

Player Interviews

Highlights of Interviews with Former Negro League Players

- **Luther Atkinson** (Satchel Paige All Stars) – Luther played second base and shortstop with the Satchel Paige All Stars from 1955 to 1960. Luther shared these thoughts about his career playing for Satchel: “I was playing ball for the Carolina Tigers in a game in Durham, North Carolina against the Durham Rams, when after the game my manager told me that Satchel Paige wanted to talk to me. I couldn’t imagine what he wanted, but was excited about the opportunity to meet him. Satchel told me that he liked the way I handled myself out on the field and would I like to join his team. He was picking up young ball players all over. I didn’t have to think twice about signing. When I played for Satchel he was an old man and was mainly the drawing card for the game, but he could still play. I loved playing for Satchel he was such an even tempered guy, never got mad. I remember the first game that I played for the Satchel Paige All Stars, I got a hit my first time up and was standing on first base and the coach told me to steal. You know I was known for my speed, but I got thrown out. When I went back to the bench, I went to the very end because I didn’t know how Satchel would react. He got up and came to the end of the bench and sat down beside me. He could tell I dejected I was. All he said to me was that it was ok, but next time I needed to get a bigger lead before trying to steal second. Above everything else Satchel was a teacher and a role model to us young ball players. Satchel used to sit us all down and tell us that each one of us had the ability to play in the Majors, but it was going to be our character that would get us there. Satchel could recognize talent and was always teaching us. In 1960 Satchel told me the Philadelphia Phillies had offered him \$ 3,000.00 for my contract, but he thought I was worth more. Right when it looked like I might be getting my shot, I got drafted by the Army. I spent two years in the Army and when I got out I moved up here to Maryland. I played for the Glenarden Braves of the Continental League in 1964 and that was the last “real” baseball I played.”
- **James “Cowboy” Atterbury** (Philadelphia Stars) – Atterbury played for the Philadelphia Stars in 1962 and 1963. Atterbury’s memories of Negro League baseball during this time were as follows: “There was no league when I played. We just barnstormed all over the country hoping to get noticed by a Major League scout. In fact we never played any Negro League team that I can remember. After the 1963 season, I went back home to Columbia (South Carolina). We weren’t making any money to speak of and I didn’t see myself getting anywhere with the Stars. The next season I stayed around home and played with the Columbia All Stars and James Brown’s All Stars until Buck signed me in 1965.” Buck O’Neil was a scout for the Chicago Cubs (Major League Baseball). Atterbury played in the Minor Leagues from 1965 through the 1969 seasons with the Chicago Cubs and Los Angeles Angels organizations.
- **Carlton Banks** (Kansas City Monarchs) – Banks played for the Monarchs during their 1963 barnstorming season. Banks’ memories of his season with Kansas City are as follows: “ I only played one year with the Monarchs. My cousin (Eugene Anderson) had played with the Monarchs and got me a tryout. We traveled all over the country. Most of our games were out West. We never played any Negro League teams. My understanding was that the “league” was already over with. We played at least 80 to 90 games on our

road trip. Ted Rasberry was our owner and manager. He was really good to play for and took good care of us. Ted was always promoting us to the Major League scouts whenever they showed up for one of our games. After the 1963 season, I went into the Army and that ended my professional baseball career.”

- **Harry Barnes Jr.** (Philadelphia Stars, Birmingham Black Barons and Kansas City Monarchs) – Barnes is the son of former Negro League player Harry “Mooch” Barnes. Both were catchers and played in the Negro Leagues. Harry Jr. played in the Negro American League for the Birmingham Black Barons (1958) and the Raleigh Tigers (1961). He also played for several professional black barnstorming teams: Philadelphia Stars (1962-1964), Birmingham Black Barons (1963) and Kansas City Monarchs (1964). Barnes shared the following memories about his career in professional baseball: “After playing for Arthur Dove and the Raleigh Tigers in 1961, I went with Wardell Jackson. Wardell was a big gambler from Illinois and owned the Birmingham Black Barons that were playing in the Negro American League and the Philadelphia Stars that barnstormed all over the country. I thought things were rough on the road with Arthur Dove, but they got worse with the Philly Stars. I got a good contract when I signed with the Stars, but I never saw that money over the three years I played for the Stars. We would get two or three dollars a day to eat on and you also had to pay for your laundry and other incidentals out of that. Players were always calling home for their families to send them money. We played to big crowds everywhere we went. It got real hard some times to see all the paying fans in the stadium and not getting any money ourselves. Fred Banks was our manager and he wired the money back to Wardell after every game. Gideon Jarvis was our business manager and also pitched. Jarvis gave out the meal money, if he had it. We (Philadelphia Stars) were always getting put out of hotels because we (Stars) didn’t pay the bill. In 1964 I went with Ted Rasberry and the Kansas City Monarchs. The league had already folded by then and Ted was trying to make a living barnstorming. Things were a lot better with Ted. Ted wasn’t a “big” money guy like Wardell, but if Ted had anything, he would give it to you. After the 1964 season, I called it quits. You couldn’t make a living playing Negro League ball. I settled in Kansas City and played for the Kansas City Giants for several years. Even with all the hard times, I loved baseball and would have done it all again.”
- **Rochell Broome** (Birmingham Black Barons and Philadelphia Stars) – Broome played for the Kansas City Monarchs during part of the 1957 season and for the Birmingham Black Barons during the 1962 season. Rochell spent most of his professional baseball career playing for Wardell Jackson. Rochell played for the following teams that Jackson owned: Champaign Eagles (Eastern Illinois League, Birmingham Black Barons (Negro American League and barnstorming team) and the Philadelphia Stars (barnstorming team). When talking with Dr. Revel about his career in Negro League baseball and the end of the Negro Leagues, he shared the following memories: “I played a little bit with the Kansas City Monarchs in 1957, but that didn’t work out so I moved to Champaign and started playing for Wardell Jackson. “Jack” (Wardell Jackson) owned four different baseball teams: Champaign Eagles, Urbana Colts, Birmingham Black Barons and Philadelphia Stars. He even owned a professional basketball team: the Harlem Hobos. We went wherever he sent us. We might play several games with the Eagles and then go out on a road trip with the Black Barons or Stars. Wardell’s first priority was the Champaign Eagles. He (Wardell Jackson) considered the Eagles as part of organized baseball. But in the end we played where we were needed. The only thing that changed

was our uniform. In 1962 I played most of the season for the Birmingham Black Barons. Frank Evans was my manager; he was the greatest manager I ever played for. When the “league” ended in 1962, “Jack” (Wardell Jackson) got us together and told us the league had folded, but he was going to keep on going and that any of the players that wanted to would still have a job with him. Most of the guys went home, but a few of us followed “Jack” back to Champaign. I played through the 1965 season. I know Wardell kept the Black Barons and Stars going for several years after that.”

- **Roger Brown** (Kansas City Monarchs and Birmingham Black Barons) – Roger played in the Negro American League for the Kansas City Monarchs (1957) and the Birmingham Black Barons (1958-1960). He was also listed on Wardell Jackson’s roster for the 1962 Birmingham Black Barons and Philadelphia Stars. Roger shared the following about his Negro League career: “I started playing ball here in Birmingham with the Titusville Stars. My father was a friend of Ed Steele and got me signed by the Kansas City Monarchs in 1957 while I was still in high school. It was fun playing pro ball, but I missed out on being able to play high school baseball for my last three years of school. After one season with the Monarchs, I signed with the Birmingham Black Barons. I played for the Black Barons from 1958 through the 1960 season. After the 1960 season I went to work at ACIPCO here in Birmingham and played ball for them in the Birmingham Industrial League. On April 9, 1962 I went into the Army and spent 23 years in the military before retiring. I saw some very good baseball in the Army. Our team (5th Corps Guardians) in Frankfurt, Germany could have competed with any of the Negro League teams back home.” When Dr. Revel asked Roger about playing for the Black Barons and Stars in 1962, he was totally unaware that Wardell Jackson had listed him on the team’s roster. It seemed to have been a common practice of Negro League owners like Ted Rasberry and Wardell Jackson to list players on their roster that they had not even signed.
- **Sherman Cottingham** (Kansas City Monarchs and Satchel Paige All Stars) – Sherman pitched for the Kansas City Monarchs in 1962 and the Satchel Paige All Stars during their 1963 barnstorming season. Sherman shared the following about his baseball career: “I started playing ball in high school in Farmersville, Louisiana. We also had a little local team that I played for. When I graduated from high school I went to Grambling and played baseball while I was getting my degree in education. When I graduated from college I had a tryout for Buck O’Neil and the Chicago Cubs, but when I wasn’t signed started teaching school in Louisiana. I was also playing for a local team in Farmersville. I think we were called the Eagles or something like that. I was pitching a game in Mississippi when I got approached by a fellow to play ball for the Kansas City Monarchs. In 1962, I joined the Monarchs. I guess this was just about the end on the Negro Leagues. After the season, I went back to teaching. In 1963 I got a call and offer to play for the Satchel Paige All Stars. We barnstormed all over the place. When I was playing for the All Stars sometimes I was billed as Satchel Paige Jr. I loved playing for Satchel, he used to call me “Professor” because I had gone to college. After school was over in 1964, I went up to Canada and played for the North Battleford Beavers in the Northern Saskatchewan League. The people up there sure loved their baseball. I had a good year in 1964 and led the league with a 10-2 record. We also won the league championship. I went back the following year in 1965 and had another good year (9-4). In 1966 I was offered the job as a school principal and the superintendent told me I would have to choose between that and playing ball. I took the job. I did continue playing ball around Louisiana. I got me a uniform and hired myself out for \$ 300 a game plus expenses.

Seems like I made more money doing that than teaching. I loved my time in baseball and won't have traded it for anything."

- **Odel Daniels** (Kansas City Monarchs) – Odel played for the Kansas City Monarchs in 1965 and 1966. His recollections of his career with the Monarchs is as follows: "My high school coach (Eddie Loggins) got me a tryout with the Monarchs at Arkansas A & M in Pine Bluff. Ted Rasberry was the owner of the team. I guess he liked what he saw in my pitching and signed me to the team. I can't remember if we got a contract or not. I know I signed some papers when I joined the team. We (Monarchs) had two green vans with "Kansas City Monarchs – Negro American League" painted on the sides. I thought it was kind of funny, because we didn't play in a league; we just barnstormed all over the United States and Canada. In my two years with Ted I saw just about every state in the country except for way up in the New England area. I had a great time and won't have traded it for anything."
- **Arthur Dove III** (Raleigh Tigers) - Arthur was the grandson of Raleigh Tigers team owner Arthur Dove, Sr. He was also the Tigers batboy in the early to mid 1960's. His memories of the Raleigh Tigers in the early 1960's were as follows: "My grand father (Arthur Dove, Sr.) owned the Raleigh Tigers baseball team. He also owned the Dove Music Company. The Music Company was the biggest black owned jukebox company in the Carolinas and maybe even the South. But my grandfather's first love was baseball. I was the batboy for the Tigers from about 1960 through the mid 1960's. When I was out of school, I traveled with my grandfather on the road with the Tigers. My grandfather was always on the road with the team. He was able to travel with the team because my dad (Arthur Dove, Jr.) ran the music business. My grandfather traveled with the team most of the time. He had one of the players drive his big Cadillac. In 1962 when we were in Illinois for a series with the Indianapolis Clowns, my grandfather got a call that my father had a stroke. I still remember flying home on the airplane. James Austin, who was the traveling secretary for the team, took over for my grandfather. My dad never recovered from his stroke. That caused my grandfather to take over running the Music Company again. He never went out on the road with the Tigers again. The 1962 season was the last year that the Tigers went on long road trips. The Tigers continued to play for the next several years, but most of our games were played in Raleigh at Chavis Park."
- **Manash Earl Dunlap** (Kansas City Monarchs) – Dunlap pitched and played outfield for the 1963 Kansas City Monarchs. He was also on the 1964 Monarchs roster but did not report to the team. He started his career playing sandlot ball for the Greenwood Sluggers in his hometown of Greenwood, Mississippi. Dunlap's remembrances of his career with the Kansas City Monarchs were as follows: "My cousin was John Winston; he had played in the Negro Leagues and with the Indianapolis Clowns. He got my brother (Pete Dunlap) and me a tryout with the team. It was a good experience traveling around the country because I had never been away from home. But by the end of the season I had had enough of traveling baseball. Besides we weren't making no money. At the end of the season I didn't have any more money than when I started the year. So I came on back to Greenwood and started playing ball with the Sluggers again. Ted Rasberry wanted me to come back the next season and even sent me the bus money, but I said no. During my time with the Monarchs we mainly played in the Midwest and out on the West Coast. The highlight of our season was when we played the Satchel Paige All Stars in Waterloo, Iowa. I got to play that game with Satchel on his team. I only played one year and I am glad I did."

- **Henry Elmore** (Birmingham Black Barons) – Elmore played third base for the Black Barons during the 1961 to 1962 seasons. Henry also played second base for the 1961 Philadelphia Stars that was owned by Wardell Jackson and managed by Charlie Drummond. Elmore’s recollections of what happened to the Black Barons and the Negro American League after the 1962 season were: “After the 1962 season the team and the league broke up. Most of the players went to work and/or played for the Stockham team in the Birmingham Industrial League. There was no Birmingham Black Barons team or Negro American League after the 1962 season. 1962 was the last season of Negro League baseball.” Elmore continued to play baseball for Stockham from 1963 through the early 1980’s. Other former Birmingham Black Barons and Negro League players on the Stockham team in 1963 included: Jesse Mitchell (outfield), Jesses Bass (shortstop), James “Sap” Ivory (first base), Pete Mumford (pitcher), Walter Stove (catcher) and Melvin Stove (second base).
- **Frank Evans** (Birmingham Black Barons) – Evans was the Manager of the 1962 Birmingham Black Barons team. Evans’ thoughts on the end of the Negro American League were: “After the regular season (1962) was over, we played an All Star game in Kansas City. The game was a disaster, we got rain and everybody wanted their money back. After all was said and done, the players didn’t get anything. Wardell Jackson (owner of the Birmingham Black Barons) shut the team (Birmingham) down after the season (1962). The bus and the uniforms went back to Champaign, Illinois with Jackson. I went to Wichita and joined John Pendleton and Bob Boyd on the Wichita Dreamliners team. We had quite a team and dominated the Wichita amateur tournament.”
- **Ernest Fann** (Raleigh Tigers) – Fann played one year in the Negro American League with the Raleigh Tigers. He shared the following with Dr. Revel about his short career in Negro League baseball: “ I started getting noticed as a ball player while I still was in high school. I went to school at Ballard-Hudson High School in Macon, Georgia. We won the state championship in 1961 and 1962. John “Blue Moon” Odom was my battery mate. When school let out in the summer of 1962, Blue Moon and I played with Arthur Dove’s Raleigh Tigers baseball team. We didn’t really know much about Negro League baseball, all we knew as that we loved playing ball. Neither of us got a regular salary, but we did get meal money. I think we got about \$ 5 a day, but I could be wrong. In 1963 I had to choose between a football scholarship to Florida A & M or professional baseball. I got a tryout with the Atlanta Crackers and was signed. I spent parts of four seasons in the Minor Leagues as a catcher then they made me a pitcher. I played with Brunswick (GA), Daytona (FL) and Burlington (IA). I really can’t speak to the end of the Negro Leagues, as my time in the league was very short. After my pro career was over, I moved back here to Birmingham and played with Stockham from up until the late 1970’s or early 1980’s. We had some real good baseball teams here in the Industrial League.”
- **Minnie Forbes** (Detroit Stars) – Minnie is the niece of Ted Rasberry who owned the Kansas City Monarchs and Detroit Stars. Minnie assisted Ted with the business management side of his two Negro League baseball franchises. She also served as the owner of record for the Detroit Stars. When Ted Rasberry formed the Stars and bought the Kansas City Monarchs, he immediately had a problem with the Negro American League about owning two franchises. To solve the problem, he showed Minnie as the owner of record for Detroit. When asked about when and why the Detroit Stars folded, her comments were as follows: “I worked with Ted all the years that he was in baseball. I helped him keep the books and run the business side of things. When Dr. Martin

approached Ted about the problem of owning two teams, Ted made me the owner of the Stars. There was never a lot of money in Negro League baseball. Ted felt it was important to have as many teams in the Negro American League as possible, so he personally kept two teams going. He had hoped to find another owner for the Detroit Stars, but things didn't work out in 1958 with Goose owning the team. Ted had the Stars back the next season. In 1960 the Stars were billed as the Detroit-New Orleans Stars with a hope to broaden their fan base. The 1960 season was the last year for the Stars. Ted folded the team after the season for financial reason.

- **Jim “Lenny” Gray** (Kansas City Monarchs and Raleigh Tigers) – Jim Canada gave Gray a tryout with the Birmingham Black Barons in 1959, but did not sign him. Gray did play three seasons in the Negro Leagues: 1960 with the Kansas City Monarchs, 1961 with the Raleigh Tigers and 1962 with the Indianapolis Clowns. He also played in organized ball from the mid 1960's to the mid 1970's. Over his career in organized ball he played in Granby, St. Vincent, Dubuque, Roswell, Gastonia and Greensboro. He shared the following about his career as a professional baseball player: “I was born in 1939 in Tuskegee, Alabama. When I was about 14 years old I started playing for our local team, the Tuskegee Eagles. Harry Crenshaw managed the Eagles. In 1959 I got a tryout with the Birmingham Black Barons of the Negro American League. Their manager was an ex-Negro League ball player by the name of Jim Canada. When they didn't sign me I came home to Tuskegee. I got signed by the Pittsburgh Pirates in 1959. They sent me to Roswell (New Mexico) to play in the Sophomore League. I got to play with Willie Stargell when I was there. The Pirates released me in 1959 and I caught on with the Kansas City Monarchs in 1960. They had a good team. Willie Washington was my manager when I was with the Monarchs. Arthur Dove who owned the Raleigh Tigers told me that if I signed with his team he could get me another shot at the Major Leagues. He was true to his word and sold my contract to the Washington Senators. The Senators released me in spring training and I hooked up with Carl Forney (manager of the Clowns) and the Indianapolis Clowns. When I was with the Monarchs and the Tigers, we were playing in the Negro American League. The Clowns were strictly a barnstorming team, but we were just as good if not better and either Kansas City or Raleigh. When I played for the Clowns we had Hal King and Billy Parker both on our team. You know both of them made it to the Big Leagues. I went to Canada to play in 1965 and stayed up there three years with Granby and St. Vincent. When I came back to the States I played in the Detroit Tigers, New York Yankees and Pittsburgh Pirates organizations until about 1975. I also played winter ball in the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and Venezuela. When I retired in 1975, I started scouting for the Houston Astros.”
- **Alexander James Hardin Jr.** (Birmingham Black Barons) – Hardin played for the Black Barons during their 1963 season. Hardin's recollections of his time with the Black Barons were as follows: “They (Birmingham Black Barons) had come through Oak Ridge and played our local team, the Bombers. We gave them a good ball game. After the game the Black Barons manager approached several of our players about joining the team. Leon Mahone and myself joined the team and left town the next day. I played first base and outfield. We barnstormed all over the place. We went down as far south as Louisiana and all the way up north into Canada. I only played the one year. It was a good experience.”
- **James “Sap” Ivory** (Birmingham Black Barons) – Ivory played first base for the Birmingham Black Barons from 1958 through the 1962 season. Ivory's memories of the Negro American League after the 1962 season were: “The league ended after the 1962 season. There was no Birmingham Black Barons team in 1963, at least not around

Birmingham. When the 1962 season was over, Jackson had the bus go back to Champaign (Illinois) and that's the last we ever saw of him. In 1963 I went to Mexico (Puebla) and played a little before coming home. When I came back to Birmingham, I went to work out at Stockham Valve & Fitting and played for them for several years in the Birmingham Industrial League."

- **Rex Jones** (Kansas City Monarchs) – During his baseball career, Rex played for Chet Brewer's Los Angeles Braves, Indianapolis Clowns, Kansas City Monarchs and was in spring training with the California Angels in 1966. Rex played for the Kansas City Monarchs during their 1964 barnstorming season. He also played, coached and booked professional (barnstorming/traveling) basketball for over 30 years. When asked about his playing days with the Monarchs and the end of the Negro League baseball, Rex responded as follows: "I played for Ted after the "league" had folded. I played on the 1964 Monarchs team. We had some good players on that team like Odel Daniels. Odel was fast. He could out run a deer. Leroy Doster from Willard, Ohio. Leroy played as Satchel Paige Jr. But to tell you the truth they liked to have starved us to death out on the road. With all that said, I still enjoyed the journey. After my baseball days, I started playing traveling basketball on a fulltime basis. In 1967 I hooked up with the Harlem Satellites that were owned by Ted Rasberry and coached by Rookie Brown. Over the next 30 years, I played, coached, promoted and booked games for the Harlem Satellite, Harlem Thrillers, Travelers and Global Travelers. We played our last game in Las Vegas, New Mexico in 2003."
- **Don Johnson** (Cincinnati Tigers) – Johnson played infield for the Cincinnati Tigers from 1954 to 1968. Don had played in the Negro Leagues with the Birmingham Black Barons, Chicago American Giants and Detroit Stars during the late 1940's and early 1950's. When his Negro League career was over he returned home to Cincinnati and played for the Tigers. His reflections on his playing days with the Cincinnati Tigers were as follows: "The Tigers were an established ball club but were never a part of the Negro Leagues. When the "league" folded up, it didn't have any effect on us. We traveled on the weekends for games and played around Cincinnati during the week. Most of the players had full time jobs because there wasn't any money in independent baseball. I just loved playing baseball and being around the game. Today I am 81 and am still coaching high school baseball and summer league ball."
- **Larry Le Grande** (Satchel Paige's All Stars) – Larry played in the Negro American League for the Memphis Red Sox (1957), Kansas City Monarchs (1958-1960) and Detroit Clowns (1958). In 1960 the Monarchs sold his contract to the New York Yankees of the American League. Larry played in the Yankees Minor League Farm System for Greensboro and St. Petersburg. Interestingly enough when the Yankees released him, he was leading the St. Petersburg Pelicans in several batting categories. After his short stay in "organized" ball, Larry joined his friend Satchel Paige and played four seasons (1960-1963) with the team. He also played briefly with the Birmingham Black Barons on their West Coast barnstorming tour in 1963. Larry has many fond memories of his days in the Negro Leagues and his barnstorming career. Some of which he shared with Dr. Revel are as follows: "I was just a kid when I went to play for the Memphis Red Sox. Goose Curry was my Manager. Goose took me up to see Dr. Martin at the hospital and talked him into signing me. I still remember my first payday. The players lived in quarters under the stadium at the ballpark. When payday rolled around, Goose called me into his office and started counting out one dollar bills on the desk. I had a big old stack (\$175.00) of money. More money than I had ever seen in my life. Would have gotten \$ 50.00 more if

Goose hadn't kept it for himself. I had a real good career in the Negro Leagues and made the All Star team several times. Played good enough to get signed by the New York Yankees. To this day, I haven't been able to figure out why they cut me. I guess they had enough black ball players. After the Yankees cut me loose, I started playing for Satchel Paige's All Stars. The All Stars weren't a "league" team. We were strictly barnstorming. We played on the average 75-80 ball games over a four-month road trip. You know Ted Rasberry owned the Satchel Paige All Stars. I liked playing for them because I got paid \$ 25.00 a game and Satch paid me after every game. We played a lot of games and traveled a lot of miles. Our booking agent was out of Beloit, Wisconsin and he had us crisscrossing all over the country until Satchel threatened to quit if he didn't do a better job of scheduling the games. I loved traveling with Satchel; he was sharp dresser and didn't mind spending money. The seasons I spent on the road with the Satchel Paige All Star were the best times of my baseball career. I still have my old uniform from Paige's All Stars."

- **Ira Mc Knight** (Kansas City Monarchs and Philadelphia Stars) – Ira was the starting catcher for the 1962 Kansas City Monarchs and started the 1963 season as the manager of the Philadelphia Stars. Ira's recollections of the 1962 and 1963 seasons were as follows: "There was no "league" in 1963. In fact in 1962 it seemed more like barnstorming than playing in a league. Yes, we did have an All Star game at the end of the 1962 season, but it was made up. By that I mean there was no voting or anything, we just got together and played another game. At the end of the season, I went home to South Bend (Indiana). I had worked out a deal with Wardell Jackson who owned both the Birmingham Black Barons and Philadelphia Stars to manage the Stars for the 1963 season. The Stars bus picked me up in South Bend before the start of the season. I only stayed with the Stars for a few weeks because I had trouble with two of the players. I wasn't making enough money with Jackson to put up with all the problems. After I left the Stars I went back with Ted Rasberry and the Kansas City Monarchs. We barnstormed all over the Great Lakes and Canada. Sometimes we played as the Monarchs and sometimes we were the Satchel Paige All Stars. But to answer your original question, there was no league in 1963." As a footnote, Ira returned to Canada in 1964 and played in Canada with Saskatoon, Melville, North Battleford and Drummondville through the 1969 season.
- **Leroy Miller** (Birmingham Black Barons and Philadelphia Stars) – Miller was a star pitcher for the 1962 Birmingham Black Barons and the 1963 Philadelphia Stars. Miller's memories of the 1962 and 1963 seasons were as follows: "Wardell Jackson owned both the Birmingham Black Barons and the Philadelphia Stars. When the "league" ended in 1962, I kept on playing for Jackson. We started out the 1963 season as the Birmingham Black Barons. Now don't get me wrong, this wasn't the same Black Barons team I played for in 1962. You see Jackson still had the Black Barons bus and all the uniforms from the previous season. Both the Black Barons and Stars were based out of Champaign (Illinois) where Jackson lived and was a "big" numbers man. We barnstormed all over Illinois, Memphis (TN), Little Rock (AR), Danville (VA), Tennessee and all over the East. About the middle of the season, Jackson had me go the Philadelphia Stars team. They played out West. We went through the Dakotas, played all over Canada and came out in Washington State. In fact it was in Washington that they had me pitch the game as Satchel Paige, Jr. It's a funny story how that happened. Satchel was supposed to pitch for the Stars but was a "no show." This wasn't uncommon for Satch because he drove that old Cadillac and would just as soon stop and go fishing as play baseball. Well it was about time for the game to start and the manager told the announcer to tell the crowd that Satchel was unable to make the game, but his son was going to pitch. I didn't like the idea too much,

but what could I do. Before the game I signed a few autographs, but had to sign “Leroy S. Paige, Jr.” because I didn’t know how to spell Satchel. I was getting hammered during the first several innings and the crowd was getting upset. People were starting to want their money back. The fans were shouting things like this kid’s an imposter, he ain’t no Satchel Paige. I called time out and told the catcher I was tired of trying to imitate Satchel and I was going to pitch the rest of the game my way. Well, I struck out the next nine straight batters. After the 1963 season was over, I had had enough. I figured if it (being signed by a Major League team) hadn’t happened by then, it wasn’t going to happen. I came back home to Leeds (Alabama) and played for and managed the Leeds Tigers up until about 1989.” From Miller’s recollections, there appears to have been both a Birmingham Black Barons and Philadelphia Stars team in 1963. This Black Barons team was different than the Birmingham Black Barons team that had played in the Negro American League in 1962 and Miller was very emphatic that there was no Negro American League in 1963.

- **David Pearson** (Birmingham Black Barons) David played for the Birmingham Black Barons in 1961 and 1962. He also played with Satchel Paige’s All Stars in 1963 before spending two years in Canada in the Manitoba Senior Baseball League. When he returned from Canada, David played with the Kansas City Monarchs in 1964. He finished his baseball career out playing semipro baseball for the Kansas City Giants (Jay Hawk League) and John Wietzel’s Cowboys (Victory League) from 1964 through 1969. Some of the memories about his baseball career that he shared during his interview were as follows: “I started out playing baseball at Alcorn State University. My coach was Willie Foster. He was a big man and loved throwing batting practice. When I graduated in 1959, I was signed by the Dodgers but got cut during spring training. I went to Birmingham and played for two years with the Black Barons. In 1962 I was selected to the East West All-Star game. At the end of the season, we weren’t sure what was going to happen to the “league.” With no Negro American League in 1963, I signed to play with Satchel Paige’s All Stars. We traveled all over the country and extensively in Canada. Boy those Canadians sure loved their baseball. It was on this trip that I made contact with a team in the Manitoba Senior Baseball League. I went back and played two years in Canada. Would have stayed longer but the league changed the number of imports each team was allowed to have. When I started, each team could have five players from the United States and then the league changed it to two. I came back to Kansas City and played for a while with the Kansas City Giants, until Frank Evans convinced me to come to Wichita and play for John Weitzels’ Cowboys. We played in the Victory League and had a pretty good team. The Cowboys were the last team I played for. Played up until the late 1960’s.”
- **Alonzo Perry Jr.** (Birmingham Black Barons) – Alonzo Perry played in the Negro American League for the Birmingham Black Barons in 1962. Perry also played for the Birmingham Black Barons and Philadelphia Stars in 1963 and 1964 when they were a barnstorming team. Highlights of our interview with Alonzo Perry Jr. are as follows: “I grew up around baseball all my life. My father Alonzo Perry had played in the Negro League, Mexico, Dominican Republic and Canada. When I was just a youngster I got to go with my father to Mexico when he played there. They called him “The King” when he was in Mexico; he was friends with the President. I played first base like my father and my manager (Frank Evans) said I was a pretty good hitter. But nobody could hit like my dad. Mr. Evans come and got me when I was still a teenager playing ball with Stockham (Birmingham Industrial League). I really enjoyed playing for the Black Barons and kept on playing for them even after the “league” ended. “

- **Cecil Priester** (Philadelphia Stars) – Priester played for the Philadelphia Stars during their 1962 barnstorming season. Priester’s memories of his playing days with the Stars were: “I had heard that the Philadelphia Stars were coming to South Carolina and were holding an open tryout at the Allen University baseball stadium. I had played sandlot ball in Columbia (South Carolina) for several years and thought I had some pretty good stuff, so I went to the tryout. It didn’t surprise me that I made the team. We started the season in Champaign (Illinois) and headed West. We traveled through Illinois, Wisconsin, North Dakota, Colorado, Utah and up into Canada. After coming out of Canada we played our way back through California, the Midwest and Mississippi dropping guys off until we ended up back in Champaign where we had started. Some of the towns that I remember being special were Denver (CO), Eureka (CA), Jamestown (North Dakota) and Smithfield (Utah). We played at least 70 to 80 games during the time we were gone. During the season we carried enough players for two teams. If the town we were playing in didn’t have an opponent for us we would divide the squad in half. The older established players were the Philadelphia Stars and the rest of the players wore uniforms with “New York” on the front. Most of the time the traveling team was billed as the New York Stars. I was supposed to go back with the team for the 1963 season. They had sent me bus money to join the team in Champaign, but I had already joined the United States Air Force. After my enlistment was up in the Air Force, I went to college. I graduated from Benedict College and went into the NCR management program. Never played any more baseball. But I will say, my season with the Philadelphia Stars was one of the best times in my life.” Some of the specific comments and reflections that Priester had about his life on the road with the Philadelphia Star were:

“Gideon Jarvis (Manager) was a great leader; he knew how to take care of everything. He was like a father to me.”

“ We (Philadelphia Stars) were well received everywhere we went. I can’t remember any real problems we had with discrimination or the fact we were black.”

“I had never been away from home. Traveling with the Stars I got to see the entire country. It was an incredible experience for a young man.”

“We didn’t make a lot of money. Our pay usually depended on what the gate brought in. Money wasn’t the reason I was out there. But I will say they always fed us real good.”

“It was fun. Guys really got along great with each other. The only problem that might occur is when someone took the last piece of bread.”

“My time with the Stars taught me valuable life lessons and helped prepare me for the Air Force, college and going to work in business. It taught be how to communicate and how to deal with people. It also taught me a lot about values.”

- **Vanity Rushing** (Indianapolis Clowns) – Rushing was a switch hitting catcher who played for the Indianapolis Clowns from 1958 through 1960, when his contract was sold to the Boston Red Sox. Van shared the following about his baseball career: “I grew up in Chicago and started playing ball for the Midlothian White Sox. I was scouted by the Boston Red Sox when I was in high school, but they didn’t sign me. About the same time

I was contacted by the Indianapolis Clowns and signed with them. I played three seasons for the Clowns. The Clowns were what we called a road team. We played all of our games on the road. Our opponents were usually a local all star team. If the town that we were playing in didn't have an opponent for us, then we carried a second set of uniforms and divided our roster in half and played ourselves. When I was with the Clowns, our road team was called the Georgia Flyers. The Clowns sold my contract to the Boston Red Sox in 1960. The Clowns got \$ 22,100 for me. That was the highest price paid by any Major League team for a Negro League player. The Red Sox sent me to Waterloo (Iowa) in the Midwest league. I had good speed especially for a catcher. In 1962 I had 46 straight steals without being thrown out until I injured my knee. I had a good year in 1962. I set the Midwest League record that year with 150 walks for the season. Things were never the same after my knee injury, but I played pro ball for three seasons. In 1963 I was in Wellsville and spent 1964 in Seattle and Hawaii of the Pacific Coast League. My last year in pro ball was 1965 when I played for Winston Salem in the Carolina League. After I got released I returned to Chicago and went back to playing for the Midlothian White Sox. I played for them into the 1980's. We won several national titles."

- **Bart Simmons** (Kansas City Monarchs) – Simmons played for the Kansas City Monarch in 1959 and 1960 when they were in the Negro American League and for the Monarchs in 1964 when they were strictly a barnstorming team. His memories of his playing days were as follows: "I played for Ted (Ted Rasberry – owner of the Kansas City Monarchs) two different times. Once when we were in the "league" (1959 and 1960) and again when we were strictly a traveling team. The biggest thing about my time with the Monarchs that I remember was a lot of riding on the bus and not making "no" money. I quit the team the second time because I got tired of riding on the bus and not getting paid. I just went on back home to Guthrie (Oklahoma) and went to work. At least in Guthrie I could make a steady pay check and sleep in my own bed at night. I didn't miss baseball because I went back to playing with the Guthrie Black Spiders (local town team) and a team sponsored by the Oklahoma Furniture Company."
- **Emmanuel "Brown Mule" Stanfield** (Philadelphia Stars) – Stanfield played for the Jacksonville Eagles from 1954 to 1956 before going to play college baseball for Langston State in Oklahoma. After graduating from Langston, he played one season for the Philadelphia Stars before he was drafted into the United States Army. He shared the following about his career in Negro League baseball: "I started playing ball in about 1954 with the Jacksonville Eagles. We didn't play in a league, we traveled around and played teams all over the South. I didn't really get paid much of anything because I was still a kid in high school. During college (Langston State) I was scouted by the Minnesota Twins. They didn't sign me but thought I was a good prospect. According to their scout he felt I needed a little more seasoning. That is why I signed with the Philadelphia Stars. The Stars were owned by Wardel Jackson. He also owned the Birmingham Black Barons. We didn't have a home stadium. We played all of our games on the road. It was a great experience. We played a lot of good teams all over the country. I felt it really helped me and improved my chances of being signed by a Major League team. But I got drafted in 1961 and had to go into the army. When I got out in 1964 I got married and went into teaching. "
- **Walter Stoves** (Birmingham Black Barons) – Walter caught for the Birmingham Black Barons from 1958 through 1960. In 1960 he was named to the East West All Star game. When asked about his career in the Negro Leagues and the end of Negro League baseball,

Walter shared the following: “I started playing ball with Stockham in the Industrial League in 1956 when I was seventeen. I was signed by the Black Barons in 1958 and played for them for three seasons. After the All Star game in 1960, I took a job at Stockham and started played ball for them until around 1974 or 1975. The “league” was still going when I left and went to Stockham. I remember after the 1962 Black Baron’s season a lot of the Black Barons came out to Stockham because the league had just ended. With all the former Black Barons and other Negro League players on our team we won the league title for about ten years in a row.”

- **Lowell Toombs** (Kansas City Monarchs) – Lowell spent most of his baseball career with the Kansas City Giants (1957-1960 and 1962-1964). He also went to spring training with the St. Louis Cardinals in 1958. Lowell is listed on the official 1964 Kansas Monarchs roster that was part of their media kit. When asked about playing for the 1964 Kansas City Monarchs and Ted Rasberry his response was as follows: “I never played for Ted Rasberry or the Kansas City Monarchs. The only thing that I can think of is the Monarchs may have seen me play here locally or when the Giants went to the NBC tournament in Wichita. It was about 1962 or 1963 that we went to Wichita. I had a real good tournament and made the all-star team.”
- **Ike Walker** (Satchel Paige All Stars) – Ike played for the Satchel Paige All Stars in 1963. After the 1963 season, Ike signed with the New York Mets and spent a year in their minor league system with Williamsport and Auburn. He closed out his professional career in 1964 with the St. Lazare Athletics of the Manitoba Senior League. When discussing his playing days with Dr. Revel, he shared the following: “I played with the Satchel Paige All Stars during the 1963 season. This was after the “league” had already ended. My brother (Oscar) had played for Arthur Dove and the Raleigh Tigers in 1960 and 1961. Arthur Dove also owned the Satchel Paige All Stars. When Mr. Dove was putting a team together for the 1963 barnstorming season, he called my brother about playing for the team. I went with Oscar to the tryout camp that Mr. Dove held in Raleigh. Both Oscar and I made the team. Satchel Paige was our headliner. Satch would pitch the first two innings of the game. We traveled mainly through Canada and in the West. Oscar and I got noticed by the Big League scouts during the season and both of us were signed by the New York Mets.”
- **Jim Walker** (Kansas City Monarchs) – Jim was the Publicity Director for Ted Rasberry’s Kansas City Monarchs from the mid-late 1950’s through the late 1960’s. He also served in this capacity for Ted Rasberry’s other Negro American League team the Detroit Stars. Jim was Ted Rasberry’s nephew and lived with Ted in Grand Rapids. Jim’s duties as Publicity Director included: booking games, media relations, interfacing with Major League baseball teams who might be interested in a player, getting media packages out for games and general administrative management teams to support them while they were on the road. Jim ran the Detroit Stars and Kansas City Monarchs office while Ted was on the road with the team. As Jim explained to Dr. Revel of the Center for Negro League Baseball Research in an interview: “We (Ted and Jim) lived at 603 Jefferson in Grand Rapids. The house had the team’s office attached to it. We had phones that rang in the office and in the house. When the team was on the road, I was on duty twenty-four hours a day. You see the biggest problem we had with a road team was the bus breaking down. When the bus broke down, you didn’t know who was going to fix it, how much it was going to cost, how you were going to get the money to the team and how the delay would affect the next game on the schedule.” Dr. Revel’s interview concentrated on what happened at the end of the 1962 season and what was his recollection of when the Negro

American League ended. Jim's response to these questions was as follows: "The Negro American League ended at the end of the 1962 season. There wasn't a Negro American League in 1963. After the 1962 season we were strictly barnstorming and we kept the team on the road for several more years. But Ted always capitalized on the successes of the Kansas City Monarchs in the Negro Leagues. Our promotional and media packages that we sent out in 1963 and for the next several years still promoted the Monarchs as a Negro American League team. When the "league" ended in 1962, it didn't affect me at all. I kept on doing what I had been doing and that was booking the Monarchs all over the country. Ted didn't miss a beat either. He was just as focused as he had always been on promoting the Monarchs. We (Monarchs) kept on going till the late 1960's. Each year we seemed to book fewer games and the distance we traveled got shorter each year.

- **Johnny Walker** (Kansas City Monarchs) – Walker played second base for the Kansas City Monarchs from 1960 to 1962 when they played in the Negro American League and then continued to barnstorm with the Monarchs until they quit playing in the late 1960's. Walker's memories of his days with Ted Rasberry's Kansas City Monarchs were as follows: "Ted was my uncle. I started playing for him in 1960. Sherwood Brewer was my manager. When the league ended in 1962, it didn't really affect the team that much. You see Ted never got upset, no matter what happened. He was just as enthusiastic when we were barnstorming as when the "league" was going. The Monarchs barnstormed for several years after the "league" folded. We played mainly in the Great Lakes area, Midwest, West and Canada. After our 1964 barnstorming schedule we played fewer games each year. One thing that helped Ted was that we had all kinds of ball players around Grand Rapids and if Ted booked a game, it was always easy to put a team together."
- **Oscar L. Walker** (Raleigh Tigers and Satchel Paige All Stars) – Oscar played for the Raleigh Tigers of the Negro American League in 1960 and 1961. He also played for the Satchel Paige All Stars in 1963. He shared the following thoughts about his professional baseball career were: "My career in baseball started in 1955 when I started playing ball for Jesse Richardson in my hometown of Lakeland, Florida. Jesse's team was the Lakeland Tigers. In 1959 the Detroit Tigers (American League) offered me a contract, but I didn't sign because they only offered me a \$ 500.00 signing bonus. In hindsight that was a mistake. In 1960 I signed to play with the Raleigh Tigers of the Negro American League. My contract called for me to get \$ 350.00 a month and it was even notarized. But all I ever got from Arthur Dove was meal money. I rode with Mr. Dove in his big Cadillac, while all the other players rode on the team bus. Mr. Dove was always talking about selling me to the Big Leagues. They told me the Pirates and White Sox were interested, but I never knew what was going on. To tell you the truth, I felt like a slave. I wasn't receiving any money and all they could talk about was selling me. After two years of riding with Mr. Dove all over the country, I quit and came on home to Lakeland. I sat out the 1962 season. Arthur Dove also owned the Satchel Paige All Stars and when he was getting ready for the 1963 season, he called me about playing. I went back out on the road in 1963 with the Satchel Paige All Stars. By this time the Negro American League was gone and we were strictly a road team. I had a good season with the Satchel Paige All Stars and was signed by the New York Mets. Unfortunately I was cut in spring training. When I was traveling with the Satchel Paige All Stars, we played a lot of games in Canada. I had made good contacts up there and signed with St. Lazare in 1964. I spent three years in Canada before calling it quits. I really enjoyed my years in Canada. I hit .452 one year and they told me I am going to be inducted into the Manitoba Baseball Hall of Fame in 2009."

- **Willie Walker** (Birmingham Black Barons and Philadelphia Stars) – Willie played for Wardel Jackson’s Birmingham Black Barons and Philadelphia Stars from 1961 to 1963. When interviewed, he shared the following comments about his baseball career: “Growing up I loved baseball. I even missed my high school graduation to go on a road trip with the Black Barons. Frank Evans who was my manager told me that I didn’t have to go on the road trip, but you couldn’t keep me off the bus. Baseball was the most important thing in my life. I first started playing for the Barons when I was seventeen and still in high school. I was just a kid playing with a lot of grown men. Frank Evans was my manager. He was great; I learned a lot of baseball from him. One of the things I remember the most was that I wanted to be a switch hitter, but Frank told me no I needed to bat left-handed. Well, one game when I thought he wasn’t looking, I came up to the plate to bat right-handed. Before I knew it, timeout was called and out of the dugout walked Mr. Evans. Needless to say that was the last time I batted right-handed. Wardel Jackson owned the Black Barons and he also owned the Philadelphia Stars. I played for both the Black Barons and Stars, wherever I was needed. My last year out on the road was 1963, the league had ended and we were just barnstorming. After that season, I got a full time job in Birmingham and played ball in the industrial league. I played for quite a few years. Some of the teams I played for were: Moore-Handley, Connor Steel, Westover, Olive Mount, Loveman’s Department Store and one of the local radio stations.
- **Ron “Bunny” Warren** (Cincinnati Tigers) – Warren’s baseball career started in 1950 with the Tigers. He was signed by the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1951 and spent the season at Sheboygan (Wisconsin) before getting injured and being released. Ron also played part of one season in the Negro American League with the Detroit Stars in 1955. When asked to reflect on his playing days, Bunny responded as follows: “I started out in 1950 with the Cincinnati Tigers. The team was owned and managed by Walter “Pappa” Banks. Pappa also owned a restaurant and trucking business. We played about 60 games a season. We traveled as far as West Virginia, Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois on the weekends and would also play games around town during the week. Most of our games were on the old 60/40 split, where the winning team got 60 % of the gate and the losing team got 40% of the gate. For this reason we didn’t like to lose and over the years had a pretty darn good team. We had players on our team who had played in the Negro Leagues like Don Johnson, Sonny Webb and me. Baseball for us was a part time job. You couldn’t make enough money playing with the Tigers to support your family, so everyone had a fulltime job besides. We played baseball because we loved it, heck we would have played for nothing and sometimes did. I played with the Tigers until the late 1960’s. I did play one season in the Negro American League with the Detroit Stars. We traveled all over the country. Once I had made the “big loop” (toured all over the United States), I had seen enough. I needed to go to work and make a real living to support my family.” When asked about reports that the Cincinnati Tigers had played in the Negro American League, Bunny gave this explanation: “The Tigers in the 1950’s and 1960’s that we all played on was a semipro team. We never played in the “real” Negro Leagues. There had been a Cincinnati Tigers team in 1937 that had played in the Negro American League. Double Duty Radcliffe managed that Tigers team. I think Pappa Banks and the media sometimes used that connection to “hype” a big game that we were going to play, especially when we played out of town where we might not be known as well.”
- **William “Sonny” Webb** (Cincinnati Tigers) – Sonny Webb played in the Negro American League for the Detroit Stars in 1957 and 1958 and for the Cincinnati Tigers from 1952 to 1968. Webb played first base and was a left-handed pitcher. When

discussing his baseball career, he shared the following: “I played two years in the Negro American League with the Detroit Stars (1957-1958). After the 1958 season, I returned to Cincinnati and got a job with General Electric as a test engineer. I also kept on playing baseball. We had a pretty good semipro team here in Cincinnati by the name of the Cincinnati Tigers. I had played with them before I went to the Negro Leagues. The end of the Negro American League really didn’t affect us because we were playing mostly on weekends. All the players had regular full time jobs. Over the years the Tigers played some of the Negro League teams. I can remember playing the Birmingham Black Barons, Memphis Red Sox and Indianapolis Clowns several times, but we were never a part of the Negro American League. I still love the game as much as ever and am still coaching baseball. I coach the baseball team at Taft High School here in Cincinnati.”

All three of the Cincinnati Tigers players (Don Johnson, Ron Warren and William Webb) were asked about the Cincinnati Tigers billing themselves as a member of the Negro American League in the early 1960’s. All three players were emphatic that the Tigers were never a member of the Negro American League. The Tigers did play Negro League teams over the years but were never a Negro League team themselves. From the perspective of Johnson, Warren and Webb the Tigers were a high level semipro team.

- **Ernie Westfield** (Birmingham Black Barons and Philadelphia Stars) – Westfield played for the Birmingham Black Barons from 1959 to 1964 and the Philadelphia Stars from 1961 to 1964. After the 1960 Negro American League season, Ernie moved to Champaign (Illinois) to play for Wardell Jackson who owned both the Birmingham Black Barons and Philadelphia Stars. Westfield shared the following about his playing days for Wardell Jackson: “I started playing for the Birmingham Black Barons in 1959. In 1960 while pitching for Birmingham, I was selected for the East West All Star game in Comiskey Park in Chicago. In fact I was the starting pitcher for the East squad. After the 1960, season Wardell Jackson asked me to come up to Champaign (Illinois) and play for him there. You see, Wardell owned four teams: Birmingham Black Barons (Negro American League) Philadelphia Stars (barnstorming team), Champaign Eagles (Eastern Illinois League and the Chicago-Urbana Eagles (farm team for the Champaign Eagles). Wardell really wanted to win the Eastern Illinois League title. One thing you need to understand about Wardell Jackson is that he was a big numbers man in Illinois. Sometimes when we were on the road it was hard getting paid or money from him because he always dealt in cash. Now if you were around him, it was easy getting paid. He drove a great big Cadillac that always had a trunk full of cash. If you needed something he would open the car and pay you in cash on the spot. So I felt the best thing for me was staying close to Jackson because he always took real good care of me. During the 1961 and 1962 seasons, I played for the Birmingham Black Barons, Philadelphia Stars and Champaign Eagles. I played wherever Wardell needed me. The Negro American League was still going at this time, but we all knew it was fading fast. After the 1962 season, Wardell brought the Black Barons bus and uniforms back to Champaign. Some of the players came up here, but most of them stayed in Birmingham and got jobs out at the plants. There was no Negro American League season in 1963. Wardell continued to operate the Birmingham Black Barons and Philadelphia Stars out of Champaign. In 1963 and 1964 I played for both the Birmingham Black Barons and the Philadelphia Stars, but it was strictly barnstorming by this time. The Birmingham Black Barons played mainly in the Midwest and Great Lakes area. We never went back to Birmingham. Sure missed pitching at Rickwood Field. I also pitched for the Champaign Eagles when I wasn’t out on the road with one of the other teams. I settled down permanently and made Champaign my home where I still live today. I did keep on

playing baseball for the Champaign Eagles and Danville Boosters through the early 1970's. I have stayed in pretty good shape over the year. You know I can still throw the ball over 80 mph today."

- **Ira White** (Raleigh Tigers) – Ira played in the outfield for the Raleigh Tigers during the 1962 season. Ira shared the following story with Dr. Revel about his career in the Negro American League with the Raleigh Tigers: "Arthur Dove (owner of the Raleigh Tigers) knew my high school baseball coach here in Macon (Georgia). Mr. Dove had contacted our coach about signing players for the Tigers 1962 season. Mr. Dove came to Macon and held tryouts for several players on our local team, the Macon All Stars, and several players from our high school baseball team. We had a real good high school team. John "Blue Moon" Odom was the star of our high school team. You know "Blue Moon" made it all the way up to the Major Leagues with the Athletics. When the tryouts were over, six Macon players left with the Tigers: Ernest Fann (catcher), Moses Herring (infielder), Henry Hill (shortstop) John "Blue Moon" Odom (pitcher), Tommy William (pitcher) and myself. I only stayed with the team about a month. We barnstormed through the Carolinas. I left the team and came on back home because there weren't any Big League scouts coming to the games and we weren't making any money. We weren't thinking about the Negro Leagues, we were there for one reason only, to catch the eye of a Major League scout. I heard the Tigers broke up latter that season in Illinois when they were playing the Indianapolis Clowns. If I remember correctly it had something to do with a family emergency back in Raleigh. Shortly after I returned to Macon, I went to live in New York City. I continued playing baseball for the next several years in the Central Park League before I went into the military."
- **Curtis Williams** (Birmingham Black Barons) – Curtis played in the Negro American League for the Memphis Red Sox (1958-1959) Kansas City Monarchs (1959) and Birmingham Black Barons (1960-1962). Cutis also played barnstorming baseball for the Birmingham Black Barons, Philadelphia Stars and Harlem Stars from 1962 through 1964. His memories of his baseball career are as follows: "People always told me I was too small to play baseball. I only weighed about 140 pounds. I came up knowing a lot about the Negro Leagues because our local team, the Oak Ridge Bombers, played several of the "league" teams. The Memphis Red Sox wanted me to play for them in 1957 after we played them in a game, but my father said no. The Bombers were a real good team. We had several players from our team go to the Negro Leagues. There was me, Curtis Williams, Alexander Hardin, Eugene Williams and Leon Mahone. The next year I was able to sign with Memphis and spent the next two years (1958 and 1959) with the Red Sox before moving on to play for the Birmingham Black Barons. I was with Birmingham when the "league" broke up in 1962. My manager was Frank Evans. After the "league" broke up all the players went different places. I stayed with Jackson (Wardell Jackson – team owner) and barnstormed for the Birmingham Black Barons and Philadelphia Stars for the next three years or so. I also played for another traveling team by the name of the Harlem Stars."
- **Eugene Williams** (Birmingham Black Barons) – Eugene played for the Memphis Red Sox (1958-1959) and Birmingham Black Barons (1960-1962). He also played in Venezuela (Cartenga) for Quincy Troupe and played several barnstorming seasons for Satchel Paige's All Stars. Eugene pitched and played third base for the Birmingham Black Barons during the 1962 Negro American League season. His memories of the 1962

season are as follows: “My last year in professional baseball was 1962. I was playing for the Birmingham Black Barons. Frank Evans was my manager and we played our home games at Rickwood Field in Birmingham. We played the Kansas City Monarchs, Raleigh Tigers and Philadelphia Stars (only a few games) in “league” games, but we (Black Barons) also played a lot of local teams. At the end of the season (1962), the “league” broke up and I came home to Oak Ridge (Tennessee). No big deal was made about the “league” (Negro American League) ending, we just all went home.”

- **Harvey Wrenn** (Philadelphia Stars) – Wrenn played in the outfield for the Philadelphia Stars for a short period of time during the 1963 season. Harvey’s memories of his career in professional baseball were as follows: “I signed with the Stars at the beginning of their 1963 season. We traveled through Illinois and into North Carolina before coming back through Philadelphia. I only got to play in a couple of games. These guys (Stars) were really good. They were in a whole league above me. The Stars dropped me off in Philly and went back on the road. That was the last I saw of the Philadelphia Stars. I went back to playing for the Philadelphia Raiders. We never played any Negro League teams on the road trip that I was on with the Stars. To the best of my knowledge there was no Negro League going on at this time.”