Unknown, and Unknown. Front row left to right – Daltie Cooper, **Clarence “Fats” Jenkins**, Unknown and Unknown.)

Unfortunately for Strothers and Charleston, the Giants pitchers didn’t deliver during the season like the hitters had done. The Harrisburg pitching staff posted a disappointing earned run average (ERA) of 4.40 runs per game for the season which was only sixth best in the “league.” The Giants finished the regular Eastern Colored League season with a record of 30-31 (.492) and were in fifth place in the final “league” standings.

During the Eastern Colored League season, “league” teams complained about playing in Harrisburg because of small crowds at Island Park.

The teams and final league standings for the 1924 Eastern Colored League season were as follows:

Eastern Colored League (1924)

Team	Games	Record	Pct
Hilldale Giants	69	47-22	.681
Baltimore Black Sox	51	32-19	.627
New York Lincoln Giants	57	32-25	.561
Atlantic City Bacharach Giants	59	30-29	.508
Harrisburg Giants	60	30-31	.492
Brooklyn Royal Giants	42	16-26	.381
Washington Potomacs	58	21-37	.362
Cuban Stars (East)	48	17-31	.354

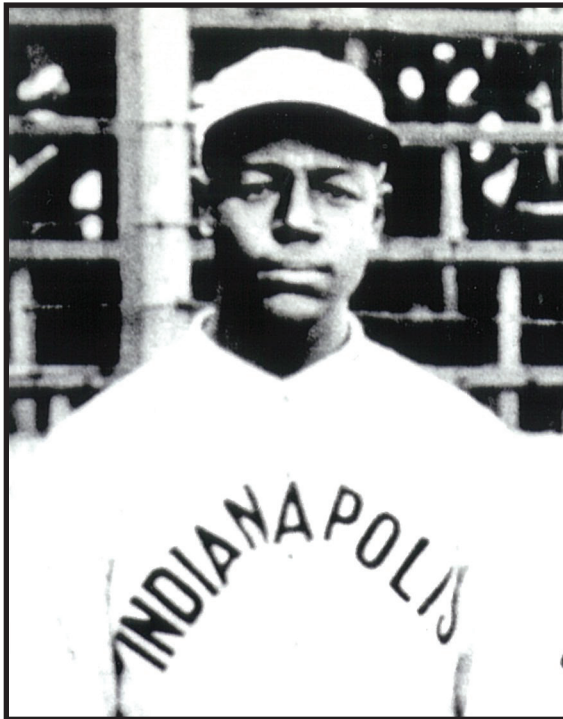
Negro League researchers differ on the records of teams playing in the 1924 Eastern Colored League. Research by Larry Lester and Dick Clark credit the 1924 Harrisburg Giants with a record of 30-31(.492). Negro League researcher John Holway credits the Harrisburg Giants with a record of 40-34 (.541) which would have made them the fourth best team in the “league.” All

Negro League researchers agree that Ed Bolden's Hilldale (58-23) squad won the Eastern Colored League championship. Hilldale was led by the hitting of Raleigh "Biz" Mackey (.357), Louis Santop (.328) and Judy Johnson (.324). Jesse "Nip" Winters (27-4) was the ace of Hilldale's pitching staff and considered the best pitcher in the Eastern Colored League.

After the regular season, the Harrisburg Giants faced off against the "white" Harrisburg Senators of the New York-Penn League. The Giants swept their post season series with the Senators.

Harrisburg Improves in the Eastern Colored League

Before the start of the 1925 Eastern Colored League season, Strothers in conjunction with "league" officials secured a lease for Rosemere Park in Lancaster (PA) to give the Harrisburg Giants a second home field. This also gave the team additional scheduling options for the upcoming season. The Giants also scheduled home games at Island Park in Harrisburg.



Ben Taylor

After what Colonel Strothers considered a subpar effort in 1924, he made three key acquisitions to strengthen his team. They were Ben Taylor (1B), Walter "Rev" Cannady (SS) and John Shackelford (3B).

Oscar Charleston returned to the Harrisburg Giants for the 1925 Eastern Colored League as the player-manager of the team. Former Harrisburg Giants third baseman, "Chick" Meade, who was a white man passing himself off as black, was the business manager of the team. Harrisburg made an incredible improvement during the 1925 season. They rose from fifth place in the final ECL standings in 1924 to second place in 1925.

One of the prime reasons for the improved showing of Harrisburg was their hitting. The Giants led the Eastern Colored League in hitting with a team batting average of .318. The following six starters all hit over .300 for the season: Oscar Charleston (.427), Rev Cannady (.389), Rap Dixon (.352), Ben Taylor (.325), Fats Jenkins (.317) and Richard Jackson (.300). Charleston finished the season with the second best batting average (.427), second in homeruns (19) and second in the "league" in doubles (23).

Oscar Charleston's complete hitting statistics for the 1925 Harrisburg Giants were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1925	Harrisburg	71	255	97	109	23	3	20	97	17	.427	

The Giants' starting line-up and their season batting averages for the 1925 Eastern Colored League season were as follows:

Harrisburg Giants (1925)

Position	Player	Batting Average	Position	Player	Batting Average
1B	Ben Taylor	.325	OF	Clarence "Fats" Jenkins	.317
2B	Dick Jackson	.300	OF	Oscar Charleston	.427
SS	Walter "Rev" Cannady	.389	OF	Herbert "Rap" Dixon	.352
3B	John Shackelford	.298			
C	Henry Jordan	.284	P	Kenneth "Ping" Gardener	11-4
			P	Charles Corbett	10-3

Harrisburg also got good hitting off the bench from usually weak hitting George Fiall (.293) and reserve catcher Mack Eggelston (.341).

Kenneth “Ping” Gardner (11-6) and Charles Corbett (10-2) were the top two pitchers on the team. Daltie Cooper (8-3), Willie Gisentaner (6-4), Charlie Henry (4-3), Wilbert Pritchett (4-3), Miles Lucas (3-0) and Bob Evans (1-0) also pitched for the Giants during the 1925 season. As a staff the Harrisburg Giants posted a 4.75 team ERA for a dismal fifth place in the “league.”

The Harrisburg Giants opened their Eastern Colored League season on April 25th with a game against Hilldale. With approximately 15,000 fans in attendance Jesse “Nip” Winters pitched a five hitter for Hilldale and led them to a 6-2 victory over Harrisburg.

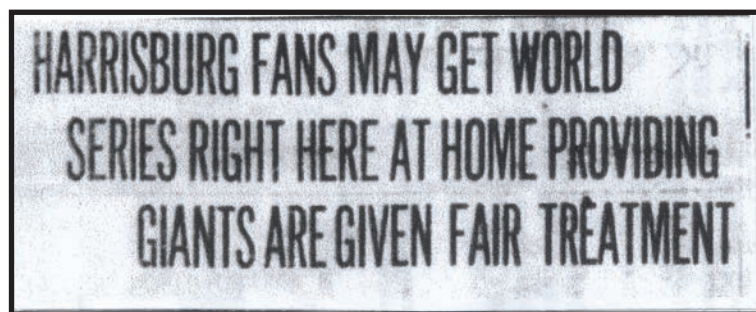
The Harrisburg Giants started the season off extremely well. According to an article that appeared in the Mount Carmel Item on June 25th the Harrisburg Giants were in first place in the Eastern Colored League with a record of 15-5 (.750).

One of the most interesting games of the 1925 season for the Harrisburg Giants occurred on June 30th when they played the Baltimore Black Sox. Both teams combined to score 19 runs in the first inning. Harrisburg went on to win the slugfest by a score of 16-14.

The 1925 Eastern Colored League season was marred by violence and rowdiness at the ball park and Harrisburg Giants manager, Oscar Charleston, was right in the middle of the problem as one of the league’s biggest trouble makers. Charleston had a long history of verbally and physically abusing opposing players and umpires. His unacceptable behavior on the field was never really challenged and he knew that he always had Colonel Strothers to intervene and get him out of trouble. Nationally known black sports writer, Rollo Wilson, had the following to say in one of his editorials:

“rowdy baseball is becoming the rule in the Eastern League.”

Harrisburg made a strong run at Hilldale late in the season by winning three straight games and took over first place for a short period of time. At the end of the season Hilldale prevailed as the Eastern Colored League champion for the third straight year. The season did end with significant controversy as to which team finished in second place. Feeling that the Harrisburg Giants had been slighted, Bill Nunn (sports writer for the Pittsburgh Courier) called for an investigation which never took place.



Harrisburg Sunday Courier
07-05-25

Researchers differ on the final standings of the 1925 Eastern Colored League. Negro League researchers Larry Lester and Dick Clark credit the Harrisburg Giants with a record in “league” games of 37-18 (.673) for the 1925 season. Gary Ashwill and his Seamheads research team have Harrisburg with a record of 48-24-1 (.667). John Holway’s researcher credits Harrisburg with a record of 65-26 (.714). It is important to note that Holway combines both “league” and “non-league” games in his totals. All researchers agree that the Hilldale Giants won the Eastern Colored League championship.

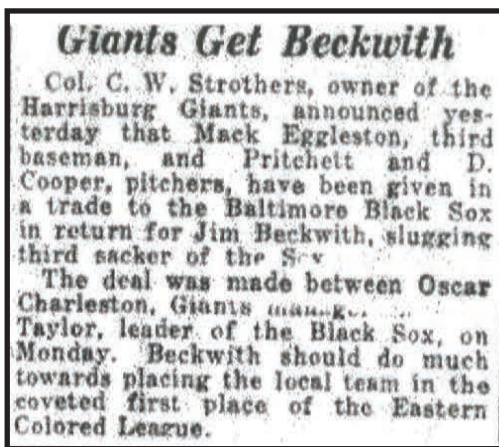
Research of Larry Lester and Dick Clark				Research of John Holway			
Team	Record	Pct	Place	Team	Record	Pct	Place
Hilldale	52-15	.776	1 st	Hilldale	65-26	.714	1 st
Harrisburg Giants	37-18	.673	2 nd	Baltimore Black Sox	61-29	.685	2 nd
Baltimore Black Sox	31-20	.608	3 rd	Harrisburg Giants	41-19	.683	3 rd
Atlantic City Bacharach Giants	26-26	.500	4 th	Brooklyn Royal Giants	16-16	.500	4 th
Brooklyn Royal Giants	13-20	.394	5 th	Atlantic City Bacharach Giants	38-44	.463	5 th
Wilmington Potomacs	13-22	.371	6 th	New York Lincoln Giants	15-20	.429	6 th
Cuban Stars (East)	15-26	.366	7 th	Cuban Stars (East)	22-30	.423	7 th
New York Lincoln Giants	7-39	.152	8 th	Wilmington Potomacs	12-21	.364	8 th

A good reference point when evaluating the won-loss records for the Eastern Colored League teams for the 1925 season is the Pittsburgh Courier which in their September 26th edition published what they called the “official” Eastern Colored League standings. The research of Larry Lester and Dick Clark compares very closely with this newspaper with the following two exceptions: Hilldale (45-13) and Baltimore Black Sox (31-19).

Beckwith Joins Harrisburg Giants

In January of 1926 Colonel Strothers attended the joint meeting of the Negro National League and Eastern Colored League. The meetings were held at the Christian Street YMCA in Philadelphia (PA). The two major accomplishments of the Eastern Colored League team representatives were admitting the Newark Stars to the “league” and the implementation of a \$ 3,000 per month salary cap.

The Harrisburg Giants called both Island Park and the West End Grounds their home fields for the 1926 season. Island Park was also the home of the “white” Harrisburg Senators minor league team. The Giants were able to use the ball park when the Senators were out of town. Strothers’ major problem with this arrangement was that he couldn’t put together a schedule for his team until the Harrisburg Senators announced their schedule for the season.



The Evening News

Harrisburg, PA
07-07-26

In mid-April before the start of the regular 1926 season, the Harrisburg Giants defeated the Harrisburg Senators (white team) in a two game series by the scores of 6-5 and 14-5 to win the “Harrisburg City Championship.”

Colonel Strothers strengthened his starting lineup in early July when he traded Mack Eggleston (3B), Daltie Cooper (P) and Wilbert Pritchett (P) to the Baltimore Black Sox for slugging great John Beckwith.

The Harrisburg Giants had another good season in the Eastern Colored League in 1926, but their pitching staff kept them from making a serious run at the Eastern Colored League championship.



(Jesse "Mountain" Hubbard, Raleigh "Biz" Mackey, John Beckwith, Herbert "Rap" Dixon and Clint Thomas)

As a team the Harrisburg Giants compiled a .278 team batting average. Herbert "Rap" Dixon led the team in hitting with a .348 batting average and a .561 slugging percentage.

In games against all levels of competition, Rap Dixon's complete hitting statistics for the 1926 season were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1926	Harrisburg	59	230	57	80	16	6	7	53	12	.348	.561

John Beckwith (.343) and Clarence "Fats" Jenkins (.319) were the only two other Harrisburg Giants starting players to bat over .300 in 1926. Oscar Charleston had for him an off season at the plate in 1926 with a .296 batting average. Charles Corbett (8-0), Sam Cooper (8-5) and Ping Gardner (8-10) were the team's leading pitchers. Cliff Carter (5-2), Daltie Cooper (3-7), Henry Gillespie (3-1), Alonzo Mitchell (2-0) and Wilbert Pritchett (2-6) also pitched for the Giants in 1926. As they had done in the past, the Harrisburg Giants pitchers struggled all season and ended the season with a 5.00 team ERA which was sixth best in the "league."

The Harrisburg Giants were in the hunt for the Eastern Colored League title for most of the season until the Atlantic City Bacharach Giants went on a fourteen (14) game winning streak to claim the title.

According the [Baltimore Afro-American](#) the Harrisburg Giants finished the season in second place in the ECL with a record of 25-17 (.595). The Seamheads research team has located forty-nine (49) box scores for the Harrisburg Giants for 1926 and credit them with a won-loss record of 27-22 (.551). The Atlantic City Bacharach Giants won the "league" title with a record of 34-20 (.630). Negro League researcher John Holway credits the Atlantic City Bacharach Giants with a record of 63-15 (.808) when both "league" and "non-league" games are added together.



Harrisburg Giants (1907)

(Colonel William Strothers, Sam Cooper, Oscar Charleston and Daltie Cooper)

The final Eastern Colored League standings for the 1926 baseball season were as follows:

Eastern Colored League (1926)

	Games	Record	Pct.	Place
Atlantic City Bacharach Giants	54	34-20	.630	1 st
Harrisburg Giants	42	25-17	.595	2 nd
Hilldale	58	34-24	.586	3 rd
Cuban Stars (East)	49	28-21	.571	4 th
New York Lincoln Giants	41	19-22	.463	5 th
Baltimore Black Sox	47	18-29	.383	6 th
Brooklyn Royal Giants	27	7-20	.259	7 th
Newark Stars	11	1-10	.091	8 th

(Note - The Newark Stars disbanded and dropped out of the "league" before mid-season.)

Besides playing in the Eastern Colored League during the 1926 season, Harrisburg also played in the Interstate League during the 1926 season. The Interstate League was a Pennsylvania based integrated league that was comprised of three white teams (Allentown Dukes, Camden and Chester) and three black teams (Atlantic City Bacharach Giants, Harrisburg Giants and Hilldale). The reason for Harrisburg joining the "league" was very simple. The Interstate League offered better booking dates and was financially more lucrative than the Eastern Colored League. The Interstate League games played between the black teams also counted in the Eastern Colored League standings.

During the 1926 season the Harrisburg Giants played a series against the New York-Penn All Stars.

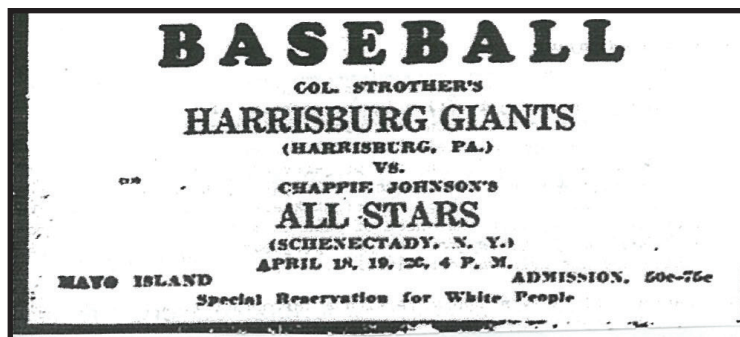
Harrisburg's Final Season in the Eastern Colored League

From January 11th through the 13th C.W. Strothers attended the joint meetings of the Eastern Colored League and Negro National League. The meetings were held in Detroit (MI) at the YMCA. During the meetings the Eastern Colored League implemented the following:

1. The "league" implemented a \$ 2,700 per month salary cap for each team.
2. A new plan for umpires was instituted.
3. The "league" also placed a fourteen (14) player limit on each team.
4. Isaac Nutter was elected as the Eastern Colored League president. He became the first president of the "league" who was not a team owner.
5. James Keenan's New York Lincoln Giants were readmitted to the "league."

Prior to the start of the 1927 season Oscar Charleston who was the team's best player and manager was a holdout. When Charleston didn't sign his contract Strothers' strategy was very simple: he tried to trade him and when that didn't look like it was going to work, he signed slugger and black baseball super star John Beckwith. Strothers attempted to trade Oscar Charleston to the Baltimore Black Sox for Jud Wilson. According to an article that appeared in the Baltimore Afro American in March of 1927, Colonel Strothers called off the trade. Strothers also tried to trade Charleston to Ed Bolden's Hilldale team for Jesse "Nip" Winters and Clint Thomas. Strothers cancelled this trade because of all the negative reactions he got from the Harrisburg fans. These events plus the fact that Charleston's wife (Jane B. Howard) who was from Harrisburg didn't like the idea of leaving her home town to move to Baltimore motivated Oscar to sign his contract with Harrisburg. Having both Beckwith and Charleston in his line-up gave the Harrisburg Giants the best one-two punch in black baseball. The media compared the combination of Charleston and Beckwith with the New York Yankees power hitting duo of Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig.

The Harrisburg Giants started the 1927 season without the services of Herbert "Rap" Dixon who was in Far East touring with the Philadelphia Royal Giants. It was an easy decision for Rap to go to Japan because Lonnie Goodwin was paying big salaries for the tour and the team owners back East were cutting salaries for the upcoming Eastern Colored League season. Dixon and the Negro League players who went on the tour seemed to take the attitude that they would worry about the repercussions of "jumping" the league when they returned home. When Dixon got back to the United States, he briefly played for the Philadelphia Cuban Stars before paying a small fine and being reinstated by the Harrisburg Giants and the Eastern Colored League.



Harrisburg Giants
vs
Chappie Johnson's All Stars

Richmond Times Dispatch
Richmond, VA
04-18-27

The Harrisburg Giants got excellent team hitting during the 1927 season. According to research by John Holway, the Giants had six players in their starting line-up who batted over .300 for the season. These players were Clarence "Fats" Jenkins (.413), Rap Dixon (.375), Oscar Charleston (.364), John Beckwith (.362), Oscar "Heavy" Johnson (.336) and Walter "Rev" Cannady (.321). Even though it appears that John Beckwith hit less than a dozen homeruns against Eastern league teams, newspaper accounts have him hitting as many as 72 homeruns for the 1927 season in games against all levels of competition.

Harrisburg also got excellent pitching from Cliff Carter (18-9) and Daltie Cooper (18-11). Also pitching for the Harrisburg Giants in 1927 were Kenneth "Ping" Gardner (4-2), William J. "Bill" Mungin (4-1), Samuel Cooper (1-1), Charles Craig (1-1), Earl Gurley (0-2), Sam Cooper (0-2), Miles Lucas (0-1), Charles Corbett (0-1) and Oscar Charleston (0-0).

Unfortunately for the Harrisburg Giants, the Atlantic City Bacharach Giants put together another championship season. The Harrisburg Giants used a forfeit victory to claim the first half of the season but Atlantic City refused to play Harrisburg for the title. For the third straight year, the Giants finished in second place in the final Eastern Colored League (ECL) season standings. Harrisburg had a final ECL season record of 41-32 (.562) and the Atlantic City Bacharach Giants won the championship with a record of 54-35 (.607) for the 1927 season.

According to Eastern Colored League standings that were published in the Harrisburg Telegraph on September 20th, the Harrisburg Giants won the second half of the regular 1927 season with a record of 19-12 (.632) and the Atlantic City Bacharach Giants ended up in second place with a won-loss record of 25-18 (.581).

The official final Eastern Colored League standings for the 1927 season are as follows:

Eastern Colored League (1927)

	Games	Record	Pct.	Place
Atlantic City Bacharach Giants	89	54-35	.607	1 st
Harrisburg Giants	73	41-32	.562	2 nd
Cuban Stars (East)	65	33-32	.508	3 rd
Baltimore Black Sox	70	35-35	.500	4 th
Hilldale	81	36-45	.444	5 th
New York Lincoln Giants	30	12-18	.400	6 th
Brooklyn Royal Giants	46	15-31	.326	7 th

Harrisburg Giants Drop Out of Eastern Colored League

HARRISBURG GIANTS WILL NOT COMPETE

Withdrawn From Series With Bacharach's Because of No Home Field; Col. Strothers Talks

Winning out in the second half of a baseball season and then being obliged to withdraw from a series of games to decide the league championship, with the probability of getting into a world series, is something new in this city. It is the fate of the Harrisburg Giants, the strongest aggregation of Negro baseball stars in the United States, according to a general belief. The one big season is, Colonel C. W. Strothers says, is no home field to play on.

Play in the Eastern League of Colored Clubs ended September 15. The final standing was as follows:

	W.	L.	Pct.
Harrisburg Giants	19	12	.632
Bacharach Giants	25	18	.581
Hilldale	19	17	.528
Cuban Stars	9	13	.409
Baltimore Black Sox....	12	21	.364
Brooklyn Royal Giants..	5	10	.333

three or four days to erect the west side bleachers and the goal posts and once erected they could not be taken down, so I decided to let the laurels go. It was not only the series with the Bacharach's, but if we won out it would be a series with the Western champions. It is hard luck. I certainly would have liked to see a championship series here." The following was issued from league headquarters in Philadelphia:

Award Title

"The Bacharach Giants are the 1927 champions of the Eastern Colored League. By finishing out in front in both halves of the split-schedule, the Atlantic City team has eliminated the post-season playoff series.

"It remained, however, for President Ike Nutter to untangle a situation that climaxed the playing season and apparently had the stage

Harrisburg Telegraph
Harrisburg, PA
09-20-27

Strothers Disbands the Harrisburg Giants

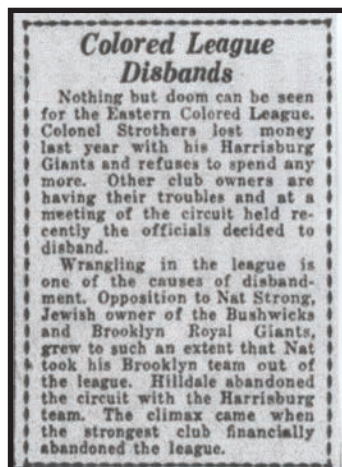
Angered by how the 1927 season had ended and feeling his team had been mistreated Colonel Strothers did not attend the annual winter meetings that were held in February before the start of the 1928 season. Reportedly C.W. Strothers was also faced with several major issues:

1. Harrisburg had a very high payroll because Strothers had signed a large number of high salaried players like John Beckwith, Oscar Charleston, Rap Dixon and Fats Jenkins.
2. Strothers was very open about not liking the Eastern Colored League schedule.
3. He adamantly took exception to the fact that the Atlantic City Bacharach Giants refused to play games in Harrisburg.
4. Strothers also felt his team had finished in second place in the final “league” standings for the 1927 season and he was disturbed because he felt strongly that the Harrisburg Giants should have received the second place money from the 1927 Negro League World Series.
5. According to the media, the Harrisburg Giants had lost a considerable amount of money during the 1927 season.

Harrisburg dropped out of the Eastern Colored League before the start of the 1928 season with the plan to play an independent schedule. Shortly after Harrisburg dropped out of the Eastern Colored League, Nat Strong who owned the Brooklyn Royal Giants followed suit and also withdrew his team from the “league.”

When the joint winter meetings of the Eastern Colored League and Negro National League were held on February 21-22 in Philadelphia, the Harrisburg Giants had already officially dropped out of the league. In response to Strothers’ actions Eastern Colored League officials distributed the Harrisburg Giants players to other Eastern Colored League teams.

Harrisburg Player	New Team
Walter “Rev” Cannady	New York Lincoln Giants
Cliff Carter	Philadelphia Tigers
Oscar Charleston	Hilldale
Daltie Cooper	Hilldale
Herbert “Rap” Dixon	Baltimore Black Sox
Kenneth “Ping” Gardner	Atlantic City Bacharach Giants
Domingo Gomez	Philadelphia Tigers
Clarence “Fats” Jenkins	New York Lincoln Giants
Jose Perez	Cuban Stars (East)



The Evening News

04-14-28

John Beckwith signed with the Homestead Grays who played an independent schedule. Oscar “Heavy” Johnson and Earl Gurley signed with the Memphis Red Sox of the Negro National League. Johnson also played for the Cleveland Tigers (Negro National League) in 1928. Most of the other Harrisburg players signed with the Brooklyn Stars and Eastern All Stars.

Faced with the loss of all of his key players and most of his team, C.W. Strothers disbanded the Harrisburg Giants and it appears that he did not field a team for the 1928 baseball season. There was also speculation that Colonel Strothers could not afford to fund the team, that Strothers felt there was too big of a financial risk in owning a professional baseball team or that he was tired of bank rolling the Giants only to lose money.

The Eastern Colored League struggled from the start of the 1928 season and had completely disbanded at mid-season in June.

Harrisburg's Tenure in the Eastern Colored League

During the four years (1924-1927) that the Harrisburg Giants played in the Eastern Colored League, they compiled the second best record in the league's history. The reason for their success was very simple: Colonel Strothers didn't hesitate to spend "big" money to sign the best ball players. The Harrisburg Giants were known to consistently have the highest payroll in black baseball. Some of the top offensive players that Strothers signed were Oscar Charleston, John Beckwith, Walter "Rev" Cannady, Herbert "Rap" Dixon, Clarence "Fats" Jenkins, Oscar "Heavy" Johnson and Ben Taylor. Strother's investment in these powerhouse hitting stars paid off as the Harrisburg Giants scored runs at a higher pace than the world famous 1927 New York Yankees.

According to Robert Peterson in his book Only the Ball Was White the composite won-loss records for teams that played in the Eastern Colored League from 1923 to 1927 were as follows:

Composite Standings for the Eastern Colored League (1923-1927)

Team	Won	Lost	Pct.
Hilldale	184	121	.616
Harrisburg Giants	129	95	.576
Atlantic City Bacharach Giants	163	133	.551
Baltimore Black Sox	133	132	.505
Cuban Stars (East)	114	127	.473
New York Lincoln Giants	73	108	.403
Brooklyn Royal Giants	69	114	.377

According to Gary Ashwill and his Seamheads research team the following players who led the way for C.W. Strothers' Harrisburg Giants teams from 1924 through 1926 were as follows:

Category	Player	Number
Hits	Oscar Charleston	244
	Clarence "Fats" Jenkins	224
	Herbert "Rap" Dixon	204
Runs Scored	Oscar Charleston	203
	Clarence "Fats" Jenkins	184
	Herbert "Rap" Dixon	143
Homeruns	Oscar Charleston	45
	Herbert "Rap" Dixon	18
	Walter "Rev" Cannady	14
Runs Batted In	Oscar Charleston	203
	Herbert "Rap" Dixon	119
	Walter "Rev" Cannady	117
Stolen Bases	Oscar Charleston	61
	Clarence "Fats" Jenkins	41
	Herbert "Rap" Dixon	33
Games Started	Kenneth "Ping" Gardner	41
	Daltie Cooper	29
	Charles Corbett	28
Innings Pitched	Kenneth "Ping" Gardner	364.0
	Charles Corbett	273.2
	Daltie Cooper	266.2

Category	Player	Number
Wins	Kenneth “Ping” Gardner	24
	Charles Corbett	22
	Daltie Cooper	18
Strikeouts	Kenneth “Ping” Gardner	142
	Daltie Cooper	100
	Charlie Henry	70

During their tenure (1924-1927) in the Eastern Colored League, the Harrisburg Giants called both Island Park and the West End Grounds their home field.

Harrisburg Giants are Revived

Without a professional black baseball team in Harrisburg, Emmanuel Price and Carleton Jackson formed a “new” Harrisburg Giants team about midway through the 1928 baseball season. This “new” version of the Harrisburg Giants was led by Spottwood Poles. The team was comprised of a mixture of older players and players with marginal talent. Familiar names on the 1928 roster included Charles Corbett (P), Paul Dixon (OF), Charlie Henry (P), Harry Jeffries (3B), David Gomez (P), Harry Gomez, Ed “Possum” Poles (SS) and Wilbert Pritchett (P). The 1928 version of the Harrisburg Giants were a lower level team who played an independent schedule. Box scores have been found for six games that the 1928 Harrisburg Giants played and they lost all six of these games. This Giants team also played during the 1929 season.

In 1928 Harrisburg also fielded another team by the name of the Harrisburg Red Sox. They promoted themselves as a one the strongest semi-professional baseball teams in the East. The team was run by J.H. Johnson, Charles Ritter and Albert Kaplan.

Some Negro League researchers contend that C.W. Strothers continually owned and operated the Harrisburg Giants until his death in 1933. Our research does not support this position. When Colonel Strothers withdrew his team from the Eastern Colored League before the start of the 1928 season, his entire starting line-up was signed by other teams and he disbanded the team.

Researching Harrisburg newspapers like the Harrisburg Telegraph and the Patriot has not revealed that C.W. Strothers owned a professional baseball team after 1927.

Charlie Henry Led Harrisburg Giants Teams Not Linked to Strothers

There was a Harrisburg Giants team in 1932 and 1933. This version of the Harrisburg Giants was run by Charlie Henry. The former veteran pitcher (Charlie Henry) billed his team as the Harrisburg Giants. The 1932 and 1933 teams were comprised of veteran ball players like William Lindsey (SS), Thomas “High Pockets” Hudspeth (1B) and John Beckwith (SS). Also playing on the 1932 Harrisburg Giants team were Bundy, (LF), Carrington (LF), Chandler (2B), James Crump (2B), Ralph Jefferson (OF), Laws (C), Lewis (P), Marshall (2B), Melton (CF/SS), Bud Mitchell (C), Powell (3B), Reading (P), Riggins (1B), Roscoe (RF), Russ (CF/SS), Watkins (C/RF), Arthur White (P) and James Womack (3B).

The 1932 and 1933 Harrisburg Giants appear to have been lower level teams.

According to an article that appeared in the June 13, 1932 edition of the Harrisburg Telegraph the newspaper reported that Charlie Henry was telling everyone that Strothers was backing the team. Strothers was so infuriated with Henry’s claim that he issued the following statement:

“I want the Harrisburg Telegraph to deny the stories published about me and tell the public I am not getting back into baseball just now. The depression makes the game uncertain and I do not care to lose any money, which is scarce at present.”

Strothers Responds to Henry's Claims

COL. STROTHERS HAS NO TEAM

Does Not Plan Baseball at This Time; Denies Story

Colonel O. W. Strothers who for many years has produced champion teams made up of Negro champion was head of the Harrisburg Giants a team hard to beat on a baseball field but getting raw deals in league series; is having his troubles notwithstanding the Colonel is out of the game. In a recent story printed in the Pittsburgh Courier the local magnate is credited with planning a return. This statement is vigorously denied. In a statement made Saturday Colonel Strothers said:

Makes Denial
"I want the Harrisburg Telegraph to deny the stories published about me, and tell the public I am not getting back in baseball just now. The depression makes the game uncertain and I do not care to lose my money, which is scarce at present."

"The story printed tells about Charles Henry, a former pitcher on my team who has a club which he illegally calls the Harrisburg Giants a name I control, and according to his statements I am back of this team. Henry came to see me some time ago and asked for the Giants uniforms. I told him they would not go out as I cherished the outfit very much and would not part with the uniforms, bats and other paraphernalia under no condition. Henry has no right to use my name or that of Harrisburg Giants. If he tells the public I am back of his team, he is giving out an untruth. When I am ready to get back in baseball my friends in Harrisburg will get the word. Just now I am willing to be just an ordinary fan. If there is a law to stop it, I will not permit Henry or any other manager to play a team in Harrisburg under the name of Harrisburg Giants."

-1-

Harrisburg Telegraph

06-13-32

In 1934 a Harrisburg Colored Giants team played an independent schedule in the East primarily against town teams and lower level competition.

Research by Ted Knorr and Calobe Jackson report Colonel Strothers passing only days before Henry's Harrisburg Giants team was scheduled to play the New York Black Yankees with former Harrisburg star players Walter "Rev" Cannady and Clarence "Fats" Jenkins in their line-up.

BASEBALL LEADER, ACTIVE IN SPORTS FOR YEARS, DIES

Colonel W. Strothers, 65, Stricken at His Home

Colonel W. Strothers, 65, for thirty-five years prominent in baseball and other sports, died this morning at his home, 423 Strawberry street. He had been in ill health for some time. He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Jennie Strothers.

Colonel Strothers conducted a cigar store, pool and billiard rooms, restaurant and barber shop adjoining his residence. For years he was manager of the Harrisburg Giants, a team that played many seasons throughout the East and Midwest.

Colonel W. Strothers, as he was named at birth, was a native of Culpepper, Va. He ran away from home when he was 12 years of age.

There was also a Strothers A.C. team that was a local amateur team in Harrisburg during the 1930's and 1940's that most likely named in honor of Colonel W. Strothers. Rap and Paul Dixon played for Strothers A.C.

Colonel Strothers Passes On

Colonel William "C.W." Strothers passed away at his home located at 423 Strawberry Street on July 15, 1933. He reportedly had been in poor health for some time. His cause of death listed on his death certificate was aortic insufficiency complicated by a diabetic condition. Strothers was laid to rest on July 18th in Lincoln Cemetery which is located in the Pennbrook section of Harrisburg. He was survived by his second wife Jeannette or Jennie as she was most often called. They were married about 1918 and she passed away in 1940. Jeannette Strothers is buried in the same cemetery as her husband.

Harrisburg Telegraph

07-14-33

Tradition of the Harrisburg Giants is Carried On

After Colonel Strothers' death there were several other black professional "Giants" teams that represented Harrisburg. In addition there was also a Strothers Athletic Club in Harrisburg that fielded a baseball team. Rap and his brother Paul played for the Strothers A.C. club during the late 1930's and early 1940's.

From 1942 through 1945 there was a Harrisburg Giants team. Herbert "Rap" Dixon coached the Harrisburg Giants team in 1942. In 1943 Dixon took over as manager of the team from Charley Taylor. The 1943 version of the Harrisburg Giants were an integrated team that played other local semipro teams. During this time Rap Dixon and local pharmacist Bud Marshall were also very active in the baseball scene in Harrisburg. They promoted Negro National League games at Island Park in Harrisburg. According to an article that appeared in the August 23, 1945 issue of the Springfield Republican (Springfield, MA), the Harrisburg Giants had posted an impressive won-loss record 41-7 (.854) in games played through late August of that year. Former Negro League player Buddy Burbage was the star of the 1945 Harrisburg Giants.

There was also a Harrisburg-St. Louis Stars team that played briefly in the Negro National League during the 1943 season. This Stars team also toured the country playing a white all-star team managed by Honus Wagner and featured the pitching of Dizzy Dean. The tour was organized to support the war effort.

In 1953 a "new" Harrisburg Giants team was formed by Richard Felton. The first thing Felton did was hire former Negro League star Spottswood Poles as the team's manager. They played an independent schedule against the top amateur and semi-professional teams in the area.

When the Eastern Negro League or Negro Eastern League as it was also called was formed in 1954, the Harrisburg Giants were an inaugural member for the "league." Behind the hitting of Tom Hailey and the pitching of Willie Fordham the Harrisburg Giants won the Eastern Negro League title with a record of 16-6 (.727). Tom Hailey won the Doc Marshall Memorial Trophy as the Eastern Negro League's Most Valuable Player (MVP). The Harrisburg Giants also played in the Eastern Negro League during the 1955 season.



Harrisburg Giants (1954)

Island Park Home Field of Harrisburg Giants

Over the majority of their career Island Park on City Island in Harrisburg served as the home field for the Harrisburg Giants. City Island is a small island (one mile long) in the middle of the Susquehanna River.

Island Park was also the home ball park for “white” professional ball clubs like the Harrisburg Athletics and Harrisburg Senators. Island Park was not only a baseball field but was also used for a wide range of other sports and entertainment venues.



**Island Park
Harrisburg, PA**



**Island Park
Harrisburg, PA**

Assessing C.W. Strothers Baseball Career

- Colonel Strothers was a very **successful businessman with significant political influence** in Harrisburg (PA).
- His **passion for baseball** started in the 1890's and continued until his death in 1933.
- Strothers **consistently fielded a competitive team that won championships**. Even though they never won an Eastern Colored League title, the Harrisburg Giants finished second place in the final "league" standings three of the four years they played in the "league." From 1924-1927 Harrisburg had the second best won-loss record when compared to all the other Eastern Colored League teams.

The May 22nd edition of the Harrisburg Telegraph identifies the Harrisburg Giants as the "Champions of Colored Baseball" in 1905.

The Harrisburg Giants were considered the "Colored Champions of Pennsylvania" in 1908, 1909, 1910 and 1916.



Harrisburg Giants (1908)

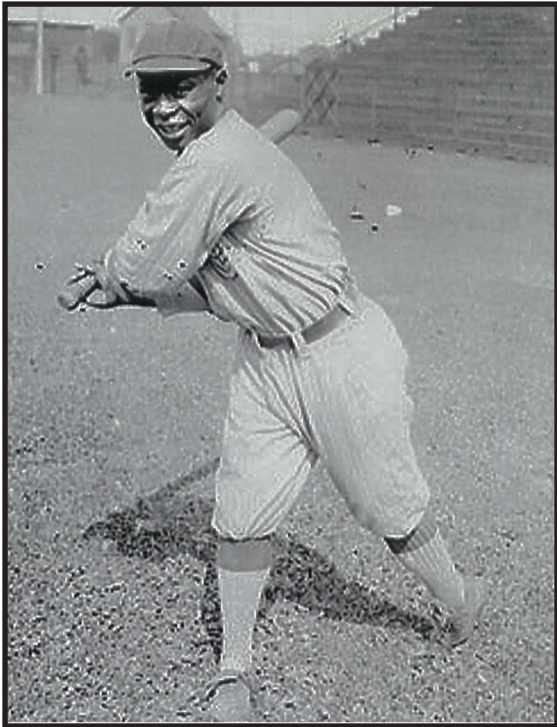
In 1914 the Harrisburg Giants were billed in the media as the "Colored Champions" of the East." They played the Pittsburg Giants in that same year to claim an unspecified "Colored Championship" in 1914.

The Harrisburg Giants were billed as the "Colored Champions" and even the "Colored Champions of the East" in the local Harrisburg newspapers in 1915 but it was never specified what they were the "Colored Champions" of.

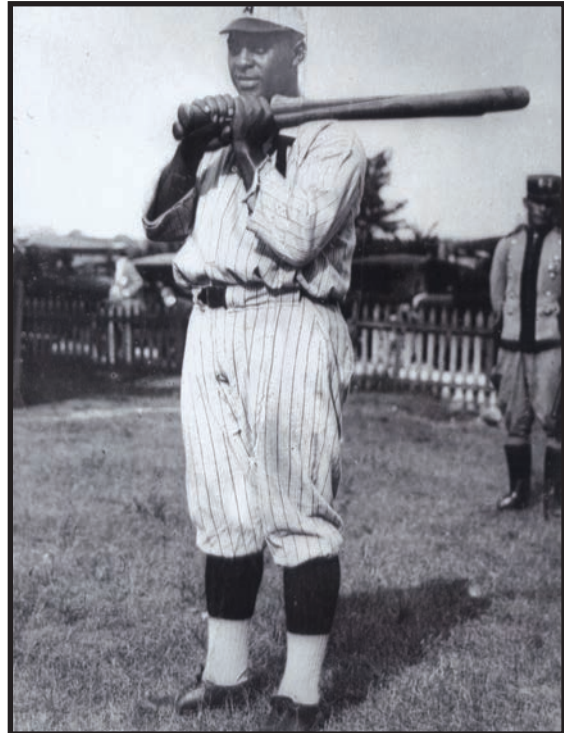
In 1920 Colonel Strothers' Harrisburg Giants defeated the Colored Monarchs to win the "Colored Championship of Dauphin County."

Harrisburg Giants

Strothers Signs - Super Star Players



Spottswood Poles



Oscar Charleston



Herbert "Rap" Dixon



John Beckwith

The Harrisburg Giants teams under the ownership/management of C.W. Strothers also won at least four (4) Harrisburg City Championships. These were in 1921, 1922, 1923 and 1926.

Mervyn "Red" (aka Fernandez) Ryan Pitches Giants to City Title

HARRISBURG GIANTS
NOW CITY CHAMPS
 Colored Stars Walk Away With
 Deciding Contest—Fernandez Allowed But Three Hits
 and Wins by 6 to 0 Score

FINAL STANDING			
Teams—	W.	L.	Pct.
Harrisburg Giants....	3	1	.750
West End	1	3	.250

on a pass to Guy and infield singles by Fernandez and Wicks. The summary:

WEST END				GIANTS			
ab.	r.	h.	e.	ab.	r.	h.	e.
T. Baker, cf.	4	0	0	2	0	0	0
Waltz, rf.	4	0	0	1	0	0	0
Bell, 2b.	3	0	2	3	1	0	0
Matter, lb.	3	0	0	0	1	0	0
Gordex, ss.	3	0	1	1	3	0	0
McKiver, k.	3	0	0	1	0	0	0
Frank, ss.	3	0	0	0	1	0	0
Cocklin, c.	3	0	0	7	1	0	0
Zinn, p.	3	0	0	0	4	1	0
Totals....	28	0	3	24	18	3	2
West End	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Giants	2	3	0	1	0	0	0

Errors—Gordex, 2; Zinn, Two-base hits—Wicks, Perry. Sacrifice hit—Kemp. Double play—Smith to Perry. Struck out—By Zinn, 6; Fernandez, 6. Base on balls—Off Zinn, 3. Left on base—West End, 2; Giants, 6. Time—1:25. Umpires—Baxter and Hanks.

The Patriot
 Harrisburg, PA
 09-26-21



Clarence "Fats" Jenkins
 and
 Oscar Charleston

- He was also **excellent at recruiting and signing** some of the top black baseball players in the East. Some of the top players who played for C.W. Strothers were John Beckwith, Walter "Rev" Cannady, Oscar Charleston, Daltie Cooper, Herbert "Rap" Dixon, Clarence "Fats" Jenkins, Oscar "Heavy" Johnson, Kenneth "Ping" Gardner, Spottswood Poles and Ben Taylor.
- Strothers was always **confident in his team**. He would often place side bets on games with the owner of the opposing team. These bets usually ranged from \$ 50 to \$ 500 depending on the circumstances of the game. It was also not out of the realm of possibility for Strothers to book games with a "winner take-all" of the gate receipts stipulation.
- C.W. Strothers **defined black baseball in Harrisburg and western Pennsylvania**.
- Colonel William Strothers is truly **one of the early pioneers of black baseball** in the United States.

Harrisburg Giants

Eastern Colored League
(1924)

The Harrisburg Giants played in the Eastern Colored League from 1924 to 1927. They had the second best composite record in the entire history of the Eastern Colored League. The team was led by the hitting of Oscar Charleston, Herbert “Rap” Dixon and Clarence “Fats” Jenkins. The trio of Charleston, Dixon and Jenkins formed one of the best outfields in the history of Negro League baseball.



Harrisburg Giants (1924)

(Back row – left to right – Unknown, **Herbert “Rap” Dixon**, **Colonel “C.W.” Strothers**, Unknown, Unknown, Unknown and **Oscar Charleston**. Middle row left to right – Kenneth “Ping” Gardner, **Edgar Wesley**, Unknown, Unknown, and Unknown. Front row left to right – Daltie Cooper, **Clarence “Fats” Jenkins**, Unknown and Unknown.)