

# **Forgotten Heroes:**

## **Edgar Wesley**



**by**

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## Harrisburg Giants (1924)

### Eastern Colored League

The Harrisburg Giants played in the Eastern Colored League from 1924 through 1927. They had the second best composite record in the entire history of the Eastern Colored League.

Prior to the start of the 1924 season, C.W. Strothers who owned the team convinced Edgar Wesley to leave Detroit and come East to play for his ball club. The Harrisburg Giants and Edgar Wesley had disappointing seasons. According to research by Larry Lester and Dick Clark, the Harrisburg Giants finished the season in fifth place in the final Eastern Colored League standings with a losing record of 26-28 (.481).

Researchers differ significantly in Edgar Wesley's hitting statistics for the 1924 season. When Negro League researcher John Holway combined both "league" and "non-league" games, he credits Wesley with a .348 batting average. The Seamheads research team has located fifty-four (54) Eastern Colored League games in which Edgar played for the Giants. In these fifty-four (54) games Wesley is credited with a .284 batting average with only four (4) homeruns.



Harrisburg Giants (1924)

(Standing left to right – unknown, **Herbert “Rap” Dixon**, C.W. Strothers , unknown, unknown, unknown and **Oscar Charleston**. Middle row left to right – Ping Gardner, **Edgar Wesley**, unknown, unknown and unknown. Seated front row left to right – Daltie Cooper, **Clarence “Fats” Jenkins**, unknown and unknown).

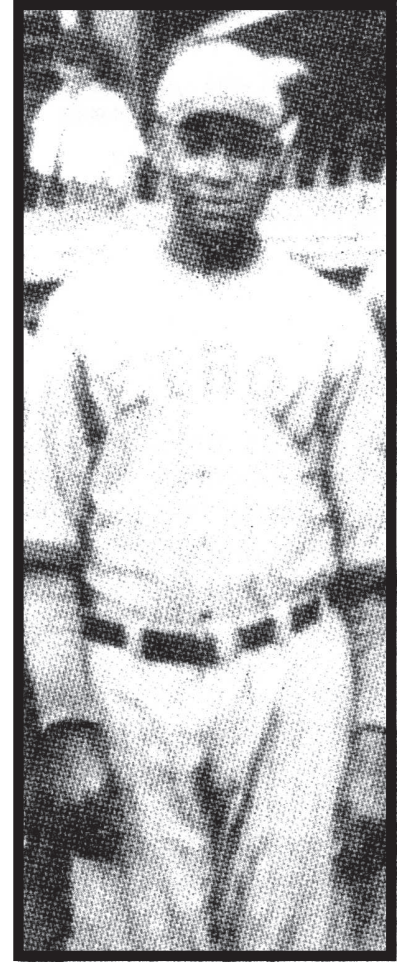
Edgar Wesley was born on May 2, 1891 in Waco, Texas. He grew up in Waco and honed his baseball skills on the sandlots of his home town.

Wesley stood 5' 11" and weighed 215 pounds during his playing career. He was a left handed first baseman who batted from the left hand side of the plate. Edgar was often described as muscular and a very imposing individual standing in the batter's box. Wesley hit for both power and average. He was also considered to have very good speed on the base paths.

During the 1920's Edgar Wesley teamed with Norman "Turkey" Stearnes to give the Detroit Stars the best one-two homerun punch in black baseball in the 1920's. Wesley generally batted clean-up behind Turkey Stearnes. Edgar was also known for his explosive line-drives that frequently damaged the wooden fences in the outfield. Some of his homeruns were said to have been legendary.

Edgar had a reputation as being a very solid first baseman and fine glove man from a defensive perspective. He fielded ground balls and pop ups with ease. In addition he was considered very adept at handling bad throws and digging an errant throw out of the dirt.

Both on and off the field Wesley was considered quiet, unassuming and according to the sports writers of the day he presented with "excellent habits." His dead pan expression made it very difficult for opposing players to know what he was thinking. According to former Negro Leaguer, Saul Davis, Wesley was a "hard" guy who could even be mean. Davis' opinion was that Edgar was not someone you messed with.



Edgar Wesley  
1891-1966

### Early Baseball Career

Reportedly the first professional team that Edgar Wesley played for was the Waco Black Navigators of the Texas Colored League, but no primary source documentation has been found to support this assumption. The first primary source documentation found to this date of Edgar Wesley playing professional baseball is 1917. When he filled out his military service draft registration card on June 5, 1917 in Waco (TX), he listed his occupation as "professional baseball player" and his employer as "Hot Springs." The best information we have found about the Hot Springs baseball club comes from an article that was published in the Dallas Express on May 19<sup>th</sup> of 1923 by William "Nacogdoches" Ross. In 1917 Ross was managing a baseball club in Longview (TX) that was owned by W.P. Northcutt. In June of that year Ross booked a club out of Hot Springs (AR) who were known as the Hot Springs Bear Cats (they were also billed as the "Hot Springs Giants") for a series in Longview. The booking made good sense for Hot Springs because Longview was on their way to play the Dallas Giants in a three game series that was to take place on June 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. The Hot Springs ball club arrived in Longview on June 13<sup>th</sup>. Hot Springs fielded a strong line-up that included Harry Blackmon (2B), Floyd "Jelly" Gardner (OF), Harry Kenyon (P/OF), Charles Spearman (OF) and Edgar Wesley (1B). After the second game of the series between Longview and Hot Springs, the owner of the Hot Springs Bear Cats took all the gate receipt money and abandoned his team in Longview. Ross suggested to the Hot Springs players that they play a third game against Longview and that way they could put some money in their pockets. After the game, Ross met with the Hot Springs players and asked them if they would like him to manage the team. With no other options in sight the players agreed. According to Ross he renamed the club the "Hot Springs Giants." They were now under the ownership of W.P. Northcutt and the management of William Ross. The Giants were now based

out of Longview (TX). For a period of time Northcutt and Ross operated two teams simultaneously. Immediately after Ross took over the team he sent the Hot Springs Giants to play their three series with the Dallas Giants which started on June 18<sup>th</sup>. For the road trip to Dallas, Ross put Longview catcher/first baseman Bob Bailey in charge of the Hot Springs ball club. At the same time Ross took the Longview squad to Galveston to play a three game series which started on June 17<sup>th</sup> and ended on June 19<sup>th</sup>. The two trips worked out well for Ross because he made money in Dallas and broke even in Galveston. In a newspaper article that appeared in the Dallas Express on October 29<sup>th</sup> of 1921, Ross claimed he had a won-loss record of 15-8 (.652) when he pitched for the Hot Springs Giants in 1917.

According to Ross he kept both teams until July 4<sup>th</sup> when he disbanded the Longview team.

### **Texas All Stars are Formed**

In late July Ross combined the Hot Springs team with the players from the Longview club to form a new team that he named the "Texas All Stars." Playing an independent schedule the Texas All Stars booked a northern barnstorming tour that according to the Fort Worth Star Telegram included stops in Oklahoma City, Kansas City, St. Louis, Indianapolis and Chicago. The Fort Worth (TX) newspaper also reported that the team would be booked as the "Fort Worth Black Wonders" but when the team hit the road they were most often billed as the "Texas All Stars."



#### Fort Worth Star Telegram

Fort Worth, TX

07-13-17

William Ross managed and pitched for the 1917 Texas All Stars. Besides Edgar Wesley who played first base for the team, Ross's team also featured several other players who would go on to star in the Negro Leagues. This group of players included Sam Bennett (OF), Henry Blackmon (3B), Floyd "Jelly" Gardner (OF), Scott Hendrix (P), Harry Kenyon (P/OF) and Johnnie Watson (OF). Manager William Ross also pitched for at least six seasons in the Negro Leagues after managing and playing for the Texas All Stars in 1917.

During their stop in Oklahoma City Ross and four other of his teammates joined forces with the Oklahoma City Blacks to help them defeat their arch rival Kansas City Star Blacks. William Ross pitched the Oklahoma City team to an 11-2 win.

The highlight of their season was a northern barnstorming tour in late July that included extended stops in Chicago (IL) and Indianapolis (IN). During their stop in Indianapolis the Texas All Stars played four games against C.I. Taylor's Indianapolis ABCs. The games were played at Washington Park in Indianapolis. The ABCs won all four of the games by the scores of 2-1, 9-4, 11-1 and 4-2.



Chicago Defender

Chicago, IL

When the Texas All Stars arrived in Chicago to play a three game series against the Chicago American Giants at Schorling Park, Rube Foster (who was originally from Calvert, Texas) welcomed the All Stars to Chicago by declaring a "Texas Day" at the ball park. The warm welcome by Foster and Chicago fans didn't help the Texas All Stars on the field. The All Stars lost all three games to Rube Foster's American Giants by the scores of 7-5, 7-6 and 16-2.

In the seven (7) games for which box scores have been located, Edgar Wesley went 12 for 30 for a .400 batting average and a .633 slugging percentage. Edgar Wesley collected a double, three triples and had seven runs batted in for these seven games with the Texas All Stars.

The Texas All Stars closed out their season in August with a double header against the Dallas Giants. According to a newspaper article written by manager William Ross, they lost the first game and tied the second.

The team was also referred to in the newspapers as the "Texas League Stars" and the "Texas Stars." They are considered a lower level team when compared to the top independent black teams in the West. Seven (7) box scores have been found by the Seamheads research team for the Texas All Stars for the 1917 season. The Texas All Stars lost all seven of these games.

There were numerous top level teams that played in the West for the 1917 baseball season. Some of these elite teams were the Chicago American Giants under the management of Rube Foster, J.L. Wilkinson's Kansas City All Nations, C.I. Taylor's Indianapolis ABC's, the Cuban Stars (West) who were managed by Latin great Tinti Molina, Jewell's ABC's of Indianapolis, W.S. Peters' Chicago Union Giants, the Chicago Giants under Joe Green and the St. Louis Giants who were managed by William Pettus.

### **Wesley Signs with Chicago**

It appears that Edgar Wesley started the 1918 season playing baseball in Texas.

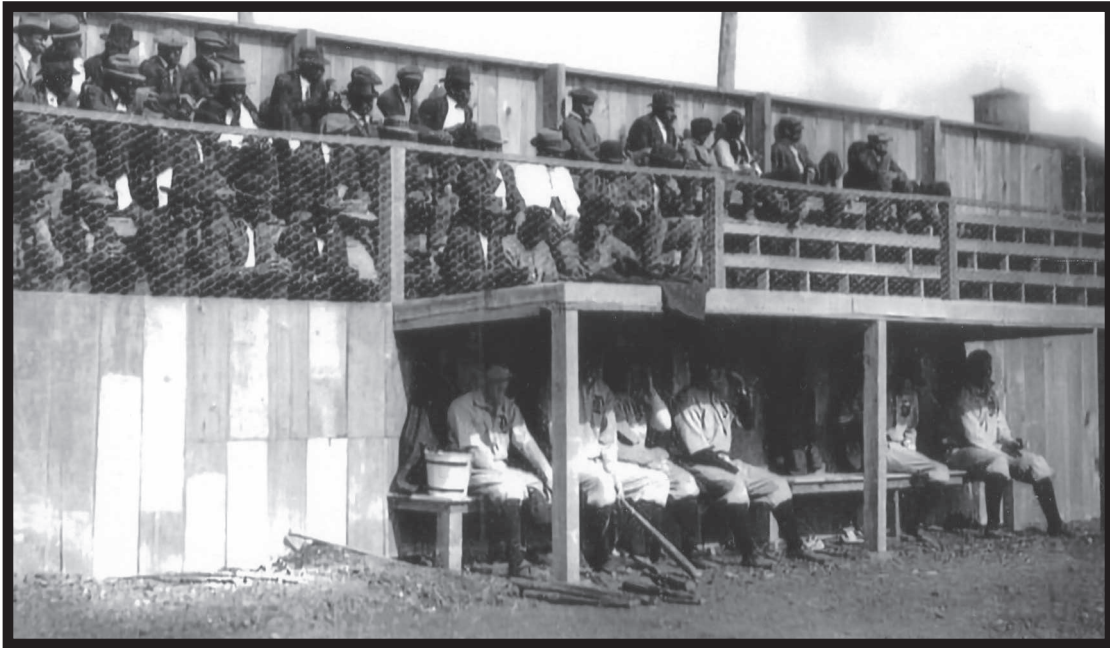
In July of 1918 when Chicago American Giants first baseman Leroy Grant was drafted into the military, Rube Foster who both owned and managed the team was faced with the difficult task of replacing his star first baseman. Foster had been impressed with the play of Edgar Wesley when he visited Chicago with the Texas All Stars in 1917 so he signed the power hitting first baseman to a contract for the remainder of the 1918 season.

The 1918 Chicago American Giants featured the hitting of Leroy Grant (1B), Bingo De Moss (2B), Bill Francis (3B), Jesse Barber (OF), Frank "Pete" Duncan (OF) and Pete Hill (OF). The team's roster also included Jude Gans (OF), Jose Mendez (SS) and Bruce Petway (C). The pitching staff for Chicago was anchored by Dick Whitworth, Gunboat Thompson, Sam Crawford, Dave Brown, Remy Fields, Frank "The Red Ant" Wickware and Tom Williams.

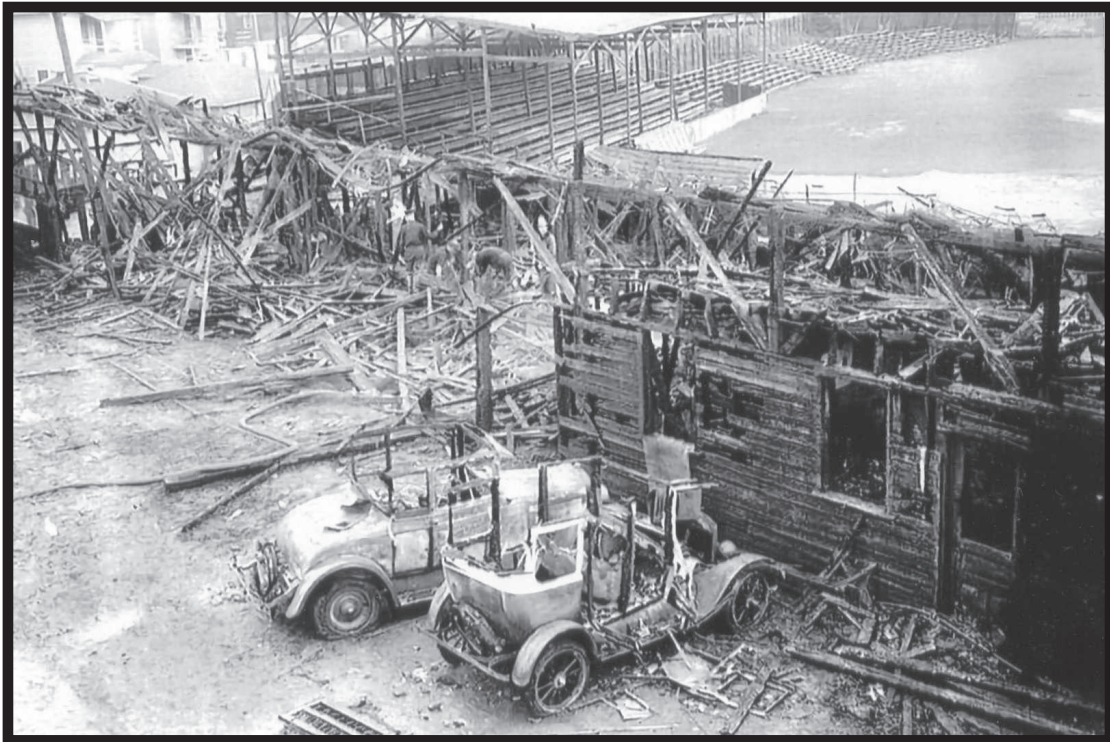
It is currently unclear how much of the season Edgar Wesley spent with the Chicago American Giants. Currently, only three (3) box scores have been found for Edgar in a Chicago American uniform. In eleven (11) at bats Edgar Wesley only got one hit for a pitiful .091 batting average. Speculation is that Edgar spent most of his 1918 season playing in Texas.

The 1918 Chicago American Giants were considered the "Champions of the West." In the thirty (30) box scores that have been located by the Seamheads research team the American Giants posted a record of 20-8-2 (.714). Other top teams in the West during the 1918 season were the Indianapolis ABCs, Chicago Columbia Giants, Cuban Stars (West), Dayton Marcos and St. Louis Giants.

**Mack Park**  
Detroit, MI



**Mack Park**  
Dugout and Grandstand



**Mack Park after the Fire**  
1929

## Wesley Becomes a Main Stay of the Detroit Stars

Before the start of the 1919 season, Rube Foster with help from his good friend John “Tenny” Blount formed the Detroit Stars. Detroit was an excellent choice for a team because it was one of the best markets for black baseball during the early part of the twentieth century. Blount had a strong business background as having been the manager of both the Keystone Hotel and Chicago Buffet. Both of these establishments were well known all over the country. He was an excellent partner for Rube Foster because he had money, connections, influence, ambition and drive. Blount was listed as the owner and President of the Detroit Stars but it was really Rube Foster that made all the decisions behind the scenes. Tenny was in reality little more than a figure head and functioned more like the team’s business manager. He promoted the team, scheduled games, arranged transportation, paid the bills and handled all the day-to-day business activities.

In order to help Detroit get off to a good start, Rube Foster sent Pete Hill, Sam Crawford, Frank Duncan, Jose Mendez, Bruce Petway, Edgar Wesley and Frank Wickware to the Stars. The 1919 Detroit Stars were managed by Pete Hill.

The Detroit Stars played their home games at Mack Park which was located on the east side of Detroit on the southeast corner of Mack Avenue and Fairview. The most interesting aspect of the selection of Mack Park as the Stars home ball park was its location in a predominately all German neighborhood. Even though Mack Park was located in an area which blacks could not live or were even particularly welcomed, it was close enough to the black neighborhoods of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley for black fans to easily access the stadium. To say Mack Park was dilapidated was too kind. Mack Park was made of wood and tin sheeting. It held seating for 6,000 fans and the park could hold 9,000 with standing room only. The park was constructed in 1914 and was owned by John Roesink who also was very active in sports promotion.

The starting line-up for the 1919 Detroit Stars was as follows:

Position	Player	Position	Player
1B	Edgar Wesley	OF	Pete Hill
2B	Frank Warfield	OF	John Donaldson
SS	Joe Hewitt/Jose Mendez	OF	Floyd “Jelly” Gardner
3B	Candy Jim Taylor		
C	Jose Rodriquez/Bruce Petway	P	Sam Crawford



Detroit Stars (1919)

(Left to right – Unknown, Joe Hewitt, **Frank Warfield**, Andrew Reed, **Pete Hill**, **Jose Mendez**, Tenny Blount, Frank Wickware, Jose Rodriquez, **Edgar Wesley**, **Bruce Petway**, **John Donaldson** and Sam Crawford.)

Also appearing as position players for the Detroit Stars during the season were Oscar Charleston (OF), Frank Duncan (OF), Bill Francis (3B), Hurley Mc Nair (OF) and Dave Malarcher (3B).

Pete Hill (.396 w/ .892 slugging percentage) and Edgar Wesley (.322 w/ .610 slugging percentage) led the team in hitting during the season. Edgar really came into his own as a hitter during the 1919 season. His hitting statistics against top level competition for 1919 were:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1919	Detroit	41	146	22	47	8	5	8	43	2	.322	.610

Edgar Wesley was considered the best first baseman in black baseball in the West during the 1919 season.



Detroit Times  
06-12-19

According to a newspaper article that appeared in the February 14, 1920 edition of the Chicago Defender, the Stars had a record of 62-18 (.775) for the 1919 season.

Another highlight of the season for the newly founded Detroit Stars was winning the Michigan Semi-Pro Tournament. The Detroit Stars would win the tournament five (5) straight seasons from 1919 through 1923. During this period they were considered the best black team in the state of Michigan.

Sam Crawford was the ace of the pitching staff. In eighteen games for which box scores have been found with Crawford pitching for the Stars, he went 10-4 (.714) with 9 complete games and 55 strikeouts in 112 innings. Hill's pitching staff also included John Donaldson, Louis "Dicta" Johnson, Jose Mendez and Frank "The Red Ant" Wickware.

During the 1919 season, the Detroit Stars were considered to have had both the best hitting line-up and pitching staff in the West. Rube Foster's plan when he helped form the Detroit Stars backfired on him because his Chicago American Giants had to take a back seat to the Detroit Stars in 1919. In short, Foster had created a monster that turned on him.

The Detroit Stars had an extremely successful year in their inaugural season. Detroit started the season with a 13 game winning streak before being beaten by the Cuban Stars. During the regular season the Stars went on a barnstorming tour of Canada and also headed back East. They played a series with Hilldale and the Bacharach Giants during their eastern tour.

At the end of the year they met the Chicago American Giants for the "Champions of the West." Detroit beat Chicago four games to two. Wesley had a big homerun in the final game of the series. According to research by Seamheads team Detroit Stars had a won-loss record of 27-14 (.659) in games against top level competition.



Amateur Baseball Federation Program

## Founding of the Negro National League

Prior to the start of the 1920 baseball season Rube Foster, owner of the Chicago American Giants, held a meeting of the owners of the top black teams in the West. These meetings were held on February 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> at the YMCA in Kansas City for the purpose of organizing the Negro National League. Each team entering the “league” put up \$ 500 to join the Negro National League. During the organizational meetings, Rube Foster was elected as the President of the “league.”

Researchers differ on the won-loss records of the eight teams that played in the inaugural season of the Negro National League season in 1920. Presented below is the research of Larry Lester/Dick Clark and Gary Ashwill (Seamheads) for the 1920 Negro National League season. Both research groups agree in the final order of standings, but Ashwill’s group appears to have found significantly more “official” Negro National League games.

### Negro National League (1920)

#### Research by Larry Lester and Dick Clark

#### Research by Gary Ashwill (Seamheads)

1920	Games	Record	Pct.	1920	Games	Record	Pct.
Chicago American Giants	45	32-13	.711	Chicago American Giants	62	43-17-2	.710
Detroit Stars	58	35-23	.603	Detroit Stars	64	37-27	.578
Kansas City Monarchs	70	41-29	.586	Kansas City Monarchs	79	44-33-2	.570
Indianapolis ABCs	74	39-35	.527	Indianapolis ABC’s	86	44-38-4	.535
Cuban Stars	45	21-24	.467	Cuban Stars (West)	69	35-34	.507
St. Louis Giants	57	25-32	.439	St. Louis Giants	72	32-40	.444
Dayton Marcos	26	8-18	.308	Dayton Marcos	52	16-36	.308
Chicago Giants	28	4-24	.143	Chicago Giants	36	5-31	.139

The Bacharach Giants were an Associate Member of the “league” in 1920.

### Detroit Stars Make an Impressive Showing

With only one season in the team’s history, the Detroit Stars became a member of the inaugural Negro National League in 1920. Detroit was managed by Pete Hill who was also the team’s starting centerfielder. Bert Barton served as the Club Secretary. The team played their home games at Mack Park in Detroit.

Before the start of the 1920 season, the Detroit Stars had numerous changes in its roster. Gone were many of the original Detroit Stars like: Sam Crawford, John Donaldson, Frank Duncan, Floyd “Jelly” Gardner, Dave Malarcher, Hurley Mc Nair, Jose Mendez, Jose Rodriguez, Candy Jim Taylor and Frank Wickware. Blount did not make these decisions by himself. Rube Foster as the founder and President of the “league” redistributed talent to help balance the teams and make the “league” more competitive.

Even though they lost a number of very good players, the Detroit Stars got Jimmie Lyons who had played for the St. Louis Giants in 1919. Being awarded Lyons proved very beneficial to the Stars because he turned out to be the best player in the Negro National League in 1920.

Jimmie Lyons (.379), Edgar Wesley (.287), Pete Hill (.281), Frank Warfield (.281) and Chick Harper (.280) led the team in hitting. Wesley’s complete hitting statistics for the 1920 Negro National League season were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1920	Detroit	64	247	41	71	15	2	11	50	3	.287	.498



**Detroit Stars (1920)**

(Back row left to right – Bill Holland, **Edgar Wesley**, **Bruce Petway**, Charlie Harper, Bill Gatewood, unknown and unknown. Middle row left to right – Joe Hewitt, **Pete Hill**, Tenny Blount, Jimmie Lyons and **Andy Cooper**. Seated left to right – Unknown, Bill Force, Orville “Mule” Riggins and unknown.)

According to Negro League researcher John Holway Edgar reports finding box scores that credits Edgar Wesley with 13 homeruns for the 1920 Negro National League season.

Bill Gatewood (16-6) and Bill Holland (12-7) anchored the pitching staff for Detroit. Gunboat Thompson (3-3), Dicta Johnson (2-1), Webster MacDonald (2-5), Andy Cooper (1-1), Wade Johnston (1-1) Jimmie Lyons (1-1), Chick Harper (0-1) and Willie Green (0-0) also pitched for the Detroit Stars in 1920.

The Detroit Stars finished the 1920 season in second place in the final Negro National League standings with a record of 37-27 (.578). According to research by the Seamheads group, Detroit had a record of 40-29 in games against all levels of competition and Negro League researcher John Holway credits the 1920 Detroit Stars with a record of 40-21 (.656).

### **Detroit Stars Make Major Changes in Their Roster**

Before the start of the 1921 season, Tenny Blount made major changes to his roster. Gone were Chick Harper (OF), Joe Hewitt (SS), Alonzo Longware (3B), Dicta Johnson (P), Webster McDonald (P), Mack Eggleston (OF), Gunboat Thompson (P) and their biggest loss of all was Jimmie Lyons (OF).

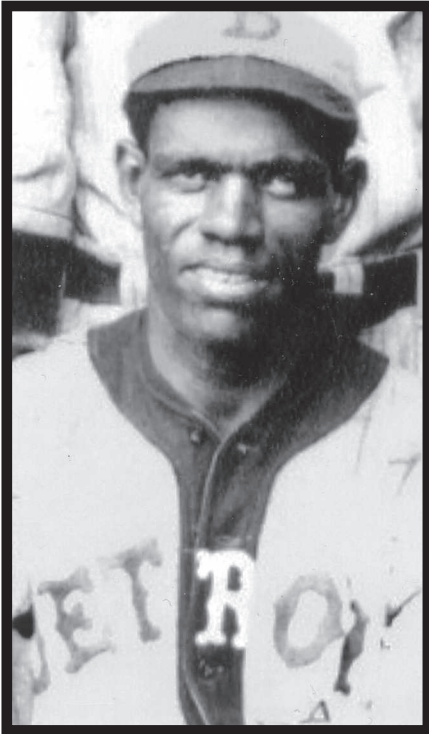
The players that replaced the vacant roster spots did not come anywhere close to matching the performance of the players they replaced. George Brown (OF)(.130), Charley Hill (OF)(.194), Ambrose Reid (OF)(.179) and David Wingfield (OF)(.246) didn't produce offensively for the Detroit Stars in 1921.

Edgar Wesley returned to the Detroit Stars as the team's starting first baseman for their 1921 Negro National League season. Other key players that were retained for the 1921 season were

Pete Hill (played in the outfield and managed the team), Bill Gatewood (P), Bill Holland (P), Bruce Petway (C), Orville Riggins (SS) and Frank Warfield (2B).

The Detroit Stars got good hitting during the 1921 season. The Stars' top hitters for the 1921 season were: Pete Hill (.337), Edgar Wesley (.319), Bruce Petway (.306) and Orville Riggins (.305). As a team Detroit compiled a .264 team batting average. Edgar Wesley's complete batting statistics for the season were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1921	Detroit	56	210	28	67	13	1	9	39	3	.319	.519



**Pete Hill**  
Detroit Stars

Five (5) articles have been found for the Detroit Stars that mention Edgar Wesley playing a “non-league” opponent. In these five articles Wesley is credited with a double and four homeruns.

Bill Holland (13-9) and Bill Force (13-7) were the only two pitchers that responded for manager Pete Hill when given a starting assignment on the mound. Great things were expected out of Force from the very beginning of the season because he had won 19 consecutive ball games while pitching for the Knoxville Giants in 1920. Bill Force was without a doubt the best addition Tenny Blount made to his team. Charley Wilson, with a 1-8 won-loss record, had the most disappointing season of all the Stars pitchers and Bill Gatewood had gone from being the team's best pitcher with a record of 16-6 in 1920 to a losing record of 6-10 in 1921. Gatewood did have a real high point on June 6<sup>th</sup> when he pitched a no-hitter against the Cuban Stars. Bill struck out 10 batters in the game. Andy Cooper (5-8), Isaac Lane (1-2), James Henderson (0-1) and Perry Hall (0-1) also pitched for Detroit during the season.

Before the start of the regular season, the Detroit Stars conducted three weeks of spring training at Mack Park.

The Detroit Stars started the 1921 season very strong. They won 18 of their first 22 games and were in first place in the “league” standings in late June. Sadly their winning ways did not continue over the course of the season. The Stars did not have the same level of success against their Negro National League opponents as they did in 1920. Detroit finished the season with a record of 30-33-1 (.476) for a fifth place finish in the final “league” standings. The Chicago American Giants (44-22-2) won the Negro National League title for the second year in a row. In games against all levels of competition, John Holway credits the Detroit Stars with a record of 46-46 (.500).

### **Detroit Stars Change Managers**

After an extremely disappointing season in 1921, Detroit Stars management was determined to turn the team around for the 1922 season. To accomplish this objective the Stars replaced manager Pete Hill with Bruce Petway. Pete Hill relocated to Milwaukee to manage their independent team. The team responded to Petway from the start of the season. Over the course of the 1922 season the Detroit Stars compiled a .282 team batting average and had three pitchers (Andy Cooper, Bill Force and Bill Holland) who collected at least 10 wins each in “league” play.

Besides losing Pete Hill, the Detroit Stars had several other major roster changes. Bill Gatewood departed for St. Louis. Clint Thomas (OF), Johnny Jones (OF), Jess Barbour (OF) and I.S. Lane (3B) were signed.

According to research by Larry Lester and Dick Clark, Edgar Wesley played two games for the Indianapolis ABCs before joining the Detroit Stars on May 6<sup>th</sup>. Edgar played left field in the first game which was played on April 30<sup>th</sup>. He went 3 for 5 with two triples and two runs batted in. In his second game which was played on May 1<sup>st</sup>, he was a pinch hitter. Both games were played against the Cuban Stars (West).

The starting line-up for the 1922 Detroit Stars was as follows:

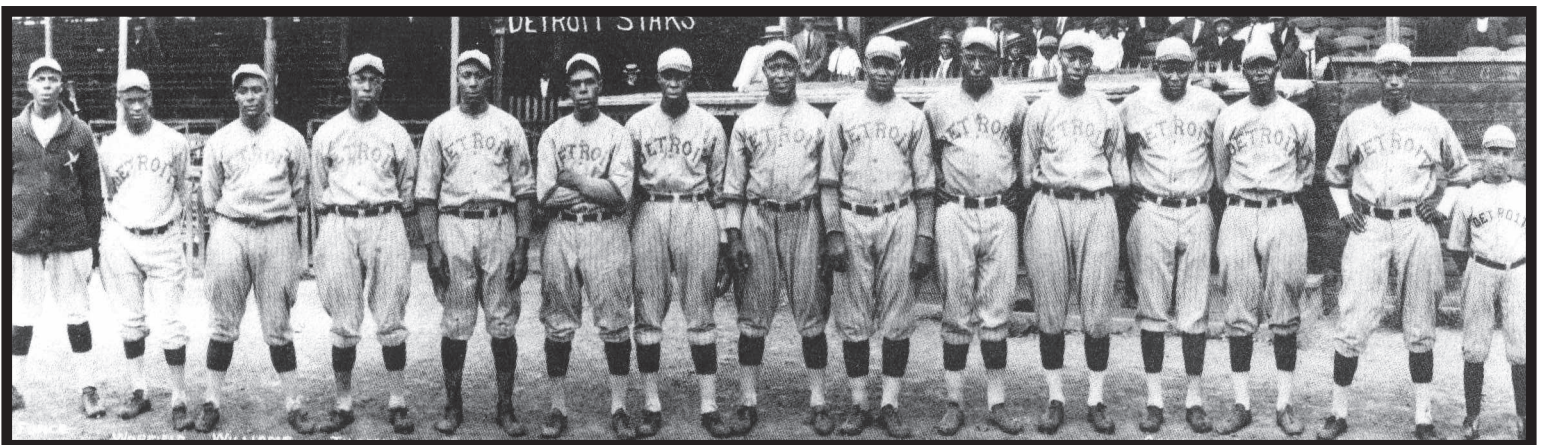
Position	Player	Average	Position	Player	Average
1B	Edgar Wesley	.344	OF	Clarence Smith	.339
2B	Frank Warfield	.320	OF	Clint Thomas	.319
SS	Orville Riggins	.252	OF	Johnny Jones	.277
3B	Isaac Lane	.280	OF	Jesse Barbour	.291
C	Poindexter Williams	.272			

Edgar Wesley was the Detroit Stars leading hitter with a .344 batting average and a .538 slugging percentage in 1922.

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1922	Detroit	78	299	63	103	17	8	10	83	10	.344	.538

In addition to an excellent team batting average of .282 the Detroit Stars also had three players who ranked in the top ten in the “league” in runs batted in. They were Clarence Smith (70) in 3<sup>rd</sup> place, Clint Thomas (66) in 6<sup>th</sup> place and Edgar Wesley (65) in 7<sup>th</sup> place.

The starting rotation for the 1922 Detroit Stars and their record in games against all levels of competition included Bill Holland (17-16), Andy Cooper (16-6) and Bill Force (11-9). Jack Marshall (6-6), Charley Wilson (6-4), Bill Gatewood (1-0) and Everett Nelson (0-0) also pitched for the Stars in 1922. The highlight for the Stars’ pitching staff in 1922 was two no-hitters. In late March at Mack Park Charley Wilson, Bill Force and Jack Marshall combined for a 4 to 0 no-hitter against a semi-pro team by the name of “Campbell’s Gardens.” Then on June 27<sup>th</sup> Bill Force pitched a 3 to 0 no-hitter against the St. Louis Stars in a Negro National League game.



**Detroit Stars (1922)**

(left to right – Bill Force, **Frank Warfield**, Poindexter Williams, **Clint Thomas**, Clarence Smith, Bill Holland, Charley Wilson, John Jones, **Edgar Wesley**, Orville Riggins, Johnnie Watson, **Andy Cooper**, I.S. Lane, **Bruce Petway** and mascot Johnnie.)



**Norman "Turkey" Stearnes**  
Detroit Stars

The Detroit Stars ended the 1922 season with a winning record of 41-32-1 (.562). After finishing the 1921 season three games under .500, the Detroit Stars were nine games over .500 at the end of the 1922 season.

According to the Seamheads research team the Stars had a record of 49-35-1 (.583) in games against all levels of competition. They were in fourth place in the final Negro National League standings. The Chicago American Giants (37-24-1) won the Negro National League championship for the third straight season.

### **Turkey Stearnes Joins Wesley in Detroit**

When the 1923 Negro National League season got underway, Edgar Wesley was back as the starting first baseman for the Detroit Stars. Bruce Petway was also back as the team's manager and the Detroit Stars continued to play their home games at Mack Park.

The biggest impact on the team for the upcoming season was the signing of Norman "Turkey" Stearnes who would become the team's leading hitting and along with Edgar Wesley would become known as the "Bash Boys of Detroit" for their power hitting.

In 1923 Stearnes batted .366 with an unbelievable slugging percentage of .723 (20 doubles, 15 triples and 18 homeruns) in Negro National League games. Stearnes also drove in 85 runs during the season. During the 1923 season the Stars' other top hitters were Walter "Steel Arm" Davis (.338), Clarence Smith (.314), Bruce Petway (.312), Orville Riggins (.302), Bill Force (.302), Edgar Wesley (.288), Johnnie Watson (.282) and Johnny Jones (.281). Edgar Wesley's complete batting statistics for the 1923 Negro National League season were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1923	Detroit	74	274	49	79	14	1	18	59	2	.288	.544

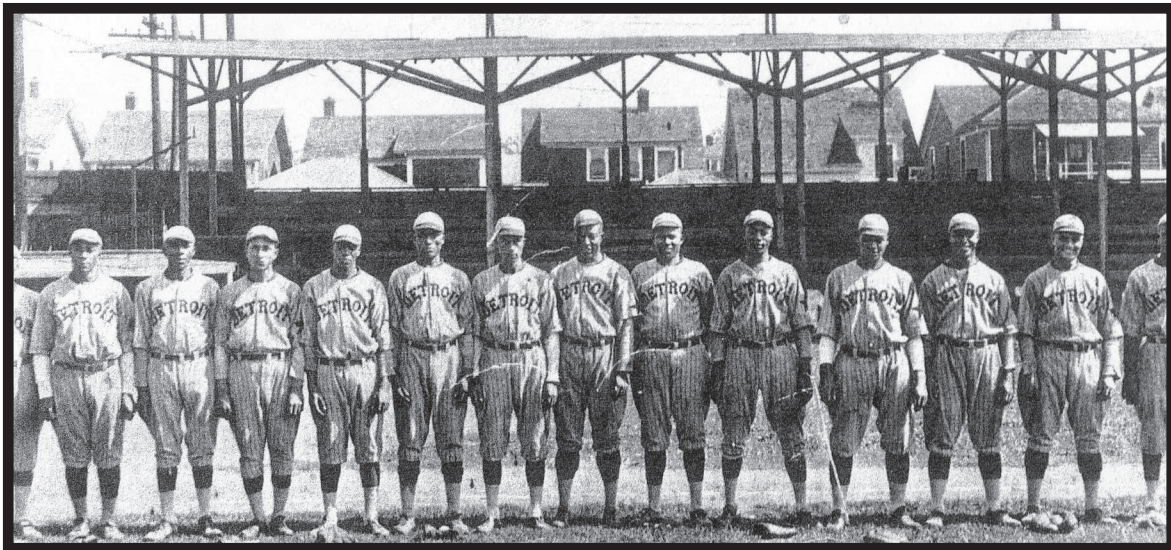
Negro League researcher credits Edgar Wesley with a .335 season batting average against all levels of competition for the season.

Edgar Wesley was considered the best first baseman in the Negro National League in 1923.

Andy Cooper (15-7 with 12 complete games) was the ace of the pitching staff. The starting rotation was rounded out by Grover "Buck" Alexander (5-5), Bill Force (14-10), Jack Combs (5-3), Walter "Steel Arm" Davis (5-4) and George Boggs (2-9). Red Haley (1-1), George Holcombe and Turkey Stearnes (0-1) also pitched for Detroit during the season.

The 1923 season started off on a positive note for the Detroit Stars. The team opened "league" play at Mack Park with 10,000 fans in attendance. The Stars came away with a 8 to 6 victory over the Cuban Stars. Behind excellent hitting and strong pitching by Cooper, Bruce Petway's Detroit Stars had a very good season in 1923. They finished season in third place in the final "league" standings with a record of 39-27. They were just a game and a half behind second place finisher the Chicago American Giants (39-24) and five games behind the Negro National League champion Kansas City Monarchs (54-32).

The highlight of the 1923 season for Detroit was winning both the "City Semi-Professional Championship" and the "Michigan State Semi-professional Championship."



**Detroit Stars (1923)**

(Turkey Stearnes – sixth from left and Edgar Wesley - fourth from right)

### **Detroit Plays the Major Leaguers**

After the St. Louis Browns finished their regular American League season they played a three game series against the Detroit Stars. The post season exhibition series was played at Mack Park in Detroit. To bolster their roster for the series the Stars added Oscar Charleston and John Beckwith to their team.

In the first game Edgar hit two homeruns. His second homerun was a walk-off blow in the ninth inning. The final score in the come back win for the Stars was 7-6 in favor of Detroit. Andy Cooper got the win for Detroit and Dave Danforth was charged with loss. The Detroit Stars also won the second game by a score of 7-6. Bill Force was credited with the win for Detroit. The St. Louis Browns did come back to beat the Stars in a slugfest by the score of 11-9. Oscar Charleston 6 for 12 - .500 and Turkey Stearnes (6 for 13 - .462) led Detroit in hitting against the Major Leaguers. After two humiliating losses Major League Baseball Commissioner, Judge Landis, placed a ban on exhibition games between Major League teams and Negro League teams. Landis went on to decree that any future games would need to be between white “all-star” teams and black squads.



**St. Louis Browns**  
American League  
1923

## Edgar Wesley Travels to Cuba

After the conclusion of the 1923 regular season, Edgar Wesley traveled to Cuba with several other Negro League players to play in the Cuban Winter League. Wesley signed with the Habana Leones as their starting first baseman. Cincinnati Reds great Adolfo Luque managed the team and was one of the Leones' top pitchers.

The forty-eight (48) game Cuban Winter League season started on November 20, 1923 and play concluded on January 16, 1924.

Cristobal Torriente (.346), Marcelino Guerra (.322), Jacinto Calvo (.317), Clint Thomas (.302), John Bischoff (.303) and John Henry "Pop" Lloyd (.267) led Habana in hitting during the winter league season. Habana also had a strong pitching staff that included Juanelo Mirabal (9-2), Adolfo Luque (7-2), Oscar Levis (3-4), Henry Ross (3-3) and Andy Cooper (1-6).

For some unknown reason, Edgar Wesley had the poorest season of his career. In 31 games during his winter in Cuba, he collected 24 hits in 101 at bats for a disappointing .238 batting average.

Reportedly Edgar Wesley also played briefly for the Marianao Tigres during the season.

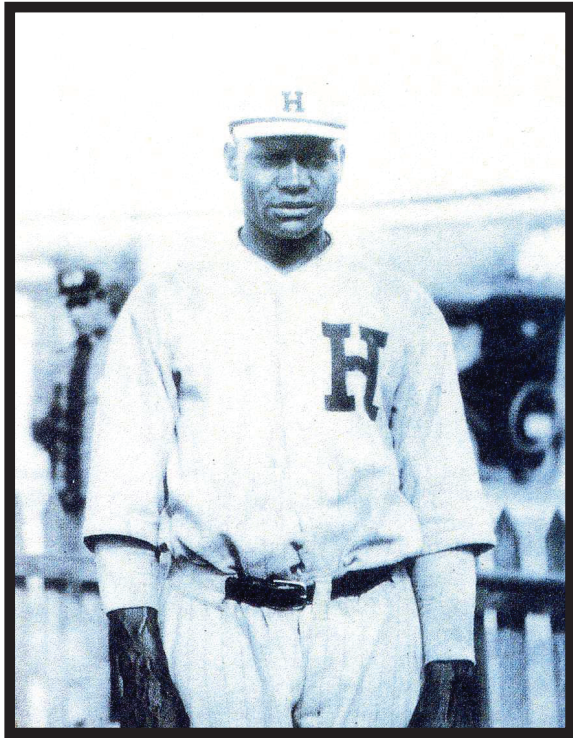
Habana had a good season. They finished with 25-23 (.521) record but were no match for Santa Clara during the season. The 1923-24 Santa Clara Leopards were one of the best teams in Latin American history. Offensively they were led by the following Negro League players: Oliver "The Ghost" Marcelle (.393), Walter "Dobie" Moore (.386), Alejandro Oms (.381), Oscar Charleston (.375) and Oscar "Heavy" Charleston (.345). The Leopards ended the season with a team batting average of .331 which was an all-time Cuban League record. Bill Holland (10-2), Rube Currie (8-2), Dave Brown (7-3) and Mervyn "Red" Ryan (5-0) anchored the Leopards' pitching staff. Santa Clara was managed by the legendary Tinti Molina.



Habana Leones (1923-24)

(Edgar Wesley – back row fourth on left and John Henry "Pop" Lloyd - back row third from right)

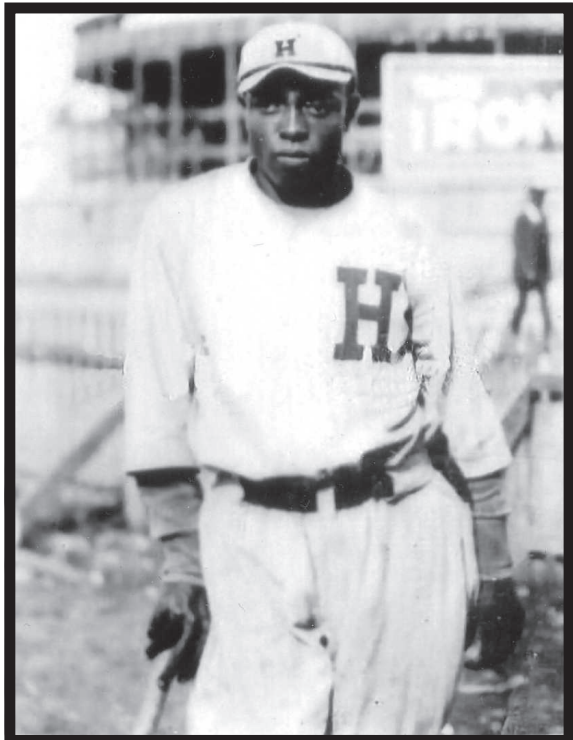
Edgar Wesley and Negro League Teammates in Cuba



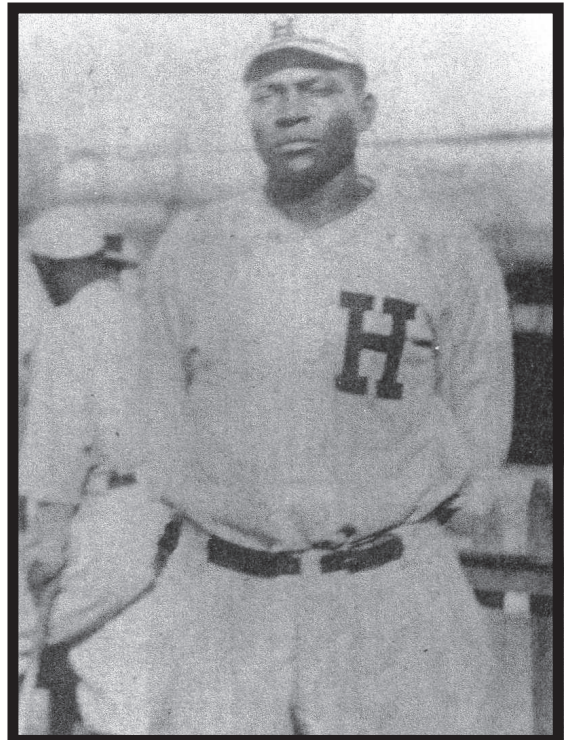
Edgar Wesley



Mack Eggleston



Clint Thomas



Andy Cooper



**Habana Leones (1923-24)**  
Billiken Baseball Card

(Edgar Wesley – top row second from right)

The Habana Leones were in second place in the final “league” standings. The “official” 1923-24 Cuban League standings were as follows:

Team	Won	Lost	Pct.	Rank
Santa Clara Leopards	36	11	.766	1 <sup>st</sup>
Habana Leones	25	23	.521	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Almendares Alacranes	18	29	.383	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Marianao Tigres	16	32	.333	4 <sup>th</sup>

The Habana Leones ended the season 11 ½ games behind the Santa Clara Leopards.

### Wesley Relocates to the East

Before the start of the 1924 season, Edgar Wesley was recruited to play first base for the Harrisburg Giants of the Eastern Colored League. The team was owned by Colonel Strothers and managed by Oscar Charleston. The Harrisburg Giants played their home games at Island Park in Harrisburg.

Besides being the manager of the Giants, Oscar Charleston was the best player in the Eastern Colored League. Charleston’s hitting statistics for the 1924 season were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1924	Harrisburg	54	205	65	83	22	5	15	63	20	.405	.780

Clarence “Fats” Jenkins (.336), Henry Jordan (.311), Dick Jackson (.287) and Edgar Wesley (.284) also had a productive season offensively in 1924. Researchers differ on Wesley’s complete hitting statistics for the 1924 season. John Holway credits Edgar with a .348 batting average for



**Harrisburg Giants (1924)**

(Standing left to right – unknown, **Herbert “Rap” Dixon**, C.W. Strothers , unknown, unknown, unknown and **Oscar Charleston**. Middle row left to right – Ping Gardner, **Edgar Wesley**, unknown, unknown and unknown. Seated front row left to right – Daltie Cooper, **Clarence “Fats” Jenkins**, unknown and unknown).

the Eastern Colored League season and the Seamheads research team has located fifty-four (54) “league” game box scores with the following statistics:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1924	Harrisburg	54	201	26	57	11	4	4	32	6	.284	.423

The starting rotation for the 1924 Harrisburg Giants team was as follows: Daltie Cooper (12-9), Fred Bell (10-8), Kenneth “Ping” Gardner (68-8), Charles Corbett (6-4) and Charlie Henry (2-7). Finis Branham (2-3), Willie Haynes (1-0), Jim Jeffries (0-4) and Rap Dixon (0-0) also pitched for Harrisburg in 1924.

According to the research of Larry Lester and Dick Clark, the final order of finish for the 1924 Eastern Colored League season was as follows:

**Eastern Colored League (1924)**

Team	Games	Record	Pct.	Rank
Hilldale	69	47-22	.681	1 <sup>st</sup>
Baltimore Black Sox	51	32-19	.627	2 <sup>nd</sup>
New York Lincoln Giants	57	32-25	.561	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Atlantic City Bacharach Giants	59	30-29	.508	4 <sup>th</sup>
Harrisburg Giants	54	26-28	.481	5 <sup>th</sup>
Brooklyn Royal Giants	42	16-26	.381	6 <sup>th</sup>
Washington Potomacs	58	21-37	.362	7 <sup>th</sup>
Cuban Stars (East)	48	17-31	.354	8 <sup>th</sup>

The highlight of the season for the Harrisburg Giants was beating the Harrisburg Senators of the New Jersey-Pennsylvania League for the “City Championship.” The Giants beat the Senators in four straight games by the score of 8-7, 3-2, 7-5 and 8-3.

The Seamheads research group credits the Harrisburg Giants with a record of 30-31 (.492) and in fifth place in the final “league” standings while Negro League researcher John Holway’s research credits Harrisburg with a 40-34 (.541) won-loss record.

Reportedly, Edgar Wesley also played for the Brooklyn Royal Giants during the 1924 season. The Royal Giants were owned by Nat Strong who was the dominate force in sports promotion in the East. Brooklyn was led by the hitting of Robert Scott (OF) and Jules Thomas (OF). Willis “Pud” Flourney was the ace of the pitching staff in 1924. For some unknown reason, Edgar Wesley also pitched while he was playing for the Brooklyn Royal Giants of the Eastern Colored League in 1924. Unfortunately for the Royal Giants he was not nearly as successful on the mound as he was at first base. Edgar went 4-8 (.333) and allowed 4.79 runs per game.

### **Edgar Wesley Returns to the Detroit Stars**

Before the start of the 1925 baseball season, John Roesink purchased the Detroit Stars. Roesink was a Detroit haberdasher with three very successful stores in downtown Detroit. He was also a very influential sports promoter and owned Mack Park. When he purchased the Stars he became only the second white owner of a team in the Negro National League. The other white owner was J.L. Wilkinson who owned the Kansas City Monarchs.

Roesink named Steve Pierce as the President of the team, kept Tenny Blount on as the team’s business manager until he was replaced by Moses Walker and signed Bruce Petway as the field manager. Reportedly one of Roesink’s first objectives was to bring Edgar Wesley back to Detroit. After only one season back East, Edgar Wesley returned to the Detroit Stars as their starting first baseman. The team continued to play their home games at Mack Park.



**Detroit Businessmen**

(John Roesink – seated middle of bottom row)

The Detroit Stars got unbelievable hitting during the 1925 Negro National League. The Stars compiled a team batting average of .288 for the season in “league” games.

Edgar Wesley and Norman “Turkey” Stearnes led the way offensively for Detroit with the following batting statistics.

	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
Edgar Wesley	56	205	58	87	13	6	18	73	10	.424	.810
Turkey Stearnes	94	367	93	136	24	14	19	126	11	.371	.668

(After collecting 4 hits on August 4<sup>th</sup>, Edgar Wesley’s season was cut short after suffering a broken ankle.)

The starting line-up and their batting averages for the 1925 season were as follows:

#### Detroit Stars (1925)

Position	Player	Average	Position	Player	Average
1B	Edgar Wesley	.404	OF	Turkey Stearnes	.371
2B	Anderson Pryor	.285	OF	Clarence Smith	.344
SS	Orville Riggins	.267	OF	Johnny Jones	.272
3B	Ray Shepard	.350	OF	Harry Kenyon	.283
C	Pepper Daniels	.227			

Unfortunately for the Detroit Stars, their pitching staff was only the fifth ranked staff in the Negro National League. Andy Cooper was the ace of the pitching staff with a record of 11-2 (.846) in “league” games. Harry Kenyon (8-6), Fred Bell (7-8), Hal “Yellow Horse” Morris (6-4), Lewis Hampton (6-4), Lawrence Terrell (6-2), Jack Combs (5-10), Finis Branham (4-5), Grover Alexander (2-9) and Omer Newsome (1-3) rounded out the pitching staff for the Stars.

Edgar Wesley got off to a great start in 1925. He started the season off with an eighteen (18) game hitting streak. During the streak he collected thirty-nine (39) hits in sixty (67) at bats for an incredible .536 batting average. Even more incredible was that eleven (11) of his thirty-nine (39) went for a homerun. This was one of the best starts to a season in the history of professional baseball.

The Detroit Stars started the season off on a high note with a crowd of over 5,000 fans at Mack park to witness the Stars take a 17- 1 victory over the Detroit Motor Sales team. Edgar Wesley went 3 for 4 in the game. Detroit finished the 1925 season with a very respectable record of 56-44 (.560) which gave them a fourth place finish in the final Negro National League standings. The Kansas City Monarchs who went 59-23-2 (.720) won the “league title.

#### Edgar Wesley Continues to Produce for the Detroit Stars

After another what team owner Roesink considered mediocre season, the Detroit Stars’ owner hired Candy Jim Taylor to manage the Stars and named Orville Riggins as the team captain.

During the 1926 season Turkey Stearnes (19 homeruns, 63 runs batted in, .387 batting average and .711 slugging percentage) continued showing why he was considered the best player in the Negro National League.

According to statistics published in the Indianapolis Recorder on September 25<sup>th</sup> of 1926, Edgar Wesley batted .340 (88 for 259) for the 1926 season. The statistics were compiled by the Associated Negro Press.

In 1926 Edgar Wesley had another solid season for the Detroit Stars. His batting statistics for the season were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1926	Detroit	-	259	40	88	9	2	16	67	9	.340	.575

Other hitters that produced during the season were Candy Jim Taylor (.377), Johnny Jones (.319), Harry Kenyon (.310), Charlie Blackwell (.294), Orville Riggins (.294) and Harry Jefferies (.288).

For the biggest part of the season the Detroit Stars went with a two man pitching rotation of Andy Cooper (13-10 w/ 13 complete games) and Lewis Hampton (10-11 w/12 complete games). Fred Bell (7-3), Hal Morris (6-7), Harry Kenyon (5-7), and Bob Saunders (3-1) also pitched for the Stars during the season. Hal Treadwell was the biggest disappointment of the season with a miserable 1-8 (.111) won-loss record.

After conducting spring training indoors at the Jewish People's Institute the Detroit Stars opened their regular season on April 4<sup>th</sup>. The Stars played solid baseball the entire season. In June the team even had a twelve game winning streak. The Detroit Stars ended the regular Negro National League season with a winning record of 50-42 (.543) and were in fourth place in the final "league" standings. The Chicago American Giants (57-23) defeated the Kansas City Monarchs (57-21) in a play-off series to claim the Negro National League title.



**Detroit Stars (1926)**

(Backrow left to right – Jack Combs, Orville Riggins, Fred Bell, Lewis Hampton, **Norman “Turkey” Stearnes**, **Andy Cooper** and Omer Newsome. Seated left to right – Johnny Watson, Larry Brown, Leon “Pepper” Daniels, Harry Kenyon, Harry Jefferies, **Charles Blackwell**, Anderson Pryor and **Edgar Wesley**.)

### **Edgar’s Last Season in the Negro National League**

Before the 1927 season got underway John Roesink, owner of the Detroit Stars, signed Elwood “Bingo” De Moss away from the Cleveland Hornets to manage the Stars. De Moss was determined to make changes to his roster that would elevate his “new” team to a “league” contender. The key player in De Moss’s mind that would improve the Stars was Ed “Huck” Rile who was a pitcher/first baseman for the Cleveland Hornets.

Edgar Wesley who started the 1927 season with the Detroit Stars was Bingo’s trade bait to bring Rile to Detroit. Shortly after the start of the season, the Detroit Stars traded Edgar Wesley (1B) and Orville “Mule” Riggins (SS) to the Cleveland Hornets for Ed Rile (P/1B), Hallie Harding (SS) and Stack Martin (utility).

The Cleveland Hornets were organized in 1926 and owned by the Cuyahoga Amusement Company. The Hornets baseball team was formed when a group of Cleveland businessmen bought the Indianapolis ABCs at the end of the 1926 season and moved it to Cleveland.

## Edgar Wesley Stars for the Cleveland Hornets

During the 1927 season Edgar Wesley did not play like it was going to be his last season in the Negro National League. When he joined the Cleveland Hornets he was considered a star player and batted clean-up in the batting order.

**CLEVELAND HORNETS HERE TODAY.**

Young and Dean Are Slated for Mound Duty in Opening Game.

The Monarchs will close their home season for the first half of the league race with the series against the Cleveland Hornets, which opens at Muehlebach Field this afternoon.

Morris Young is due to start on the mound for the home club, with his former team mate, Nelson Dean, working for the visitors. These two youngsters have been pitching rivals since their sandlot days.

Scrappy Dixon, for several seasons the star catcher for the Chicago club, is doing most of the work behind the bat for the visitors. Edgar Wesley, one of the greatest first sackers in negro baseball, recently joined the Hornets and with Riggins at short the visitors have one of the fastest infields in negro baseball.

Today's line-up:

<p><b>MONARCHS.</b></p> <p>Johnson, lf. Allen, ss. McNair, rf. Joseph, 3b. Mothel, cf. Orange, 2b. Hawkins, 1b. T. Young, c. M. Young, p.</p>	<p><b>CLEVELAND.</b></p> <p>Miles, rf. Evans, cf. Riggins, ss. Wesley, 1b. Summers, lf. Zombier, 2b. Dixon, c. Watts, 3b. Dean, p.</p>
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CLEVELAND.						MONARCHS.					
AB	R	H	PO	A		AB	R	H	PO	A	
Riggins, ss	5	0	1	0	4	Hawkins, 1b	4	1	0	8	0
Duff, rf	3	0	0	1	0	Allen, ss	2	0	1	1	3
Summers, lf	3	0	1	1	0	Mothel, cf	1	0	1	3	0
Wesley, 1b	3	0	2	7	0	Young, c	2	0	1	5	1
Zohries, 3b	3	0	0	0	2	Johnston, lf	3	0	2	0	0
Watts, 2b	3	0	0	3	2	McNair, rf	3	0	0	0	0
Evans, cf	2	0	1	2	0	Joseph, 3b	1	0	0	1	0
Dixon, c	2	0	1	4	0	Orange, 2b	2	0	1	3	3
Dean, p	2	0	0	0	2	Mitchell, p	1	1	1	0	0
Miles, rf	1	0	0	0	0						
Stevens	1	0	1	0	0	<b>Totals</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7</b>
Duncan	1	0	0	0	0						
<b>Totals</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10</b>						

Stevens batted for Evans in seventh.  
Duncan batted for Dixon in seventh.  
Errors—Cleveland 3 (Riggins, Wesley, Dixon).  
The score by innings:

Cleveland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Monarchs	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1

The summary: Left on bases—Cleveland 3, Monarchs 6. Stolen bases—Young, Hawkins, Johnston. Sacrifices—Allen, Mothel. Two-base hit—Mothel. Hits and runs—Off Dean 6 and 2 in four and one-third innings, off Miller 1 and 0 in two and two-thirds innings. Struck out—By Mitchell 5, by Dean 1, by Miller 2. Saves on balls—Off Dean 2. Hit by pitched ball—By Dean (Young). Umpires—Gholston and Boone.

Cleveland vs Kansas City

Wesley gets off to as hot start  
Edgar Goes 2 for 3

Kansas City Times  
Kansas City, MO  
06-27-27

Kansas City Times  
Kansas City, MO  
06-25-27

The 1927 season was their first and only season that the Cleveland Hornets played in the Negro National League. The management team for the Hornets included S.M. Terrell (President), L.S.N. Cobb (Business Manager), Col. Jake Reed (Board of Directors) and Frank Duncan (Manager). The Hornets played their home games at Hooper Field in Cleveland and reportedly drew 2,500 or more fans on multiple occasions during the season.

Edgar Wesley played his first game for the Cleveland Hornets on May 21<sup>st</sup> and went 3 for 4 with two runs batted in. The game was played against the Cuban Stars (West).

The trade worked out extremely well for both teams. Huck Rile ended the season as the Detroit Stars' leading hitter (.406) and was the ace of the pitching staff with a 17-8 (.680) won-loss record. Edgar Wesley became the starting first baseman for the Cleveland Hornets and was the team's best hitter.

Even at the age of 36, Wesley was still a dominate force on the field of play. Researchers differ greatly as to Wesley's batting average for the 1927 season. John Holway credits Wesley with a .421 season batting average in games against all levels of competition. Unfortunately, Holway does not provide detailed statistics. The Baseball Reference website does list the following statistics for Edgar's 1927 Negro National League season.

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1927	Cleveland	-	197	19	60	10	4	7	9	6	.305	.503

**HORNETS STING CANTON**  
**Record Second Victory of Season**  
**Over O. and P. Club, 10 to 6.**  
**CANTON, O., July 20.**—The Cleveland Hornets defeated the Canton Noakers of the O. and P. league, 10 to 6, here today, for their second victory this year over the local club. The visitors drove Gantz to cover in the fourth inning after scoring seven runs.  
 Lash held them in tow until the ninth, when an epidemic of extra-base hits accounted for three more tallies. Canton had plenty of chances to score, but was unable to hit with men on bases.

Cleveland	A	H	O	A	Canton	A	H	O	A
Evans...	4	1	5	1	Dove...	4	0	1	7
Duff,rf...	4	1	2	0	Carl...	2	1	0	2
Sommers,lf	4	2	0	0	Grimes...	3	2	0	2
Wesley,1...	5	3	2	1	Miller,cf...	5	3	0	0
Miles,cf...	3	0	4	1	Marker,rf...	5	1	1	0
Sockard...	5	1	2	0	Azler,1...	4	1	1	2
Watts...	4	0	2	1	Stortz...	4	2	5	2
*Duncan...	1	1	0	0	McCormack,lf	5	2	0	0
Brannigan...	0	0	0	0	Gantz,p...	1	1	0	2
Barnes...	4	3	0	0	Lash,p...	3	0	0	3
Moore,p...	4	1	1	1					
Ross,p...	1	0	0	0					
<b>Totals...</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Totals...</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>20</b>

\*Batted for Watts in ninth.  
 Cleveland ..... 0 0 2 5 0 0 0 2-10  
 Canton ..... 0 1 0 0 0 0 2 3 6-0  
 Runs—Evans 2, Sommers 2, Wesley 2, Duff, Brannigan, Barnes, Moore, Carl 2.  
 Errors—Evans, Grimes 2, Stortz, Lash. Errors—Evans, Barnes, Grimes, Miller, Stortz, McCormack.  
 Two-base hits—Sommers, Barnes, Marker. Three-base hits—Wesley 2, Sommers.  
 Home run—Grimes. Sacrifices—Sommers.  
 Stolen bases—Dodex, Evans, Sockard.  
 Left on bases—Canton 11, Cleveland 5.  
 Pitchers summary—7 runs, 8 hits off Gantz in 3½ innings; 3 runs, 6 hits off Lash in 5¾ innings; 0 runs, 13 hits off Moore in 8 innings; no runs, no hits off Ross in 1 inning. Passed ball—Barnes.  
 Hit by pitcher—Miles and Barnes.

Regardless of whose statistics you use, everyone agrees that Edgar had an excellent season in his final season in the Negro National League.

Unfortunately for the Cleveland Hornets, Edgar Wesley was the only player in their starting line-up who could produce offensively. Some of the other starters for the Hornets during the season were Orville Riggins (SS), Tack Summers (OF) George Dixon (OF), Ernest Duff (OF) and Charles Zomphier (2B). The starting rotation for Cleveland included Dimp Miller (6-3), George Brannigan (4-8), Square Moore (3-6), Frank "Lefty" Stevens (2-8) and Nelson Dean (1-10).

Without any real standout players with the exception of Edgar Wesley, the Cleveland Hornets under manager Pete Duncan struggled through a miserable season. In their only season in the Negro National League they posted a dismal record of 17-42 (.288) in "league" play before dropping out of the "league" in early July. The Hornets finished off their season playing independent games. The team played into late September. For Wesley it was one more pay day at the end of his career.

The Chicago American Giants (winners of the first half of the season) defeated the Birmingham Black Barons (winners of the second half of the season) to take the Negro National League championship.

**Plain Dealer**  
 Cleveland, OH  
 07-21-27

Even though the Cleveland Hornets had a poor record in Negro National League games, it appears that the Hornets were very successful in “non-league” games. Box and line scores have been found for seventeen (17) “non-league” games that were played by the Cleveland Hornets during the 1927 season. Cleveland had an amazing won-loss record of 17-2 (.895) in these games. Some of the “non-league” opponents over which the Hornets held victories were Reichert Giants, Canton O-P Leaguers, Canton Noakers, Youngstown Stars, General Tires, Louisville, Brown Stars, Tellings, Wheeling McConkeys and the Homestead Braves.

### **Final Thoughts**

Very little is known about Edgar Wesley’s career after his playing days with the Detroit Stars and the Cleveland Hornets. Currently, no documentation has been found for Edgar Wesley playing during the 1928, 1929 or 1930 seasons. The most puzzling aspect of this is that Edgar Wesley posted extremely good numbers during the 1927 Negro National League season with the Cleveland Hornets. Surely some Negro League team could have used an outstanding first baseman like Edgar Wesley.



**Johnny Jones, Edgar Wesley and Orville Riggins**  
Detroit Stars

Some researchers suggest that after the 1927 season, Edgar went to Cuba and South America to play. No primary source documentation has been found to support Edgar playing in Latin America after the 1927 Negro National League season. If he continued to play baseball after the 1927 season, it was most likely with lower levels teams here in the United States.

Edgar Wesley’s last documented appearance in a professional baseball uniform was in 1931 when he appeared in a few games in June and July for the Atlantic City Bacharach Giants. The 1931 version of the Bacharach Giants was nothing like the team that had found success in the Eastern Colored League. They were an independent team that included a roster of players well past their prime. Otto Briggs (OF), Hallie Harding (3B), Charley Henry (P), Obie Layton (P), John Henry “Pop” Lloyd (1B), Connie Rector (P), Edgar Wesley (1B) and Jesse “Nip” Winters all played for Atlantic City in 1931. Most of the team was like Edgar; they were just looking for another pay check. When compared to the other top independent teams in the East like Hilldale, Homestead Grays, Pittsburg Crawfords, Baltimore Black Sox, Cuban Stars and Harlem Stars. The Atlantic City Bacharach Giants had a hard time holding their own on the playing field.

### **Passing of a Negro League Legend**

Edgar Wesley passed away on July 1, 1966 in Detroit, Michigan at the age of 75.

## Assessing Edgar Wesley's Career

Even though the statistical analysis of Negro League researchers may have come up with different batting statistics, all Negro League researchers agree that Edgar Wesley was an outstanding Negro League baseball player.

A comparison of Edgar Wesley's yearly and career batting average for the majority of his baseball career by seven leading Negro League researchers is as follows:

	CNLBR	Larry Lester and Dick Clark	Baseball Reference	Seamheads	John Holway	James Riley	MacMillan Baseball Reference
1917	.400	-	.400	.400	.357	-	-
1918	.091	.125	.091	.091	-	-	-
1919	.322	.232	.322	.322	.300	-	.160
1920	.287	.272	.288	.287	.272	.277	.277
1921	.319	.327	.310	.319	.240	.290	.290
1922	.344	.356	.346	.344	.351	.344	.344
1923	.288	.287	.287	.288	.335	.338	.338
1924	.284	.279	.256	.284	.348	.266	.266
1925	.424	.413	.413	.404	.424	.424	.416
1926	.340	.296	.290	-	.300	.300	.300
1927	.305	.361	.305	-	.141	.421	.421
Career Batting Avg.	<b>.323</b>	<b>.315</b>	<b>.311</b>	<b>.317</b>	<b>.318</b>	Not Calculated	<b>.324</b>

- CNLBR stands for the Center for Negro League Baseball Research. The CNLBR statistics presented in this chart only include "league" games and games against top level competition.

Batting averages for Edgar Wesley differ between researchers because the number of box scores that each research group analyzed is not the same and some researchers include "non-league" games in their totals while others only count "league" games.

	CNLBR	Larry Lester and Dick Clark	Baseball Reference	John Holway	Seamheads	MacMillan Baseball Encyclopedia	Richard Bak
At Bats	2079	1777	1946	1881	1746	1649	1185
Hits	672	560	605	594	553	594	400
Career Batting Average	.323	.315	.311	.318	.317	.324	.338

Some of the facts that need to be given serious consideration when evaluating Edgar Wesley's baseball career are as follows:

- When Edgar Wesley joined the Hot Springs Bear Cats in 1917 he was already 26 years old. Presumably he was playing ball in Texas but we currently do not have any information on the early years of his baseball career before 1917.

It is important to note that the Hot Springs Bear Cats may not have been Edgar Wesley's "first" professional team. Texas had numerous professional teams during the early part of the twentieth century and there was even a Texas Negro League that dated back to 1910. In addition in a short article about pitcher Bob McClure, the Afro American newspaper references him playing for Beaumont of the Texas League in 1917. The Fort Worth Star Telegram also refers to a Southern Colored League from which William Ross hand picked an all star team to form the Texas All Stars. The existence of a formal Negro League in Texas in 1917 might lead one to conclude that the Texas All Stars could have been a team that formed for a post season barnstorming tour and that Edgar

Wesley had played for a “league” team during the regular season. Unfortunately, newspaper coverage was very poor during this time and additional in-depth research still needs to be conducted.

- Many of his career batting statistics are still missing. The best example of this is games against “non-league” and lower level opponents. Currently we have found only 52 “non-league” games in which he played. Realistically Edgar must have played in several hundred games against lower level opponents.
- Over his twelve (12) year Negro League career, Edgar Wesley batted over .300 six (6) times.
- Wesley was a power hitter who also hit for a high average. In addition he reportedly possessed excellent speed for a big man which is extremely hard to find.

During the 1920’s Edgar Wesley and Norman “Turkey” Stearnes gave the Detroit Stars the best one-two power punch in black baseball. Their homerun productivity for “league” games during the three years that they played together in Detroit was as follows:

Year	Turkey Stearnes	Edgar Wesley
1923	18	18
1925	19	17/18
1926	19	16

- Edgar Wesley’s career was plagued by injuries. One of the most significant was in 1925 when he suffered a broken ankle.
- He is generally considered the best all-around first baseman in the Negro National League in the 1920’s.
- It is unclear what Edgar Wesley did in the off season. Most all of the other high profile ball players like Edgar played winter baseball. The only season which we can document him playing winter baseball was during the 1923-34 winter league season in Cuba.
- It is currently unclear as to whether or not Edgar Wesley played professional baseball from 1928-1930. He did appear in a few games for the Atlantic City Bacharach Giants in 1931. The puzzling part of this issue is that Edgar Wesley had an excellent season in 1927 for the Cleveland Hornets. From box scores that have been located for “league” and “non-league” games for the 1927 season, Edgar had 231 “official” at bats. In these games he collected 72 hits for a .312 batting average. Without question even at 36 year old, Edgar Wesley could still hit and some professional team should have been interested in his services.

One distinct possibility is that in 1928, Edgar could have played for the Cleveland Hornets team that was reorganized by the Euclid-13<sup>th</sup> Street Recreation Company after the original Hornets team that was owned by the Cuyahoga Amusement Company had been dissolved at the end of the 1927 season. The 1928 Cleveland Hornets played an independent schedule.

The 1929 and 1930 seasons for Wesley are still a mystery.

## Playing Career

### Regular Season:

Year	Team	League
1917	Hot Springs Bear Cats	Independent
1917	Hot Springs Giants	Independent
1917	Texas All Stars	Independent
1918	Chicago American Giants	Independent
1919	Detroit Stars	Independent
1920-1921	Detroit Stars	Negro National League
1922	Indianapolis ABCs	Negro National League
1922-1923	Detroit Stars	Negro National League
1924	Harrisburg Giants	Eastern Colored League
1924	Brooklyn Royal Giants	Eastern Colored League
1925-1927	Detroit Stars	Negro National League
1927	Cleveland Hornets	Negro National League
1931	Atlantic City Bacharach Giants	Independent

### Winter Leagues:

Year	Team	League
1923	Detroit Stars	Three Exhibition Games vs St. Louis Browns
1923-24	Habana Leones	Cuban Winter League
1923-24	Marianao Tigres	Cuban Winter League



Detroit Stars (1921)

Edgar Wesley Produces at the Plate

Even though the 1927 season was his last full season in the Negro National League, Edgar Wesley continued to be an offensive threat at the plate.

Cleveland, May 21.—A tremendous drive over the right field fence by Riggins, first batter up in the ninth inning, gave the Cleveland Hornets a 6 to 5 victory over the Cuban Stars at Hooper field.

Sensational relief pitching by Stevens, who held the visitors hitless during the three and one-third innings he worked, was an added feature. The star southpaw retired four Cubans on strikes.

Riggins and Wesley, the latter purchased last week from Detroit, were the offensive stars. Two pretty stops and throws by Miles retired the Cubans in the eighth and ninth stanzas.

CUBAN STARS				CLEVELAND			
AB.	H.	R.	P.A.	AB.	H.	R.	P.A.
Sierra 2b...	5	0	3	Miles rf 2b...	4	0	0
Alonzo rf...	5	1	2	Evans cf...	4	0	3
Correa ss...	4	2	1	Riggins 3b-ss	5	2	0
Droke cf...	4	1	0	Wesley lb...	4	3	1
Carderone c...	3	1	4	Summers lf	4	2	0
Esteniza lf...	4	1	1	Zomphler 2b	3	1	1
Pedrosa lb...	4	1	0	Dixon v...	3	1	0
Rigal 3b...	3	0	2	Watts ss...	2	1	1
Garcia p...	3	1	0	Duff rf...	1	0	0
Blaz p...	1	0	0	Dean p...	2	0	0
				Stevens p...	2	1	0
<b>Totals...</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>Totals...</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>27</b>

\*None out when winning run scored.  
 Cuban Stars ..... 2 0 0 2 0 0 0 0-5  
 Cleveland ..... 0 2 2 0 0 0 0 0-6  
 Runs—Alonzo, Correa, Esteniza, Rigal, Garcia, Riggins (2), Wesley, Summers, Zomphier, Watts. Errors—Sierra, Correa, Carderone, Rigal, Riggins, Dixon, Stevens. Two-base hits—Correa, Carderone, Pedrosa, Wesley. Three-base hit—Riggins. Home run—Riggins. Stolen bases—Rigal, Evans. Bases on ball—Off Garcia, 3; off Stevens, 1. Struck out—By Dean, 3; by Stevens, 4.

Cleveland Hornet vs Cuban Stars

Edgar Goes 3 for 4 w/double

Chicago Defender  
 Chicago, IL  
 05-28-27

**HORNETS DEFEAT TIRES**

Take Hotly Contested Game on Akron Diamond, 6-3.

(From Plain Dealer Bureau.)

AKRON, O., Aug. 21.—General Tires dropped a hotly contested game to the Cleveland Hornets here this afternoon, 6 to 3.

The game was a slugging match all the way. A total of twenty-six hits were registered, including two three-baggers and two doubles. Each side used two pitchers.

An error in the ninth put three runs across for the Hornets after the Generals had scored in the fifth, seventh and eighth innings to tie the count.

Hornets.				Tires.			
A.	H.	O.	A.	A.	H.	O.	A.
Evans...	5	1	3	Savage...	5	1	1
Duff...	5	3	3	Mostade...	2	1	3
Sumers...	4	0	0	Layden...	3	0	1
Wesley...	5	2	1	Lewis...	5	1	0
Stockard...	5	3	0	Snyder...	4	1	0
Watts...	4	2	0	Moore...	3	1	2
Dixon...	3	1	0	Bosworth...	4	0	2
Robb...	4	2	0	Doherty...	4	2	3
Miller...	3	1	0	Ketchump...	3	2	0
Barnes...	1	0	3	Taylor...	1	1	0
Moore...	1	1	0	Vaughan...	1	0	0
				†Clemens...	1	0	0
<b>Totals...</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>Totals...</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>27</b>

\*Batted for Moore in ninth.  
 †Batted for Bosworth in ninth.

Hornets ..... 0 2 1 0 0 0 0 3-6  
 Tires ..... 0 0 0 0 1 0 1 0-3  
 Runs—Wesley, Stockard, Duff 2, Doherty, Ketchum, Moore, Evans, Moore. Errors—Doherty, Miller, Moore, Savage.  
 Two-base hits—Stockard, Doherty. Three-base hits—Wesley, Ketchum. Stolen bases—Savage, Evans. Sacrifices—Watts, Summers. Bases on balls—Off Miller 3, off Moore 1. Struck out—By Ketchum 3, by Miller 3, by Moore 2, by Taylor 4. Um-

Cleveland Hornets vs General Tires

Edgar Goes 2 for 5 w/triple

Plain Dealer  
 Cleveland, OH  
 08-22-27

### Career Statistics – Hitting (Negro Leagues)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1917	Texas	7	30	3	12	1	3	0	7	1	.400	.633
1918	Chicago	3	11	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	.091	.182
1919	Detroit	41	146	22	47	8	5	8	43	2	.322	.610
1920	Detroit	64	247	41	71	15	2	13	50	3	.287	.498
1921	Detroit	56	210	28	67	13	1	9	40	4	.319	.519
1922	Detroit	78	299	63	103	17	8	10	83	10	.344	.538
1923	Detroit	74	274	49	79	14	1	18	59	2	.288	.544
1924	Harrisburg	54	201	26	57	11	4	4	32	6	.284	.423
1925	Detroit	56	205	58	87	13	6	18	73	10	.424	.810
1926	Detroit	-	259	40	88	9	2	16	67	9	.340	.575
1927	Detroit	-	197	19	60	10	4	7	9	6	.305	.503
	Cleveland											
	<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>2079</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>672</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>.323</b>	<b>.560</b>

### Career Statistics – Hitting (Exhibition Games vs Major League All Star Teams)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1923	Detroit	3	9	2	2	-	-	2	-	-	.222	.889
1924	Harrisburg	3	13	1	5	-	-	1	2	-	.385	.615
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>.318</b>	<b>.727</b>

### Career Statistics – Hitting (Non-League Games)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1920	Detroit	11	28	7	13	2	0	4	-	-	.464	.964
1921	Detroit	6	22	3	9	2	1	1	-	-	.409	.727
1922	Detroit	7	26	7	13	2	-	2	-	-	.500	.808
1923	Detroit	9	36	3	15	-	1	1	-	-	.417	.556
1924	Harrisburg	2	6	1	3	1	-	-	-	-	.500	.667
1925	Detroit	3	13	5	7	1	-	-	-	-	.538	.615
1926	Detroit	5	17	-	10	1	-	3	-	-	.588	1.176
1927	Cleveland	9	34	7	12	-	5	-	-	-	.353	.647
	<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>.451</b>	<b>.758</b>

### Career Statistics – Hitting (Cuba)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1923-24	Habana	31	101	14	24	1	1	0	-	-	.238	.267

### Career Hitting Statistics (Totals)

	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
Negro League	433	2079	349	672	112	36	103	464	54	.323	.560
Non-League	52	182	33	82	9	7	11	-	-	.451	.758
Exhibition	6	22	3	7	-	-	3	-	-	.318	.727
Cuba	31	101	14	24	1	1	0	-	-	.238	.267
<b>Total</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>2384</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>785</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>.329</b>	<b>.565</b>

(It is important to note that these career statistics are not to be considered complete. A significant number of hitting statistics are still missing.)

## Batting and League Leader Hitting Titles

Category	Year	League	Number
Batting Average	1925	Negro National League	.424
Slugging Percentage	1925	Negro National League	.810
Homeruns	1920	Negro National League	13
	1923	Negro National League	18
	1925	Negro National League	18



**Detroit Stars**  
Negro National League

Mack Park  
April 23, 1923

### Selected Career Highlights

- Edgar Wesley compiled a career batting average of .323 with a slugging percentage of .560 in Negro League games and a .329 career batting average with a .565 slugging percentage in games against all levels of competition.
- During his he was incredibly effective in games against “non-league” opponents. Currently we have found 52 “non-league” games in which Edgar Wesley played. In these games he went 82 for 182 for a batting average of .451 with a slugging percentage of .758
- In 1918 Edgar Wesley was a member of Rube Foster’s Chicago American Giants who were considered the “Champions of the West.”
- Wesley was a member of the inaugural Detroit Stars team who were considered the “Champions of the West” in 1919.
- In 1919 which was his first real season at the highest level of black baseball in the West, Edgar produced extremely well with at least 8 homeruns, .322 batting average and a .610 slugging percentage. He was considered the best first baseman in the West during the 1919 season.
- He was a member of the Detroit Stars team that won the Michigan Semi-Pro Championship five (5) straight seasons from 1919 through 1923.
- In 1920 he played for the Detroit Stars in the inaugural season of the Negro National League. During the 1920 season he is credited with 13 homeruns, 50 runs batted in and a .287 batting average. His 13 homeruns led the Negro National League.
- When the 1921 Negro National League season had concluded play, Edgar Wesley had posted a .319 batting average for the season. This was 32 points higher than the previous year.
- In 1922 Wesley posted a .344 batting average with a .538 slugging percentage in Negro National League games while playing for the Detroit Stars.
- During the 1923 Negro National League season, Wesley is credited with 18 homeruns which led the Negro National League and he also had 59 RBIs.
- Edgar Wesley had the best season of his career in 1925 when in 60 “league” games he led the Negro National League in homeruns (18), batting average (.424) and slugging percentage (.810). He also drove in 73 runs.
- During the 1926 season, Edgar Wesley had 16 homeruns in Negro National League games.
- Edgar Wesley ended his Negro National League career in 1927 with a .305 batting average and a .503 slugging percentage while playing for the Hornets.
- In his Negro League career which spanned from 1920 through 1927, Edgar Wesley only had one season (1924) when he was not the starting first baseman for the Detroit Stars.
- Today Edgar Wesley’s Negro League career is all but a forgotten memory, but during the 1920’s he was one of the best players in black baseball.

### Detroit Stars (1920)

When the Negro National League was formed in 1920 by Rube Foster, the Detroit Stars were an inaugural member of the “league.” The Detroit Stars represented themselves very well during the season especially when you take into consideration that they were only in their second year of existence. They finished the season in second place in the final “league” standings. The research of Larry Lester/Dick Clark credits the Stars with a record of 35-23 (.603) and the Seamheads research team credits Detroit with a record of 37-27 (.578). Rube Foster’s Chicago American Giants won the 1920 Negro National League title.

Edgar Wesley was the starting first baseman for the Stars and had a very good season. Edgar Wesley was the starting first baseman for the Stars and had a very good season. Wesley led the “league” in homeruns with 13 and batted .287 in “league” games.



Detroit Stars (1920)

(Back row left to right – Bill Holland, **Edgar Wesley**, **Bruce Petway**, Charlie Harper, Bill Gatewood, unknown and unknown. Middle row left to right – Joe Hewitt, **Pete Hill**, John “Tenny” Blount, **Jimmie Lyons** and **Andy Cooper**. Seated left to right – Unknown, Bill Force, Orville “Mule” Riggins and unknown.)