

# **Forgotten Heroes: Charles Isham “C.I.” Taylor**



**by**

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## The Taylors – Baseball a Family Business

The four Taylor brothers, Charles Isham, John Boyce, James Allen and Benjamin Harrison, helped forge the early years of Negro League baseball. No family, not even the Bankheads (Sam, Dan, Fred, Joe and Garnett), had a greater impact on Negro League baseball than the Taylor family.

**Charles Isham “C.I.” Taylor** was born on January 20, 1875 in Anderson, South Carolina. After serving the military in the Spanish American War, C.I. enrolled in Clark College. It was there he began his baseball career as second baseman on the school’s baseball team. His professional career began in 1904 when he became the manager of the Birmingham Giants. During the course of his managerial career he managed the Birmingham Giants (1904-1909), West Baden Sprudels (1910-1913) and Indianapolis ABC’s (1914-1921) C.I. became half owner of the ABC’s in 1914 and led them to a “Colored World’s Champions” in 1916 when they defeated the Chicago American Giants in their championship series. C.I. passed away at 47 years of age on February 23, 1922. He was at the height of his managerial career.

**John Boyce “Steel Arm Johnny” Taylor** was born on August 12, 1879 in Anderson, South Carolina. “Steel Arm” Johnny started his professional baseball career in 1904 where he was the ace pitcher of brother C.I.’s Birmingham Giants. His baseball career lasted from 1904 to 1925. After his pitching career was over, he became a manager like his three brothers C.I., “Candy Jim” and Ben. Over the course of his career, he played for and managed for the Birmingham Giants, St. Paul Gophers, Chicago Giants, Leland Giants, Chicago Black Sox, West Baden Sprudels, St. Louis Giants, New York Lincoln Giants, Chicago American Giants, Indianapolis ABC’s, Louisville White Sox, Bowser’s ABC’s, Hilldale, Bacharach Giants and Washington Potomacs. Johnny Taylor passed away on March 25, 1956 in Peoria, Illinois.



**James Allen, John Boyce, Charles Isham and Benjamin**

**James Allen “Candy Jim” Taylor** was born in 1884 in Anderson, South Carolina. He began his professional baseball career in 1904 when he was signed as the starting third baseman by the Birmingham Giants. Candy Jim started out as a player, became a player–manager on a fulltime basis in 1919 and continued to manage until he passed away in 1948. As a manager, Candy Jim won more than twice as many games as any other manager in the history of Negro League baseball. He also won three Negro National League titles and two Negro League World Series titles.

**Benjamin Harrison “Ben” Taylor** was born on July 1, 1888 in Anderson, South Carolina. He was the youngest of the four Taylor brothers. His playing career spanned from 1908 to 1929. During his career he was a .320 hitter and the top defensive first basemen of his day. Some of the teams he played for or was the player/manager of were: Birmingham Giants, West Baden Sprudels, Indianapolis ABC’s, St. Louis Giants, New York Lincoln Giants, Chicago American Giants, Jewell’s ABC’s, Atlantic City Bacharach Giants, Hilldale, Harrisburg Giants, Philadelphia Tigers, Washington Black Senators and Baltimore Black Sox. Ben Taylor also managed the Washington Potomacs (1923-1924), Harrisburg Giants (1925), Baltimore Black Sox (1926-1928), Washington Pilots (1932) and Brooklyn Eagles (1935). Ben Taylor died on January 24, 1953 in Baltimore (MD). He was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 2006.

Charles Isham “C.I.” Taylor was born on January 20, 1875 in Anderson, South Carolina. His father, Isham Taylor, was a farmer and a Methodist minister. He was the sixth of thirteen children born to Isham and Adaline Taylor. Charles Isham was also the oldest of four brothers (Charles Isham, James, Benjamin Harrison and John Boyce) who all would have very successful careers in professional baseball.

He stood five feet eleven inches tall and weighed 175 pounds. Taylor threw right handed and batted from the right hand side of the plate.

C.I. started out as a ball player in college, but after college he realized very quickly that his true calling was as an owner and manager. As a manager he had an uncanny ability to evaluate talent and develop young ball players. Taylor was known to work players hard but never to the point where they complained. He was also adept at recruiting players and was a master strategist on the field of play. C.I. Taylor was extremely intelligent and often referred to as “The Wizard.” Discipline was a key factor in his success as a manager. Not only did he develop ball players, but he also helped develop several very successful future Negro League managers. These managers include: Otto Briggs, Oscar Charleston, Elwood “Bingo” De Moss, William “Dizzy” Dismukes, Raleigh “Biz” Mackey, Dave Malarcher, Ben Taylor, “Candy Jim” Taylor and Frank Warfield.

Both on and off the field, Charles I. Taylor was a perfect gentleman, honest, polite and always demonstrated exemplary character. He always exemplified a Christian lifestyle. Even when he disagreed with an umpire’s call, Taylor always maintained his composure and never let his temper get the best of him.

Taylor was a disciplinarian and expected his players to demonstrate exemplary conduct. When not in uniform, players were expected to wear collars, ties and shined shoes.

He was also very civic minded, well respected in the black community and always played a major role in community affairs. C.I. was a member of the Persian Temple of the Mystic Shrines and a Mason. He held the distinction of being a thirty-third degree Mason. Throughout his career, he always served as a role model for the black youth of the community.

When the baseball season was over, C.I. Taylor owned and operated one of the finest pool halls in the United States. The Indianapolis Freeman described his pool hall as follows: “it was the finest and most elaborately equipped in the Middle West.” C.I. would occasionally give some of his player’s jobs at the pool hall in the off-season. The pool hall was also a gathering place for locals to talk baseball, especially during the winter months.

### **Taylor Becomes a Buffalo Soldier**

Like most of the young men of his day, Charles Isham served in the military. Taylor’s military service was with Troop H (Buffalo Soldiers) of the 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry. During his time with the Buffalo soldiers unit, Taylor saw action during the Spanish-American War in 1898. The war started when the U.S. Maine (war ship) was blown up in Havana harbor on February 15, 1898. A total of 266 sailors lost their lives in the explosion. War was officially declared by the United States on April 25<sup>th</sup> and fighting ceased on August 12<sup>th</sup>. The majority of the fighting took place in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines. The war officially ended with the Treaty of Paris which was signed on December 10, 1898.



**C.I. Taylor**  
1875-1922





**Buffalo Soldiers**  
Spanish-American War (1898)

When Taylor returned to the United States, he was discharged from the service and set his sights on receiving a college education.

### Early Baseball Career

Charles learned the game of baseball while growing up in Anderson, South Carolina. In 1899 Taylor enrolled at Clark College in Atlanta, Georgia. C.I. immediately joined the college's baseball team and became the team's starting third baseman. Clark College had a very powerful baseball team that played in the Atlanta Intercollegiate League. According to a newspaper article that appeared in the Freeman on April 21, 1900 Clark College had not lost a game in three consecutive seasons. The Clark College baseball team also went undefeated during the 1900 baseball season. The newspaper article went on to say that Charles I. Taylor was regarded as the best third baseman in the Atlanta Intercollegiate League.



**CLARK UNIVERSITY BASE BALL CLUB, Atlanta, Ga.**

1-S. Hilworth, pitcher: 2-J Bowland, catcher: 3-M. M. Calloway, asst. pitcher: 4-Chas. I Taylor, 3rd b: 5-Wm. M. Gordon, Capt. and 2nd b: 6-Clifton Barlow, f. f: 7-Lyndon Hill 1st b: 8-Emmett Lester, r. f: 9-Edw. L. Gordon, c. f: 10-E L. W. Prather, manager: 11-Wil lie Hall, sub: 12-Wilkie Crogman, s. s.: 13-William Long, president Athletic Association.

## Negro League Career

C.I. Taylor's professional baseball career began in 1904 when he moved to Birmingham, Alabama and formed the Birmingham Giants. Like the Birmingham Barons of the Southern Association, the Birmingham Giants called West End Park also known as Slag Field as their home field. Taylor maintained his office for the Birmingham Giants at the corner of Center and Core Streets in downtown Birmingham.

To form the nucleus of his roster C.I. recruited his brothers Candy Jim as the team's starting third baseman and "Steel Arm" Johnny who would become the ace of the pitching staff for the Giants. C.I. Taylor also recruited heavily at Southern black colleges which he knew well from his playing days at Clark College. Some of the college players recruited by C.I. for the Birmingham Giants were Arthur Gillard (Talladega College), William Houston (Bowling Green Kentucky Academy), Fred Pinson (M & I College), James "Candy Jim" Taylor (Greeley Institute), "Steel Arm" Johnny Taylor (Biddle University) and Spencer Wiley (Arkansas Baptist College). Younger brother Ben Taylor who was a Greeley Institute graduate joined his brothers with the Giants in 1908.

Led by the Taylor brothers with Candy Jim at third, C.I. filling in at second base and "Steel Arm" Johnny as the ace of the pitching staff, the Birmingham Giants quickly became one of the top teams in the South. By 1907 the Birmingham Giants were considered the "Colored Champions of the South." Some of the top players for the 1907 Birmingham Giants team were George Donald (SS), Jack Griffin (OF), James Patton (OF), Joe Scotland (1B) and "Candy Jim" Taylor (3B). C.I. Taylor was the regular second baseman for Birmingham during the season. "Steel Arm" Johnny Taylor was the team's top pitcher in 1907. James Hubbard also pitched for the Giants during the season. After finishing the 1907 regular season with a won-loss record of 51-31 (.622), they defeated Smokey Joe Williams and the San Antonio Black Bronchos of the Texas Colored League for the Southern championship title. Candy Jim Taylor led the Giants hitting during the 1907 season with a .340 batting average.



**Birmingham Giants (1908)**  
(C.I. Taylor – back row third from right)



**BIRMINGHAM GIANTS  
CLOSE THE SEASON**

**Alabama Team Makes a Good Record  
Winning Many Games.**

The Birmingham (Ala.) Giants closed the most excellent season September 14, from the standpoint of games won, in the history of the club, having played 191 games, won 79, lost 22, a percentage of .73.

The Giants used eight pitchers and three catchers during the season.

Of the pitchers, we can say the youngsters, viz., B. H. Taylor, Arthur Gilliard of Talladega College, and Fred Pinson of M. and I. College, showed high class, and were especially strong toward the latter part of the season, all three being almost invincible.

Cobb, the Giants' young catcher, did the receiving in 69 games. His work with the stick and in the receiving department was one of the surprises of the season. At the rate he went this season he will be without a peer in about three or four years.

Bingham, our little right fielder, and Houston, our shortstop, secured from the Bowling Green (Ky.) Academy, were other surprises also.

Oliver, Scotland, Wiley and myself were the only seasoned players on the club the last three months of the year. We had eight youngsters, and they were pitted against the best clubs in Indiana and Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi and Florida, and won a large majority of the games. The young and intelligent baseball player, properly handled, makes the best man every time.

C. I. TAYLOR.

**Birmingham Giants' Pitchers' Record  
Season 1909.**

Player	Pitched	Won	Lost	Pct.
Scotland, Joe...	2	2	0	1.000
*Taylor, J. E...	12	9	3	.923
Taylor, B. H...	30	27	3	.900
Gilliard, A...	25	21	5	.807
Pinson, F. E...	21	15	6	.714
Taylor, C. I...	5	3	2	.600
*Zuber .....	4	3	2	.600
*Williams, Joe...	1	0	1	.000

A \* before a player's name indicates that he did not finish season with the Giants.

Birmingham Giants (1909)

Freeman  
10-30-09

Prior to the start of the 1908 season, C.I. recruited his youngest brother Ben to join the Birmingham Giants. Ben quickly became one of the team's starting pitchers. He was also an outstanding hitter and played first base when he wasn't pitching. "Candy Jim" Taylor was the team's leading hitter and "Steel Arm" Johnny Taylor was the team's best pitcher during the 1908 season. Some of the other top players for Birmingham during the 1908 season were Will Bedford (C), Morten Clark (P), George Donald (SS), Red Foster (1B), Jack Griffin (CF), James Hubbard (LF) and James Patton (RF). C.I. Taylor also played second base on a regular basis for the team. The Birmingham Giants continued their winning ways in 1908 when they started the season off with a record of 15-7 (.682) and ended the season by being crowned as the "Colored Champions of the South" for the second straight year. One of the highlights of the 1908 season for the Birmingham Giants was when "Steel Arm" Johnny Taylor out dueled "Cyclone" Joe Williams and the San Antonio Black Bronchos for a 1-0 victory.

In April of 1909, the Birmingham Giants faced Rube Foster's Leland Giants in a three game series. During the early 1900's the Leland Giants under Frank Leland and then Rube Foster were consistently considered the top team in the West. The series between Birmingham and the Leland Giants was played on April 14-16 and initiated a friendship and rivalry between Rube Foster and C.I. Taylor that would continue to Taylor's death in 1922. Their relationship was truly unique. At times they feuded bitterly and intensely in the media and publicly. Then at other times they were congenial friends and came together for the advancement of Negro League baseball.

After hearing about baseball and life in the north from Foster and realizing that his team could compete with Foster's "World Champion" club, Taylor decided to take his club to Indianapolis in July of 1909 to play a five game series against Chicago.

The Birmingham Giants played several games against local teams on their way to Indianapolis and on their way back home. The Birmingham Giants also played a series against the Indianapolis ABCs on the trip. Box scores have been found for four of these five games against the ABCs. Birmingham won two games and Indianapolis won two games.

On August 14<sup>th</sup> the Freeman published the following assessment of Taylor's Birmingham Giants.

"The Giants play like clock works and every man is for the team's interest which naturally results in team work or cooperation. With C.I. Taylor's field generalship the Alabamians are about the most consistent players that have ever played at Northwestern Park in some time."

The Birmingham Giants played the best baseball in the team's history during the 1909 season. They were led by the hitting of William "Bingo" Bingham (OF/3B), L.S.N. Cobb (C), Tick Houston (3B/SS), Johnny Pugh (SS), Joe Scotland (CF), Ben Taylor (P/1B) and Doc Wiley (1B). Arthur Gilliard, Fred E. Pinson and Ben Taylor were the Giants top three pitchers during the season. According to a newspaper report by C.I. Taylor that appeared in the Freeman on October 30<sup>th</sup>, Ben Taylor posted a record of 27-3 (.900), Gilliard was credited with a record of 21-5 (.783)

and Fred E. Pinson 15-6 (.714) for the 1909 season. "Steel Arm" Johnny Taylor had a pitching record of 9-3 (.750) before he left the Birmingham Giants early in the season to join the St. Paul Gophers. C.I. Taylor also took the mound in five games during the 1909 season for the Giants. C.I. had a won-loss record of 3-2 (.600) in his five appearances on the mound for Birmingham.

The Birmingham Giants closed out their regular season on September 14<sup>th</sup>. By the end of the 1909 season the Birmingham Giants were considered the top black baseball team in the South. The Birmingham Giants finished the season with a record of 79-22 (.782).

### Taylor Moves to West Baden

**TAYLOR HEADS WEST BADEN SPRUDELS.**  
Former Manager of Birmingham, Ala., Giants in Indiana.

WEST BADEN, Ind., April 25.—C. J. Taylor of the famous Taylor brothers of baseball fame and former manager of the Birmingham (Ala.) Giants, has taken charge of the West Baden Sprudels for the season and the former members of the Alabama team are with him. His team has already played six games with the French Lick Plutos, winning four and losing two games.

"THE FREEMAN is truly the greatest friend the Negro baseball player has," said Mr. Taylor, "and, believe me, we appreciate it a great deal more than you really believe and yet not as much as we ought to. Everybody here and also at French Lick speaks in praise of your great edition of April 16. It was grand."

After his trip north in 1909, C.I. Taylor returned to Birmingham with the idea that Indiana, especially the Spring Valley area was a land of "wonderful baseball opportunities." Taylor was drawn to Spring Valley because it was the home of the West Baden Sprudels. Even though West Baden had been the "whipping boys" for the French Lick Plutos for years, Taylor felt that with some of his key players from the Birmingham Giants and his managerial skills he could turn the Sprudels into a highly competitive team.

Both the West Baden Springs Hotel and the French Lick Springs Resort were exclusive resort hotels that were very popular tourist destinations for the wealthy. Baseball was a popular form of entertainment for the hotel's guests. Not only did the hotel guests enjoy watching the baseball games, but they also enjoyed betting on the games even more.

Freeman  
04-30-10

The West Baden Resort was owned by Lee Sinclair and the Sprudels baseball team was owned by the Burnett-Pollard-Rogers Baseball Club Company. Edward Rogers was the chief operating officer for the company. The West Baden Sprudels played their home games at Sprudel Park. The rivalry between West Baden and French Lick began about 1907.

Before the start of the 1910 baseball season, C.I. along with his new wife Olivia and several of his Birmingham Giants ball players moved to Spring Valley. When C.I. got to Spring Valley, he immediately took over the management of the West Baden Sprudels. After evaluating the roster of the 1909 Sprudels, Taylor was very happy that he had brought a number of his former Birmingham Giants north with him. Players that accompanied C.I. to West Baden and were signed to the Sprudels roster for the 1910 season were as follows: Bingo Bingham (RF), Morten "Mortie" Clark (SS), Tick Houston (2B), Eugene Moore (LF), Ben Taylor (P/1B), "Steel Arm" Johnny Taylor (P), Doc Wiley (C) and Sam Wiley (3B).

C.I. Taylor's West Baden Sprudels started the 1910 season strong. From April 10<sup>th</sup> through May 14<sup>th</sup> the Sprudels faced the French Lick Plutos nineteen (19) times. For years the Sprudels had been dominated by the Plutos. Now it was West Baden's turn to be on top. They posted a record of 12-5-2 (.706) in the 19 games they played against the Plutos at the start of the season. French Lick's domination of West Baden had come to an end. West Baden continued its winning streak into the summer. On May 10<sup>th</sup> and May 11<sup>th</sup> the West Baden Sprudels faced the Vincennes Alices who were the winners of the first half of the 1910 Kitty League season. The Sprudels took both games. They beat their Minor League opponents by the scores of 7-1 and 10-5. On July 9<sup>th</sup>, the Freeman reported that the Sprudels had a record of 36-12 (.750) with a 20 game winning streak. The Freeman also reported that West Baden had only lost 2 of their last 38 games.

Late in the 1910 season, C.I. Taylor recruited a pitcher from St. Louis by the name of William “Dizzy” Dismukes to bolster his starting rotation. In one of his first outings for West Baden, Dismukes pitched the Sprudels to a 3-1 victory over his home town St. Louis Giants. Dizzy limited St. Louis to just four hits over nine innings.

Under the leadership of C.I. Taylor the West Baden Sprudels ended the 1910 season with a record of 49-23-1 (.681). Some of the top teams which the Sprudels held victories over during the season were the Chicago Giants, Cincinnati Shamrocks, Cuban Giants, Dallas Giants, Evansville Athletics, French Lick Plutos, Louisville Cubs, Memphis Tigers and St. Louis Giants. In addition for the first time in years, the Sprudels not only held their own against their arch rival French Lick Plutos, but they dominated them on the field of play during the 1910 season. In 1909 the Plutos had compiled a record of 126-20 (.863) and won the Spring Valley League pennant. West Baden’s domination of French Lick in 1910 gave them the Springs Valley League championship. The 1910 season was the best year that the West Baden Sprudels had ever had in the history of the ball club. In just one season C.I. Taylor had turned the West Baden Sprudels into a highly competitive team.

Some of the other top teams in the West during the 1910 season were the Chicago Leland Giants, Kansas City Royal Giants, Chicago Giants, Indianapolis ABCs, Kansas City Giants, Minneapolis Keystones, St. Paul Gophers and the Stars of Cuba. The top team in the West was the Leland Giants with a reported won-lost record of 123-6 (.953). At the end of the season Rube Foster offered a \$ 3,000.00 side bet for any team that would challenge his Leland Giants for the title of “World’s Champion.” Foster found no takers.



**West Baden Sprudels (1911)**

(Standing left to right – Jack Watts, Bennie Lyons, Bingo Bingham, **William “Dizzy” Dismukes**, Pleas “Hub” Miller.  
Seated left to right – **George Shively**, Ellis, **C.I. Taylor**, Short Sammy Dickinson, George Brown,  
Sutton and Jerome Lewis.)

Before the start of the 1911 season, C.I. signed an 18 year old rookie by the name of George Shively to strengthen his line-up. George Shively led the team in hitting while playing center field. William “Dizzy” Dismukes who had been signed late in the 1910 season became the ace of the pitching staff. Other top players on the 1911 Sprudels team were William “Bingo” Bingham (RF), Jerome Lewis (2B), Bennie Lyons (1B) and Hub Miller (LF).



**GOODGAME, OF WEST BADEN THE SPRUDELS, PITCHES A NO-HIT GAME AGAINST PLUTOS.**

WEST BADEN, IND.—John Goodgame, of Talladega College, new recruit of the Sprudels and a young ball player of about twenty years old, shut the Plutos out April 21 in one of the best games seen at Pluto Park. Goodgame struck out eleven men and gave one-base on balls. There was not even a scratch hit. He was invincible to the heavy-hitting Plutos. Score:

Baden	.....0 2 0 0 1 0 0 0 0—3
Pluto	.....0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0—0

West Baden's Goodgame  
Pitches No-Hitter

Freeman  
04-29-11

The West Baden Sprudels opened their season on April 14<sup>th</sup> before the largest crowd that had ever attended a baseball game in West Baden. Unfortunately, the Sprudels lost the game by a score 4-3 to their arch rivals, the French Lick Plutos. Taylor got terrific fan support for his home games in West Baden the entire season.

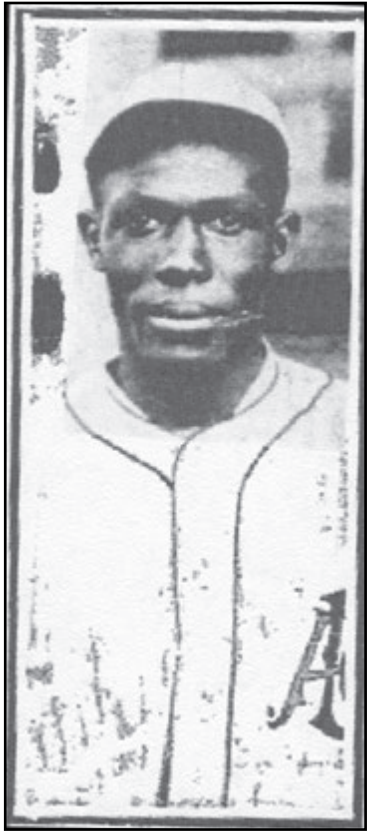
The West Baden Sprudels improved on their 1910 season and by early August they had compiled a record of 53-22 (.707). Along with the Chicago American Giants, Kansas City Giants, Leland Giants and St. Louis Giants, they were considered one of the best teams in the West.

One of the highlights of the 1911 season for the West Baden Sprudels came on April 29<sup>th</sup> when John Goodgame pitched a 3-0 no hitter against their arch rivals, the French Lick Plutos.

William "Dizzy" Dismukes also turned in another pitching gem for the West Baden Sprudels when on September 11<sup>th</sup> he defeated the Pittsburgh Pirates of the National League in a post season exhibition game by a score of 2-1. Dizzy Dismukes limited the Pirates to just four hits as he pitched the Sprudels to the victory.

The 1912 Sprudels were led by the hitting of William "Bingo" Bingham (OF), George Brown (CF), George Shively (LF), Ben Taylor (1B) and Candy Jim Taylor (3B). William "Dizzy" Dismukes, Ben Taylor, "Steel Arm" Johnny Taylor and Hub Miller made up the nucleus of the pitching staff. Ben Taylor was the team's top hitter with a .375 batting average for the season.

Newspaper accounts of the West Baden Sprudels 1912 season were very limited and therefore we don't have the team's complete won-loss record for the season. Currently box scores and primary source documentation has been found for forty-one (41) games played by the West Baden Sprudels during the 1912 season. The Sprudels had a won-loss record of 22-19 (.537) in these 41 games. According to an article published in the Freeman on September 7<sup>th</sup> of 1912, the West Baden Sprudels are credited with having won the Springs Valley League for the 1912 season. The top team in the West during the 1912 season was Rube Foster's Chicago American Giants.



Dizzy Dismukes  
Defeats  
Pittsburgh Pirates  
09-11-11

WEST BADEN, Ind.—The West Baden Sprudels won the pennant and championship of the Spring Valley League by defeating the Plutos. The game marks the closing of the summer season. The fall pennant race begins September 1. Scotland robbed Clark of a home run by a remarkable catch in the eighth. Clark and Ward starred for the Sprudels. Score:

Plutos	.....0 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 0—1 7 3
Sprudels	.....2 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 *—3 6 2

Batteries—Pangburn, Lyon and Silby; J. B. Taylor and O'Neal. Umpires—Smith and Jones.

In October of 1912 the West Baden Sprudels played the Cincinnati Reds of the National League in an exhibition game. The game was played in French Lick, Indiana. The newspaper account after the game was played reported that Cincinnati won the game but it did not give a score. The important factor was not that the Sprudels lost but that the Cincinnati Reds deemed the West Baden team as being worthy competition for them to play

West Baden Wins Spring Valley League Title

Freeman  
09-07-12

**SPRUDELS AND A. B. C'S. TO PLAY UNIONS AUG. 1, 2, 4, 5.**

Today and Friday the West Baden Sprudels, the fastest ball team in the state will play the Flora-Briarhurst Unions at amusement park in Flora.

They will be followed by the Indianapolis A. B. C's on Sunday and Monday, August 4th and 5th, and from every indication four great games are looked for as the Carroll county lads have had a two weeks vacation and are ready to cross bats with their husky (colored) opponents.

The Sprudels have defeated almost all the best teams in Indiana and expect to take both of the games from the Unions. They carry four pitchers among them being "Steel Arm" John Taylor and Dismukes, "the iron man," their color being the only thing that keeps them out of the national league. Dismukes, defeated the Pittsburg Nationals by a score of 2 to 1 last fall.



**Dismukes, "The Iron Man"** who will pitch one of the games with the Sprudels. September 11, 1911 he defeated the Pittsburg Nationals of the National League by a score of 2 to 1. He retired the side on a strike the first inning. Don't fail to see Dismukes in action.



The A. B. C's. have played the Unions every year for several years and have always been general favorites with the fans. The team not only has good ball players but one of the best bunch of coaches knows among colored teams. Their antics on the side lines are well worth the price of admission.

McElfresh, Downey and an American Association pitcher will pitch these four great games for the Unions.

All Games Called Promptly at 3:00 o'clock p. m.

**Admission 25c to Everybody**

**"Steel Arm" John Taylor**  
One of the most sensational pitchers now playing ball, his color being the only thing that keeps him out of the big league. John says the Unions will be picked for him in the game he pitches for the Sprudels.

Before the start of the 1913 season, C.I. Taylor lost two key players: Candy Jim Taylor and William "Dizzy" Dismukes. Candy Jim went to the Chicago American Giants and Dizzy Dismukes signed with Philadelphia Giants. Ben Taylor was the leading hitter on the team with a reported .400 batting average for the season. Other top hitters for the 1913 Sprudels were George Brown, Morten Clark and George Shively. "Steel Arm" Johnny Taylor and Andrew "String Bean" Williams were the top two pitchers for the team.

During the 1913 season the West Baden Sprudels continued their rivalry with the French Lick Plutos and began to challenge the Chicago American Giants for dominance in the West. The increased rivalry with the Foster's Chicago American Giants was witnessed on July 1<sup>st</sup> when 6,000 fans showed up in Chicago to see the Sprudels face off against the American Giants. West Baden took two out of the three games they played against Chicago in the series.

On August 17, 1913 the West Baden Sprudels played the Indianapolis ABCs in a five game series for the title of "Colored Champions of Indiana. Taylor's Sprudels dominated the series winning four of the five games played.

**West Baden's Ace Pitchers**  
Dizzy Dismukes and Steel Arm Taylor

From the fifty box scores that have been uncovered for the 1913 West Baden season, the Sprudels had a won-loss record of 29-19-2 (.604). During the season they claimed victories over top teams like the Bloomer Girls, Chicago American Giants, Chicago Giants, Chicago Unions, French Lick Plutos, Indianapolis ABCs, Indianapolis Reserves, Kokomo Reds, Green's Nebraska Indians and the Washington Grays.

**West Baden Sprudel's  
Beat  
Indianapolis ABCs  
Four Games to One**

**"Colored Champions of Indiana"**

Freeman  
August 1913

**SPRUDELS TAKE SERIES FROM A. B. C'S.**

**Thereby Claiming Championship Over Four States.**

The five-game series for the championship of Indiana, which the fast West Baden Sprudels and the Indianapolis A. B. C's have been engaged in, resulted in the Sprudels winning four out of five games, making them champions of Indiana. The series began Sunday, August 17.

The Sprudels proved themselves to be world beaters when they decisively defeated Rube Foster's American Giants recently.

In the great series of games played between the Lincoln Giants, of New York, and Foster's American Giants, recently, so outclassed was Foster's lineup that he was forced to send to Manager Taylor and borrow that famous twirler, "Steel-Arm" Johnnie Taylor, a first baseman and a second sacker; and after the smoke had cleared away Rube let Taylor know that, had it not been for these three stars, he would not have had a chance in the games.

What might be the cause of much or all of great ball playing of this famous team is due the master mind and baseball wisdom of Manager C. I. Taylor. Taylor is a maker of ball players in every sense of the word. If a player has it in him, he knows how to get it out, for Taylor is an exceptionally good player himself, coming from a baseball family.



## Taylor Moves to Indianapolis

In February of 1914 C.I. Taylor relocated to Indianapolis and worked out an agreement with Thomas Bowser to purchase half interest in the Indianapolis ABCs. Besides being the owner of the Indianapolis ABCs, Thomas Bowser was also a white bail bondsman with strong political connections. Besides his ownership interest, Taylor also became the manager of the Indianapolis ABCs.

**LOCAL COLORED FANS WILL SEE GOOD BALL.**

**This Season's A. B. C. Team Promises to Be One of the Fastest Clubs in its Class in the United States.**

Fans who attend the games at Northwestern Park this season will be furnished the best quality of colored semi-professional baseball that money can produce. Owner Tom Bowser has engaged C. D. Taylor, for the last year manager of the champion West Baden Sprudels, to handle the reins of his club. Taylor has been in baseball fifteen years and knows the game from A to Z.

He is considered one of the craftiest colored baseball managers in the business. Thirty-one players have been added to the roster of the A. B. C.'s. A majority of last year's A. B. C.'s will be given a thorough tryout, besides four of the stars from last season's Sprudels, two from the American Giants of Chicago, two French Lick Pintos, three from Dayton, Ohio, and two from St. Louis. Manager Taylor is also in communication with a pitcher from Clifton, Ariz., who has an excellent record.

The A. B. C.'s this season intend to play ball every day, as all players will be paid a monthly salary. Manager Taylor will take his large squad of ball tossers out for their first practice this afternoon at Northwestern Park. Practice will be held every afternoon this week. Starting with Sunday a morning and afternoon practice will be held. The fans are invited to attend, as no admission will be charged.

C.I. Taylor  
Moves to  
Indianapolis ABCs

Freeman  
04-11-14

The ABCs were founded in 1902 and originally sponsored by the American Brewing Company. The Indianapolis ABCs played their home games at Northwestern Park. During the week C.I.'s plans were for the ABCs to tour the surrounding states and play their "big" games at home on the weekends when they could draw the biggest crowds. Taylor's move to Indianapolis put him right in the back yard of Rube Foster and his Chicago American Giants.

When Thomas Bowser was asked by the Ledger newspaper how the relationship between he and C.I. Taylor would work, he was quoted in the Ledger on February 18, 1914 as follows:

"The management of the team on the field and the selection of personnel will be entirely in charge of Mr. Taylor. You may say that the team will be chosen from the best available men of the two teams (Indianapolis and West Baden) and the fittest will be given regular berths. My aims by this new order of things will be directed at all times to give the fans of Indianapolis the best colored team that has represented the city in its entire history. Only the strongest semi-professional teams will be booked and you may assure your readers that they are going to witness the fastest article of popular price ball they have ever had an opportunity to see before."

When Taylor first became associated with the ABCs they were a good team (they went 25-18 in 1913), but through his leadership the Indianapolis ABCs grew into a powerhouse who would rival Rube Foster's Chicago American Giants for recognition as the best team in the West.

The first thing that C.I. Taylor did when he took over the Indianapolis ABCs was to lure his brothers Ben and Candy Jim away from the Chicago American Giants. This left two major holes in Rube Foster's line-up and set the stage for a long bitter rivalry between Rube Foster and himself. After Taylor held try-outs only one player, Fred Pug" Hutchinson, made Taylor's ABCs' starting line-up. Hutchinson was the team's starting shortstop and hit .296 for the season.

Combining the rosters of West Baden and Indianapolis resulted in an outstanding line-up for the Indianapolis ABCs for the 1914 season. Ben Taylor (.366), George Shively (.343), Fred Hutchinson (.296), Candy Jim Taylor (.290), George Brown (.278) and Eugene Moore (.277) were the leading hitters for the 1914 ABCs. According to Negro League researcher, John Holway, Ben Taylor and George Shively were the top two hitters in the West. Holway reports that Shively had the best batting average in the West with a .372 batting average and also hit 6 homeruns which tied him for second in the West. Holway's researcher credits Ben Taylor with leading the West in homeruns (7), doubles (24), triples (6) and stolen bases (19). It is important to note that Holway's research combines both games against top level teams and lower level teams in his totals.





**Indianapolis ABCs (1914)**

(left to right – “Steel Arm” Johnny Taylor, Dicta Johnson, C.I. Taylor, Russell Powell, Joe Scotland, Andrew “String Bean” Williams, Thomas Bowser, Alonzo Burch, Fred Hutchinson, George Brown and **Candy Jim Taylor**)

The Indianapolis ABCs scored runs and a lot of them during the 1914 season. One example was when they took on the Indianapolis Reserves who were considered the top white team in the city. In May the ABC’s beat the Reserves at Northwestern Park by collecting 28 hits for a total of forty-five (45) bases in a 33-5 win over their white counterparts. Candy Jim Taylor (3B) and Aggie Turner (2B) led the way with five (5) hits each. The ABCs also hit four (4) homeruns during the game.

The pitching staff for the 1914 Indianapolis ABCs included Dicta Johnson (12-7), Andrew “String Bean” Williams (10-7), “Steel Arm” Johnny Taylor, Ben Taylor (4-0), Edgar Burch (3-1), Lawrence Simpson, Sapho Bartlett and Bee Seldon.

One of the highlights of the 1914 season for the Taylor family was on May 3<sup>rd</sup> when all four brothers were in the line-up for Indianapolis’ game against the Special of Peru, Indiana. The ABCs won the game by a score of 7-1.

In October the Indianapolis ABCs faced the Indianapolis All Professionals and Ownie Bush’s All Stars. Both of these teams were made up of white Major and Minor League players. Taylor led his team to four wins in the five games against the white all-stars. Indianapolis victories came by posting scores of 11-5, 8-1, 8-0 and 6-3. To bolster his roster for playing the all-stars, C.I. Taylor recruited the services of Jess Barber, John Henry “Pop” Lloyd, Bruce Petway and Frank “The Red Ant” Wickware.

**Leaguers Outclassed by A. B. C.s in First Game of Series—Score is 11 to 5.**

The A. B. C.s took the first game from the All Professionals Sunday at Northwestern Park, 11 to 5. Williams pitched good ball for the colored boys. The fielding of French, Stewart, E. Duggan, Scotland and Gordon featured. Both clubs fielded fast, four double plays being completed. Next Sunday Ownie Bush's All Professionals play the A. B. C.s

All-Pro	.....	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	—	5
A. B. C.s	.....	0	0	8	0	0	2	0	1	—	—	11

Two-base hits—Powell, Shively, French, Stewart, J. Taylor. Three-base hit—E. Duggan. Home runs—Fluse, Williams, J. Taylor, Gordon. Double plays—J. Taylor to Gordon; French to Stewart to E. Duggan; French to E. Duggan; Hutchinson to Gordon to B. Taylor. Stolen bases—Scotland, Powell. Bases on balls—Off Williams, 2; off Myers, 4. Struck out—By Williams, 5; by Myers, 1. Wild pitches—Myers, J. Duggan. Hits—Off Myers, 7 in 2 2-3 innings. Sacrifice—Dilger, Brown. Umpire—McCarty.

**Local Colored Club Has Easy Time With Team of All-Pro—Score is 8 to 1.**

The A. B. C.'s defeated the All-Professionals again yesterday at Northwestern Park, 8 to 1, in a game full of sensational plays. Buford pitched a good game, although he was very wild, allowing but three hits. Score:

All-Pro	.....	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	—	1
A. B. C.'s	.....	0	1	0	0	2	3	2	—	—	8

**Indianapolis ABCs  
Defeat  
All Professionals**

Freeman  
10-10-14

In one short season C.I. Taylor transformed the Indianapolis ABCs from a decent regional semi-professional team to a national power. The Indianapolis ABCs finished the 1914 season with an exemplary record of 51-19 (.729). Some of the top black teams that the ABCs defeated during the season were the Brooklyn All Stars, Chicago American Giants, Chicago Union Giants, Cuban Stars, French Lick Plutos, Leland Giants, Louisville White Sox, Mohawk Giants and West Baden Sprudels. The only team in the West with a better won-loss record than Indianapolis was Rube Foster's Chicago American Giants who went 42-13 (.764) against top level competition.



**Indianapolis ABCs (1915)**

(back row left to right –Russell Powell, **Ben Taylor**, Dick “Cannonball” Redding, Elwood “Bingo” De Moss, Morten Clark and Dan Kennard. Seated left to right – **Oscar Charleston**, Dicta Johnson, **C.I. Taylor**, **Jimmie Lyons** and Tom Allen. Front row left to right – **George Shively** and James Jeffries.)

Before the start of the 1915 season, Taylor conducted spring training for the Indianapolis ABCs in Birmingham (Mar 22-23), M.I. College (Holly Springs, MS) (March 26-27), Memphis (March 28-29), Lane College (Jackson, TN) (March 30) and Fisk University (Nashville, TN) (March 31). The team returned to Indianapolis on April 1<sup>st</sup> and immediately played a four game series at Federal League Park against the Indianapolis Federals. In late April Taylor's team took on French's All Leaguers and defeated them by a score of 14-3.

When the 1915 season opened for play, C.I. Taylor's Indianapolis ABCs picked right up where they had left off the season before. They won ball games. The Indianapolis ABCs won 14 out of their first 17 games. During this winning streak they claimed victories over the Chicago Union



**DISMUKES HURLS NO-HIT SHUT-OUT.**

**Tall Twirler Leads A. B. C.'s to Great Victory Over Chicago Giants—  
Local Team Scores Five Runs.**

Dismukes, pitching for the A. B. C.'s, added a no-hit victory to his credit Sunday at Northwestern Park, the tall boy scoring a shutout over the Chicago Giants, the local champs winning, 5 to 0. The Giants were helpless before the hurling of Dismukes. In only two innings did runners reach first, and one of these was promptly caught stealing. Only twelve batters faced Dismukes in the first four innings.

An exceptionally large crowd turned out regardless of the weather, and was rewarded, as both teams feided cleverly. DeMoss, Strothers, Shively and Allen contributed the feiding features. Charleston was "there" with his usual long hit, it being a home run drive to deep center.

A. B. C.	AB	H	O	A	E
Shively, lf	4	0	2	0	0
DeMoss, 2	1	1	1	4	0
Allen, 3	4	2	1	2	1
Taylor, 1	3	0	10	0	0
Clark, s	3	1	5	1	1
Powell, c	4	0	4	2	0
Charleston, cf	4	1	2	0	0
Jeffries, rf	4	1	0	0	0
Dismukes, p	4	1	0	2	0

Totals ----- 32 7 27 11 2

Giants	AB	H	O	A	E
Jennings, 2	4	0	0	1	1
W. Green, 3	3	0	2	1	0
Winton, lf	3	0	1	0	0
Pate, rf	2	0	0	0	0
J. Green, cf	2	0	3	1	0
Strothers, 1	3	0	9	2	1
Ford, s	3	0	2	4	0
Clarkson, c	3	0	4	1	0
Dixon, p	3	0	1	3	1

Totals ----- 27 0 24 12 2

Giants ----- 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

A. B. C.'s ----- 3 1 0 2 0 0 0 0 0 0

Two-base hit—Allen. Home run—Charleston. Stolen bases—DeMoss, Taylor, Clark 2, Allen. Bases on balls—OK Dixon, 5. Struck out—By Dixon, 5; by Dismukes, 5. Hit by pitcher—By Dismukes (Pate). Wild pitches—Dixon 2. Passed ball—Clarkson. Umpire—McCarty. Time—1:43.

Dizzy Dismukes  
No-Hits Chicago

Freeman  
05-15-15

Giants, Cuban Stars and West Baden Sprudels. Five of these victories were shutouts and one was a no hitter by Dizzy Dismukes. During the 1915 season, the ABCs played their home games at both Northwestern Park and Federal League Park.

Before the start of the 1915 season, Taylor made two key additions to his roster. They were Morten Clark (SS) and Elwood "Bingo" DeMoss (2B). DeMoss is generally considered the best second baseman of his era. Indianapolis hitters struggled at the plate all season. In games against top level competition, they compiled a meager .222 team batting average for the season. George Shively (.298) and Ben Taylor (.293) were the team's top hitters for the season. Oscar Charleston (.258) was the only other hitter in the starting line-up to bat over .234 during 1915.

The pitching staff headed up by William "Dizzy" Dismukes (14-5) and Dicta Johnson (14-8) carried the team most of the season. They were considered the top two pitchers in the West during the 1915 season. The highlight of the season for Dizzy Dismukes was when he pitched a no-hitter against the Chicago Union Giants on May 9<sup>th</sup>. Other members of the pitching staff in 1915 included Tom Johnson and Jim Jeffries. With only a four man pitching staff, the following position players also saw some time on the mound: Oscar Charleston, Ben Taylor, Morten Clark and Fred Hutchinson.

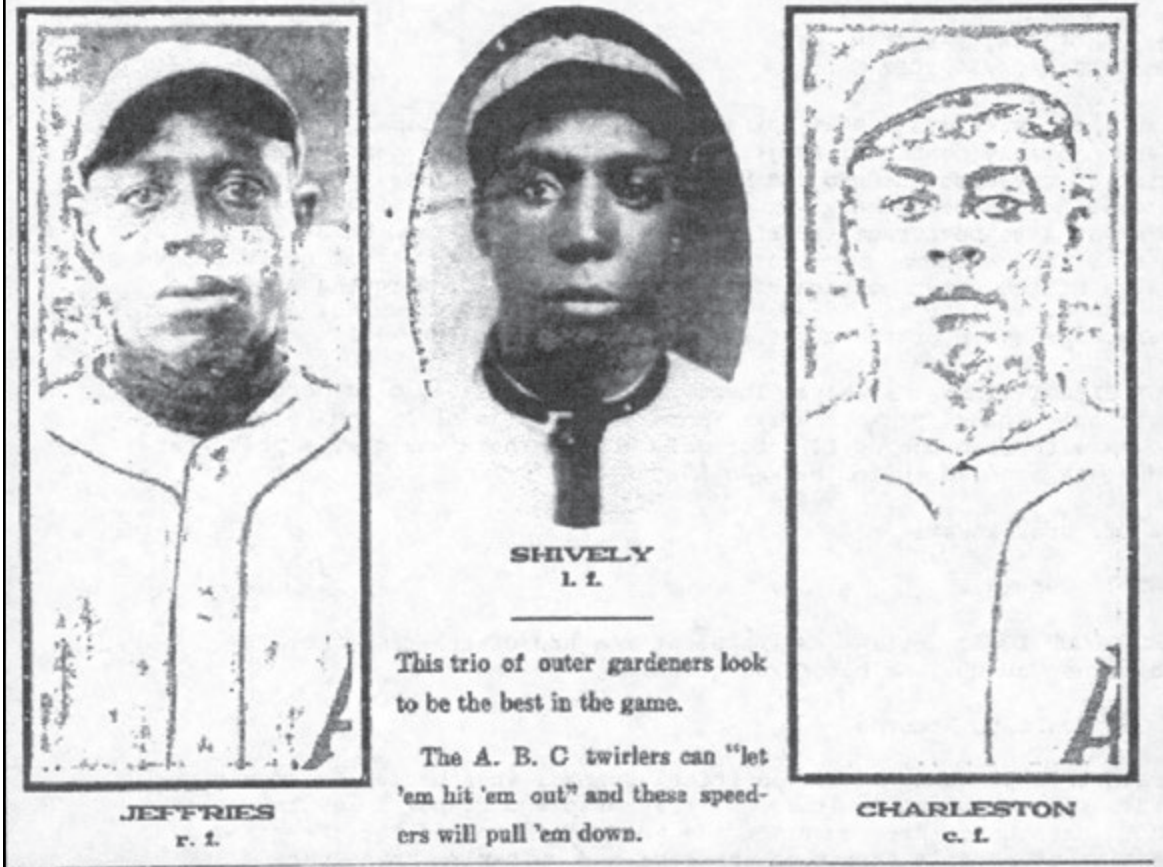
After the regular season, the Indianapolis ABCs played Columbus of the American Association. To take on the ABCs, Columbus supplemented its roster by recruiting several star players from the Federal League. The game was played on September 9<sup>th</sup> in Columbus (OH) and resulted in a 12-0 victory for Indianapolis. On September 26<sup>th</sup> the Indianapolis ABCs played a double header against the Minor League All Stars. C.I. Taylor's team dominated their professional opponents. They won the first game by a score of 12-1 and the second game by a score of 7-0.

In October of 1915 the Indianapolis ABCs faced the Major-Minor League All Stars in a three game series that was played on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. The series ended in turmoil when Oscar Charleston punched an umpire and the game ended in a "near riot." Both Charleston and Bingo De Moss were arrested and went to jail. C.I. bailed out his ball players and publicly apologized for what he considered a "cowardly act."

The Indianapolis ABCs finished the 1915 season with an impressive won-loss record of 50-23-4 (.685). From current research, it appears that the Indianapolis ABCs were the top team in the West in 1915. However, Rube Foster promoted his Chicago American Giants as the "Colored Champions of the World" with a record of 60-17-2 (.779). It is important to note that the Chicago American Giants played two series against the Indianapolis ABCs during the season. In June Chicago took three of the five games they played against Indianapolis, but in July Indianapolis took all four games in their series with Chicago. In short the ABCs won six games and only lost three against the American Giants. According to current research there was no "championship series" played in 1915 to resolve the issue of which team was the best in the West. A case can be made for both the Chicago American Giants and the Indianapolis ABCs as the "Colored Champion of the West" for the 1915 season.



## The Fast and Hard Hitting Out Field of the A. B. C. Ball Team



**Indianapolis ABCs (1915)**  
Best Outfield in Black Baseball

(James Jeffries, George Shively and Oscar Charleston)

### The ABCs go to Cuba

After the fiasco with Charleston and De Moss that occurred during the Major-Minor League All Stars series, C.I. Taylor took his team Cuba to play an exhibition series against the top professional teams on the island. To bolster his roster for the tour, Taylor signed Dick "Cannonball" Redding who was one of the best pitchers in baseball. The roster that C.I. Taylor took to Cuba was as follows:

Player	Position (s)	Player	Position (s)
Todd Allen	3B, 1B	James "Jimmie" Lyons	RF, CF, 1B, LF
Oscar Charleston	CF, P	Russell Powell	C, 3B, 1B
Morten Clark	SS	Dick "Cannonball" Redding	P
Elwood "Bingo" DeMoss	2B	George Shively	LF, RF
James C. Jeffries	P, RF	Benjamin "Ben" Taylor	1B, P
Louis "Dicta" Johnson	P	Charles I. Taylor	Mgr, RF
Dan Kennard	C		

The Indianapolis ABC's played their first game in Cuba on October 30<sup>th</sup> against the Almendares Alacranes. Taylor sent his ace pitcher during the regular season, Louis "Dicta" Johnson, to the mound to face Cincinnati Reds and Cuban great Adolfo Luque. Behind the hitting of Bingo

**A. B. C.'S WIN ANOTHER  
FAST ONE FROM HAVANA**

HAVANA, Cuba, Oct. 31.—The Indianapolis A. B. C. ball club, colored, won from the Havana team again today, 5 to 4. It was an exciting contest, and the fans were kept in an uproar at all times. The A. B. C.'s opened a six weeks' stay in Cuba yesterday.

The A. B. C.'s won their first game, which was on October 29, by the score of 5 to 4. En route to Cuba they won a game at Tampa, Fla. Score, 14 to 0. Manager Taylor's address is, San Nicholas 45, Havana, Cuba.

Freeman  
11-06-15

DeMoss, Jimmie Lyons and Ben Taylor, Indianapolis walked off with a 5-4 win when Dick Redding came into the game in the late innings to shut down the Alacranes and pick up the win. The ABCs took the field the next day on October 31<sup>st</sup> with Dick Redding picking up his second victory in two days.

The rest of the tour did not go as well for Indianapolis. Over the course of their stay in Cuba, Taylor's team played nine games against Almendares, nine games against Habana and two games versus San Francisco. They ended their tour of Cuba at Almendares Park on December 2<sup>nd</sup> with a 5-4 loss to team San Francisco. The Indianapolis ABCs went 8-12 (.400). Habana posted a 6-3 (.667) record, Almendares went 5-4 (.556) and San Francisco was 1-1 (.500).

The Indianapolis ABCs lack of success in Cuba had nothing to do with their hitting. As a team they compiled a .287 (182 for 634) team batting average during the winter of 1915 in Cuba. Todd Allen (.404), Ben Taylor (.380), Bingo De Moss (.333), Dan Kennard (.333) and Jimmie Lyons (.295) led the ABCs in hitting. Taylor's problem was his pitching staff. Indianapolis pitchers posted a lofty 6.47 earned run average. They simply couldn't get their Cuban opponents out. Redding who was supposed to be their "ringer" did post a 6-5 (.545) won-loss record but had a 5.56 ERA. The rest of the staff went 2-7 (.222). To make matters worse the ABCs committed 57 errors in just 20 games. Morten Clark had the toughest time on the field, making 13 errors at shortstop for a miserable .879 fielding percentage.

### **Taylor Takes His Team to Florida**

During the first part of January of 1916, C.I. Taylor took his Indianapolis ABCs team to Palm Beach, Florida to represent the Royal Poinciana Hotel in the Florida Hotel League. The Florida Hotel League or the Coconut League as it was sometimes called was a two team league in Florida that was comprised of all-black baseball teams representing the Breakers Hotel and the Royal Poinciana Hotel. During the winter black ball players would travel to Florida and take jobs as bellmen, porters, cooks, dish washers and wait staff personnel in the restaurants of the big resort hotels. Each winter season management of the Breakers and Royal Poinciana would form baseball teams and games would be scheduled for the entertainment of the hotel guests.

C.I. Taylor got great hitting from his team during the winter season of early 1916 in Florida. The leading hitters for Taylor's Royal Poinciana team were Ben Taylor (.343), Joe Hewitt (.333), Todd Allen (.313) and Ashby Dunbar (.300). Oscar Charleston and Bingo De Moss, two of the best players from the 1915 Indianapolis ABC team, did not make the trip to Florida because of legal problems they faced in Indianapolis. Unfortunately for C.I. his pitching staff was a dismal failure. Dizzy Dismukes who was the ace of the pitching staff went 2-2 while pitching for the Royal Poinciana. John Donaldson who Taylor picked up from the All Nations team had a disappointing won-loss record of 1-5.

The Breakers Hotel Bulldogs who were led by the pitching of Smokey Joe Williams (5-1 w/ two shut outs) and Ad Langford (5-2) won the Florida Hotel League with a won-loss record of 10-6-1. Spottswood Poles was the top hitter for the Breakers with a .353 batting average. This was the third year in a row that the Breakers Hotel team had won the championship.



**Royal Poinciana Baseball BB Club**  
Florida Hotel League

(Back row left to right – Dan Kennard, **Candy Jim Taylor**, **Jimmie Lyons** and Joe Hewitt. Middle row left to right – **Ben Taylor**, Morten Clark, James Jeffries, Todd Allen, and Ashby Dunbar. Front row left to right – Dicta Johnson, Russell Powell, Frank Forbes, **C.I. Taylor**, **John Donaldson** and Bill Pierce.)

### **The ABCs Return to Indianapolis**

Going into the 1916 season C.I. Taylor felt very strongly that he had put together a roster that would challenge the Chicago American Giants and all of the other top teams in the West. When the season started, Taylor was faced with several major problems. First, Tom Bowser who had broken his ties with C.I. Taylor after the 1915 season fielded his own team that he called “Bowser’s ABCs.” Two major black professional teams in Indianapolis were not perceived as being good for Indianapolis or black baseball in general. Taylor felt two teams in Indianapolis left an impression that was unprofessional. Rube Foster agreed with Taylor and tried to no avail to mediate a solution between C.I. and Tom Bowser. To make matters even worse, Bowser had hired Bingo De Moss away from Taylor’s team as the player-manager of his 1916 team. Taylor’s Indianapolis ABCs played their home games at Federal League Park and Bowser’s ABCs played their home games at Northwestern Park. By late August Bowser’s ABCs folded and De Moss returned to C.I. Taylor’s Indianapolis ABCs. Another problem that C.I. was faced with at the beginning of the season was that Oscar Charleston had left his team and signed with the New York Lincoln Giants. Like Bingo De Moss, Charleston also returned to Taylor’s team before the end of the season.

Even with the early season loss of Charleston and De Moss, C.I. Taylor still fielded a strong hitting roster in 1916 that included five players that batted over .300 for the season. The top hitters for the Indianapolis ABCs in 1916 were George Shively (.333), Ben Taylor (.313), Russell Powell (.302), Candy Jim Taylor (.301), Jim Jeffries (.301) and Oscar Charleston (.293). The ABCs’ hitting attack was also supported by George Brown (OF), Morten Clark (SS) and Dave Malacher (utility). For the season in games against top level competition, the 1916 Indianapolis ABCs posted a team batting average of .276.



Dizzy Dismukes was the ace of the pitching staff in 1916 with a 9-6 (.600) record and a 2.73 earned run average against top level teams. Newspaper reports credit Dismukes with a won-loss record of 17-6 (.739) against teams of all levels of competition. Dicta Johnson (7-6 w/ 2.81 ERA), Jim Jeffries (4-4 w/ 2.49 ERA) and Frank “The Red Ant” Wickware (2-0 w/ 2.35 ERA) rounded out the starting rotation. All four members of the starting rotation posted earned run averages under 3.00. In 53 games against top level competition, the Indianapolis ABCs posted a team earned run average of 2.95.

On October 8<sup>th</sup> the Indianapolis ABCs played the All Professionals (group of Major and Minor League all-stars). Dicta Johnson took the mound for Indianapolis and Major Leaguer Art Nehf started for the All Professionals. Both Johnson and Nehf pitched brilliantly. The game was decided when George Shively knocked in the winning run to give the ABCs a 1-0 victory.

When the 1916 season ended, the Indianapolis ABCs with a record of 43-23-2 (.652) and the Chicago American Giants with a record of 40-26-3 (.601) were clearly the two best teams in the West. Other top teams in the West in 1916 were the All Nations, Bowser’s ABCs, Chicago Giants, Chicago Union Giants, Cuban Stars (West) and the St. Louis Giants.



**Colored Championship Series (1916)**  
Chicago American Giants vs Indianapolis ABCs  
Federal League Park  
Indianapolis, IN

(E.C. Knox – Managing Editor of Indianapolis Freeman, Andrew “Rube” Foster – Chicago American Giants, J.D. Howard – Sports Editor Indianapolis Ledger and C.I. Taylor – Indianapolis ABCs)

## Indianapolis Becomes the Best Team in the West

In October of 1916 the Chicago American Giants traveled to Indianapolis to play the Indianapolis ABCs for the “Colored Championship of the West.” The first four games of the “championship series” were played at Federal Field in Indianapolis.

Rube Foster’s Chicago American Giants team was led by the hitting of John Henry “Pop” Lloyd, Preston “Pete” Hill, Leroy Grant, Pete Duncan and Brodie Francis. Tom Johnson, Dick Whitworth and Frank “Red Ant” Wickware were the top pitchers for Chicago.



Chicago American Giants (1916)

(Left to right – **Pete Hill**, unknown, unknown, Leroy Grant, Jude Gans, **Bruce Petway**, **Rube Foster**, Jess Barbour, unknown, unknown, **John Henry “Pop” Lloyd**, unknown and **Hurler McNair**)

C. I. Taylor fielded a strong team for the Indianapolis ABC’s. Ben Taylor (first base), Bingo De Moss (second base), Mortie Clark (shortstop), Candy Jim Taylor (third base) and Oscar Charleston (outfield) were the top offensive stars of Indianapolis. Dizzy Dismukes was the ace of the pitching staff for the ABC’s with a won-loss record of 17-6 (.739).

Originally the series was to have been for twelve games. The first four games of the series were played in Indianapolis, giving the ABC’s a real home team advantage from the outset.

The series began on October 21<sup>st</sup> with what was scheduled as a double header. Chicago took game one by a score of 5-3 on a winning base hit by Pete Hill. The second game of the doubleheader was called due to Sunday baseball laws. Tom Johnson got the win for Chicago and Dicta Johnson was charged with the loss.

Dizzy Dismukes took the mound for the ABCs and Frank “The Red Ant” Wickware got the start for the American Giants in game two. The game turned into a pitching duel with Dismukes giving up only three hits and Wickware scattering six hits over nine innings. An error by usually reliable John Henry “Pop” Lloyd allowed Indianapolis to score the only run of the game.

Game three ended in controversy and proved to be the turning point of the series. The controversy started when Ben Taylor who was playing first base for the ABCs objected to Rube Foster wearing a fielder’s baseball mitt while coaching first base for Chicago. Taylor asked Foster to remove the glove and when he refused, the umpires got involved. After a heated discussion, Foster was ejected from the game. Before Foster left the game, he pulled his team from the field

of play. When Chicago refused to continue play, the umpire ruled the game a forfeit. Indianapolis was credited with a 9-0 win. Dicta Johnson (Indianapolis) got the win and Rube Tyree (Chicago) took the loss. Rube Foster defended his taking his ball club from the field because he felt he and his team were being prejudiced against in Indianapolis. The Indianapolis ABCs were leading 1-0 when the incident occurred.

In game four Dizzy Dismukes scattered seven hits and Oscar Charleston went 4-4 as the ABCs rolled to an 8-2 victory. This gave Indianapolis a three games to one lead in the series.

The series moved to Chicago for game five. Moving the series to Chicago didn't help the American Giants as they were blown out of game five by a score of 12-8. Behind the pitching of Dizzy Dismukes who won all three of the games he started and the hitting of Candy Jim Taylor (.529), the Indianapolis ABC's easily defeated the Chicago American Giants four games to one to claim the "Colored Championship of the West." This marked the end of Rube Foster's Chicago American Giants dominating the West.

No championship series between teams from the East and West was played in 1916.

A summary of the 1916 "Colored Championship Series of the West" is as follows:

Game	Location	Date	Winning Team	Score	Winning Pitcher	Loosing Pitcher
1	Indianapolis	Oct 21 <sup>st</sup>	Chicago	5-3	Tom Johnson	Dicta Johnson
2	Indianapolis	Oct 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Indianapolis	1-0	Dizzy Dismukes	Frank Wickware
3	Indianapolis	Oct 24 <sup>th</sup>	Indianapolis	9-0	Dicta Johnson	Rube Tyree
4	Indianapolis	Oct 26 <sup>th</sup>	Indianapolis	8-2	Dizzy Dismukes	Tom Johnson
5	Chicago	Oct 29 <sup>th</sup>	Indianapolis	12-8	Dizzy Dismukes	Rube Tyree

Rube Foster did not take the "championship series" loss lying down. Foster immediately challenged the Indianapolis ABCs being considered the "Colored Champions of the West."



Media Supports Indianapolis as the Champions  
Indianapolis Freeman

12-02-16

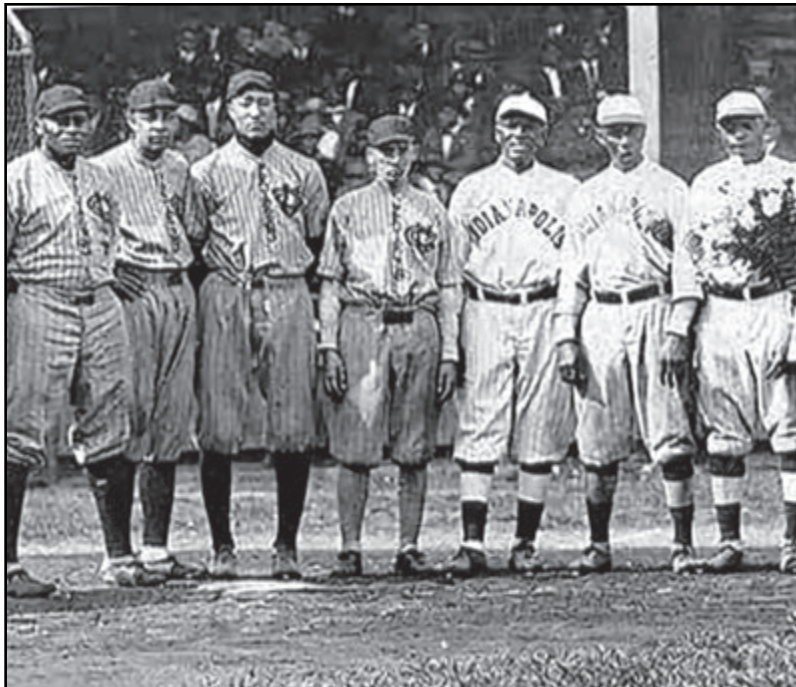


Almost immediately, a feud between C.I. Taylor and Rube Foster played out in the media with both parties writing numerous powerful-opinionated letters that were published in the Indianapolis Freeman and Chicago Defender.

Foster's claim in the media was based on several factors. First, earlier in the season the Chicago American Giants had beaten the Indianapolis ABCs four out of five games in a series that had been played in Chicago. Secondly, Foster argued that the "championship series" should have gone twelve games and only five games were actually played. In addition Rube Foster seriously questioned the abilities and motives of the umpiring staff that C.I. Taylor had hired. The media and most baseball fans were not very sympathetic to Foster's claims and the Indianapolis ABCs were considered the "Colored Champions of the West." The 1916 Indianapolis ABCs were also considered by many as the "Colored World Champions."

After being crowned the "Colored Champions of the West" at the end of the 1916 season there was nowhere for the Indianapolis ABCs to go but down. The number one problem that C.I. faced during the 1917 season was injuries. In a letter by C.I. Taylor that was published in the Chicago Defender on October 6<sup>th</sup>, C.I. listed all the players who had been injured during the season. Virtually every starter had been injured at one time or another during the 1917 season. Some of the worst injuries during the season were:

- Candy Jim Taylor (3B), one of the team's leading hitters, suffered with a bad ankle and then charley horse the entire season.
- Starting shortstop Morten Clark played the entire season with problems with his eyes.
- A lingering bout of pneumonia affected Ben Taylor's play most of the season.
- Starting pitcher Dicta Johnson suffered with a sore arm and according to C.I. was "off form" the entire season.



**Indianapolis ABCs vs Peter's Chicago Union Giants (1917)**  
(C.I. Taylor – third from right)

In all nine starters either played hurt or were out of the lineup all together during the season. In the letter that appeared in the Chicago Defender, C.I. went on to tell his fans that in order to bolster his roster he tried to sign the following players: "Cyclone" Joe Williams (Lincoln Giants), Spottswood Poles (Lincoln Giants), Louis Santop (Brooklyn Royal Giants), Yank Deas (Atlantic City Bacharach Giants) and Dan Johnson (Atlantic City Bacharach Giants). In each case Taylor offered every player more than he was making with his current team, but was unable to sign any of these players. Taylor even hired the services of a trainer to travel with the team. According to C.I. this was the first time a colored club ever employed a trainer to travel with the team. To complicate his roster problems even more, Dizzy Dismukes, George Shively and Jack Watts left the team on their own accord during the season.

The 1917 season became even more complicated for C.I. Taylor when Tom Bowser sold his ABCs team to Warner Jewell. Warner named his team "Jewell's ABCs." Jewell's team ended up being a mix of aging veterans and promising young players. The 1917 roster for Jewell's ABCs included Charles Blackwell, Joe ".45" Scotland, Todd Allen, Puggy Hutchinson, Connie Day and Frank Wickware. George Abrams who had a long history of being involved in black baseball in Indianapolis was Warner Jewell's promoter. This gave the city of Indianapolis two black teams which wasn't good for either team or black baseball in general. With Federal League Park being demolished, C.I. Taylor's team played out of Washington Park and Warner Jewell's team played at Northwestern Park.

C.I. Taylor conducted his spring training for the 1917 season in the West Baden-French Lick area. While at the resorts, Taylor had his players "taking the water cure" for which the resorts were internationally known. The Indianapolis ABCs roster for the 1917 season remained basically the same as the 1916 starting line-up with the exception of losing Bingo DeMoss to the Chicago American Giants. DeMoss' spot at second base was taken over by Indianapolis native Frank Warfield.

The Indianapolis ABCs opened the season against the Chicago Union Giants at Washington Park. Before the game there was a massive parade and celebration honoring the "World Champion" Indianapolis ABCs.

The United States started preparing for World War I in 1917. On May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1917 a proclamation was issued requiring young men between the ages of 21-30 to register for the draft. With war on the horizon and the inevitable fact that black baseball teams would be losing players, C.I. Taylor and Rube Foster were drawn even closer together. By Indianapolis and Chicago playing more games against each other, they hoped that they could get black baseball defined by the federal government as an "essential industry." If black baseball were to get this designation then black ball players would be exempt from being drafted. Included in these games were numerous charity games to benefit the American Red Cross and other organizations that supported the soldiers.

During the 1917 season Indianapolis was led by the hitting of Ben Taylor (.294), Oscar Charleston (.292), George Shively (.279), Candy Jim Taylor (.271) and Charles Blackwell (.252). The ace of the pitching staff during 1916 was Andrew "String Bean" Williams (9-3). According to C.I. Taylor, Williams almost single handedly carried the team the entire season. Williams was a "workhorse" throughout the season. Newspaper accounts credit Williams with pitching 15 innings against the Chicago American Giants on August 4<sup>th</sup> and then going out the next day and hurling 26 innings in an 8-4 win over Chicago. The rest of the pitching staff suffered from fatigue during the season and no one else was really consistently effective. Also pitching for C.I. Taylor during the 1917 season were Bill Gatewood (7-9), Jim Jeffries (4-3), Dicta Johnson (3-4), Dizzy Dismukes (2-5), Lem McDougal and John Landers. Ben Taylor and Oscar Charleston also pitched during the 1917 season when C.I. ran short on pitchers.

The Indianapolis ABCs' fate for retaining their "championship" was sealed in a series against the Chicago American Giants that was played after July 4<sup>th</sup>. Indianapolis and Chicago played a ten game series. Chicago dominated the series winning seven games and losing two with one tie.

On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Indianapolis ABCs played a double header against the Indianapolis Indians who were the reigning Champions of the American Association and recognized as the best Minor League club in the country. With a starting line-up destroyed by injuries, C.I. Taylor reached out to Rube Foster for help. Taylor asked Foster for the loan of Bingo DeMoss and either Tubby Dixon or Bruce Petway. Unfortunately, Foster was playing an important series in Beloit (WI) and Taylor was forced to play with a crippled line-up. Even though they lost both games, the ABC's out hit their Minor League opponents.

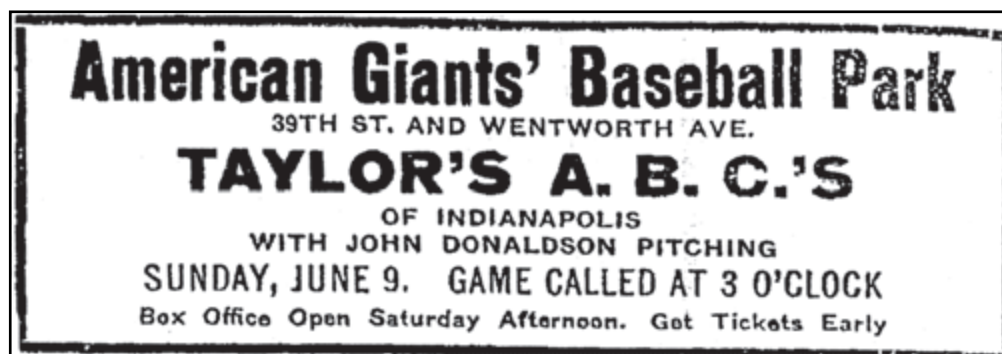
In October Indianapolis played three games against Major-Minor League ball players. On October 7<sup>th</sup> they split a double header against Dolan's Indianapolis All-Pros. The ABCs lost the first game and behind the shut out pitching of "String Bean" Williams, Indianapolis took the second game by a score of 2-0. Then on October 14<sup>th</sup> the ABCs beat Ownie Bush's All Stars by a score of 6 to 1. The last reported game of the 1917 season for the ABCs took place on October 22<sup>nd</sup> against the Muncie Grays. Indianapolis ended the season on a positive note with a 2-1 win.

Even with all their injuries, the Indianapolis ABCs still had a good season. In games against all levels of competition Indianapolis posted a won-loss record of 36-25-3 (.590) for the 1917 season. Over half of their losses (13) were to the Chicago American Giants. Even though they had a winning record, Indianapolis lost the title as the best team in the West to the Chicago American Giants (49-14-2).

Before the start of the 1918 season, there were rumors that C.I. Taylor was considering moving his team to another city because he was still competing with Jewell's ABCs for the same fan base at the box office. Taylor's final decision was to keep his team in Indianapolis and play his home games at Washington Park.

C.I. Taylor went into the 1918 season with high expectations and his team did not disappoint him. To bolster his roster Taylor signed John Donaldson from the All Nations for what the Freeman reported "as the highest salary known to the history of colored baseball." In 1918 Taylor got excellent hitting from his starting line-up and strong pitching from his starting rotation.

The Indianapolis ABCs started the season on a positive note by defeating the Dayton Marcos in their first two games of the season. The Marcos with former Indianapolis hurler William "Dizzy" Dismukes as their player/manager went down by the scores of 14-0 and 5-0. Indianapolis then traveled to Camp Grant in Rockford (IL) to take on their military baseball team. Camp Grant was led by the pitching of Louis "Dicta" Johnson who was the Indianapolis ABCs first player inducted into the service. The ABCs prevailed by a score of 14-3.



Chicago American Giants vs Indianapolis ABCs (1918)

Chicago Defender

06-08-18



Oscar Charleston (.381), George Shively (.338), Frank Warfield (.333), Ben Taylor (.320), Dave Malarcher (.286), Morten Clark (.276) and Jimmie Lyons (.271) led the team in hitting during the 1918 season. The starting pitching rotation for the 1918 ABCs were Jim Jeffries (7-2), Andrew “String Bean” Williams (6-4), Dizzy Dismukes (4-5) and John Donaldson (3-1). When C.I. needed additional pitching during the season, he called on the following position players to take the mound: Oscar Charleston, Morten Clark, Jimmie Lyons, Ben Taylor and Candy Jim Taylor.

In mid July the Indianapolis ABCs and Chicago American Giants embarked on a tour of the eastern part of the United States. The first game between the two clubs was played in Washington, D.C. on July 27<sup>th</sup>. Chicago took the game by a score of 6-2. The next game ended in a 7-7 tie and was called because of darkness. Indianapolis rebounded to win the next two games by the scores of 8-7 and 16-11. Indianapolis closed out their eastern tour by winning both ends of a doubleheader against the New York Red Caps. The ABCs posted scores of 5-2 and 5-4 versus their New York opponent. Indianapolis went 5-3-1 on the tour.

In late August it was rumored that the Indianapolis ABCs would be ending their season early. By September C.I. Taylor’s roster had been decimated by losing players to the draft. Gone to military service were Oscar Charleston, Morten Clark, Dizzy Dismukes, Louis Johnson, Jimmie Lyons and Dave Malarcher.

From current research, it appears the Indianapolis ABCs concluded play with a depleted line-up sometime in September. The Indianapolis ABCs ended the 1918 season with a record of 26-12-1 (.684) in games against top level competition. They also played a significant number of games against lower level teams and these games are not counted in the won-loss record presented here. Unfortunately, they were still considered the second best team in the West behind the Chicago American Giants who went 45-22-1 (.672) for the 1918 season.

### **America Goes to War**

Before the start of the 1919 baseball season, a large number of black baseball players were drafted into the military due to World War I. The Indianapolis ABCs were the hardest hit of all the black teams in the country. They lost seven of their top players (Oscar Charleston, Morten Clark, William “Dizzy” Dismukes, James Jeffries, Jimmie Lyons, Dave Malarcher and Russell Powell) to military service. Louis “Dicta” Johnson, who had been one of the best pitchers for Indianapolis for several seasons, voluntarily enlisted and was sent to Europe to fight. Some of the other top black ball players who were lost to the war effort were Jude Gans (Chicago American Giants), Spottswood Poles (Lincoln Giants), Dick “Cannonball” Redding (Brooklyn Royal Giants), Louis Santop (Lincoln Giants) and Frank “The Red Ant” Wickware (Chicago American Giants).

Rather than dwell on the negatives of losing most of the best players from his team, C.I. who was a military veteran himself tried to install a sense of national pride in his players. Reportedly, Taylor took his players on a tour of Washington, D.C. and tried to install a sense of duty to their country in his players.

The general consensus of opinion by Negro League researchers is that C.I. Taylor did not field a team for the 1919 baseball season due to the impact of World War I on black baseball in the United States. Even though World War I officially ended in November of 1918, it still took several months for many of the players to return back to the United States and receive their military discharges.

It is important to note that Negro League researcher John Holway reports that the Indianapolis ABCs did play several games in 1919. Unfortunately, Holway does not give any details of these four games like the dates that the games were played or the teams the ABCs faced. Holway even

lists a roster for the Indianapolis ABCs for the 1919 season in one of his books. Holway's roster includes C.I. Taylor as the manager and the following starting line-up.

### Indianapolis ABCs (1919)

Position	Player	Position	Player
1B	Pete Booker	OF	Tom Lynch
2B	Tick Huston	OF	Joe Scotland
SS	Huck Rile	OF	Goldie
3B	Del Francis	P	Red Farrell
C	Speck Webster	P	Luther Brewer

From this researcher's perspective the team that Holway references is Jewell's Indianapolis ABCs team which did play during the 1919 baseball season. Our research, however, has never shown that C.I. Taylor was ever associated with this team and that George Abrams was the manager of Jewell's ABCs.

## Organize Base Ball League

**Best Colored Players in the  
Country Included in Five  
Team League**

Kansas City, Feb. 25—The National Negro Base-ball League has been organized here, with Rube Foster, of Chicago as president. The constitution and by-laws of the league were written by Dave Wyatt, Indianapolis Ledger; Attorney Elisha Scott, Topeka, Kan.; Cary B. Lewis, Chicago Defender and Ellwood C. Knox, Indianapolis Freeman. The teams and players include:

**Detroit Stars**—Pete Hill, Bruce Petway, Frank Warfield, Edgar Wesley, Joe Hewitt, Mac Eggerston, Leroy Roberts, Henderson K. Boyd, Holland Richard Whitworth, Jimmy Lyons, Johnson Hill, Lotty Hill.

**Kansas City**—John Donaldson, Jim Mendez, Frank Blukol, Jackson Wilmuir, Rube Currie, Rodriguez, Fortordana, Sam Crawford, Wilbur Morgan, W. Harris, Kiro.

**St. Louis Giants**—Tillie McAdoo, Dan Kenard, Charles Brooks, Charles Scott, Wm. Drake, Tarridge Felix Wallace, Charles Blackwell, Eddie Holt, John Tinner, Hill.

**American Giants**—George Dixon, Jas. Brown, Leroy Grant, Elwood DeLoas, Robert Williams, David Malacher, J. E. Reese, Thomas Johnson, Thomas Williams, Richard Lundy, Christopher Torrenti, Edw. Gans.

**Chicago Giants**—Lawrence Simpson, Walter Ball, Lemuel McJugai, Edward Jones, John Beckwith, William Green, Thurman Jennings, Frank Jefferson, Horacio Jenkins, Joe Green, Clarence Winston, Tom Clark.

**Taylor's A. H. C's**—James Jeffries, J. Taylor, Marten Clark, Russell Powell, Itchland, William Webster, Oscar Charleston, Ed Rile, Murray, William Dismukes, Decatur Johnson.

Several other owners, however, did adapt to the problems caused by the war effort and fielded teams. Most of the teams that played during the 1919 season played limited schedules and did not travel very far from their home base of operations. The top teams in the East during the 1919 season were the Atlantic City Bacharach Giants, Brooklyn Royal Giants, Cuban Stars (East), Hilldale and the New York Lincoln Giants. The top teams in the West in 1919 were the Chicago American Giants, Chicago Giants, Cuban Stars (West), Dayton Marcos, Detroit Stars, Jewell's ABCs of Indianapolis and the St. Louis Giants.

### Founding of the Negro National League

Prior to the start of the 1920 baseball season Rube Foster, owner of the Chicago American Giants, held a meeting of the owners of the top black teams in the West. These meetings were held on February 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of 1920 at the YMCA in Kansas City (Missouri) for the purpose of organizing the Negro National League. Some of the owners who attended the meeting were: Andrew "Rube" Foster (Chicago American Giants), John "Tenny" Blount (Detroit Stars), Joe Green (Chicago Giants), C.I. Taylor (Indianapolis ABC's) and J.L. Wilkinson (Kansas City Monarchs). Lorenzo Cobb represented Charles Mills who was the owner of the St. Louis Giants.

At the end of the meeting a "league" constitution was ratified and Rube Foster was elected as the President and C.I. Taylor Vice-President of the Negro National League.

The formation of the Negro National League did not happen overnight. In December of 1907 a meeting had been held at the offices of the Freeman newspaper in Indianapolis to discuss the formation of the "National Colored Baseball League." Among those attending this meeting were Frank Leland, Rube Foster and other owners of some of the top black teams in the West.

In addition according to a letter by C.I. Taylor that was printed in the Indianapolis Freeman on May 5<sup>th</sup> of 1915, he and Rube Foster had been corresponding and planning for a national black league since at least the fall of 1914.

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

### Negro National League (1920)

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

(Note - The Bacharach Giants were an Associate Member of the “league” in 1920.)

The Negro National League proved to be the first successful baseball league featuring black baseball players.

### Indianapolis ABCs First Season in the Negro National League

After helping Rube Foster form the Negro National League, C.I. Taylor set his sights on “league” play. The ABCs played their home games at Washington Park during the 1920 season. The season opened for Indianapolis on May 2<sup>nd</sup> with the ABCs taking a double header victory from the Chicago Giants by the scores of 4-2 and 11-4. Their next “league” opponent was the Cuban Stars. Approximately 10,000 fans showed up at Washington Park when the series against the Cuban Stars started on May 9<sup>th</sup>. Indianapolis continued their winning ways by taking these games by the scores of 4-2, 4-2 and 7-3.

C.I. Taylor’s starting line-up for the 1920 Negro National League season included:

### Indianapolis ABCs (1920)

Position	Player	Batting Average	Position	Player	Batting Average
1B	Ben Taylor	.321	OF	Oscar Charleston	.353
2B	Connie Day	.197	OF	George Shively	.314
SS	Morten Clark	.287	OF	Ralph Jefferson	.268
3B	Henry Blackman	.232			
C	Russell Powell	.249	P	Dizzy Dismukes	14-9
C	Raleigh “Biz” Mackey	.312	P	Dicta Johnson	10-8

(Note – The batting averages reported above are for “league” games and games against high level competition. Games against lower level competition and most “non-league” games are not included in these figures.)





**Indianapolis ABCs (1920)**  
Negro National League

(Standing left to right – Unknown, George Shively, **Ben Taylor**, unknown, Hampton, **Ralieigh “Biz” Mackey** and **William “Dizzy” Dismukes**. Middle row – **C.I. Taylor**. Front row left to right- Unknown, **Oscar Charleston**, Russell Powell, Henry Blackman and unknown.

When both “league” and “non-league” games are added together, Negro League researcher John Holway credits Ben Taylor with a season batting average of .359 and Ralph Jefferson with a .345 average.

Taylor’s pitching staff for the inaugural Negro National League season and their won-loss records in “league” play were as follows: Dizzy Dismukes (14-9), Dicta Johnson (10-8), Bob McClure (7-7), Jim Jeffries (7-8), Morris Williams (4-7), Ed “Huck” Rile (2-2), Ben Taylor (1-1) and Herlen Ragland (1-1).

The Indianapolis ABCs were dealt a significant blow at mid-season when George Shively and Ed “Huck” Rile left the team to join a team in New York. To replenish his line-up, C.I. turned to his friend Charles Bellinger who owned the San Antonio Black Aces. Taylor offered contracts to six of the Black Aces. These players included future Negro League stars Raleigh “Biz” Mackey, Henry Blackman, Crush Holoway, Robert “High Pockets” Hudspeth, Namon Washington and Morris Williams. Everyone except Holoway signed. Crush would join the Indianapolis ABCs in 1921.

Rube Foster’s Chicago American Giants (43-17-2 .710) dominated Negro National League play the entire season. The Detroit Stars finished the season in second place, the Kansas City Monarchs were in third place and the Indianapolis ABCs ended up in fourth place with a record of 49-43 (.531).

After the regular season the Indianapolis ABCs played a three game series against a team of Major and Minor League players who billed themselves as the “All-Pros.” The ABCs took the first game by a score of 6-4. The All-Pros came back to win the next two by the scores of 5-4 and 7-2.

On December 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of 1920 the Negro National League Annual meeting was held in Indianapolis. C.I. Taylor represented the Indianapolis ABCs. Other owners and team representatives that attended the meeting were:

**Negro National League – Annual Meeting (1920)**

<b>Attendee</b>	<b>Team</b>	<b>Attendee</b>	<b>Team</b>
Andrew “Rube” Foster	Chicago American Giants	Charles Mills	St. Louis Giants
John “Tenny” Blount	Detroit Stars	Dr. Howard Smith	
J.W. Conners	Bacharach Giants	Ira Lewis	<u>Pittsburgh Courier</u>
Ed Bolden	Hilldale	Harry St. Clair	
J.G. Tate	Cleveland Tate Stars	Q. J. Gilmore	Kansas City Monarchs
L.R. Williams	Cleveland Tate Stars	J.L. Wilkinson	Kansas City Monarchs
John Matthews	Dayton Marcos	Homer Phillips	

Major decisions were reached during the winter meeting. They were as follows:

- Andre “Rube” Foster (Chicago American Giants) was elected as President and C.I. Taylor (Indianapolis ABCs) was elected as Vice-President.
- Columbus replaced the Dayton franchise in the “league.”
- The Cuban Stars would play their home games at Redland Field in Cincinnati.
- The Bacharach Giants and Hilldale became associate members of the “league.”

**Andrew “Rube” Foster**

Owner and Manager of Chicago American Giants  
and  
President of Negro National League

National Baseball Hall of Fame (1981)

(Never in the history of black baseball in America was there a greater rivalry than the one that existed between Rube Foster’s Chicago American Giants and C.I. Taylor’s Indianapolis ABCs.

Not only did their rivalry play out on the field but both Foster and Taylor took their rivalry to the national media. Both individuals would write long in-depth letters that would appear in the national black newspapers like the Chicago Defender and the Indianapolis Freeman.)



According to research by Paul DeBono and reported in his book, The Indianapolis ABCs, Taylor's Indianapolis ABCs club played two games against the Cincinnati Reds of the National League before the start of the 1921 Negro National League season. The first game was played on April 30<sup>th</sup> and the second game was played the next day on April 31<sup>st</sup>. Indianapolis won both games. They won the first game by a score of 3-1 and the second game by a score of 12-2.

C.I Taylor started the 1921 season with high hopes of improving on their Negro National League fourth place finish from the year before. The Indianapolis ABCs opened the season strong. They played their first nine games at home and came away with seven victories. Unfortunately, Indianapolis could not keep the momentum going through the rest of the season. One of the biggest reasons for their mediocre season was losing Oscar Charleston to the St. Louis Giants before the start of the season. Oscar Charleston was considered the "franchise player" of Indianapolis. C.I. couldn't hope to find a player to replace someone of Charleston's ability, but he did sign several players who helped the team during the season. These players were outfielder Crush Holoway from the San Antonio Black Aces, pitcher Bob McClure also from the Black Aces and Mobile shortstop Charlie Williams.

The 1921 Indianapolis ABCs were led by the hitting of Ben Taylor (.390), Raleigh "Biz" Mackey (.329), Crush Holoway (.324), Charlie Williams (.291) and Harry Kenyon (.286). As a team, Indianapolis posted a very respectable .281 team batting average for the season.

Jim Jeffries (15-13) and Dicta Johnson (11-8) were the top two pitchers for the 1921 ABCs. Other pitchers on the staff during the season were Harry Kenyon (7-11), John Stephens (5-0), Lloyd Latimer (4-2), Anthony Mahoney (3-4), Bob McClure (2-2), Dizzy Dismukes (2-3) and Morris Williams. The Indianapolis ABCs pitching staff posted a 3.90 team earned run average for the 1921 season.

Indianapolis finished the season with a record of 37-37-2 (.500) in "league" play and an overall record of 54-55-3 (.496). They ended the season in fourth place in the final Negro National League standings. The Chicago American Giants (44-22-2) repeated as "league" champions.

From January 26<sup>th</sup> to January 28<sup>th</sup> of 1922, the Negro National League held its yearly meeting at the Appomattox Club in Chicago. The highlight of the meeting was the election of "league" officers. Andrew "Rube" Foster (Chicago American Giants) was elected President, C.I. Taylor (Indianapolis ABCs) was elected as Vice-President and J. L. Wilkinson (Kansas City Monarchs) was selected as the "league" Secretary. In other "league" action the Pittsburgh Keystones and Cleveland Tate Stars replaced the Columbus Buckeyes and Chicago Giants as "league" members.

After the "league" meetings C.I. Taylor returned to Indianapolis to prepare for the upcoming season. Unfortunately, Taylor would not be in the dugout when the season began.



**Charles Isham Taylor**  
1875-1922

### **A Glorious Career Cut Dramatically Short**

Charles Isham Taylor passed away on February 23, 1922 of pneumonia at his home located at 440 Indiana Avenue, Indianapolis (Marion County), Indiana. He was just 47 years old. Mourners overflowed the Bethel A.M. E. Church at Vermont and Toledo Streets in Indianapolis for his funeral. Three separate eulogies were given during the service. Andrew "Rube" Foster gave his eulogy entitled "C.I. Taylor in Athletics." Freeman B. Ransom, noted Indianapolis civil rights leader, gave a eulogy entitled "C.I. Taylor as a Citizen." Dr. Summer A. Furniss, C.I.'s personal physician, gave a eulogy entitled "C.I. Taylor as Race Man." He was laid to rest in the Crown Hill Cemetery (Lot 55 Section 53) in Indianapolis.



## **Olivia Taylor becomes the First Women to Own a Negro League Team**

After C.I. passed away, the controlling interest in the Indianapolis ABCs was transferred to his wife Olivia. Day-to-day management of the team was taken over by his brother Ben who was the player-manager. When Olivia took over her husband's team, she became the first female to own a Negro League team.

Olivia Taylor was faced with several significant problems almost immediately when she took over the team and these challenges continued until she folded the team in June of 1924.

1. Many players were hesitant to play for a women and this only got worse as time went on.
2. Team owners especially those from the Eastern Colored League constantly raided her roster and as a result she lost most of her key players. The biggest loss that Olivia incurred was when Oscar Charleston was signed by Colonel Strothers of the Harrisburg Giants in 1924. Also gone from the roster of the ABCs by 1924 were star players Henry Blackman (3B), Morten Clark (SS), Connie Day (2B), George Holoway (OF), Jim Jeffries (P), Dicta Johnson (P), Raleigh "Biz" Mackey (C/3B), George Shively (OF) and Ben Taylor (1B). Olivia Taylor lost virtually her entire starting roster from the time she took over the team until the time she folded the franchise approximately two and a half years later.
3. During her ownership of the team she was under constant criticism for reportedly under paying the players.
4. Olivia and her brother-in-law Ben Taylor did not seem to have a good working relationship. Speculation at the time was that Ben felt that he should have been given the team when C.I. passed away. Their relationship deteriorated and Ben's tenure with the ABCs ended in 1923 when he went to the Washington Potomacs as a co-owner.
5. From the very beginning of her tenure as owner of the Indianapolis ABCs, Negro National League owners urged her to sell the team. They felt this was in the best interest of black baseball and the Negro National League in general. Other team owners felt that Olivia had ruined the great legacy that her husband had built. Olivia Taylor steadfastly refused to sell the team right up until the time the ABCs were ousted from the "league" and eventually folded.
6. The team also lost its ability to draw fans at the box office. Without C.I. Taylor at the helm of the club the dynamics of the team were significantly different. Lower numbers of fans in the stands meant less revenues and that resulted in financial problems for Olivia's team. To make matters even worse the start of the 1924 season proved disastrous when early season rain outs caused the cancellation of several key game dates.
7. Before the start of the 1924 season, Olivia Taylor and her teams' manager William "Dizzy" Dismukes became embroiled in a bitter feud that ended up being played out in the national black press.

Ben Taylor got the Indianapolis ABCs off to a good start when the 1922 Negro National League season got underway. Behind the great hitting of Raleigh "Biz" Mackey (.411), Oscar Charleston (.395), Ben Taylor (.371) and Edgar Wesley (.346), Indianapolis played excellent baseball the entire season. The pitching staff for Indianapolis included James Jeffries, Louis "Dicta" Johnson, Wayne Carr, Anthony Mahoney and Howard Ross.

According to the 1922 Negro National League standings that were published in the Kokomo Tribune on July 28<sup>th</sup>, the Indianapolis ABCs were leading the “league with a record of 28-13 (.682). Researchers differ on the final won-loss records for the Indianapolis ABCs for the 1922 season.

Research by Larry Lester and Dick Clark credits Indianapolis with a record 46-33 (.582) and in second place in the final Negro National League standings. The Seamheads research group headed by Gary Ashwill credit Indianapolis with a record of 61-41 (.596) and in second place in the final “league” standings. Both research groups agree that the Chicago American Giants won the Negro National League title for the 1922 season.



**Indianapolis ABCs (1922)**

(Back row left to right – Henry Blackman, unknown, Dizzy Dismukes, **Oscar Charleston**, **Ben Taylor**, Connie Day and **Crush Holoway**. Seated left to right – **George Shively**, James Jeffries, Daltie Cooper, Namon Washington and George “Tubby” Dixon.)

Without C.I. at the helm of the team and the formation of the Eastern Colored League in 1923, Eastern owners started raiding the ABCs’ roster. The most prominent losses to the ABCs were Oscar Charleston, Dizzy Dismukes, Crush Holoway, Raleigh “Biz” Mackey and Ben Taylor.

The 1923 Indianapolis ABCs were managed by William “Dizzy” Dismukes. The top hitters for the team during the season were Connie Day (.382), Gerald Williams (.338), Crush Holoway (.319), George Shively (.318) and Oscar Charleston (.311). The pitching staff for the ABCs during the 1923 season included Daltie Cooper, Charles Corbett, Dizzy Dismukes, James Jeffries and Ralph Moore.

Indianapolis under the leadership of Dizzy Dismukes had a good season in 1923. They posted a final won-loss record of 45-34 (.570) in Negro National League play and in games against top level teams.

## The Original Indianapolis ABCs Fade from the Scene of Professional Baseball

With Olivia in Birmingham, Alabama visiting family before the start of the 1924 season, William “Dizzy” Dismukes tried in vain to put together a competitive squad. This was a real challenge for Dismukes because he only had two players from his 1923 team return for the 1924 season. These players were Gerard Williams (SS) and Namon Williams (OF/2B). With a non name roster, no real hitting or pitching; the Indianapolis ABCs started the season with a dismal record of 6-21 (.222).

The team’s problems of losing players and outstanding debt culminated with the ABCs being ousted from the Negro National League in June of 1924. In a statement that appeared in all the leading black newspapers in the United States, the Board of Directors for the Negro National League cited the following reasons as to why they had pulled the Indianapolis ABCs’ franchise:

1. Supposedly the team did not have the funds to pay their players.
2. The Indianapolis ABCs and Olivia Taylor personally owed money to Rube Foster.
3. Also the team owed money to the Negro National League that was past due.

In short the Indianapolis ABCs had accumulated significant debts that the team couldn’t pay.

When Rube Foster was asked to comment on the matter, he went into great detail and publicly listed twelve (12) reasons as to why Indianapolis’ franchise had been taken away from them.

1. The owner Mrs. C.I. Taylor did not have the funds with which to continue in the “league.”
2. There was at the time of the disbanding of the club no finances to further care for the expenses of the same.
3. There still remains an outstanding debt to the “league” of \$ 1,556.56.
4. There is a personal obligation to Mr. A.R. Foster amounting to \$ 620.25.
5. There is a total indebtedness to the “league” directly and indirectly of \$ 2,176.81.
6. There is an unpaid board and room bill incurred while the club was in Chicago of \$275.26. The clubs uniforms are now being held for the same.
7. No funds with which to continue to the next place on the schedule.
8. No funds to meet the salaries of the ball players which were then due.
9. The inability of Mrs. Taylor to get together with men who contemplated buying the club by shaking them down for an enormous sum.
10. Inability of the owner and manager to put a club on the field which would even play a good brand of semi-professional ball, to say nothing of the brand demanded by Negro National League patrons.
11. Loss of confidence by the players in the owner after repeated failures to meet the payroll promptly and in full.
12. Club owners of the league realized that the continuance of the club in the “league” would prove costly and perhaps disastrous to all the clubs of the “league.”

Mrs. Taylor took exception to the rationale used to expel her team from the “league.” According to statement made by Olivia Taylor to the national media, she asserted that her team’s finances were in quite good shape and that Rube Foster had manipulated the “league’s financial statements to make the ABCs look bad. Mrs. Taylor claimed she had taken in \$ 25,000 and had the funds to cover all of her debts. She went on to charge Rube Foster and his friends with betraying their own race for the sake of greed.



The Indianapolis ABCs were replaced by the Memphis Red Sox. Officials from the Negro National League did allow the Indianapolis ABCs to still be an “associate member” of the “league.” The Indianapolis ABCs did try to play an independent schedule after they were booted out of the “league.” Six games have been found for the team during this period. They lost to the Cermaks of Chicago and then took two games of a five game series against the Chicago Stars. The last box score found to this date for Olivia Taylor’s team was on July 6<sup>th</sup> in Chicago versus the Chicago Stars who beat them by a score of 10-0.

While Olivia Taylor is generally regarded by many as not having been successful with her franchise for the two and a half years that she owned it, she did play an important role in Negro League baseball history. From this researcher’s perspective, Olivia Taylor has been judged and remembered unfairly. While her 1924 team did fall apart and ended the season with a record of 8-25-1 (.242), she did have winning seasons in 1922 (46-33) and 1923 (45-34) and this was against mainly stiff Negro National League competition. Paul DeBano in his book The Indianapolis ABCs has the following to say about Olivia Taylor:

“Olivia emblemized the hard working spirit of black women at that time. She was smart and humble, I don’t think Olivia really needed or expected the attention of the larger community, but apparently she had the respect of her peers.”

Prior to the 1925 season Warner Jewell reorganized the ABCs. After two losing seasons in 1925 (17-57) and 1926 (43-45) the Indianapolis ABCs team that C.I Taylor had taken to a “World Championship” in 1916, folded quietly.



**Washington Park**  
Home of the Indianapolis ABCs  
Indianapolis, IN

## Assessing Taylor’s Managerial Career

- Charles Isham Taylor was **one of the greatest managers in the history of black baseball** in America.
- Current research has identified that C.I. Taylor has a **won-loss record of 639-371-14 (.633)** as manager. This number will go up significantly as more research is done.
- When assessing C.I. Taylor’s career as a manager it is important to see **how he stacks up against the other top Negro League managers** of all-time. The following chart presents the won-loss records for regular season “league” games, number of pennants won and number of World Series victories for the top Negro League managers.

**All –Time Negro League Managers**

Manager	Number of Seasons	Won-Loss Record	Pct.	Negro League Pennants	Negro League World Series Wins
1. Candy Jim Taylor	30	907-809	.529	3	2
2. C.I. Taylor	17	639-371	.633	0	0
3. Oscar Charleston	19	414-338	.551	2	0
4. Vic Harris	12	400-231	.630	7	1
5. Dick Lundy	10	293-185	.613	3	0
6. Bullet Rogan	5	262-124	.679	1	0
7. Rube Foster	6	254-151	.627	3	0
8. Dave Malarcher	6	250-118	.679	3	2
9. Frank Warfield	8	236-158	.599	3	1
10. Jose Mendez	4	215-107	.669	3	1
11. John Henry Lloyd	6	172-159	.520	1	0
12. Jose Fernandez	-	156-174	.470	1	1
13. Winfield Welch	-	88-55	.620	3	0

(It is important to note that the majority of C.I. Taylor’s managerial career took place before there even was a Negro National League. In addition it is important to mention that Negro League great Sol White is not on this list because most of his best years were prior to 1920 and even though Rube Foster is mentioned on the list, most of his best years were before 1920 and not included in this research project.)

- Over his career C.I. Taylor owned and managed teams in Birmingham, West Baden and Indianapolis. In all three cities, Taylor created a “championship” team. During his managerial career he **managed at least eleven (11) teams to championships.**
- Taylor’s team also **more than held their own against “white” Major and Minor League competition.** In eighteen (18) games against Major-Minor League all-star teams - five (5) games against the Cincinnati Reds (National League), one (1) game against the Pittsburgh Pirates (National League), one (1) game against Columbus (American Association), two (2) games versus the Indianapolis Indians (American Association) and two (2) games versus the Vincennes Alices (Kitty League) - Taylor’s West Baden and Indianapolis ABCs teams compiled an impressive **won-loss record of 19-10 (.655).**
- Some of the **keys to Taylor’s success as a manager** were as follows:
  1. He excelled in his ability to recognize baseball talent, recruit players and then develop them into outstanding ball players. Taylor was known for signing top young players and then bringing them along slowly to prepare them for playing against top level competition. Taylor excelled at being patient with young or developing players.
  2. C.I. was known for his work ethic and expected the same from his players but not to a point where they resented him for it. He was known for his vigorous workouts. During spring training it was not uncommon for Taylor to have his team go through three hours of calisthenics a day. Taylor didn’t stand on the sidelines while his players worked out. C.I. exercised with his team and as hard as any player on the

team. According to Dave Malarcher, “C.I. would condition you. He made you run. He’d run you to death.”

3. Taylor installed a sense of self-discipline in his players. One example of this is that he required his players to wear a suit, tie and have shined shoes when they were not in uniform. He also always stressed clean living and Christian values. Even though he was a disciplinarian, he always presented himself as kind and gentle. In addition he was always concerned about the feelings and individual pride of each of his players.
  4. The Freeman newspaper in an article that appeared in their newspaper on April 25, 1914 made the following analysis of Taylor’s management style: “Manager Taylor builds up his men as individual ball players and as a team.”
  5. He inspired and motivated his players.
  6. Taylor emphasized every aspect of the game especially the basics like bunting, moving runners into scoring position, stealing, taking an extra base, running the bases and playing intelligent baseball.
  7. Charles Isham Taylor was well respected by his players, fellow managers, opposing players, the media and the fans.
  8. He was very intelligent and a natural born leader.
  9. Taylor was a master strategist on the field. The Freeman referred to him as the “Wizard of the Game.” C.I. regularly held clubhouse meetings to discuss game strategy and the current game’s opponent. C.I. just won ball games.
  10. Communication with ball players both on and off the field was very important to C.I.
  11. He focused on strong community relations and formed civic ties within the community with both “black” and “white” community leaders. Taylor’s team regularly played charity or benefit games for worthy organizations.
  12. Through his strong community relation skills, C.I. Taylor was always able to lease a first class ball park to serve as a home field for his team.
  13. Taylor was always known for having excellent business management skills.
  14. C.I. Taylor recognized the importance of the black newspapers not just in Indianapolis but also nationally. He was very successful in developing and maintaining a strong relationship with the black press.
  15. He cultivated the black middle class in Indianapolis to build a strong and loyal fan base for his team.
  16. Taylor always promoted the concept of “clean” baseball. Some of the things that this concept meant were to provide a suitable playing field, the hiring of security guards for games to ensure the safety of the fans and demanding good deportment both on and off the field from both players and fans.
  17. Lastly, C.I. Taylor’s integrity was unapproachable.
- Besides the ability to evaluate and develop young talent into ball players, C.I. Taylor also had a **significant impact on developing players who would later have very successful careers as managers**. These managers include Otto Briggs, Oscar Charleston, Elwood “Bingo” De Moss, William “Dizzy” Dismukes, Raleigh “Biz” Mackey, Dave Malarcher, Ben Taylor, “Candy Jim” Taylor and Frank Warfield.
  - We are **missing a significant amount of data** for several seasons of his won-loss records. Taylor’s won-loss records for the Birmingham Giants for his first three seasons from 1904 to 1906 have not been uncovered. Only partial records have been found for 1908, 1913 and 1918. In addition a large number of games he managed against lower level opponents have not been found.
  - Charles Isham Taylor’s **career was cut short by his premature death** in 1922 at the age of only 47. Had he not passed away at such an early age, he would have most likely managed at least ten years and picked up several hundred more victories.
  - He is remembered as **one of the early pioneers of Negro League baseball**.





**West Baden Resort**  
West Baden, IN



**Royal Poinciana Hotel**  
Palm Beach, FL

## Managerial, Ownership and Playing Career

### Regular Season:

Year	Team	League
1899-1902	Clark College	Atlanta Intercollegiate League
1904-1909	Birmingham Giants	Independent
1910-1913	West Baden Sprudels	Independent
1909-1913	West Baden Sprudels	Springs Valley League
1914-1918	Indianapolis ABCs	Independent
1919	Did not field a team due to the impact of World War I on black baseball.	
1920-1921	Indianapolis ABCs	Negro National League

### Winter League:

1910	West Baden Sprudels	Two Games vs Vincinnes Alices
1911	West Baden Sprudels	Game vs Pittsburgh Pirates (NL)
1912	West Baden Sprudels	Game vs Cincinnati Reds (NL)
1913	West Baden Sprudels	Three Game Series vs Cincinnati Reds (NL)
1914	Indianapolis ABCs	Two Games vs Indianapolis All Pros
1914	Indianapolis ABCs	Three Game Series vs Ownie Bush's All Stars
1915	Indianapolis ABCs	Game vs French's All Leaguers
1915	Indianapolis ABCs	Two Games vs Minor League All Stars
1915	Indianapolis ABCs	Two Games vs Ownie Bush's All Stars
1915	Indianapolis ABCs	Game vs Columbus (AA)
1915	Indianapolis ABCs	Cuban Exhibition Tour
1916	Royal Poinciana Hotel	Florida Hotel League
1916	Indianapolis ABCs	Game vs All Professionals
1917	Indianapolis ABCs	Two Game Series vs Indianapolis Indians
1917	Indianapolis ABCs	Two Games vs Dolan's All Stars
1917	Indianapolis ABCs	Game vs Ownie Bush's All Stars
1920	Indianapolis ABCs	Three Games vs All Pros w/ Art Nehf
1921	Indianapolis ABCs	Two Games vs Cincinnati Reds (NL)
1921	Indianapolis ABCs	Two Games vs Major-Minor League All Stars

**KAUFF'S PITCHING AMBITION IS WRECKED BY A. B. C. SLUGGERS —THE ALL-STAR AGGREGATION WENT DOWN, 8 TO 0.**

As a pitcher Bennie Kauff is king of the base stealers in the Federal League. Benjamin essayed a pitching role for Ownie Bush's all-star aggregation at Northwestern Park last Sunday and the folk from Indiana avenue won, 8 to 0. The A. B. C.'s rode the Hooped Star all over the lot and some of the balls he floated up to them were lost in the reservoir located just outside of the left-field barrier.

Kauff took up the pitching in the seventh inning when John Duggan, who had hurled splendid ball, was taken out to permit Elmer Duggan to hit for him with two on. The score was 2 to 0 in favor of the A. B. C.'s when Bennie assumed command, and then the wild attack started. Six runs were sent over the plate in rapid succession when the dusky fellows became aware that the Federal League star was trying to fool them with a fast ball.

The A. B. C.'s counted in the first inning, Gordon being hit by a pitched ball and worked around on singles by B. Taylor and J. Taylor. Gordon clouted out a home run in the third for the second run off Duggan's delivery.

"Spitball" Johnson pitched a splendid game for the A. B. C.'s. He was touched up for only four hits and at no time was in great danger, although his support was excellent.

The fielding of Reilley in left was the feature of the game. "Duke" made two sensational catches and prevented the colored team from running up a larger score. George Daus was called out of the city late Saturday night. The Tiger star will be on the mound next Sunday when the same teams meet at Northwestern Park. The box score:

Stars	AB	H	O	A	E
Bush, ss	4	2	1	2	0
French, 2	3	1	2	3	0
Reilley, lf	4	0	2	0	0
Kauff, cf, p	4	1	4	1	0
Metz, 1	3	1	10	0	0
McCarty, rf	4	1	3	0	0
Firestone, 3	3	0	0	2	0
Dilger, c	3	0	1	2	0
J. Duggan, p	2	0	0	4	0
E. Duggan, cf	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>

A. B. C.	AB	H	O	A	E
Shively, lf	5	0	0	0	0
Moore, rf	4	0	2	0	0
Gordon, 2	4	2	0	3	0
B. Taylor, 1	5	2	15	1	1
J. Taylor, 3	4	2	1	0	0
Hutchinson, ss	4	1	0	2	0
Powell, c	4	2	7	0	0
Scotland, cf	4	0	2	0	0
Johnson, p	3	1	0	5	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2</b>

All Stars 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0  
A. B. C.'s 1 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0  
Two-base hits—Powell, Hutchinson. Home run—Gordon. Bases on balls—Off Johnson, 2; off Kauff, 2. Struck out—By Johnson, 7; by J. Duggan, 2. Hit by pitcher—By J. Duggan, Gordon; by Johnson, French. Wild pitch—Kauf. Hits—Off J. Duggan, 5 in 6 innings; off Kauff, 5 in 1 inning; off E. Duggan, 1 in 1 inning. Stolen bases—McCarty, Firestone, Shively. Passed ball—Powell. Time—1:59. Umpire—William McCarty.

Freeman  
10-31-14

**A. B. C.'S SLUG BALL DEFEATING ALL-STAR 14 TO 3—DISMUKES FANS TEN.**

The A. B. C.'s turned the tables on Frenches' All-Leaguers Sunday at Northwestern Park, defeating them 14 to 3. Taylor, Clark and Allen leading in the attack on the white club. The score:

A. B. C.'s	AB	H	O	A	E
Shively, lf	2	1	3	0	0
Clark, ss	5	3	4	3	0
Allen, 3b	5	3	2	0	0
B. Taylor, 1b	5	3	5	0	0
Charleston, cf	4	1	0	0	1
Powell, c	3	2	8	0	1
Briggs, 2b	4	1	3	3	0
Jeffries, rf	5	0	2	0	0
Dismukes, p	4	0	0	1	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>

All-Leaguers	AB	H	O	A	E
Daringer, ss	3	1	2	3	1
Fisse, 3b	4	1	0	1	3
Ludwig, lf	3	0	3	0	0
Fesse, 3b	4	1	0	1	3
Muhn, cf	4	1	2	0	0
Coughtn, 1b	4	1	5	0	0
Duggan, rf, p	3	0	0	0	0
Anderson, c	4	1	4	2	0
Hancock, p	0	0	0	0	0
Harris, p, rf	4	0	4	2	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>

All Leaguers	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	—3
A. B. C.'s	5	1	1	0	0	2	4	0—14

Two-base hits—French, Fisse. Three-base hits—B. Taylor, 2. Clark. Home runs—Charleston, Powell, Allen. Stolen bases—Briggs, Shively, Clark. Double play—Dismukes to Clark to B. Taylor. Sacrifice hits—Briggs, Charleston, Ludwig. Bases on balls—Off Dismukes, 2; off Harris, 3; off Duggan, 1. Struck out—By Dismukes, 10; by Harris, 2; by Duggan, 1. Hits—Off Hancock, 6 in one-third inning; off Harris, 5 in 5-3 innings; off Duggan, 2 in 2 innings. Double play—Dismukes to Clark to B. Taylor. Passed ball—Powell. Time—2:01. Umpire—McCarty.

**NOTES OF THE GAME.**

Dismukes struck out ten of the visitors without much exertion.

Scotty Frazier was busy collecting change after the game.

Briggs at second handled everything in fine style and securing a hit.

Manager Taylor used two of his pitchers in the field—Jeffries and Charleston.

Little Shively went up the hill in the eighth and rolled down but still held the ball.

Charleston and Powell dropped one in the lake and received \$1.00 from owner Bowser.

The sensational Merty Clark crossed second in the seventh and got his man at first by a step. It was a fine piece of fielding and the fans applauded.

Ben Taylor, the demon slugger of the A. B. C.'s was there with a single and two three-basers, even if he did pull a "Casey" in the sixth. Ben is a favorite with the fans.

Todd Allen, the "Old Reliable" looked familiar at third base, handling everything clean that came his way. The captain hit one to deep center for the circuit and to show that he could run some, he scored from first on a single in the seventh—some boy that Todd.

Freeman  
05-01-15

**A. B. C.'S TOO FAST FOR MINOR LEAGUERS**

Colored Champs Cut Loose on the Bases and Romp Away With Double-Header—Fisly Plays Frequent.

Manager Taylor of the A. B. C.'s has drilled so much base running knowledge into his colored champs that it is going to take an all-powerful outfit to grab a game from them. This fact was shown at Federal park Sunday, when the A. B. C.'s defeated the All-Stars, a minor league aggregation, 12 to 1 and 7 to 0. The Stars were caught napping several times by the winners' speedy work on the bases.

With less stolen bases to the credit of the Taylor aggregation the All-Stars might have had a chance. As it was the A. B. C.'s got away with a rush at the start of the first game and were not headed the entire afternoon. Myers of the Fort Wayne club pitched good ball for the All-Stars in the second game, but his support was ragged. There were a number of fielding features. Scores:

A. B. C.	AB	H	O	A	E
Shively, lf	4	1	2	0	0
D-Moss, 2	3	2	1	0	1
Allen, 3	4	1	2	4	0
B. Taylor, 1	3	2	2	1	0
Charleston, cf	3	1	2	1	0
Clark, rf	4	3	2	0	0
Powell, c	3	1	9	0	0
Hutchinson, ss	4	0	3	0	0
Johnson, p	4	2	0	2	1

All-Stars	AB	H	O	A	E
Fisse, 2	4	0	3	1	0
Pierce, rf	4	0	2	0	0
McCarty, lf	4	1	2	1	0
Duggan, 1	4	1	2	2	1
Vann, c	4	2	5	1	2
Chase, cf	4	0	0	0	0
Harris, 3	2	0	1	3	0
McCann, ss	2	0	4	5	0
Starkey, p	0	0	0	0	0
Avery, p	3	0	0	1	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>

All-Stars	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	—1
A. B. C.'s	1	5	2	1	0	0	2	—12

A. B. C.	AB	H	O	A	E
Totals	18	7	12	13	3
All-Stars	0	0	0	0	0
A. B. C.'s	1	0	2	2	—7

Freeman  
10-02-15



## C.I. Taylor's – Managerial Career

### Independent:

Year	Team	League	Won	Lost	Tie	Pct.
1904	Birmingham Giants	Independent	-	-	-	-
1905	Birmingham Giants	Independent	-	-	-	-
1906	Birmingham Giants	Independent	-	-	-	-
1907	Birmingham Giants	Independent	51	31	0	.622
1908	Birmingham Giants	Independent	15	7	0	.682
1909	Birmingham Giants	Independent	79	22	0	.782
1910	West Baden Sprudels	Independent	49	23	1	.681
1911	West Baden Sprudels	Independent	53	22	0	.707
1912	West Baden Sprudels	Independent	22	20	0	.524
1913	West Baden Sprudels	Independent	29	21	2	.580
1914	Indianapolis ABC's	Independent	51	19	0	.729
1915	Indianapolis ABC's	Independent	50	23	4	.685
1916	Indianapolis ABC's	Independent	43	23	2	.652
1917	Indianapolis ABC's	Independent	36	25	3	.590
1918	Indianapolis ABC's	Independent	26	12	1	.684
<b>Total</b>			<b>504</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>.670</b>

### Negro National League:

Year	Team	League	Won	Lost	Pct.	Place
1920	Indianapolis ABC's	Negro National League	49	43	.531	4 <sup>th</sup>
1920	Indianapolis ABC's	Non-League	9	1	.900	-
1920	Indianapolis ABC's	Exhibition vs Major Leaguers	3	0	1.000	-
1921	Indianapolis ABC's	Negro National League	54	55	.496	5 <sup>th</sup>
1921	Indianapolis ABC's	Non-League	3	2	.600	-
1921	Indianapolis ABC's	Exhibition vs Major Leaguers	3	0	1.000	-
<b>Total</b>			<b>121</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>.545</b>	<b>-</b>

### Cuba:

Year	Team	League	Won	Lost	Tie	Pct.
1915	Indianapolis	Cuba	8	12	0	.400

### Florida:

Year	Team	League	Won	Lost	Tie	Pct.
1916	Royal Poinciana Hotel	Florida Hotel League	6	10	1	.375

Note – 1. C.I. Taylor did not field a team during the 1919 baseball season due to World War I.

2. Won-loss records are either entirely missing or incomplete for several of the years that C.I. Taylor managed.

## Taylor-Foster Rivalry

Charles Isham “C.I.” Taylor and Andrew “Rube” Foster were without a doubt the two greatest managers in the early days of black baseball in America. They first met each other when Rube Foster took his Chicago American Giants team on a barnstorming tour of the South in April of 1909. During Foster’s tour of the South the American Giants played a series against Taylor’s Birmingham Giants.

Over the years C.I. Taylor and Rube Foster developed a rivalry and friendship of immense proportions. Taylor and Foster were a definite contrast in personalities. C.I. Taylor was soft spoken, gentlemanly and always presented with Christian values. Rube Foster was simply big, bold and brash. At times they fought bitterly in the press and at other times they were the best of friends. When issues related to what was in the best interest of black baseball, they always supported one another. The one constant in their relationship was a mutual respect for one another.

It was through the influence of Rube Foster that C.I. Taylor decided to move his base of baseball operations to Spring Valley, Indiana and take over the West Baden Sprudels who represented the West Baden Resort. Taylor’s move to Indiana put him right in Rube Foster’s backyard. Before long C.I. Taylor would start to challenge Rube Foster’s Chicago American Giants for the dominance of black baseball in the West.

By 1915 C.I. Taylor’s Indianapolis ABCs challenged Rube Foster’s Chicago American Giants for the title of “Colored Champions of the West.” Even though no championship series was ever held, a case could be made for either team or Chicago being considered the best team in the West.

When the 1916 regular season ended the Indianapolis ABCs and the Chicago American Giants were the two top teams in the West. They met in a championship series in late October. The Indianapolis ABCs took the series four games to one to be crowned the “Colored Champions of the West.” Rube Foster did not take the “championship series” loss lying down. He immediately challenged Indianapolis being considered the “Colored Champions of the West.” Foster’s claim in the media was based on several factors. First, earlier in the season the Chicago American Giants had beaten the Indianapolis ABCs four out of five games in a series that had been played in Chicago. Secondly, Foster argued that the “championship series” should have gone twelve games and only five games were actually played. In addition Rube Foster seriously questioned the abilities and motives of the umpiring staff that C.I. Taylor had hired. The media and most baseball fans were not very sympathetic to Foster’s claims and the consensus of opinion was that the Indianapolis ABCs were the “Colored Champions of the West.” The 1916 Indianapolis ABCs were also considered by many as the “Colored World Champions.” The feud between C.I. Taylor and Rube Foster played out in the media with both parties writing numerous powerful-opinionated letters that were published in the Indianapolis Freeman and Chicago Defender.

After being beaten convincingly throughout the 1917 season by the Chicago American Giants, C.I. Taylor sent the following correspondence to the sports editor of the Indianapolis Freeman and the following was published on September 29, 1917:

“Rube Foster has the greatest Colored aggregation in the business, and every true sport ought to give him praise....Foster’s club is truly the World’s Colored Champions for 1917....All honor to him and his magnificent ball club.”

(C.I. Taylor)

C.I. Taylor started focusing on the formation of an organized league of black baseball teams as early as 1914. In 1920 when Rube Foster was forming the Negro National League, Taylor supported Foster’s effort for the “league” and Foster as the President.

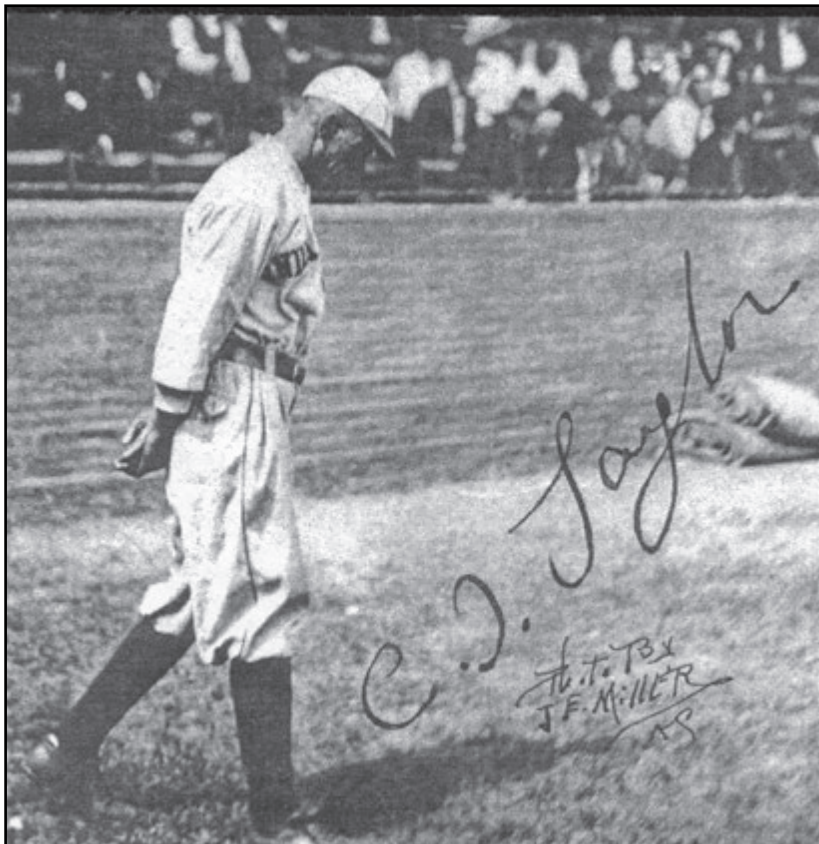
When C.I. Taylor passed away in 1922, it was Rube Foster who gave his eulogy at the funeral.

### Managerial Career - Won-Loss Record

	Won	Lost	Tie	Pct.
Independent	504	248	13	.670
Negro League	103	98	0	.512
Non-League	12	3	0	.800
Exhibition	6	0	0	1.000
Cuba	8	12	0	.400
Florida	6	10	1	.375
<b>Total</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>.633</b>

### Managerial Championships

Year	Team	Championship
1907	Birmingham Giants	Colored Champions of the South
1908	Birmingham Giants	Colored Champions of the South
1909	Birmingham Giants	Colored Champions of the South
1910	West Baden Sprudels	Springs Valley League
1912	West Baden Sprudels	Springs Valley League
1913	West Baden Sprudels	Colored Champions of Indiana
1914	Indianapolis ABCs	Colored Champions of Indianapolis
1915	Indianapolis ABCs	Colored Champions of Indianapolis
1915	Indianapolis ABCs	Colored Championship of the West
1916	Indianapolis ABC's	Colored Championship of the West
1916	Indianapolis ABC's	Colored Champions of the World



**C.I. Taylor**  
Indianapolis ABCs

Taylor Makes a Trip to the Mound



## C.I. Taylor as a Ball Player

C. I. Taylor started his baseball career as a third baseman playing for Clark College in the Atlanta Intercollegiate League. According to an article that appeared in the Freeman, C.I. was considered the best third baseman in the “league.” Taylor would find out that there was a significant difference in playing college ball and professional baseball.

Negro League historians list C.I. Taylor as an owner, manager, second baseman, outfielder, first baseman, pitcher and pinch hitter. While Taylor was a very successful owner and great manager; he was only a mediocre professional ball player.

Current research identifies C.I. as a career .215 hitter and that includes a .278 batting average for the 1910 West Baden Sprudels. If you take out his 1910 season numbers with West Baden, C.I. Taylor would be left with a .189 career batting average.

The highlight of C.I. Taylor’s career as a hitter came when his Birmingham Giants played Mobile on September 10, 1909. C.I. collected as the Freeman newspaper reported “four clean hits out of four times up.” He also scored three times and had four stolen bases in the game.

When C.I. Taylor formed the Birmingham Giants and then when he took over the West Baden Sprudels, he regularly played in the starting line-up. It is important to note that we are missing the vast majority of the box scores from games that he played for the Birmingham Giants and West Baden Sprudels.

### Career Statistics – Hitting (Regular Season)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1907	Birmingham	2	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
1908	Birmingham	4	15	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	.067	.067
1909	Birmingham	3	14	5	7	0	0	0	2	4	.500	.500
1910	West Baden	11	54	-	15	2	-	1	-	1	.278	.465
1911	West Baden	3	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
1912	West Baden	4	7	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	.143	.571
1913	West Baden	4	9	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	.222	.333
1914	Indianapolis	12	23	2	6	0	0	0	0	2	.261	.261
1915	Indianapolis	16	19	1	4	1	0	0	1	0	.211	.263
1915-16	Indianapolis	9	10	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	.000	.000
1916	Indianapolis	6	5	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	.400	.600
1917	Indianapolis	6	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	.000	.000
1918	Indianapolis	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
1920	Indianapolis	6	6	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	.167	.167
1921	Indianapolis	5	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	.250	.250
	Total	93	186	15	40	5	0	2	6	12	.215	.274

### Career Statistics – Pitching (Regular Season)

Year	Team	Games	Innings	Won	Lost	Hits	Runs	BB	S0	ERA
1909	Birmingham	5	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	-
1910	West Baden	3	15.3	0	1	17	11	3	9	6.46
1911	West Baden	1	20.0	1	1	7	5	7	11	-
	Total	9	35.3	4	4	24	16	10	20	-

## Selected Career Highlights

- Played third base on the Clark College baseball team that won several Atlanta Intercollegiate League baseball championships.
- Considered the top third baseman in the Atlanta Intercollegiate League.
- Compiled an outstanding won-loss record of 639-371-14 (.633) during his managerial career.
- In eighteen (18) games against Major-Minor League all-star teams - five (5) games against the Cincinnati Reds, one (1) game against the Pittsburgh Pirates, two (2) games versus the Indianapolis Indians (American Association), one (1) game against Columbus (American Association) and two (2) games versus the Vincennes Alices (Kitty League) - Taylor's West Baden Sprudels and Indianapolis ABCs compiled an impressive won-loss record of 19-10 (.655).
- Founded the Birmingham Giants and brought professional black baseball to Birmingham, Alabama.
- Led the Birmingham Giants to the "Colored Championship of the South" in 1907, 1908 and 1909.
- Transformed the West Baden Sprudels from a mediocre club into a competitive team.
- Managed the West Baden Sprudels to the Springs Valley League title in 1910 and 1912.
- Led the West Baden Sprudels to a victory over the Pittsburgh Pirates of the National League in September of 1911.
- Managed the Indianapolis ABCs to the "Colored Championship of the West" in 1915.
- Managed the Indianapolis ABCs to both the "Colored Championship of the West" and the "Colored World's Championship" in 1916.
- Helped Rube Foster found the Negro National League in 1920. The Indianapolis ABCs were one of the charter members of the Negro National League.
- Elected as the Vice – President of the Negro National League in 1920. He was also reelected to his role as Negro National League Vice-President in 1921 and 1922.
- Considered one of the greatest managers in the history of black baseball in America. Rube Foster and C.I. Taylor are generally considered the top two managers in the early days of black baseball.
- Served as a role model and mentor to the following ball players who became outstanding managers in the Negro Leagues: Otto Briggs, Oscar Charleston, "Bingo" De Moss, "Dizzy" Dismukes, Raleigh "Biz" Mackey, Dave Malarcher, Ben Taylor, "Candy Jim" Taylor and Frank Warfield. C.I. Taylor's guidance and influence had a tremendous impact on the managerial careers of these Negro League legends.
- Not only was C.I. Taylor one of the early pioneers of black baseball in America but he is also considered one of the best and most successful managers in the history of black baseball.

**Negro National League - Annual Meeting  
January 28, 1922**

This photograph was taken at the Negro National League meeting that was held in Chicago on January 28, 1922. It is perhaps the last recorded photograph of C.I. Taylor because he passed away in Indianapolis less than a month after this picture was taken.

At this meeting, Rube Foster (Chicago American Giants) was elected as the President of the Negro National League, C.I. Taylor (Indianapolis ABCs) was elected as Vice-President and J. L. Wilkinson (Kansas City Monarchs) was elected as Secretary of the "league."



**Negro National League Meeting**  
Appomattox Club  
Chicago, IL  
January 28, 1922

(Front row left to right – J.L. Wilkinson, unknown, Andrew “Rube Foster, C. I. Taylor, unknown and unknown)