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Beating the Klan

Brian Carroll

the introduction of integration in the 1930s, a decade before Jackie Robinson and the Brooklyn Dodgers broke the color barrier in Major League Baseball in 1947 and two decades before the desegregation of public schools was ushered in by *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* in 1954.

To that end, I looked at coverage in the *Eagle* and the *Beacon*, the two dailies in Wichita during the 1920s, as well as in several weeklies, including the *Negro Star* and the *People's Elevator*, the city's two African American papers at the time; the *Klan Kourier* (later the *Kansas Kourier*); and the *Catholic Advance*. Particularly, I looked at press coverage—mainstream and black—of the beginnings of the integration of baseball in Wichita during 1920-30, a momentous period for race relations in the United States. Founded to fight legal race discrimination of all kinds, the NAACP marked its first decade in 1920, while the Urban League, the African Blood Brotherhood, and the Universal Negro Improvement Association all were ascendant.⁸ The re-formed Ku Klux Klan, which aimed to enforce race discrimination, to fight Catholicism, Judaism, and immigration, and to make money, was but five years old, struggling for credibility and acceptance in the state and in the region.

The literature on the history of baseball in Wichita and all of Kansas is thin with respect to the contributions of African Americans. Harold Evans in *Baseball in Kansas, 1867-1940* does not mention players of color in any context, for example, while Bob Rives in *Baseball in Wichita* only briefly mentions the Monrovians in its single reference to African Americans in baseball (and does so incorrectly, referring to the team as the Monrovarians).⁹ Jason Pendleton in "Jim Crow Strikes Out" does carefully document interracial baseball in the city, and I seek to build on his scholarship by focusing on newspaper coverage.¹⁰

BASEBALL AND RACE RELATIONS AFTER WORLD WAR I

Having fought for freedom in Europe in a war in which blacks served with distinction both as soldiers abroad and in factories at home, America did little to prevent a hardening of the racial divide on its own soil. During the "Red Summer" of 1919, twenty-five race riots broke out across the nation.¹¹ Two years later, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, thirty-five black residents were killed in a

baseball fans planning to attend the game at Island Park in Wichita, Kansas, on June 21, 1925, were advised by the *Wichita Beacon*, the afternoon newspaper, that "strangle holds, razors, horsewhips, and other violent implements of argument" would be barred at the gate.¹ The fear was not of unrest that might somehow be provoked by the near-record heat wave; the warning had to do with race. The all-black Wichita Monrovians, a "fast colored team" just back from a barnstorming tour in Oklahoma, were to play the Ku Klux Klan No. 6 semi-professional team.² To discourage favoritism, the game was to be officiated by two white Catholics, "Irish" Carrey and Dan Dwyer.

Little else is known about what must have been a remarkable baseball game played just months after the Klan had been officially ousted from the state by the Kansas Supreme Court and, a few years earlier, by Kansas governor Henry J. Allen, publisher of the *Beacon*.³ Despite the unlikely matchup, few remarked on the game, to judge by newspaper coverage at the time, and few, therefore, have remarked on it since.⁴ Coverage of it in the morning newspaper, the *Wichita Eagle*, in which it was described as a "novel" game, is typical. Under the headline "Monrovians Beat K. K.," a tantalizingly short, two-sentence report in the middle of a sports page devoted to white baseball coverage summarized the action from the day before, a day during which "searing winds" drove the mercury to 102 degrees: "The Wichita Monrovians won from the K. K. team in a close and interesting baseball battle at Island Park, Sunday 10 to 8. A good sized crowd watched the colored team win the contest."⁵

Why did the game take place at all? Who initiated or organized the event? What did the teams seek to gain in playing, other than a paycheck? Unfortunately, the newspapers of the day are silent, and the game's participants, whose names are not known, likely all are deceased.⁶ That the game occurred at all, however, reveals something of the state of race relations in the mid-1920s in Kansas, a state with, according to one historian, an ambiguous record on race.⁷ Examining newspaper coverage—or the absence of it—of racial conditions in the heartland in the 1920s, we can identify something of the social change that eventuated in

BLACK BASEBALL IN WICHITA IN THE 1920S

The game between the Monrovians and the Klan could only highlight the racial divide in Wichita and Kansas at mid-decade. In 1906, ten years after the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Plessy v. Ferguson* ("separate but equal"), Wichita began segregating its schools, a move that the Klan aggressively fought for. The *Eagle* endorsed the plan as best "for the colored race."²⁰ The black population of 6,500, less than 10 percent of the city's total, was too small to mount a significant resistance. Probably in light of that fact, the *Wichita Searchlight* advised that blacks avoid "ungentlemanly or unladylike" behavior in response to the new Jim Crow law.²¹ Housing, too, became increasingly segregated, as shown by a study done by the Wichita Council on Churches in 1924. One out of five blacks, 1,300 in total, lived "far below the level of decency and comfort," according to the report, and many lived in "squatter-towns" that were developing at the city's margins.²²

The Klan-Monrovians game punctuated a period of transition for black baseball. In 1920 the Negro National, the first black professional league of substance, was launched nearby in Kansas City, Missouri, and was the product of an intimate partnership between team owners and the black press.²³ In the context of what quickly became an economically depressed decade for most Americans but in particular black Americans, the cooperation from and among newspapermen interested to promote financial success and athletic achievement in black baseball was part of a larger effort to establish credibility in the eyes of the mainstream from which the black community was systematically excluded. It was this period of self-help and uplift that made possible the activist reporting and campaigning for the desegregation of baseball in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

Many black communities, including Wichita's, were heeding Booker T. Washington's call for cooperation within and among black businesses "as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress."²⁴ The *Negro Star*, for example, sounded the theme in its house ads—"We strive to please, to uplift, to advance the race" and "Yours for Racial Uplift and Business Enterprise."²⁵ The headline to a story about a day of meetings at the black Water Street YMCA in 1922 read, "The Negro Must Help Himself." "If we are to gain and maintain the respect of the white race," wrote the reporter, probably Hollie T. Sims, the *Star*'s owner and publisher, who attended the meetings, "we must prove that the rich, red, potent blood is in our veins and that we are capable of producing and achieving results."²⁶

later blamed on "agitation among the negroes of social equality."¹² Walter F. White, secretary of the NAACP, warned that the patience of blacks was running out, that their experience of inequality at war and now at home was taking its toll.¹³ In addition, in the early twenties, in the "Great Northern Drive," hundreds of thousands of blacks from the South migrated northward and into the cities to benefit from the industrial boom, leading to a sense of hope and a period of institution building.¹⁴ From 1910 to 1930, 1.5 million blacks, including the publishers of Wichita's *Negro Star*, left the South and headed for Northern cities, many of them passing through the gateway city of Kansas City, just east of Wichita.¹⁵ Kansas actively recruited Southern blacks, allowing land ownership as early as the 1870s.

Baseball during this period was reestablishing itself as the national pastime after the Black Sox scandal of 1919 had threatened its integrity.¹⁶ Several developments coincided to contribute to baseball's resurgence. Press coverage of the game was expanding; a play-ground movement, school athletic programs, and park programs were all growing; baseball's moral tone and reputation for civility and sportsmanship were felt to be improved by the increased interest that women were beginning to take in baseball; baseball was celebrated in popular songs and entertainment; and the automobile gave easy access to the ballpark for many people who otherwise would be unlikely to attend a ballgame in the city. Movie houses had been showing World Series films since 1908, while the advent and mass adoption of the telegraph and electric scoreboards enabled fans in America's cities to monitor the progress of games remotely.¹⁷ In Wichita, baseball coverage in the *Eagle*, *Beacon*, and *Star* was robust, indicating the game's importance to black and white communities alike.

Baseball provides a convenient lens through which to examine integration's contexts, because during the first half of the twentieth century the national pastime flourished—together with banking, insurance, gambling, and journalism—as one of the industries in which African Americans found most success during the "bleak decades of racial exclusion."¹⁸ Culturally, the summertime game was an important institution in black communities throughout the country, from the Roaring Twenties through the war-torn 1940s and into the 1950s. The hugely successful Kansas City Monarchs, for example, were described in the *Call*, the city's African American newspaper, as "the life of Kansas City in the Negro vicinity."¹⁹

fore control its own playing venue; most clubs had to accommodate their schedule to that of another club whose ballpark they rented.

The Monroviaans officially opened their new park on June 3, 1922, with a gala event covered by the *Beacon*, though not the *Star*. Charles Prince Edward, a black "attaché" of Wichita's district court, delivered the opening speech and then stayed to umpire the game. Throughout the decade, Edward appears more often than not as the umpire at games at Monrovia Park. Throwing out the first pitch was S. W. Zickefoose, a white man, chief of Wichita's detectives. "A large number of enthusiastic fans of both races sat in the bleachers" for the game, indicating Wichita's ambiguous attitudes toward race in the 1920s.²⁹

Stock in the Monrovia Park Association was valued at \$10,000, which was to be used to buy the ballpark at 12th and Mosley. It is not clear whether this transaction was ever made, though the park's name, like the team's, a tribute to the capital of Liberia, suggests that it did. J. M. Booker, president of the corporation, was reported by the *Beacon* to be planning a benefit for a children's home in Wichita—an example of the civic involvement of most black teams of the era. The Monroviaans appear sporadically in brief mentions in the *Eagle* and *Beacon* through 1930, when the team and the corporation simply vanish. According to the *Negro Star*, where coverage was also sporadic, the "South-western Champions" enjoyed enormous success in 1923, a year after the opening of their ballpark. They went 52-8, a record that included wins against "the best amateur clubs in the country," many of them white.³¹

In 1922, two years after the Negro National's mentions founding in Kansas City, the Monroviaans and eight teams in Oklahoma, Nebraska, and Kansas banded together to form the Colored Western League, a segregated counterpart to the white Western League, of which the Wichita Izzies were longtime members. Charles Bettis, an editor with the *Wichita Protest*, a black weekly, served as secretary. Like most black leagues, however, the Colored Western was loosely run. It faced deep logistical and fiscal challenges and could not overcome fighting among its members. With team officials considering a lawsuit against the league

The same week that the Monroviaans battled the Klan, the twenty-fourth annual National Baptist Sunday School and Baptist Young People's Union Congress opened in Wichita with a ringing endorsement of Washington's ideas. Atlanta's Rev. Dr. Daniel W. Cannon, a bishop in the black Baptist church, delivered the Congress's keynote address:

The American Negro must win his way to civilization as other races have done, and then he must learn that civilization is not a garment to be purchased . . . but must be gained thru [sic] industry, honesty, reliability and thrift.²⁷

In a front-page story in the *Beacon*, Cannon was quoted as saying that blacks "are here to work."²⁸

The convention received several days of front-page coverage in the *Beacon*, probably because of the size of the assembly, which gathered at Wichita's Forum, the city's largest indoor meeting venue.

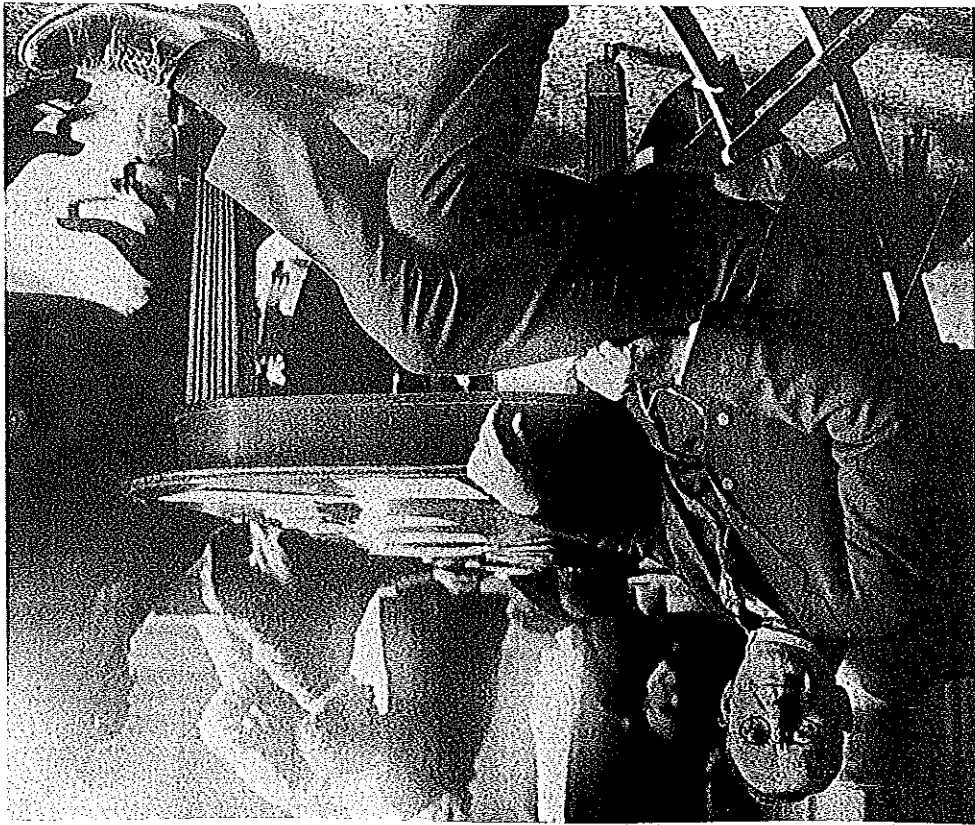
The Monroviaans, too, were a product of the kind of self-help urged on the black community by Cannon, Washington, and the *Star*. The ballpark was owned by the Monrovia Park Association, "one of the first colored corporations in the West" to own and maintain both a team and a ballpark, Monrovia Park, also called Monrovia Amusement Park.²⁹ In the history of black baseball, it was rare for a team to own and there-

Wichita, Kansas, circa 1926. The local newspapers, including the dailies, the *Wichita Beacon* and the *Wichita Eagle*, show a Midwestern city where race relations in sports in the 1920s were progressing on the field and in the stands—a picture in sharp contrast to what prevailed in regions where Jim Crow still prevailed.



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William Simmons (1880-1945), who in 1915 re-formed the Ku Klux Klan, which counted 6,000 members in Wichita in 1922 but would see its influence wane there and nationwide as the decade progressed. The Klan emerged as a campaign issue in Kansas's 1924 gubernatorial race, as publisher William Allen White ran as the "anti-Klan candidate" and the Klan responded with attacks in the *Klan Courier*.

director, Jack Johnson of Topeka, the league collapsed after only one season of play and one championship, won by the Monroviens, who finished with the best won-loss record.³²

In 1925, without league games to fill out their schedule, the Monroviens had to hit the road and, just prior to their game with the Klan, had been touring for six days through western Oklahoma. Barnstorming, the team played six games, losing to Alva, Kiowa, and De-coma and beating Woodward, Waynoka, and Alva.³³ In a brief report in the *Eagle* after the trip, the Monroviens announced they were "open for games with any team in Kansas," an invitation that might have led to the game with the Klan approximately three weeks later.

Still, some important facts are known about the Monroviens-Klan game in 1925. In a report in the *Eagle* a few days afterward, it was described as the "best attended and most interesting game in Wichita" that Sunday, a see-saw battle that began as a pitchers' duel and ended with a blizzard of scoring.³⁷ We also know that, given "the wide difference of the two organizations," violence was a distinct possibility, as the warning against razors and stranglers indicates.³⁸ According to the *People's Elevator*, the record number of lynchings nationally in the first half of 1925, nine, was four more than during the first six months of 1924, the Klan's disavowals of violence notwithstanding.³⁹ In the *Beacon's* pregame report, which likely was submitted by the Monroviens' manager, Lascelle Dorch, the "colored boys" were said to have asked that "all their supporters be on hand." The article also noted that "the Klansmen are comparatively new" and that the umpires—Irish Garrety and Dan Dwyer—were selected

So little is known about the Klan-Monroviens game in part because the *Negro Star* did not regularly cover sports until 1934. In 1925 it provided no sports coverage at all. The weekly devoted its four or six pages instead mostly to church news and sermons, black achievement, news on resistance to the Klan, and advertising by black businesses. The weekly *Catholic Advance* did not cover sports either. It focused instead on world and national Catholic news, local church news and announcements, and a buyer's guide of Catholic businesses "recommended for your patronage."³⁴ Nor did the *Klan Courier* cover sports, devoting its pages mostly to national roundups, meeting reports,

Proths in Predicting What He'll Do," and "White Changes Stand Any Time to Make It Fit."

Gathering opposition, including resistance from Catholics, the black press, and politicians such as Allen and White, who were also newspaper publishers, combined to limit the "Protestant American giant," as did postwar society generally, in which studenty in any form seemed somewhat out of place. Robert S. Abbott, founder and publisher of the *Chicago Defender*, the nation's leading black newspaper at the time, called on blacks nationally to "join Catholics, Jews and the Irish in the war against the Klan."⁴⁶ Across the country, whites resisted, including, in Wichita, the local police force and veterans of foreign wars.⁴⁷

The *Negro Star* opposed the Klan in a variety of ways. Virtually every week during the 1920s, it included news on the Klan's progress nationwide or on success in curbing its influence and growth. "Watch and pray, yet be ye ever ready," the *Star* warned in May 1922. "The Ku Klux Klan has a more sinister purpose than merely maintaining white supremacy and protecting the virtue of the white skin woman."⁴⁸

Three stories on the "continued outrages" of the Klan dominated the front page of the *Star* a month later, coverage that united "Negroes, Catholics, Jews" in opposition to the "un-American" organization.⁴⁹ In July 1926, specifically in opposition to a Klan-backed state, the *Star* endorsed three judges—of "unquestioned moral standing," it wrote—who were up for election in Wichita.⁵⁰

Neither the *Eagle* nor the *Beacon* actively opposed or supported the Klan. The *Beacon* was more thorough in its reporting on Klan and anti-Klan activities. Coverage of the Klan was in general infrequent. Typically it reflected concern for the organization's reputation for staidness and violence.⁵¹ Also undermining the efforts of the Klan in Kansas was the fact that it was not a home-grown organization, being largely imported from Oklahoma. The Wichita chapter was organized by an Oklahoman using a local hotel room, "room 511, Hotel Broadview," as headquarters.⁵² By early 1923, the "koo-koo" had organizations in Wichita, Hutchinson, and Arkansas City, and a chapter was forming in Topeka. In 1925, the year of the game, a gathering of 15,000 Klansmen "jammed the fairgrounds here burning crosses and singing. . . this marked the [Klan's] crescendo in Kansas."⁵³ As the game was being played that hot summer's day in Wichita, the Klan had already been exposed, in efforts such as Allen's "ouster" suit, as a moneymaking racket.⁵⁴

because they were "well known amateur umpires" and "to get away from all possible favoritism," a reference to their being Irish Catholic.⁶⁰

It is significant that the game took place at the city-owned Island Park. Built on Ackerman Island in the middle of the Arkansas River in 1911, the wooden ballpark anchored a thirty-four-acre leisure complex that included the Wonderland amusement park and its Giant Thriller rollercoaster built in 1905. Also on the property were a swimming pool, vaudeville theater, dance pavilion and bandstand, roller rink, and a collection of larger-than-life statues acquired from the 1904 World Fair. Ackerman Island was perhaps the most public of Wichita venues for an interracial game; after improvements to the ballpark in 1921, seating capacity was about 5,000.⁴¹

Island Park, like other city-owned, city-run venues and facilities, including Wichita High School, the city's largest high school in the 1920s, was open to blacks. Segregation occurred at a societal level, but mostly it was not effected by law, as it increasingly was throughout the Deep South.⁴² A story in 1924 in the *Star*, for example, offered to "Any Group of Colored Boys" a baseball field at 9th and Mosley, a field owned by the city but run by the black Water Street YMCA two afternoons and two evenings each week.⁴³ This allowed blacks and whites (and, presumably, the city's Mexican and Syrian populations) to use the park on alternate days.

THE KLAN AND ITS OPPOSITION

The game against the Monroviaans came at a critical time for the Klan in Kansas and nationally, which may explain why it occurred at all. The white supremacist organization was fighting for its life. Organized by William Simmons in 1915, the renewed Klan had a great deal of support in the early 1920s, counting 40,000 members in Kansas and approximately 6,000 in Wichita in 1922.⁴⁴ In the 1924 gubernatorial race, the Klan's policies became a campaign issue. William Allen White, publisher of the progressive *Emporia Gazette*, ran on a platform that included strong opposition to the Klan, a group he called a "self constituted body of moral idiots." He called himself the "Anti-Klan Candidate for Governor."⁴⁵ The Klan fought back. In the October 17 issue of the *Klan Courier*, the headline for the lead story on the weekly's front page read, "White Appears in Sorry Role in Race for Governor." The story carried the deckhead, "Editor Reckless of Truth." Other front-page stories that week in the *Courier*: "Kansas Citizen Says White Is Bushwhacker," "Religion Football for Jest of Editor White," "White

BASEBALL COVERAGE IN WICHITA'S NEWSPAPERS

by the Bloomers, indicating a fairly liberal editorial policy on the part of the newspaper.

Why the *Star* did not cover the game is more difficult to understand, though perhaps simple to explain. Until mid-1934, sports coverage in the black weekly was almost entirely reflexive, or passive. The paper solicited and sometimes received reports from teams and clubs in the city's black community, including the Monroviens, the A.B.C.s, the Gray Sox, and many of the city's South Central Athletic Association basketball teams. It appears to have published whatever such reports it received, yielding no comprehensive or systematic coverage of any sport, much less of any one organization. In addition, publisher H. T. Sims was not in Wichita the day of the game. He was at a session of the Baptist Young People's Union (BYPU), an organization for which he was national secretary, in Fort Scott. Given its limited resources, the newspaper may not have been able to send anyone to Island Park to cover the game, particularly on Sunday, the busiest news day of the week for a publication devoted to church news. The *Star* did briefly experiment with sports coverage in 1922 (one issue, 28 July, using Negro Newspaper Association wire copy), but Sims did not begin meaningful sports coverage until the arrival of sports editor Bennie C. Williams in 1934.⁶¹

Sims's own story parallels that of the community he served. As a young newspaper publisher in Greenwood, Mississippi, and newly married to Virginia, who would help publish the *Star* for thirty-four years, Holhe T. Sims was run out of town for publishing a story in 1919 in tribute to the black soldiers who helped defeat Germany in World War I. Greenwood's sheriff and "a committee of white citizens" told the Sims that "you can't run that kind of stuff in Mississippi," Virginia Sims later remembered. "Cotton can grow at the North Pole easier than the news you're putting out could go in Mississippi," the Sims were told. "We couldn't continue to publish our newspaper and live," wrote Virginia Sims, shortly before her death.⁶² In a letter to a fellow member of the NAACP, for which H. T. Sims founded the Wichita chapter, H. T. Sims remembered it this way: "The white man of the South attempted to stop me from praising my people."⁶³ With two other families who helped publish the newspaper, the Sims loaded up their printing press and boarded a northbound train to Kansas. They published the *Star*, the self-proclaimed "mouth-piece of 28,000 in Kansas" first in June 1919 from a barn behind their home at 1241 Wabash. (The barn and the house are completely gone, leaving only a neglected, overgrown vacant lot in a poor black section of Wichita.)

These historical and social contexts suggest that for Wichita's Klan chapter, Klan No. 6, the game at Island Park was a rather desperate publicity move. The Klan's No. 6 team in fact does not appear in any other *Beacon* or *Eagle* article or in any posting of league standings in the 1920s, making the few reports of the Monroviens game the only evidence in the press that the team existed. It could have been organized expressly for the one Sunday afternoon in June, an irony against the backdrop of the Klan's much publicized campaign to ban Sunday baseball earlier in the decade. If their purpose in playing a baseball game with the Monroviens was to win public favor, that could help explain why the event was evidently unaccompanied by violence or rowdiness. The see-saw battle, knotted at one apiece through the first five innings, was the most entertaining game in town that Sunday, according to the *Beacon*.⁵⁵ The rooting was "enthusiastic," it reported, and the large crowd "would have been a credit to the [white] Western League."⁵⁶

It is not clear whose judgments and opinions the newspaper was reporting, but coverage during the period of black teams in general and of the Kansas City Monarchs in particular suggests that the *Beacon* and the *Eagle* reprinted reports sent in by the black teams themselves, including the Monroviens. The game report carried no byline, which was common for sports coverage of the period, and no individuals in the short article were identified in any context, neither as subjects nor as sources. The report likely was submitted by Lascelle Dorich, the team's manager and a porter at Wichita's Skær Hotel, exemplifying how in the black communities of the period business leaders invariably played many roles.⁵⁷

That the game was not meaningfully covered by the big dailies can only be explained by race. White teams and leagues got plenty of regular coverage, including previews leading up to big games, reports on the contests themselves, and statistical roundups and league standings.⁵⁸ That the dailies would accept and run reports from black teams signals accommodation, however, as does the existence on the *Beacon* staff in 1922 of at least two black reporters, George E. Hamilton and B. C. Kanavallona.⁵⁹ (The Reverend Dr. Kanavallona also was the *Star*'s assistant editor throughout the decade.) Even more dramatically, the local dailies ran at least two items on all-black women's teams, including one as early as 1920. In May of that year, in a game at Island Park, the Alabama Bloomers played a Wichita team called the A.B.C. Club.⁶⁰ The report appears to have been submitted to the *Beacon*

organize the Kansas Coal and Mercantile Company.⁶⁷ The business partners sold shares in the new company. "We need your and every Race man and woman's \$s and co-operation to make this Company a success," they said. To judge from advertisements in the *Star*, which ran over a period of years, the company was indeed a success, but it is not known on what scale. Neely was a "Race man" himself, organizing, with national backing, Wichita's Local Porters Union in 1924, in addition to working at the *Star* and running the mercantile company.⁶⁸ So also was Sims's brother, Hugh N. Sims, who moved with the Sims family to Wichita from Mississippi. Hugh was one of Wichita's two black dentists in 1925, according to a church-council report published by the *Beacon*, a comprehensive study that described "general race relations" as "co-operative" and that discouraged "discrimination against Negro pupils at Wichita High School," an integrated school.⁶⁹

The *Beacon* and *Eagle* each covered the Montrovians as frequently, or as infrequently, as did the *Star*, providing a few lines on a recent game in the city every few weeks or so. Of the three, the *Beacon* provided the most coverage, though for all three papers the short reports were almost certainly submitted by the teams—by Dorch for the Montrovians. The clue is how the teams are described. "The fastest organization of colored players ever organized in Wichita," read one story in the *Eagle* about the Montrovians. According to

Hollie T. Sims was the son of R. T. Sims, who published a black church paper in Canton, Mississippi, the *Mississippi Baptist*.⁶⁴ H. T. Sims was also a prototypical black newspaperman, serving as an important voice in and for Wichita's black community and involving himself deeply in the community's efforts to lift itself up out of poverty. He founded Wichita's chapter of the NAACP soon after moving to Wichita and served as treasurer of the Water Street YMCA, which was a cultural nexus for Wichita's black community in the 1920s. He also was secretary of the BYPU, which exerted important political influence in its role as a mouthpiece for Baptist blacks and particularly the young.⁶⁵ Sims wrote in the *Star* that "a newspaper-man's duty is to serve the public by giving the truth of all matters touching the interests of the public regardless of his own individual opinions or creed."⁶⁶ Had he been in Wichita the day of the game, he might have covered it himself or at least been on hand. It is also possible he would have ignored the game, recognizing the event as a Klan ploy to curry favor with the public at large and the black community specifically.

Sims clearly lived out Booker T. Washington's philosophy, by employing six people to publish the *Star* and more generally in working to expand business and enterprise in Wichita's black community. In early 1922, for example, he joined with B. H. Neely, his longtime business manager and advertising representative, to

Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) advocated cooperation within and among black businesses, a message that was well received by members of Wichita's black community. The Wichita Montrovians were owned by the first colored corporations in the West" to own and maintain a ballclub and a ballpark at a time when most black ballclubs had to accommodate their schedule to that of another club whose facility they rented.



CARROLL: Beating the Klan

developed baseball's first portable lighting system and in the early 1930s barnstormed with it in cities including St. Louis, Dallas, and Wichita, leading up to its debut in the major leagues at Cincinnati's Crosley Field in May 1935.⁷⁵ After the debut of night baseball in Enid, Oklahoma, on April 29, 1930, the lighting system came to Wichita, where it required fifty workers to install.⁷⁶ Noting the importance of the innovation for baseball, both the *Eagle* and the *Bacon* devoted several days' worth of coverage to the game in Oklahoma. More importantly, the coverage played up the technological progress the lights represented and made little mention of the Monarchs' race or that the game was between black clubs. The *Eagle* story carried the headline "Night Baseball To Get Introduction in Wichita For Two Games," and its lead paragraph read: "Between 7 A.M. and 8:15 P.M. today, Island Park will be transformed into a modern electrical plant . . . so fans in this vicinity can view night baseball for the first time."⁷⁷ The next day's paper told Wichitans that "Night Baseball Proves Success At Island" and that playing conditions were "almost as perfect as . . . daylight could give."⁷⁸

There is no trace of prejudice, antagonism, or institutional bias against the Monarchs merely because of their race (though neither is there recognition of the injustices and discrimination that gave birth to the Monarchs and the Negro Leagues in the first place). By contrast, two years later, when the Wichita Izzies, a white team in the Western League, played its first night game, little was made of the event in either of the big dailies.⁷⁹ The *Eagle's* columnist Pete Lightner became a sort of Monarchs advocate, a peculiar posture for a white writer in a mainstream daily in 1930, and he remained a Monarchs booster throughout the decade.⁸⁰ He was especially enamored of Satchel Paige, calling him the "greatest colored pitcher in the country and perhaps the greatest pitcher regardless of race."⁸¹

In the *Negro Star*, the longest baseball story to appear there during the decade, and one of the few to land on page one, was a report on the Monarchs' defeat of the Monroviens in 1923 in a game at Monrovia Park. Charles Prince Edwards umpired, and T. J. "T Baby" Young caught.⁸² "Last Tuesday brought the long looked for and noted Kansas City Monarchs before the Wichita Base Ball Fans," the story read, giving the most complete game report published in the *Star* up to that date. It is likely that the performance by Young in this game, catching popular Monroviens pitcher named only as "Farmer," led the Monarchs to sign the 21-year-old Oklahoma native. Thomas Jefferson Young started for the Monarchs in the late 1920s and 1930s, and for at least one season there his brother

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another, they were "Wichita's favorite colored ball team," a team that played at a level "that has not been excelled in the history of colored baseball circles in Wichita." The players' names, too, suggest that the teams themselves submitted the copy, names such as "Chicken," "Red Horse," and "Six Shooter."⁸³ The dailies likewise included items on the city's other black teams, including the Gray Sox, the A. B. C. Club, Black Wonders, Rex Cudahy, Stockyards, and Coffeyville. These short game reports, *fats divers*, appeared before filler copy at the bottom of the sports page. One report, on the Monroviens' win over Aces Up of Hutchinson, was followed by the filler line, "Dutch painters have always given their women large hands." Another inane alert alerted readers that there were 3.5 billion cubic feet of timber in the forests of eastern Poland.⁸⁴

Some of these games were against white clubs, including a game in 1922 at Monrovia Park against the *Eagle's* own city-league team, the Wichita Eagle Newsies.⁸⁵ That year the Monroviens also played the white American Legion team, winning 2 to 1, also at Monrovia Park, and played several games against the *Bacon's* championship amateur-league team.⁸⁶ That white teams would routinely play all-black teams on the black team's home field in the black section of town says a great deal about race relations during the period. This did not occur, for example, in Boston, Chicago, Baltimore, or New York City, nor did it occur anywhere in the South.

One black team stands out for its high profile in the Wichita press, being routinely treated to more than brief mentions in the *Star*, the *Eagle*, and the *Bacon*—the perennial Negro Leagues champion Kansas City Monarchs. As Wichita native and baseball historian Tim Rives points out, no Negro Leagues team "won more pennants, sent more players to the major leagues, or has more members enshrined in the National Baseball Hall of Fame" than the Monarchs.⁸⁷ The team barnstormed throughout the Midwest in the 1920s, taking the Negro Leagues brand of baseball and its own brand of comedy to small towns, to black communities in the larger cities, and to white fans everywhere. As did Joe Louis and Jesse Owens for their peers in their respective sports, the Monarchs won for blacks in baseball a measure of credibility and notoriety, as shown by coverage of them in the *Eagle* and the *Bacon*. For Wichita, the Monarchs also brought night baseball. The team's white owner, J. L. Wilkinson,

Notes

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1. "Only Baseball Is On Tap At Island Park; Klan and Colored Team To Mix on the Diamond Today," 21 June 1925, A5.
2. Description "fast colored team" from "Monrovia (Sd) Divide," *Wichita Eagle*, 3 June 1925, 11. Umpires' names from "Only Baseball Is On Tap At Island Park; Klan and Colored Team To Mix on the Diamond Today," *Wichita Eagle*, 21 June 1925, A5.
3. In January 1925, the Klan was "oust[ed]," or outlawed, for operating for profit without a state charter; the Klan appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, but the appeal was denied ("Klan's End in Kansas Began in 1922," *Wichita Beacon*, 14 April 1965, no page number). The action was brought by Kansas's attorney general, Richard Hopkins, at the request of Governor Allen, longtime owner and publisher of the *Wichita Beacon*. See also "Report Wichita Alive With Secret Service," *Wichita Eagle*, 25 November 1922, 1. The story carried three dechheads: "Seeking Full Roster of Ku Klux Members," "Many Wichitans Expected to be Listed as Defendants in Ouster Suit," and "5,000 Klansmen in City Is Belief." Allen sold the *Beacon* in 1928.
4. The game has not previously been researched. When the game is mentioned in news media, the few sentences the *Beacon* or *Eagle* devoted to the game are simply recycled. For examples, see Paul Gutierrez, "Museum Brings the Negro Leagues to Life," (Ogden, Utah) *Standard-Examiner*, 24 May 2007; Rheta Grimsley Johnson, "Exhibits of Jazz and Negro League Baseball are Must-Sees in Kansas City," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* 13 January 1999; and Greg Couch, "You're Never Too Old to Learn," *Chicago Sun-Times*, 3 August 2003 (all accessed through America's Newspapers database from NewsBank, 14 November 2007).
5. "Monrovia Beat K. K. K.," *Wichita Eagle*, 22 June 1925, 3. Temperature reading from "Hottest Day," *Wichita Beacon*, 23 June 1925, 1. The 102-degree reading was three degrees off the record for the year and five degrees off the all-time record, according to the newspaper. The *Eagle* also reported a record 4,459 bathers at the city's pool at Central River-side park ("Municipal Pool Attracted 4,459 Bathers Sunday," *Wichita Eagle*, 22 June 1925, 2).
6. The names of only two players, the manager, and the two umpires are known. On-site research to find the five, or their descendants, did not locate any living participants of the game. The players: Thomas Jefferson "T Baby" Young and Hewl Joseph. The manager: Laclelle Dortch. The umpires: W. W. "Fish" Garrey and Dan Dwyer. Both Young and Joseph had good careers with the Kansas City Monarchs, Young as a catcher and Joseph as an infielder, mostly at third base. Joseph also started a taxi service in Kansas City, Paseo Cab Company, later Monarch Cab Company (Larry Lester, "J. L. Wilkinson: 'Only the Stars Come Out at Night,'" in *Satchel Paige and Company*, ed. Leslie Heaphy Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2007), 124).
7. Craig Miner, *Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 1854-2000* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 253.
8. Gregory Holmes Singleton, "Birth, Rebirth, and the 'New Negro' of the 1920s," *Phylon* 43, no. 1 (1982), 42. For more on the black movements referenced, see Simon P. Fullinwider, *The Mind and Mood of Black America* (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1969).
9. "Baseball in Kansas, 1867-1940," in *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (1940), 175-92; *Baseball in Wichita* (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia, 2004). Rives also incorrectly places the Monrovia-Klan game at "Montrovanan Park." There was no such place.
10. Jason Pendleton, "Jim Crow Strikes Out: Interracial Baseball in Wichita, Kansas, 1920-1935," *Kansas History* 20, no. 2 (summer 1997): 86-101. For more on the riots and the increase in lynchings in 1919, see Anne Hagedorn, *Savage Peace: Hope and Fear in America, 1919* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007).

Maurice was a teammate.⁸³ One of the other few front-page baseball stories to run in the *Star* was about the Monarchs winning the Negro National League pennant in 1923.⁸⁴

Coverage of baseball in Wichita during the 1920s, including coverage of the unlikely matchup of blacks and Klansmen on a hot summer Sunday afternoon, indicated an ambivalence toward race and an acceptance of the segregation that created distinct and separate worlds in Wichita, worlds that rarely intersected. When they did, as on that Sunday at Island Park and whenever the Monarchs came to town, little was made of it and nothing was written about it in the newspapers, which seemed to accept de facto segregation. The big dailies did little to cause readers to see any need for change in that regard. The city's black community, to judge from its two weeklies, was more focused on uplifting itself and on gaining respect from the white community than it was on integration; activism on this front was more than a decade away.

The coverage also shows a Klan on the retreat, struggling to win public favor and finding new and gathering enemies as the decade advanced. It shows Wichita sports opening up to blacks, both on the field and in the stands—a picture of race relations in sharp contrast to those that prevailed in the South, where Jim Crow laws and policies were proliferating. The coverage is a tribute to the black press during the period, which relied on families like the Sims to overcome financial and logistical obstacles each and every week. The *Negro Star*, *Wichita Protest*, and *Wichita Searchlight* provide some of the only records of daily life for the city's black community, which was concentrated along Wichita's Cleveland Avenue, from Third to 21st Streets.⁸⁵ They also were more than mere chroniclers of the black experience. As change agents they helped to shape it as well.

In important ways the philosophy of uplift that characterized the 1920s made possible the dramatic progress toward integration in the 1930s. Achievements like those of the Monrovia, the Monarchs, and the black business community in the 1920s provided tools with which to chip away at ignorance of and apathy toward segregation in the 1930s, an arrangement with great costs to black and white populations alike. An examination of coverage in these same newspapers during the 1930s will show how this progress was made and how, as the decade progressed, commentators felt about interracial play in baseball. ■

12. In David J. Goldberg's *Discontented America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1999), 96.
13. Robert Cottrell, *The Best Pitcher in Baseball: The Life of Rube Foster, Negro League Giant* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 139.
14. The "Great Northern Drive" was a phrase coined by the *Chicago Defender* in March 1917 to publicize migration (24 March 1917). For more on the pattern of movement into Kansas of African Americans, who came mostly from Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, and Tennessee, see Nell Irvin Painter, *Exodus: Black Migration to Kansas After Reconstruction* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976).
15. Two good studies of the exodus from the South are Nicholas Lemann, *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992) and Carole Marks, *Farwell, We're Good and Gone: The Great Black Migration* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989). In September 1923, in a report dated in Kansas City, the *Chicago Defender* gloated that the "Migration Movement" had cost the state of Georgia more than \$2 million in one year, finally tying economic repercussions to the absence of a federal anti-lynching law ("Solid South's Power Doomed by Migration," 1 September 1923, 1).
16. For more on Shoeless Joe Jackson and the Black Sox, see Eliot Aislin, *Eight Men Out* (New York: Henry Holt, 1963).
17. John Betts, *America's Sporting Heritage: 1850-1950* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1974), 123.
18. Jerry Malloy, ed., *Sol White's History of Colored Base Ball* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 74. Malloy's edition includes a reprinting of the 1907 volume *Sol White's Official Base Ball Guide*, by Sol White, a black ballplayer, successful manager, and, later, a newspaperman. Quoted in *The Kansas City Monarchs, Champions of Black Baseball*, by Janet Bruce (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1985), 3.
20. In Miller, *Kansas*, 255.
21. *Ibid.*, 256.
22. "Wichita Newspapers Attaining Success in Several Lines," *Wichita Beacon*, 18 January 1924, n.p.
23. See Brian Carroll, *When to Stop the Cheating? The Black Press, the Black Community, and the Integration of Professional Baseball* (New York: Routledge, 2007).
24. Booker T. Washington, "Atlanta Compromise Speech," 18 September 1895. Appearing, respectively, in the *Negro Star*, 13 October 1922, p. 5 and p. 4.
25. "The Negro Must Help Himself," *Negro Star*, 29 April 1922, 2. Sims was treasurer of the YMCA and, therefore, was likely present for the meetings. The story carried no byline.
27. "Negroes Must Make a Place for Their Race," *Wichita Beacon*, 25 June 1925, 1. The convention reported 22,000 member churches and nearly 4 million individual members.
28. Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum, photo archives, accessed 10 January 2008. Cannon's message, which *Beacon* readers would likely have found reassuring, also likely contributed to the prominent coverage. In the June 26 issue he is quoted as preaching "love, not hate" ("teach Negroes Tolerance, Not Hate, Is Urged," *Wichita Beacon*, 11).
29. "Monrovia's Get Charter," *Negro Star*, 11 August 1922, 1. The corporation was made up of "several colored men of the community" who were not identified, and led by J. M. Booker, an attorney in Wichita, who served as president.
30. "Colored Western League Opened and Tulsa Lost," *Wichita Beacon*, 4 June 1922, 4A. The Monrovia's gummelled the Tulsa Black Oilers 8 to 1 behind the pitching of Hill and the catching of T. J. Young.
31. "Lost Just Eight Out of Sixty," *Negro Star*, 20 July 1923, 1. The team's record is perhaps a bit misleading. The Monrovia's would play anyone, including the Arthur Gossett American Legion Post team, the Campbell Bread team, and Kirtie Tire Co.
32. "Colored Western League Having Some Bad Trouble," *Wichita Beacon*, 20 July 1922, 4.
33. "Monrovia's [sic] Divide," *Wichita Eagle*, 3 June 1925, 11.
34. From the *Catholic Advance*, 23 May 1925, 8.
35. The *Klan Courier*, which became the *Kansas Courier* in August 1924, had little local news of any kind. Its contents during the period studied resembled closely that of the Ohio Flory Cross, the Klan's weekly in Ohio, indicating more of a national agenda and the syndication of content. James Harold Slusser, "The Sports Page in American Life in the Nineteen Twenties" (master's thesis, University of California, 1952), 15.
37. "With the Amateurs," *Wichita Beacon*, 23 June 1925, 2.
38. "Only Baseball Is on Tap at Island Park; Klan and Colored Team to Mix on the Diamond Today," *Wichita Beacon*, 21 June 1925, A5. From advertisements in the *Star*, it is known that both W. W. "Insh" Garry and Dwyer served in World War I, were longtime residents of Sedgwick County, claimed to be friends of the black community, and courted the black vote in local elections, Garry for sheriff and Dwyer for registrar of deeds (for Garry, see 21 July 1922, 5; for Dwyer, 27 October 1922, 6). Dwyer was a native of Sedgwick County; Garry had lived in Sedgwick all but one of his fifty years.
41. Jim Cross, "Mid-river Museum Offered; Proposal Calls for Island in Ark," *Wichita Eagle*, 20 April 1995. Ackerman Island is gone; Exploration Place, a \$2-million science center and children's museum, occupies a place of the land that once was home to the man-made island. The wooden Island Park burned down in 1933; it was replaced the next year by Lawrence Stadium, which, as Lawrence-Dumont Stadium, still serves as the city's minor-league baseball facility ("Local History Spotlight," *Wichita Eagle*, 1 June 2006, E 1).
42. Ray "Hap" Dumont, a former sports editor for the *Hutchinson News*, founded the National Baseball Congress, which annually organized the Kansas State Baseball Tournament ("Baseball Legend Dumont Put Wichita on the Map; Tourney Idea Spurred Stadium," *Wichita Eagle*, 10 June 1993).
43. The 1906 law segregating some of Wichita's public schools is the exception rather than the rule.
43. "Base Ball Field Open to Our Boys," *Negro Star*, 18 July 1924, 1.
44. *Minor*, Kansas, 252.
45. Advertisement, *Negro Star*, 31 October 1924, 6. White spoke to Wichita's black community in four stops on 1 November 1924. "Don't [sic] Fail to hear him tell about the Ku Klux Klan," the ad read.
46. In Goldberg, 134.
47. "Supposed Klan Under Eyes of Kas. Police," *Wichita Beacon*, 5 May 1922, 1. "Kansas G. A. R. Warns Ku Klux by Resolution," *Wichita Beacon*, 18 May 1922, 1.
48. No headline, *Negro Star*, 12 May 1922, 2.
49. "Continued Outrages of K.K.K.," "K.K.K. Draw Small Crowd at Meeting," *Journal Uprise*, *Negro Star*, 16 June 1922, 1.
50. "Watch Your Steps for Judges of the Supreme Court," *Negro Star*, 30 July 1926, 1.
51. See "Fifty Thousand Klansmen Gather at Joliet," *Wichita Eagle*, 4 June 1922, 1. The lead story carried an eight-column banner headline and the deckhead "H. Gives Worry to Many."
52. "Report Wichita Alive With Secret Service," *Wichita Eagle*, 25 November 1922, 1. The Broadview was Wichita's premier hotel (and, some would argue, still is today).
53. "Klan Once Rode in Kansas," *Wichita Beacon*, 17 April 1965, n.p.
54. Recruiters received four of the eight dollars levied to join the Klan (Goldberg, 57).
55. There were several other games in town that day. The powerful Wichita Advertisers "mauled" the Cudahy Puritans, 12 to 3, in an Open League game at Cudahy Park ("Bye League," *Wichita Beacon*, 23 June 1925, 2); Dold's played Derby Oil at Dold's Park, in an Industrial League double-header ("To Play Today," *Wichita Beacon*, 21 June 1925, A5); the Blind Toms, a squad of umpires, played the Wichita Juniors, and Frisco took on the East Side Merchants at the Mosely Diamond, where the Monrovia's played most of their home games ("Today's Calendar Games," *Wichita Eagle*, 21 June 1925, 15).

57. Occupation from Polk's Wichita City Directory (Kansas City, Mo., 1925). The Shaer Hotel was a three-story, 56-room hotel built in 1917 by John Henry Shaer and J. W. Shaer, two brothers from Oklahoma (Wichita Beacon, 28 March 1943, 5). The hotel was sold in 1957 for \$250,000 (Wichita Eagle, 5 January 1957, 5A). See, for example, "Leading Teams in City Leagues Take Beatings," Wichita Beacon, 21 June 1925, 4A. The roundup story documented play in the white leagues, including the Industrial, Bye, Commercial, Minit-pal, Spalding, Utility, Peerless, and Open leagues, but did not mention black teams or leagues.
59. "Colored Reporter on Big Daily Awarded Gift for Superior Service," Negro Star, 2 November 1922, 4. Nothing else is known about Hamilton; and no headline, Negro Star, 5 January 1922, 4. Ranavala had been promoted from "club reporter to first class reporter by The Beacon," Wichita Beacon, "Alabama Bloomers to Play Wichita For Another Game," Wichita Beacon, 29 May 1920, 7. "Pitching for the Bloomers was to be Miss Havana Seagar, while Liza Grass was slated for center field. The paper published no report on the game's result, however. The other report also appeared in 1920, on the A.B.C. Club beating the Wichita Gray Sox for the "local colored championship" (no headline, Wichita Beacon, 20 July 1922, 7). There also appears to have been a men's A. B. C. Club, which in the early 1920s went by the name Black Wonders.
61. Williams was a Wichita city fireman before, during, and after his short stint as Star sports editor (Polk's Wichita City Directory).
62. Sims Private Papers, Kansas African American Museum, Wichita, Kansas. In *Dissent in Wichita: The Civil Rights Movement in the Midwest, 1954-1972*, by Gretchen Cassel Eick (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 34. Sims founded the Wichita chapter in 1919, six years after the first Kansas branch, and by 1920 the chapter counted 93 members.
64. R. L. Sims remained in Mississippi, pasturing the First Baptist Church of Moss Point. He resigned that position in February 1922 ("Expression of Regret," Negro Star, 17 April 1922, 1). He moved to the Spring Hill Missionary Baptist Church in Tupelo, Miss., in 1924 ("Dr. R. L. Sims," Negro Star, 27 February 1925, 1).
65. See "B.Y.F.U. Indorses War Policy," New York Times, 17 July 1898, 6.
66. No headline, Negro Star, 27 January 1922, 4.
67. "Attention!" Negro Star, 17 March 1922, 4.
68. "B. H. Neely Takes Lead for Porters' Union," Negro Star, 7 March 1924, 1.
69. "Wichita Newspapers Attaining Success in Several Lines," Wichita Beacon, 18 January 1924, no page number. Hugh Sims became Wichita's first black school-board member after winning election in his second try in 1949 (Eick, 30). He later served on the city's advisory council on minority problems in 1957.
70. "Negroes Beat Legion," Wichita Eagle, 8 June 1922, 11; "Game Sunday," Wichita Beacon, 26 June 1926, 5; "Sunday's Game," Wichita Eagle, 23 July 1920, 4. No other names were provided for Chicken and Six Shooter. "Dutch painters" in the 23 June 1922 Wichita Beacon, A11; "timber" in no headline, Wichita Eagle, 16 June 1922, 10. It is from this brief report that we learn that the teams played for the gate receipts, the purse.
73. "Negroes Beat Legion," Wichita Eagle, 8 June 1922, 11; "Beacon Team to Try and Break Tie at Monrovia," Wichita Beacon, 28 July 1922, 8.
74. Tim Rives, "Tom Baird: A Challenge to the Modern Memory of the Kansas City Monarchs," in *Satchel Paige and Company: Essays on the Kansas City Monarchs*, ed. Leslie Heaphy (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2007), 144.
75. Larry Lester, "J. L. Wilkinson: 'Only the Stars Come Out at Night,'" in *Satchel Paige and Company*, ed. Leslie Heaphy (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2007), 123.
76. "Night Baseball to Get Introduction in Wichita For Two Games," Wichita Eagle, 2 June 1930, 12.
77. *Ibid.*, 12.
78. "Night Baseball Proves Success at Island; Monarchs Winning," Wichita Eagle, 3 June 1930, 4.
79. See "Izies Open Night Baseball Season," Wichita Beacon, 17 April 1932, 12A. The Western League Izies beat Paul Buser Lumber 13 to 1.
80. Pete Lightner, "Just in Sport," Wichita Eagle, 3 June 1930, 4; 18 July 1935, 6; 23 July 1935, 6; 24 July 1935, 6. It is interesting to note that Lightner wrote however well the night baseball game in Wichita went, Lightner wrote that he could not foresee lights catching on in football, not "after the newness wears off," nor could he envision a World Series played at night (3 June 1930, 4).
81. Pete Lightner, "Just in Sport," Wichita Eagle, 18 July 1935, 6.
82. "Monarchs Defeat Monrovia," Negro Star, 27 April 1923, 1.
83. Appendix D, *Satchel Paige and Company: Essays on the Kansas City Monarchs*, ed. Leslie Heaphy (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2007), 256.
84. "Negro National League to Meet December 6," Negro Star, 30 November 1923, 1.
85. "Wichita Newspapers Attaining Success in Several Lines," Wichita Beacon, 18 January 1924, no page number.