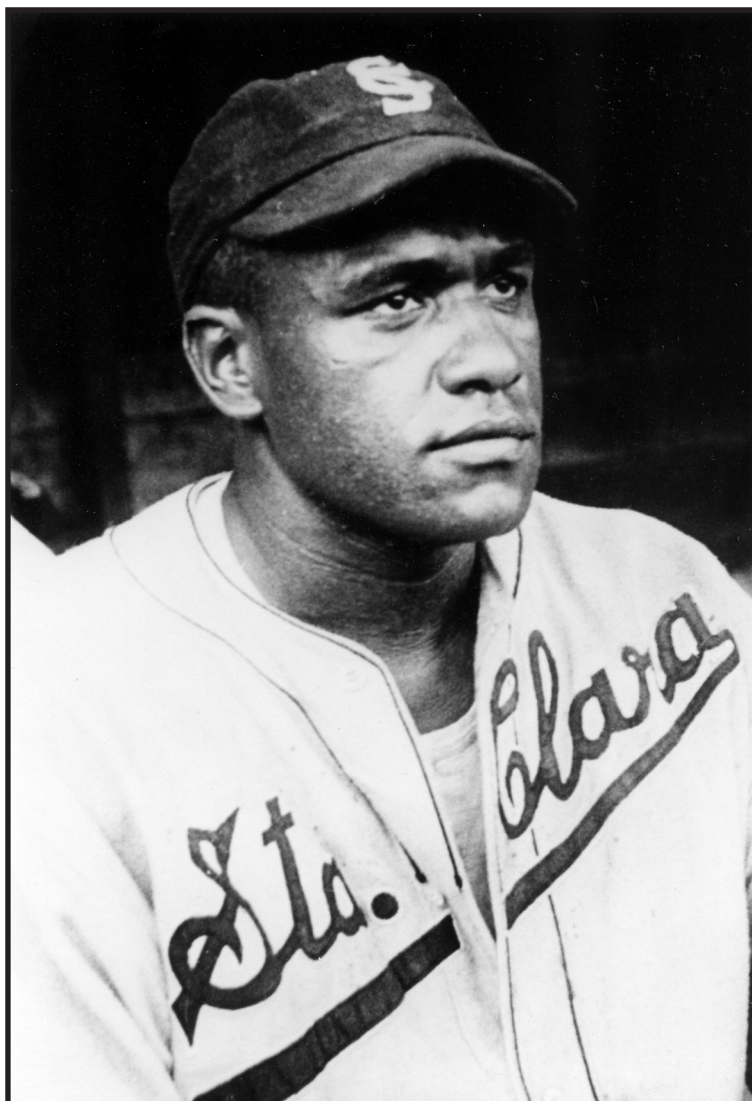


Forgotten Heroes: Samuel “Sam” Bankhead



by

Center for Negro League Baseball Research

Dr. Layton Revel

and

Luis Munoz

The Bankheads

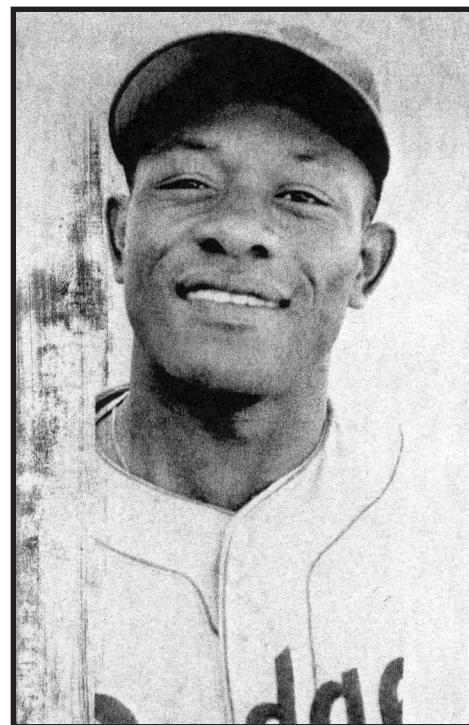
Baseball: A Family Business

The Bankhead boys grew up in the small coal mining town of Empire, Alabama. For Sam, Fred, Dan, Joe and Garnett hard work and baseball were a way of life. Amazingly enough, all five brothers went on to play professional baseball in the Negro Leagues.

Sam Bankhead was born on September 8, 1905. He entered professional baseball in 1929 when he appeared in several games for the Birmingham Black Barons. From 1930 to 1932 he played off and on with the Birmingham Black Barons, Louisville Black Caps and Nashville Elite Giants. His career took off in 1933 when he became a starter in the outfield for the Nashville Elite Giants of the Negro National League. In his first year in the starting line-up he made the East-West All Star game. Over the next 20+ years he would be a full time professional ball player playing twelve months out of the year. During his career he played for the Nashville Elite Giants, Pittsburg Crawfords, Toledo Crawfords and Homestead Grays. His career also took him to play ball in California, Canada, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Panama, Puerto Rico and Venezuela. He was named to nine East-West All Star games and played on twenty-five championship teams. Sam died tragically of a gunshot wound on July 24, 1976.

Fred Bankhead was born on November 23, 1912. Fred was an infielder who played in the Negro Leagues from 1936 to 1948. During his career he played for the Birmingham Black Barons, Memphis Red Sox and New York Black Yankees. Fred was selected to the 1942 East-West All Star game. He was killed in an automobile accident on December 17, 1972 when he was driving to the airport to pick up his mother who was coming to visit for the Christmas holidays.

Dan Bankhead was born on May 3, 1920. He is the most famous of the Bankhead brothers because he was one of the first black players signed by Major League baseball in 1947. He started his career in the Negro American League in 1940 with the Birmingham Black Barons. He played with the Birmingham Black Barons, Chicago American Giants and Memphis Red Sox in the Negro Leagues. Dan was selected to play in the 1941, 1946 and 1947 East-West All Star games. He was a power pitcher who could also hit extremely well. Dan was signed by the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947 making him the first black pitcher to play in the Major Leagues. Bankhead spent parts of three seasons (1947, 1950 and 1951) with the Dodgers. His best year in the Majors was 1950 when he appeared in 41 games and posted a won-loss record of 9-4. Dan also had outstanding years in the Brooklyn Minor League system with Nashua (20-6 with 2.35 ERA) in 1948 and Montreal (20-6) in 1949. He led the New England League in strikeouts (143 SO) in 1948 and the International League in strikeouts (176 SO) in 1949. In addition he led the Puerto Rican Winter League in strikeouts two different years: 1946-47 (179 SO) and 1949-50 (133 SO). When his pitching career stalled, he went to Mexico and reinvented himself as a first baseman and outfielder. Dan played baseball in Mexico from 1953 to 1966. His best seasons were with Aguila-Mexico City in 1957 (.361 batting average) and Puebla in 1960 (.378 batting average). He retired from baseball with a career batting average in Mexico of .293. Dan died of throat cancer on May 2, 1976 in Houston, Texas.



Dan Bankhead
Brooklyn Dodgers

Joe Bankhead was born on September 8, 1926. Joe pitched for the Birmingham Black Barons of the Negro American League in 1948. He passed away on February 8, 1988 in Alabama.

Garnett Bankhead was the youngest of the Bankhead brothers and was born on June 27, 1928. He pitched for the Memphis Red Sox of the Negro American League in 1947. He also played with his brother Sam on the Homestead Grays team that played in the Negro National League in 1948 and the Homestead Grays team that played in the Negro American Association in 1949. He died when he was shot during an argument on September 15, 1991 in Detroit, Michigan.

In Negro League baseball, the best known of the Bankhead baseball playing brothers was Sam. He had by far the longest and most productive career in the Negro Leagues.

Samuel Howard Bankhead was born on September 18, 1905 in Empire, Alabama. He was the oldest of the five brothers (Sam, Fred, Dan, Joe and Garnett) to play in the Negro Leagues. Sam grew up in the coal mining towns of central Alabama. As a young man he worked in the coal mines and played baseball for the company teams. He was also a regular on local sandlot teams.

Bankhead stood 5 feet 8 inches tall and weighed 175 pounds during his playing days. He batted and threw right handed.

During his professional baseball career, he was one of the most versatile players to have ever played the game. Bankhead played most of his career at shortstop or in the outfield, but he could play any position on the field equally well. Over the course of his career in the Negro National League, he was selected to play in nine East-West All Star games at five different positions for three different teams. Defensively there were few players of his equal. He had no peer when it came to fielding the ball, covered more than his share of ground, had a strong throwing arm and was always accurate with his throws. In the outfield he would regularly cut down runners who tried to take an extra base. Maurice Peatross who played first base for the Homestead Grays had this to say about Bankhead's ability to play shortstop:

“When he played shortstop, he just poured the ball over to first base – no wrinkle on his throws. Just like a bullet.”

(Maurice Peatross – Homestead Grays)

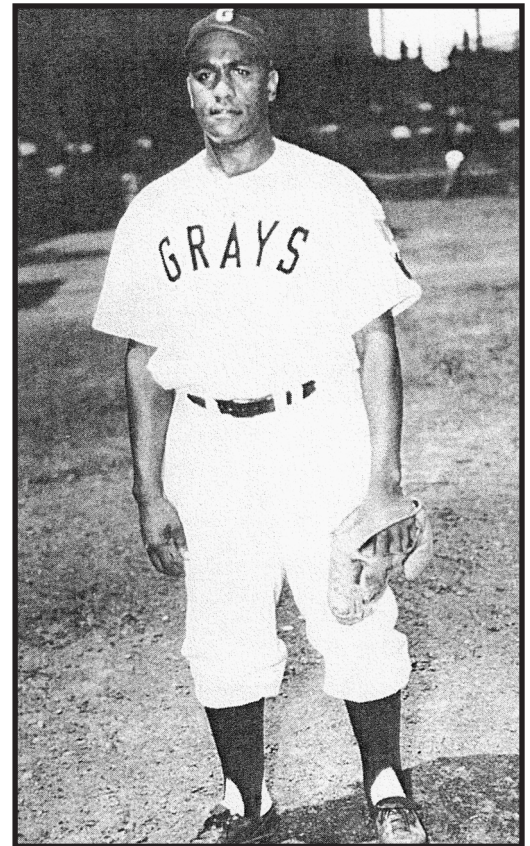
Garnett Blair who played with him on the Homestead Grays had this to say about his teammate.

“Sam Bankhead to me was an outstanding player. He played shortstop and he would go behind third to get it and throw you out waist high across the diamond. He could not only play short, he could play second, third, he could play outfield, he could pitch and he could catch. He was all around, so anytime I was pitching I said if that ball goes to Sam Bankhead, fine. There's nothing wrong with that, let it go there because if he got his glove on it, he was going to throw you out.”

(Garnett Blair – Homestead Grays)

As a hitter, Sam consistently hit .300 plus everywhere he played. He was always a threat at the plate and had the ability to deliver in the clutch. On the base paths Bankhead had exceptional speed, could steal and take the extra base when the opportunity presented itself.

In short, Sam Bankhead was an exceptional all around ball player who was one of the most versatile players to have ever played the game He was an exceptional fielder, could steal bases and beat you with his speed. Bankhead was also a clutch hitter who had a career batting average of .311 for his 20+ years as a professional baseball player.



Sam Bankhead
Homestead Grays

Negro League Career

Bankhead's career in Negro League baseball began in 1929, when at the age of 24 he played briefly with the Birmingham Black Barons of the Negro National League. The next season (1930), he saw limited action with the Nashville Elite Giants of the Negro National League. In 1931 Bankhead was signed by the Birmingham Black Barons who had moved to the Negro Southern League. The 1932 season would see Sam playing for three different teams in the Negro Southern League. During the 1932 season he started the season with the Birmingham Black Barons, moved to the Louisville Black Caps and then was picked up by the Nashville Elite Giants as they made their playoff run. Sam spent most of the 1932 season as a pitcher, but found limited success on the mound. His pitching won-loss record was 2-6 for the 1932 season. In the 1932 playoffs the Nashville Elite Giants were defeated by Turkey Stearnes and the Chicago American Giants 5 games to 3.



Sam Bankhead
Nashville Elite Giants

BASEBALL

Empire Giants Vs. Nashville Giants
(Members of American Colored League)

Thursday, May 24—Fairgrounds

Game Starts at 5:15 P. M.
Admission 25c

Free Parking Free Grandstand

The Mansfield News
Mansfield, Ohio
05-23-34

Before the start of the 1933 baseball season, the Nashville Elite Giants moved back to the Negro National League. Sam Bankhead played second base and in the outfield for Candy Jim Taylor's (Manager) Elite Giants during the 1933 and 1934 Negro National League seasons. Sam responded to his starting role and posted a .295 batting average in his first season (1933) in the starting line-up. The Elite Giants fielded a strong team in 1933 that included Tommy Dukes (.343), Sammy Hughes (.347), Percy Miller (10-2) and Burnis "Wild Bill" Wright (.328).

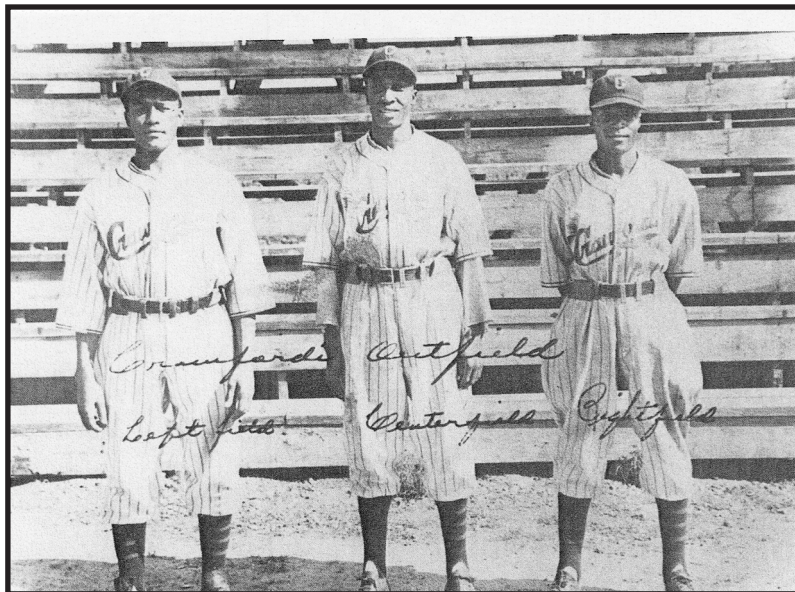
At the end of the season, Nashville played the Pittsburgh Crawfords in a playoff series. Pittsburgh won the series 2 games to 0 for the Elites. In 1934 Sam was back with the Nashville Elite Giants and had another good season. Bankhead finished the 1934 season with a .323 batting average.

After the 1934 regular Negro National League season was over, Bankhead was recruited by the Kansas City Monarchs. The Monarchs had played an independent schedule during the 1934 baseball season and were on their way to play in the Denver Post Tournament. Kansas City already had an outstanding team that included: Newt Allen, James "Cool Pappa" Bell, Chet Brewer, Bill Foster, Newt Joseph, Bullet Rogan and Turkey Stearnes. But the Monarchs knew they would face stiff competition at the Denver Post Tournament because it featured the best eighteen semipro and independent teams in the country. The Monarchs made a strong showing in the tournament and finished in second place to Satchel Paige and the House of David. With more than 11,000 fans (thousands of fans also had to be turned away when standing room only was not available) packed into Merchants Park, the Monarchs lost the championship game 2-0 to the House of David. The House of David took home the first place money of \$ 7,000.00 and the Kansas City Monarchs had to settle for second place money of \$ 5,000.00.

Bankhead's solid play was rewarded for both the 1933 and 1934 Negro National League seasons when he was named the starting right fielder for the West squad in the East-West All Star game. The 1933 East-West All Star game was the first Negro League All Star game and was played in Comiskey Park in Chicago, Illinois. Sam's two hits, stolen base and two runs scored helped pace

the West squad to an 11-7 victory in the 1933 game. In 1934 he was the second leading vote getter behind Turkey Stearnes for outfielders on the West team. Sam went one for three as the West went down by a score of 1-0 in the 1934 East-West All Star game.

Before the start of the 1935 Negro National League season, Bankhead moved to the Pittsburgh Crawfords. He joined the team in Hot Springs, Arkansas for spring training and was immediately named one of the starting outfielders. Pittsburgh was managed by Oscar Charleston and was one of the strongest teams in the East. They had a lineup that included: James "Cool Papa" Bell (.320), Oscar Charleston (.294), Jimmie Crutchfield (.327), Josh Gibson (.355), Judy Johnson (.263) and Pat Patterson (.376). The pitching staff was led by Leroy Matlock (17-0) and Roosevelt Davis (12-4). Sam Bankhead together with "Cool Papa" Bell and Jimmie Crutchfield formed one of the best outfielders in Negro League baseball history. They were certainly the fastest group of outfielders ever to play together. Because of their blazing speed, the trio was given the nickname the "Rain Drop Rangers." The nickname came from the legendary story that once before an important game, it started to rain and the trio of Bankhead, Bell and Crutchfield caught all the drops of rain until the thunderstorm had passed so that the game could be played. Formal documentation of the story needless to say has still yet to be uncovered.



Sam Bankhead, James "Cool Papa" Bell and Jimmie Crutchfield
"Rain Drop Rangers"
Pittsburgh Crawfords (1935)

The Pittsburgh Crawfords had an outstanding season in 1935 and won the Negro National League championship with a 39-17 (.696) record. Bankhead had an excellent season at the plate with a .343 batting average and a slugging percentage of .485. After the regular season had concluded, the Pittsburgh Crawfords met the New York Cubans in a Playoff Series. Pittsburgh defeated New York winning four games to the Cubans three when Sam Bankhead scored the winning run in the seventh and deciding game. After the 1935 regular season, Sam stayed with the Pittsburgh Crawfords as they barnstormed against the Dizzy Dean All Stars.

BASEBALL'S SENSATION!
PITTSBURGH CRAWFORDS
 — VERSUS —
CHICAGO AMERICAN GIANTS
 PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL GAME!
STADIUM — THURS. NITE, JUNE 20
Game at 8:15 Admission 40c
 NOTE: Extreme Left Section Grand Stand, Also Open Stand
 Reserved for Colored Patrons.

The Daily Mail
 Hagerstown, MD
 06-18-35



Pittsburgh Crawfords (1935)
 Spring Training – Hot Springs, AR
 (Bankhead – middle row second from left)



Pittsburgh Crawfords (1936)
 Greenlee Field - Pittsburgh, PA
 (Bankhead – kneeling fourth from left)

Sam returned to Pittsburgh and played the 1936 season with the Crawfords. The Crawfords season started with spring training in Atlanta (GA) and when they broke camp the team played their way north back to Pittsburgh. The Pittsburgh Crawfords turned in a repeat performance of the preceding year and won their second straight Negro National League championship. There were no playoffs after the 1936 season. The 1936 Crawfords team included six players who would be inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. They were James "Cool Pappa" Bell (.301), Oscar Charleston (.322), William Foster (3-2), Josh Gibson (.327), Judy Johnson (.239) and Satchel Paige (11-3). In addition their pitching staff also included Leroy Matlock (9-3) and Sam Streeter (6-3). Pittsburgh's record for 1936 was 36-24 (.600). Bankhead had good season at the plate in 1936 and hit .306 with a .388 slugging percentage. Due to Sam's brilliant defensive play and solid hitting during the season, he was selected as the starting left fielder in the 1936 East-West All Star game. Bankhead had a good game going two for four and helped lead the East squad to a 10-2 victory before the 30,000 fans that had jammed their way into Comiskey Park in Chicago.

BOLDEN'S STARS AT FELTON FIELD

Meet Pittsburgh Crawfords in National Negro League Game

Bolden's Stars	Crawfords
Stearns, cf.	Bankhead, cf.
Dunn, ss.	Bell, lf.
Wilson, lb.	Charleston, 1b.
Marshall, 2b.	Williams, 2b.
Casey, c.	Seay, ss.
Padge, lf.	Johnson, 3b.
Yancey, 3b.	Dixon, rf.
Wolson, rf.	Perkins, c.
MacDonald, p.	B. Padge, p.

One of the classic Negro baseball

Pittsburgh Crawfords

Starting Line-Up

07-22-36

Chester		ab.	r.	h.	o.	n.	e.
Brancaleo, 2b.	.....	5	0	3	5	2	0
Gillespie, ss.	.....	3	0	0	2	5	1
Holstein, rf.	.....	3	1	0	1	2	0
Baldwin, 3b.	.....	5	1	3	2	1	0
Vann, 1b.	.....	5	0	2	8	1	0
Eberts, lf.	.....	4	1	0	2	0	0
Malseed, cf., rf.	.....	4	1	1	3	0	0
Fisher, c.	.....	4	2	2	3	1	0
Benner, p.	.....	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wiggins, 3b.	.....	4	0	0	1	1	0
Total	.....	37	6	11	27	14	1

Pittsburgh Crawfords		ab.	r.	h.	o.	n.	e.
Crutchfield, rf.	.....	4	2	1	2	0	0
Bankhead, lf.	.....	5	3	3	4	0	0
Williams, ss.	.....	5	2	3	1	5	1
Perkins, c.	.....	5	1	0	3	1	0
Charleston, 1b.	.....	2	1	2	1	0	0
Bell, cf.	.....	5	1	3	2	0	0
Johnson, 3b.	.....	5	1	2	2	1	0
Seay, 2b.	.....	5	0	0	4	2	0
Streeter, p.	.....	5	0	2	0	1	0
Matlock, lb.	.....	1	0	0	3	0	0
Gibson, lb.	.....	1	0	1	5	0	0
Total	.....	43	11	17	27	10	1

Pitts. Crawfords	7	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	11
Chester	0	0	0	3	1	1	0	0	1	6

Stolen bases—Fisher. Two-base hits—Bell, Johnson, Brancato (2), Baldwin, Bankhead, Gibson, Fisher. Three-base hits—Malseed. Home runs—Bankhead. Double plays—Johnson to Seay to Charleston; Johnson to Seay to Matlock. Struck out—By Benner, 0; by Holstein, 2; by Streeter, 4. Bases on balls—Off Benner, 1; Off Holstein, 0; off Streeter, 4. Winning pitcher—Streeter. Losing pitcher—Benner. Umpires—Paugh and Michaels.

After the regular season, the Pittsburgh Crawfords went on a barnstorming tour across the United States and into Mexico. It was in Mexico City that the Crawfords played a three game exhibition series against the Major League All Stars. On the roster of the Major League All Stars were Jimmie Foxx, Rogers Hornsby and Heine Manush. The first game between the Crawfords and Major League All Stars ended in an eleven inning 6-6 tied game when the umpire called the contest. The Major League All Stars won the second and third games by the scores of 11-1 and 7-2. Bankhead had a good series against Major League pitching, collecting three hits in eight at bats.

MID-ATLANTIC LEAGUE

BASEBALL TODAY

DOUBLE-HEADER FOR ONE ADMISSION

PITTSBURGH CRAWFORDS

NATIONAL COLORED CHAMPIONS

vs

ZANESVILLE GREYS

First Game Called at 1:30 P. M. General Admission 25c

MARK PARK

Bankhead Goes 3-5
Crawfords vs Chester
06-18-36

The Zanesville Signal
Zanesville, Ohio
05-03-36



Cuidad Trujillo Dragones (1937)
Dominican League

(Standing – from left Bill Perkins, Enrique Lantigua, **James “Cool Pappa” Bell**, Tony Castanos, **Josh Gibson**, Rudy Fernandez, Bob Griffith and **Satchel Paige**. Kneeling – from left Lazaro Salazar, Jose “Huesito” Vargas, S. Alvarado, Silvio Garcia, **Sam Bankhead**, Harry Williams and Perucho Cepeda)



Cuidad Trujillo Dragones (1937)
Dominican League Champions

(Back row from left – **Josh Gibson**, Harry Williams, Tony Castanos, Rudy Fernandez, Bob Griffith, Perucho Cepeda, Bill Perkins. Middle row from left – Lazaro Salazar, Dr. Jose Enrique Aybar and **Satchel Paige**. Front row – from left Enrique Lantigua, Leroy Matlock, Jose “Huesito” Vargas, **James “Cool Pappa” Bell**, **Sam Bankhead**, Silvio Garcia and Francisco “Cho-Cho” Correa)

Detour to the Dominican Republic

In the Dominican Republic, Rafael Trujillo who was the country's dictator was also a strong baseball supporter. He had his own team named the Ciudad Trujillo Dragones and was determined to win the Dominican League championship in 1937. Unfortunately for Trujillo his two main political opponents backed the other two teams in the Dominican League. These teams represented the cities of Santiago (Aguilas Cibaenas) and San Pedro de Macoris (Estrellas Orientales). In an attempt to accomplish his goal of winning the championship and preserving his political power, Trujillo sent an emissary to the United States with a briefcase full of money and orders to return with the best "black" ballplayers money could buy. Trujillo's agent immediately went to New Orleans where the Pittsburgh Crawfords were conducting spring training. The player at the top of their signing list was Satchel Paige. Money talked with Satchel and he signed with Ciudad Trujillo. With all of Trujillo's money and Paige's influence the following Negro League players were also signed to play for Ciudad Trujillo: Sam Bankhead, James "Cool Pappa" Bell, Josh Gibson, Leroy Matlock and Bill Perkins. Gus Greenlee, the owner of the Crawfords, was beside himself over losing Paige and his other stars. Greenlee even went to the United States State Department in Washington, D.C. to try and block the players from going to the Dominican Republic. Estrellas Orientales and Aguilas Cibaenas were not going to be out done by Trujillo and started signing their own big name Negro League and Latin players. The final rosters for the three Dominican teams looked more like a Negro League roster than the usual Latin winter league roster. By the end of all the bidding wars and signings, the following players with Negro League experience had committed to play in the 1937 Dominican League.



Sam Bankhead
Ciudad Trujillo
(1937)

Roster of Negro League Players in the Dominican Republic in 1937

Ciudad Trujillo

Herman Andrews
Sam Bankhead
James "Cool Pappa" Bell
Perucho Cepeda
Francisco "Cho Cho" Correa
Rodolfo Fernandez
Silvio Garcia
Josh Gibson
Robert Griffith
Enrique Lantigua
Leroy Matlock
Satchel Paige
Bill Perkins
Lazaro Salazar
Harry Williams

Aguilas Cibaenas

Santos Amaro
Chet Brewer
Martin Dihigo
Bert Hunter
Cando Lopez
Clarence Palm
Roy Parnell
Pat Patterson
Clyde Spearman
David Thomas
Luis Tiant, Sr.

Estrellas Orientales

Carlos Blanco
Ramon Bragana
Ernest Carter
Manuel "Cocaina" Garcia
Alejandro Oms
Julio Rojo
George Scales
Juan "Tetelo" Vargas


The 1937 Dominican season was hotly contested and the Ciudad Trujillo team did not run away with the title like Dictator Trujillo thought they would. According to James "Cool Pappa" Bell

their team was constantly under guard and made to feel that their very lives depended on them winning the island championship. Sam had an excellent season against some of the best pitching in Negro League and Latin baseball. He finished the season going 21 for 68 for a .309 batting average.

It was in the championship game that Sam Bankhead had the most important at bat of his career. The Dragones were playing Santiago and down by one run in the seventh inning. With two outs and "Cool Papa" Bell on base, Bankhead was facing Negro League pitching star Chet Brewer. The Santiago pitcher got a count of 3 balls and 2 strikes on Bankhead when Sam hit the next pitch out of the park for what proved to be the game's winning runs. Satchel Paige shut the Santiago batters down the rest of the way and Ciudad Trujillo won the Dominican League championship.

By jumping the Negro National League season to play in the Dominican Republic, all the players were banned by team owners from returning to the Negro National League. When the Dominican season was over Paige, Bankhead and the other "black" players from the Ciudad Trujillo team returned to the United States. They played a barnstorming schedule all over the United States and Canada using the names Trujillo All Stars, Dominican Republic, Cuban All Stars and Negro National League All Stars. The highlight of their tour was playing in and winning the prestigious Denver Post Tournament. With their victory, the Trujillo All Stars walked off with the tournament's top prize money of \$ 5,179.15.

**1937 DENVER POST
BASEBALL
TOURNAMENT**



**FEATURING SATCHEL PAIGE AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC CHAMPION
TRUJILLO ALL-STARS
JULY 25 - AUG 7**

Games everyday at 11:00am • 2:30pm • 6:00pm
RESERVED SEATS \$1.25 • GENERAL ADM. \$1.00 • BLEACHERS \$.60

Ciudad Trujillo
Denver Post Tournament
(1937)

Satchel Paige Coming

Five-time champions of the Denver Post baseball tournament, the Ciudad Trujillo club, Dominican Republic titlists, will be in Winnipeg for a four-day series at Osborne Stadium next week. Their opposition will come from Jesse Petty's Wisconsin All-Stars. The series at Osborne between these two clubs opens Wednesday evening.

The Ciudad Trujillo club is colored and considered one of the best touring outfits ever to take the road. All members of the team are former Negro National league products, and reports state that every man on the line-up is of major league calibre.

Satchel Paige heads the pitching staff. Fans here have already had a glimpse of Paige performing. The remainder of the pitching corps is said to be equal to Satchel, and the

rest of the team strong in every department.

The Wisconsin All-Stars headed by Jesse Petty also come here highly rated. They have a star-studded line-up, selected from all over the country, and have built up a fine record to date. Petty was a recent pitcher with Minneapolis Millers and saw much action in the majors.

The Wisconsin and Ciudad Trujillo clubs have not met so far this season, and they will mark the first visit of touring ball chasers to Osborne Stadium this summer.

Sixteen clubs took part in the recent Denver Post tournament, and the Ciudad Trujillos went through undefeated. In their rush to their fifth tournament championship they whipped teams headed by Grovet Cleveland Alexander and Rogers Hornsby.

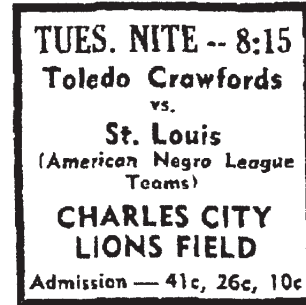
Ciudad Trujillo Plays in Canada
08-14-37

The Trujillo team playing under the name "Dominican Republic" also played a double header against the Negro National League All Stars before 20,000 fans in Yankee Stadium on September 26, 1937. Satchel Paige pitched the Dominican team to a 9-4 victory in the first game. Chet Brewer took the mound for the Dominican Republic in the second game. The second game was called because of darkness after only five innings.

Bankhead Returns to the Pittsburgh Crawfords

Sam Bankhead mended his fences with Pittsburgh Crawfords owner Gus Greenlee and returned to the Pittsburgh Crawfords for the 1938 Negro National League season. The Crawfords under the management of Oscar Charleston played good ball and posted a record of 24-16 (.600) which was good enough for fourth place in the league. They finished the season four and half games behind the league champion Homestead Grays. Sam hit .270 for the year and was selected as the starting centerfielder for the 1938 East-West All Star game. Sam went two for four with a stolen base in the East's 5-4 loss to the West.

When the Pittsburgh Crawfords did not field a team in 1939, the Toledo Crawfords were formed with Oscar Charleston as their manager. Bankhead started the season with Toledo before moving to the Homestead Grays of the Negro National League. Sam played second base for the Grays during 1939. Homestead had a strong team that included Buck Leonard (.397), Vic Harris, Josh Gibson (.341), Tom Parker (.375), Edsall Walker (6-2) and Ray Brown (6-3). Bankhead had a good year with the Grays and hit .317 with a .452 slugging percentage. The Grays easily won the Negro National League title with a 33-14 (.702) record.



Toledo Crawfords vs St. Louis

At the end of the 1939 season, Colonel Jacob Ruppert who was the owner of the New York Yankees donated a trophy that was to be awarded to the winner of a playoff series between the four top teams in the Negro National League. The teams that competed in the series were the Homestead Grays (33-14), Newark Eagles (29-20), Baltimore Elite Giants (25-21) and the Philadelphia Stars (31-32). The Grays faced the Stars in the first playoff series and defeated Philadelphia 3 games to 2. The Grays then met the Elite Giants who had beaten the Newark Eagles. The Baltimore Elite Giants led by Roy Campanella bested the Homestead Grays in the series and took home Ruppert's trophy.



Homestead Grays (1939)
(Bankhead – kneeling second from right)

Bankhead goes South of the Border

Jorge Pasquel who was one of the richest men in Mexico founded the Mexican League in 1938. Pasquel's goal was to have his Mexican League recognized as the third Major League in professional baseball. After two years of mediocre play on the field and poor attendance at the box office, Pasquel knew drastic changes would be needed to accomplish his goal. One of his primary objectives was to increase the level of play by bringing to Mexico the best Negro League and Latin players he could sign. He knew he could pay them significantly more money (at least two to four times their current salaries) than they were making playing baseball anywhere else. If the team's performance on the field significantly improved, he knew he would get more fan support and the stature of Mexican baseball would be dramatically raised.

Pasquel started with his team the Vera Cruz Azules. Legendary Negro League and Latin great Martin Dihigo was signed as player-manager. With Dihigo's baseball connections and Pasquel's money, the following players were signed by Vera Cruz for the 1940 Mexican League season:

Vera Cruz Azules (1940)

Player	1940 Mexican League Statistics
Santos Amaro	.345
James "Cool Pappa" Bell	.437
Ray Dandridge	.346
Leon Day	.298
Martin Dihigo	.364
Josh Gibson	.467
Lonnie Summers	.312
Willie "El Diablo" Wells	.345

Six of these Azules players (Bell, Dandridge, Day, Dihigo, Gibson and Wells) would go on to be inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. Pasquel didn't stop with bringing just the offensive fire power to his team. He also signed some of the best Negro League pitchers of the day. The Vera Cruz pitching staff was led by Barney Brown (16-7), Ramon Bragana (16-8), Leroy Gaines (8-3), Leon Day (6-0) and Raymond Taylor (3-1).



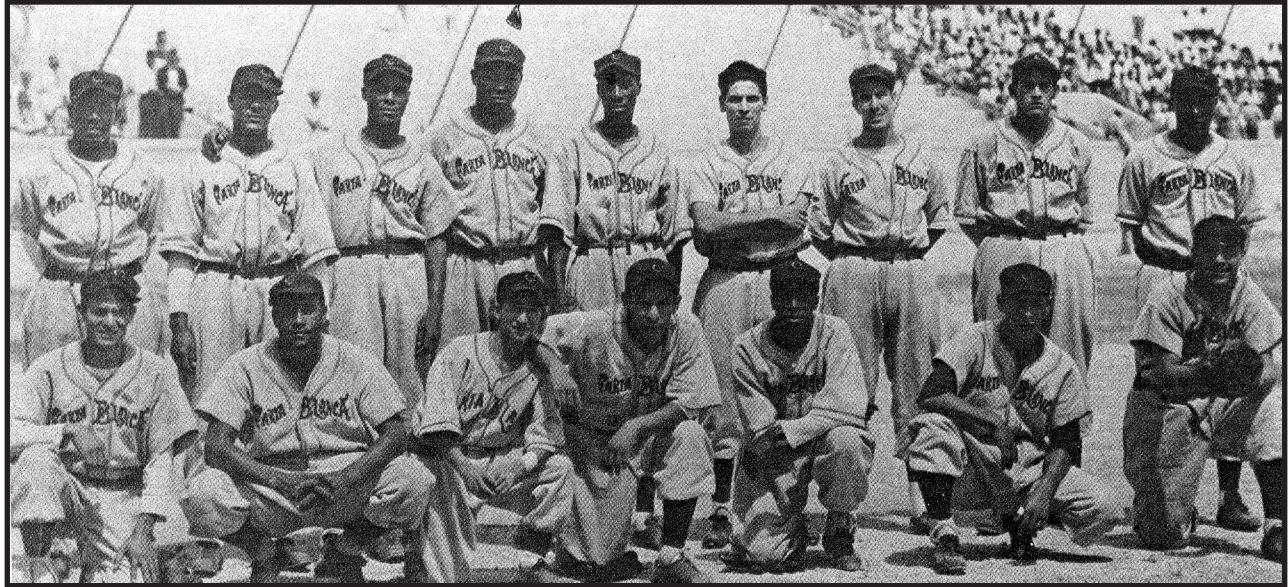
Sam Bankhead
Monterrey Carta Blanca (1940)

Sam Bankhead was recruited by Monterrey Carta Blanca to play shortstop for them for the 1940 Mexican League season. Along with Negro League players Quincy Troupe (.337), Bill Jefferson (22-9) and Bill Harvey (7-9) they helped lead Carta Blanca to a 52-41 record. Monterrey's performance was good enough for second place in the final league standings. They finished the season nine games behind Mexican League champion Vera Cruz who posted a won-loss record of 61-30 (.670).

Bankhead had a good first season in Mexico in 1940. He led the league in stolen bases with 32 and hit .318. Sam also put up good power numbers with 19 doubles, 11 triples and 8 homeruns for a .487 slugging percentage. His timely hitting for Carta Blanca resulted in 74 runs batted in.

Monterrey was very pleased with Bankhead's 1940 Mexican League performance and signed him to return for the 1941 season in Mexico. Sam put up one of the best seasons of his baseball career in 1941. His final hitting statistics for the 1941 Mexican League season were:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1941	Monterrey	101	405	74	142	21	12	8	85	19	.351	.521



Monterrey Carta Blanca (1941)

(Bankhead – kneeling second from left and James “Cool Pappa” Bell – kneeling third from right)

Unfortunately, the rest of the Carta Blanca team did not respond with the same level of play as Bankhead and Monterrey finished the season in last place in the Mexican League with a losing record of 43-59 (.422). Monterrey ended the year twenty-four (24) games behind the Mexican League champion Vera Cruz Azules who posted a record of 67-35 (.657).

After the 1941 Mexican League season, Quincy Troupe who had played with Monterrey formed his own all star team to barnstorm throughout the United States. Troupe named his team the “Mexican League All Stars” and signed the following former Negro League players:

Mexican League All Stars (1941)

Player	Position	Mexican League Team	1941 Statistics
Quincy Troupe	1B	Monterrey	.306
Ray Dandridge	2B	Vera Cruz	.367
Willie Wells	SS	Vera Cruz	.347
Buster Clarkson	3B	Tampico	.334
Josh Gibson	C	Vera Cruz	.374
Sam Bankhead	RF	Monterrey	.351
James “Cool Pappa” Bell	CF	Monterrey	.314
Leslie Green	LF	Monterrey	.357
Barney Brown	P	Vera Cruz	16-5
Leroy Matlock	P	Mexico	15-9
Willie Jefferson	P	Monterrey	9-16

The Mexican League All Stars played ten games and won all ten before disbanding in Chicago, Illinois. Troupe had formed the team and booked the barnstorming schedule with the understanding that the Jones brothers out of Chicago were going to be financially backing the venture. Unfortunately for Troupe, the President of the Negro National League stepped in and blocked the Jones brothers from any involvement with the team. After the team broke up most of the players went to play winter league ball in the Caribbean. Bankhead went to Puerto Rico to play with the Ponce Leones.

Bankhead Returns to the Negro Leagues

After two years in Mexico, Sam was ready to come home. Bankhead returned to the Homestead Grays as the team's starting shortstop for the 1942 Negro National League season. He had a good season at the plate and posted a .293 batting average for the Grays in "league" games. The Grays finished the Negro National League season with a 21-11 (.656) record to claim the Negro National League title over the Baltimore Elite Giants. The Grays faced Satchel Paige and the Kansas City Monarchs in the Negro League World Series. Homestead never got untracked in the series and went down 4 games to 1. During the 1942 season, Sam was selected to play second base in both East-West All Star games. He went two for four in both contests. His sacrifice fly in game one (August 16, 1942) drove in what would be the winning run in a 5-2 victory for the East squad.

NIGHT BASEBALL
Friday, Aug. 28 **Hallowan Park**
HOMESTEAD GRAYS
 (Colored National League Champions, 1937-38-40-41)
 VS.
PHILADELPHIA STARS
 (With Best Club In History)
 Note. This is a regular league game
 Prices—Boxes, 75c; Grandstand, 50c; Children, 25c
 Starting Time—8:30 p. m.

Homestead Grays vs Philadelphia Stars

The Lima News

Lima, Ohio

08-26-42

While there are only 32 games reported for the Grays for the 1942 Negro National League season, Homestead played a significant number of "nonleague" games during the year. In an article that appeared in the Mansfield News Journal (Mansfield, OH) on 07-21-42 the Homestead Grays were reported to have had a record of 79-4 up to that point in the season.

In August of 1942 it was reported in the newspapers that the Pittsburgh Pirates were going to give several Negro League players a try out after the regular season concluded. The newspapers also reported that African American sports writer, Wendell Smith, had been "authorized" by the Pirates to select the players. Smith suggested that Leon Day (Newark Eagles), Josh Gibson (Homestead Grays), Willie Wells (Newark Eagles) and Sam Bankhead (Homestead Grays) would be the players that the Pirates would workout. Unfortunately, nothing ever came of the tryout.

World War II had a dramatic impact on Negro League baseball in the United States. First, several players like Sam's brother, Dan (Birmingham Black Barons star pitcher), were drafted into the service. In addition other players like Homestead Grays player-manager, Vic Harris, took defense jobs in war factories to keep from being drafted. Government regulations that were passed to support the war effort also affected Negro League baseball. One of these regulations almost caused the 1943 Negro League season to be cancelled before it got started. This regulation was related to gasoline consumption which was a major issue during the war years. In an effort to reduce the gasoline consumption in the United States, the Office of Defense Transportation (ODT) implemented a regulation that made "special bus transportation" unavailable to Negro League teams for the summer of 1943. The Homestead Grays and most of the other black

professional teams made other transportation arrangements (primarily private cars) and drastically changed how they scheduled games and road trips. Most teams also reduced their roster size.

The War also had positive effects on Negro League baseball. The high take home pay of factory workers (especially with overtime) meant black workers had more disposable income than ever. In addition the Office of Price Administration (OPA) created a ban on “pleasure driving.” The ban on “pleasure-driving” kept people’s travel near home and with limited recreational activities attendance at Negro League games sky rocketed. Newspaper reports were that in 1942 over three million fans attended Negro League games. This made Negro League baseball the second largest black business (insurance companies was the first) in the United States. In the final analysis during the war years Negro League baseball experienced a time of unprecedented prosperity.



Homestead Grays (1943)
(Bankhead – kneeling second from right)

Once the 1943 season got underway, the Homestead Grays picked right up where they had left off against Negro League competition at the end of the 1942 season. Homestead compiled a record of 31-9 (.775), according to research by Larry Lester and Dick Clark, to easily win the 1943 Negro National League championship. According to research by John Holway, the Homestead Grays had a record of 44-15 (.746) for one of their best seasons in their history. Holway’s research identified the following statistics for the Grays starting lineup for the 1943 season.

Homestead Grays (1943)

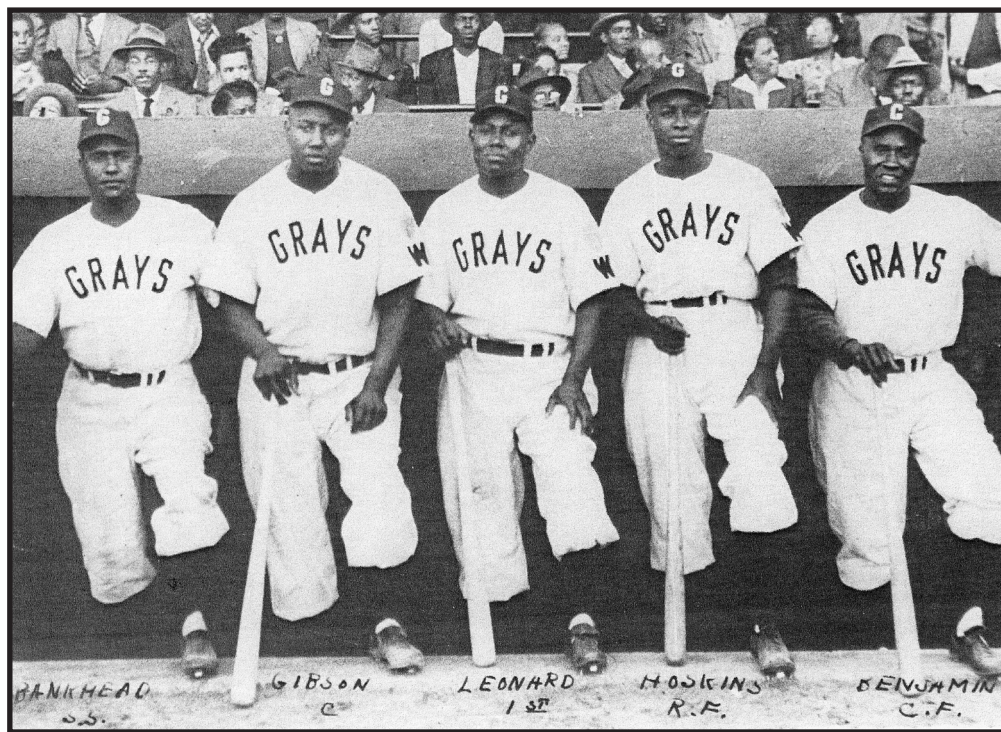
Player	Position	1943 Statistics
Buck Leonard	First base	.321
Jud Wilson	Second base	.327
Sam Bankhead	Shortstop	.483
Howard Easterling	Third base	.399
Josh Gibson	Catcher	.449
James “Cool Pappa” Bell	Outfield	.299
Jerry Benjamin	Outfield	.370
Vic Harris	Outfield	.298
Matthew “Lick” Carlisle	Utility	.349
Johnny Wright	Pitcher	18-5
Ray Brown	Pitcher	8-1
Edsall Walker	Pitcher	8-4
Charles Carter	Pitcher	6-1

According to Holway's research Bankhead finished in second place for the Negro National League batting title just one point behind by Juan "Tetelo" Vargas (.484). Bankhead also finished among the league leaders in doubles (11), triples (10) and stolen bases (5).

During the 1943 Negro League season, Sam Bankhead became involved in a controversial incident that stemmed from Mexico to Forbes Field in Pittsburgh. According to Mexican Consul A.J. Guina, Homestead Grays players Sam Bankhead and Howard Easterling had agreed to contracts to play in Mexico for the 1943 season. When the players failed to show, Guina was dispatched from Washington, D.C. to Pittsburgh in July of that year to find out what happened to the two players and also make contract offers to Josh Gibson and Buck Leonard. When Guina got to Forbes Field he asked Rufus "Sonnyman" Jackson (co-owner and President of the Homestead Grays) about the players' whereabouts. Jackson recognized the foreign accent and had Guina forcibly removed from the stadium. The end result was that Jackson got arrested but no Homestead Grays players ever went to Mexico for the 1943 season.

Sam appeared in the 1943 East-West All Star game as the East team's starting second baseman. Bankhead was also selected to play for the South squad in the North-South All Star game on September 9, 1943. The North-South contest was held at Griffith Stadium (Washington, D.C.) and was played to benefit the Lend-a-Hand Club of Washington, D.C. With 5,000 fans looking on in the seventh inning and the game tied 4 to 4, Sam came through with the game winning hit.

The Homestead Grays met the Birmingham Black Barons who were the champions of the Negro American League in the 1943 Negro League World Series. In the eighth inning of the eighth and final game of the series (one game had ended in a tie) with two outs, Sam Bankhead delivered a clutch hit single that won the championship for the Grays. The Negro League World Series between the Grays and Black Barons had been so popular that the two teams played two additional games after the World Series had concluded. Exhibition games between Homestead and Birmingham were played in Birmingham and New Orleans. No box scores have been found for these two exhibition games.



Homestead Grays (1944)
Griffith Stadium - Washington, D.C.
(Sam Bankhead, Josh Gibson, Buck Leonard, Dave Hoskins and Jerry Benjamin)

When the 1944 season opened, Sam was 39 years old and was back with the Grays as their starting shortstop for another season in the Negro National League. Homestead had an offensive line-up that dominated the competition. According to research by John Holway the following players had exceptionally good seasons for the Grays: Josh Gibson (.369), Rev Cannady (.356), Buck Leonard (.350), Sam Bankhead (.345), Jerry Benjamin (.342) and Dave Hoskins (.333). With all this star power, the Homestead Grays compiled a record of 27-12 (.692) to win their third Negro National League title in a row. Homestead faced the Birmingham Black Barons in a rematch of their Negro League World Series the prior year. This time the Black Barons were no match for the power hitting Grays. Homestead beat Birmingham four games to one to walk away with the series. Bankhead had an excellent series collecting seven hits in eighteen plate appearance for a .388 batting average. Sam also played second base and shortstop in the 1944 East-West All Star game. He had one hit in three at bats in the classic.



Sam Bankhead
Homestead Grays

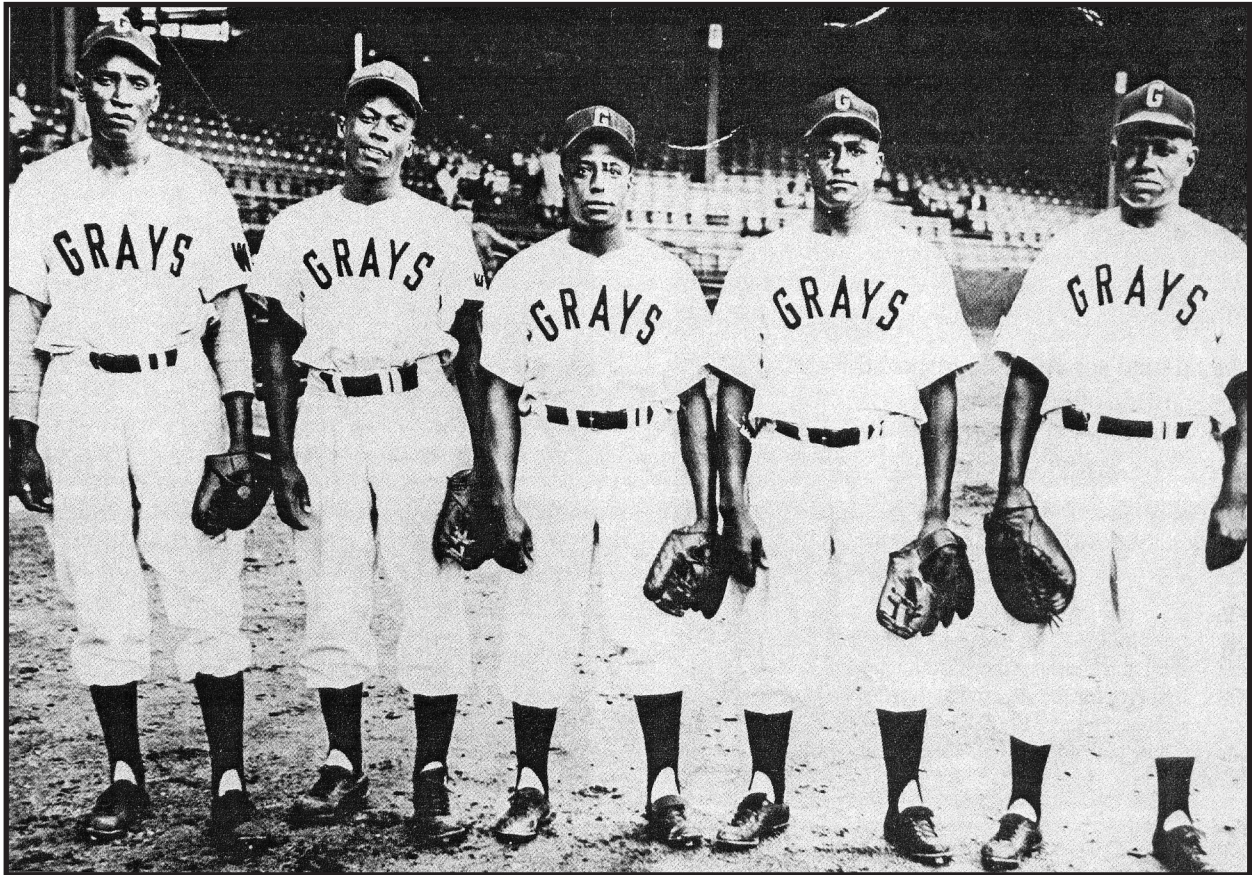
Most of Homestead's players from their 1944 championship team returned for the 1945 season. Sam moved from shortstop to second base for the 1945 season. He had a good year hitting and finished with a .301 batting average. The Grays finished the season with a 32-13 record which enabled them to claim a fourth straight Negro National League title. The Grays had an unbelievable 20-2 record at home during the season. The Grays met the Cleveland Buckeyes who won the Negro American League title in the Negro League World Series. The Buckeyes pitching staff (George Jefferson, Frank Carswell, Willie Jefferson and Gene Bremer) totally shut down the Grays hitters, enabling the Buckeyes to sweep the series four games to none for the Grays.

After only one week of spring training in Jacksonville (FL) in 1946, the Grays embarked on a twenty game exhibition schedule in April that went from Atlanta (GA) to New Orleans (LA) to Texas to North Carolina to Virginia before starting the 1946 Negro National League season. Homestead's loss to the Cleveland Buckeyes in the 1945 Negro League World Series seemed to take the life out of the Grays. During the 1946 baseball season, everyone in Homestead's starting line up except James "Cool Papa" Bell (.447), Josh Gibson (.397) and Sam Bankhead (.308) had an off year at the plate.

Sam Bankhead's complete statistics for the 1946 Negro National League season were:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1946	Homestead	34	133	19	41	4	0	3	23	1	.308	.406

Wilmer Field (14-3) was the only member of the pitching staff to deliver on the mound. The Homestead Grays finished the season one game under .500 with a record of 27-28 (.491). It was their first losing record in years. Like in so many years past, Sam was once again selected for the East-West All Stars game. Sam was selected as the East team's starting shortstop. This made the ninth Negro League All Star game in which he appeared.



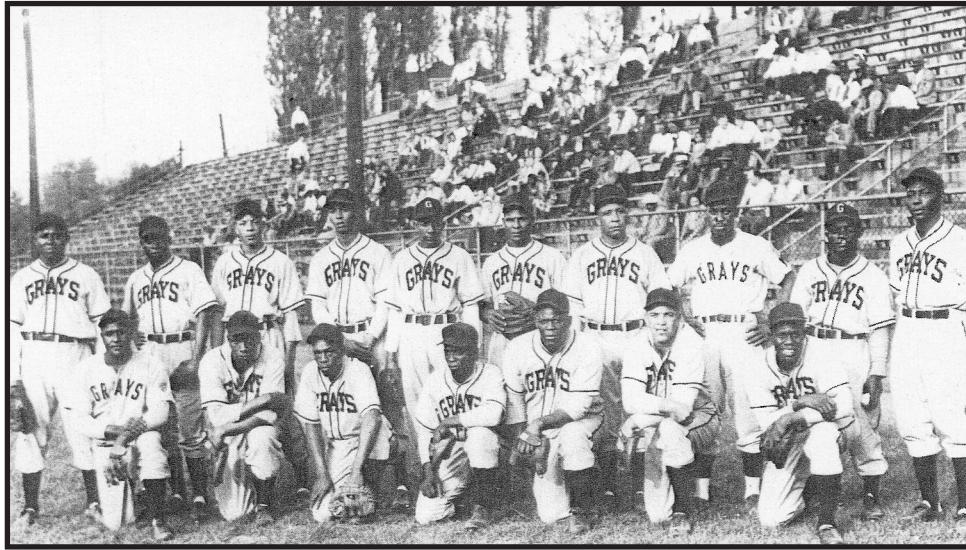
Homestead Grays (1946)

(Dan Wilson, Luis Marquez, Matthew Carlise, Sam Bankhead and Buck Leonard)

When the 1947 Negro League season opened, Bankhead was back in the line-up for the Grays as their starting shortstop. Homestead improved significantly on their record from 1946 and ended the 1947 season in second place just behind the New York Cubans in the Negro National League with a 38-27 (.585) record. Sam had another good year at the plate in 1947 and ended the season with a .309 batting average.

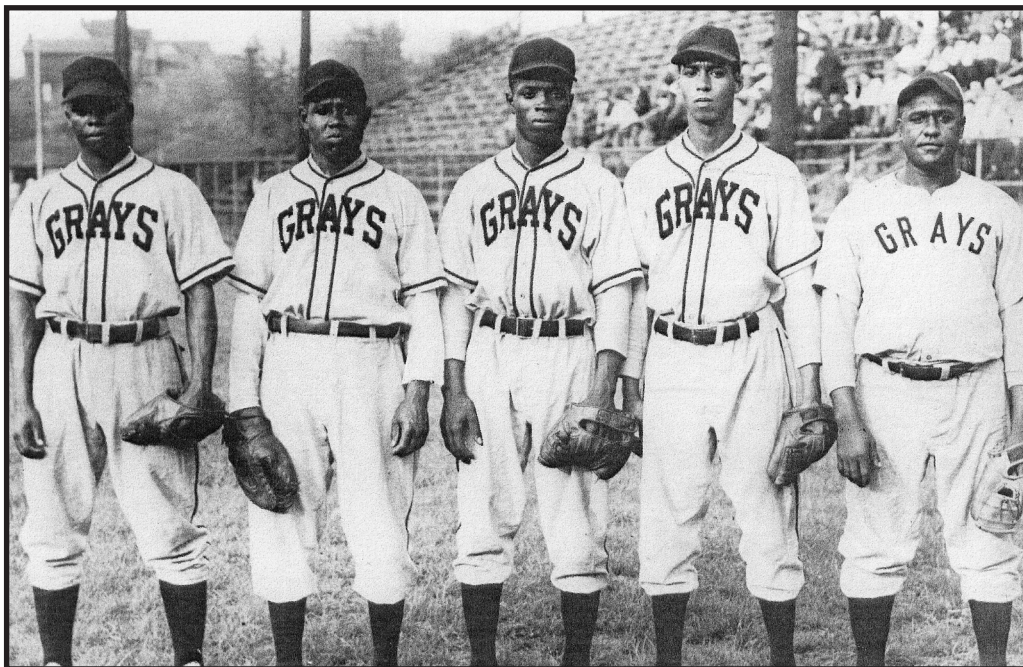
Sam was 42 years of age when the 1948 Negro National League season began play and it seemed like "Father Time" finally was catching up with him. He had an off year hitting and finished the season with a .203 batting average for the fourteen "league" games for which box scores have been found. The 1948 baseball season would be the last for the Negro National League. While no "official" standings were published, the Baltimore Elite Giants were declared the winners of the first half of the season and the Washington Homestead Grays were declared the winners of the second half of the season. The Grays met the Birmingham Black Barons in the Negro League World Series after the regular season had concluded. This would be the third meeting between the

Grays and Black Barons in World Series competition. Like in years past, the Black Barons proved no match for the Grays and went down in five games. The Washington Homestead Grays were named the World Series Champions in the final season of the Negro National League.



Homestead Grays (1948)
(Bankhead – kneeling first on left)

The Negro National League folded before the start of the 1949 baseball season. Seward Posey who had taken over running the team when his brother and owner of the Grays, Cumberland “Cum” Posey, died in 1946 was committed to keeping the Grays playing baseball. Besides not having a “league” to play in, Posey was faced with the dilemma of replacing a manager and several key players who had gone into “organized” ball. Over the off season of 1948-49, the Grays lost Vic Harris as their manager and the following star players: Luke Easter (OF), Luis Marquez (OF), Bob Thurman (OF), Willie Pope (P), Johnny Wright (P), Ted Alexander (P) and Tom Parker (P). The loss of Luke Easter (.363), Bob Thurman (.345) and Luis Marquez (.417) were particularly hard because they were the heart of the Grays hitting line-up.



Homestead Grays (1948)
(Luis Marquez, Buck Leonard, Charles Gray, Clarence Bruce and Sam Bankhead)

Homestead Grays
 Negro American Association
 League Champions
 (1949)

Bankhead Manages Grays
 to 24-2 Record

Washington Afro American
 07-9-49

Grays Rally, Win Pair, Clinch NAA 1st Half

The Washington Grays officially copped first half honors in the Negro American Association by taking a double-header from the Charlotte Blues, 11-5 and 11-4, on the Fourth of July.

The Grays had to come from behind to win both contests. In the first game they were trailing, 5-3, in the last half of the fifth when Buck Leonard, Clint Jackson and Luther Clifford started swinging for extra base clouts off the slants of Font Dickson driving home four big runs.

Lonnie Blair started the opener and had to be relieved by Trice in the fifth in the 11-5 victory. Manager Sammy Bankhead was the hitting star for the Grays with three out of four, while Bramon's four hits out of five trips to the platter were tops for the losers.

In the second game, the Grays were trailing, 4-1, in the fourth before coming up with three runs to knot the count in their half

of the fourth and going on to the final 11-4 score.

Witherspoon started for the victors but had to be relieved by Kaiser in the third.

Buck Leonard and Clint Jackson shared hitting honors in the second fray with three hits out of four tries.

The victory was the Grays' twenty-second in 24 association tilts, and was reputedly their tenth straight. About 2,000 witnessed the games.

First Game

Charlotte Blues			Washington Grays				
ab	r	h	ab	r	h		
Mangum, 2b	5	1	3	Rich'd'nass	4	1	0
Plummer, ss	5	0	1	Gary, 2b	5	0	0
Brannon, lb	5	1	4	Bankh'nd, rf	4	3	3
Alex'nd'r, rf	4	2	1	Leonard, lb	4	3	2
Montg'r'y, lf	4	1	2	Fields, cf	5	1	2
Humbl'r, 3b	4	0	1	Clifford, c	5	1	3
Stallings, cf	4	0	0	Jackson, lf	5	1	1
Hicks, c	4	0	0	Gibson, 2b	4	0	0
Dick'r's'n,p	3	0	3	Blair, p	1	1	0
Williams, p	1	0	1	Trice	1	0	0

Totals	30	5	15	Totals	33	11	13
Blues	020	030	050	—	3	15	3
Grays	300	042	20x	—	11	13	3

Dickson, Williams (5) and Hicks and Blair, Trice (5) and Clifford.

Second Game

Blues	004	000	0—	4	6	3
Grays	010	334	x—	11	12	0

Howman and Hicks and Witherspoon, Kaiser (4) and Clifford.

Nite Baseball

THE ORIGINAL

House of David

vs.

Homestead Grays

Negro World Champions

MONDAY NITE July 18

Time 8:30 P. M.

Roaring Spring, Pa.

Admission: Adults, \$1.00; Children, 50c
 TAX INCLUDED

Homestead Grays Barnstorm
 vs House of David

Altoona Mirror
 Altoona, PA
 07-16-49

Posey's first step was to make Sam Bankhead the Homestead Grays player-manager before the start of the 1949 baseball season. The Grays started off the season as a member of the Negro American Association. Besides the Homestead Grays, the league included the following teams: Charlotte Blues, Greensboro Red Wings, Norfolk Royals, Raleigh Tigers, Richmond Giants and the Winston-Salem Pond Giants. The Grays dominated league play and easily won the league championship with a record of 24-2 (.923). The Grays played an independent schedule the remainder of the 1949 season and won the vast majority of their games. According to newspaper accounts, the Homestead Grays had a 97-15 (.866) record as of August 29, 1949 for their independent schedule for the 1949 season.

Sam returned to manage the Homestead Grays for their 1950 season. As player-manager, he led them to another outstanding year playing against local competition. The Grays still fielded a strong line-up that included Buck Leonard, Wilmer Fields, Cecil Kaiser, Buddy Armour, Mahlon Duckett, Bob Trice and Roy Partlow. According to newspaper reports the Grays had a won-loss record of 64-8 (.889) on 07-08-50. Over the course of the season, the New York Black Yankees were a frequent barnstorming opponent for the Homestead Grays. The Black Yankees were a good match up for the Grays for two reasons. First, the New York Black Yankees had a long history in Negro League baseball and this provided instant name recognition for a good draw at the gate. Secondly, the Black Yankees were managed by Negro League star Marvin Baker and fielded an excellent team that was extremely competitive against all comers. According to newspaper stories, the New York Black Yankees had a record of 129-30-2 for the 1949 season.



Homestead Grays (1950)
 (Sam Bankhead – first on left and Garnett Bankhead – fifth from right)

During the season, Bankhead also showed that he could still play ball. In eleven box scores that have been uncovered for the 1950 season, Sam Bankhead compiled the following hitting statistics:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1950	Homestead	11	45	15	18	5	0	1	5	3	.400	.578

Homestead Grays Fold; No Funds

PITTSBURGH, May 23.—(AP)—
Financial setbacks and lack of talent
will end the fabulous career of the
Homestead Grays, oldest Negro
baseball team in the nation.

Seward Posey, business manager,
said yesterday the Grays are fold-
ing up. The team lost \$10,000 in
1950.

The club was organized by the
late Cum Posey in 1910. Last year
it played in the Negro American
Baseball League.

Indiana Evening Gazette

Indiana, PA
05-23-51

Before the start of the 1951 season, Seward Posey who was the business manager for the Homestead Grays announced that the Grays would be folding because they had lost \$ 10,000 during the 1950 baseball season.

Sam Bankhead Named Pilot of Farnham Club

FARNHAM, Que., Mar. 17 —
(AP). Sam Bankhead, brother of
pitcher Dan Bankhead of the
Brooklyn Dodgers, became the
first Negro manager in organized
baseball when he signed today to
lead the Farnham club of the
Class C Provincial League.

Bankhead will play as well as
manage. He hit .292 as shortstop
for the Homestead Grays of the
Negro National League last sea-
son and will play that position for
Farnham.

Sam Bankhead Signs with Farnham

Bankhead Breaks the Color Barrier

In 1951 Sam Bankhead made baseball history when he was signed by the Farnham Pirates of the Canadian Provincial League as their player-manager. His signing made him the first African American to manage a predominately “white” team in professional baseball. Bankhead’s signing was a logical decision for the Pirates who always had a strong link with the African American community and Sam had just come off two very successful seasons managing the Homestead Grays who played an independent schedule.

Unfortunately for Farnham the city was too small to support a professional team, its stadium was too old and the fan base had dwindled dramatically since Farnham made a serious run at the league title in 1949.

The Pirates signed several other former Negro League players like Josh Gibson Jr. (.230), Cowan “Bubba” Hyde (.193), Cecil Kaiser (14-13), Lester Lockett (.217), Eudie Napier (.285), Al Pinkston (.301), Joseph Scott (.264), Joe Taylor (.360), Bob Trice (7-12), and Archie Ware (.257) during the 1951 season. Of this group only Kaiser, Pinkston and Trice played the majority of the season with Farnham.

Sam put forth his best effort on the field as a player and in the clubhouse as a manager. The forty-six year old Bankhead hit a respectful .274 as the team’s starting shortstop. Even with all of his efforts on and off the field, the Pirates finished with a record of 52-71 (.423) in seventh place which was next to last place in the league’s standings.

This would be Bankhead’s last full season in professional baseball. He would appear now and then for the Homestead Grays during the 1952 season and then again briefly in 1955 when Walter Hughes reorganized the Grays.



Farnham Pirates (1951)
Canadian Provincial League
(Bankhead – kneeling fourth from right)

Winter League Baseball

There is a saying in Negro League baseball that “The sun is always shining somewhere.” This meant that they were always playing baseball somewhere. Bankhead like many other black ball players made baseball a twelve month a year job.

Sam started playing winter league baseball in 1932 and played his last season of winter ball in 1949. Over his eighteen (18) years in winter baseball he played in California (3 seasons), Cuba (4 seasons), Puerto Rico (4 seasons), Venezuela (1 season) and Panama (1 season). In addition he barnstormed all over the United States and Canada during the regular season and in the off-season with numerous black baseball clubs.

California Winter League

After the Nashville Elite Giants’ 1932 Negro Southern League season was over, Tom Wilson took his Elite Giants team to the West Coast to play in Joe Pirrone’s California Winter League. Besides Wilson’s Elite Giants the 1932-33 California Winter League also included four other teams (Pirrone’s All Stars, El Paso, Firestone and Redondo). The Elite Giants roster had eight players that hit over .300 for the 1932-33 winter league season. These players were Alex Radcliffe (.381), Jake Dunn (.378), Sam Bankhead (.371), Leroy Stratton (.366), Walt Davis (.359), Tommy Dukes (.357), Jesse Walker (.349) and Granville Lyons (.325). The Elite Giants pitching staff was anchored by Satchel Paige (5-0 with 65 strikeouts in 45 innings) and “Cannonball” Jim Willis (4-0). The Elite Giants easily won the California Winter League title with a 14-2 record. In addition to hitting .371, Sam also showed excellent power at the plate with a .632 slugging average that included 6 doubles, 6 triples (league leader) and 4 homeruns in only 114 at bats.

The Elite Giants returned to California with an even stronger team to play in the 1933-34 California Winter League season. Every player in the Elite Giants starting line-up hit over .300 for the 1933-34 season.

Wilson's Elite Giants Roster (1933-34)

Player	Position	1933-34 Batting Average
Mule Suttles	1B	.325 (with league leading 4 homeruns)
Sam Bankhead	2B	.344
Willie Wells	SS	.355
Felton Snow	3B	.322
Tommy Dukes	C	.334
Wild Bill Wright	RF	.351
James "Cool Pappa" Bell	CF	.362 (league leader)
Turkey Stearns	LF	.331

The pitching staff was led by Satchel Paige who had a 16-2 won loss record, 18 complete games, 7 shutouts, 1.63 earned run average and 244 strikeouts in 171 innings. "Cannonball" Jim Willis had a 14-2 record for the Elite Giants.

With five future Hall of Famers (Bell, Paige, Stearnes, Suttles and Wells), the Elite Giants fielded one of the strongest Negro League teams ever assembled. They easily won the 1933-34 California Winter League title with a 34-8 (.810) record over the rest of the league's competition (White Kings, Pirrone's All Stars, Portland, El Paso Mexicans and the May Company).

Sam Bankhead made one more appearance in the California Winter League when he joined the Birmingham Black Barons for the 1944-45 season. The California Winter League had two "black" teams (Birmingham Black Barons and Kansas City Royals) and two "white" teams (Service All Stars and Naval Dry Dock) for the 1944-45 season. The Black Barons were led by James "Cool Pappa" Bell, Lorenzo "Piper" Davis and Artie Wilson. At the end of the season the Birmingham Black Barons were declared the 1944-45 California Winter League champions.



Santa Clara Leopards (1937-38)
 Cuban Winter League Champions
 (Sam Bankhead – kneeling first on the left)

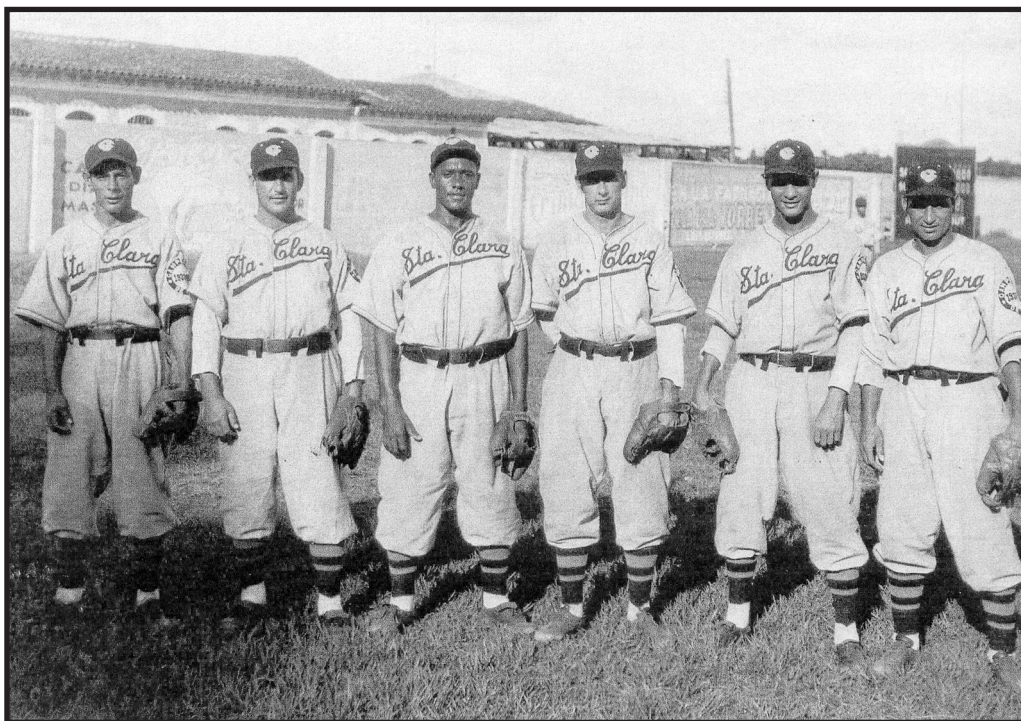
Cuban Winter League Career

In 1937 Emilio de Armas recruited Negro League players Ray Brown, Bob Griffith, Bill Perkins and Sam Bankhead to come to Cuba to play for his Santa Clara team in the Cuban Winter League. The Santa Clara Leopards had lost the league championship the year before to Martin Dihigo's Marianao Tigers by just one game and de Armas was determined to win the league title for the 1937-38 season. With Negro League and Latin star Lazaro Salazar at the helm as manager of the team and de Armas' Negro League recruits all turning in excellent seasons, the Leopards returned to championship form. Santa Clara posted a record of 44-18 (.710) for first place in the final league standings. Brown (12-5) and Griffith (12-6) led the Santa Clara team in pitching, while Perkins (.281) handled the catching duties. Bankhead responded to Latin winter ball with the best season of his career. He led the Cuban Winter League in hitting with a .366 batting average and in slugging with a .457 slugging percentage. He also led the league in at bats (243), runs scored (47), hits (89), triples (5) and runs batted in (34). When the final Cuban Winter League statistics were calculated, Sam Bankhead led the league in seven offensive categories. During the 1937-38 season, Sam was also selected to play in the Cuban Winter League All Star game. The game was held at the mid point of the season between the Americanos (American import players) and the Cubans (Latin players). Virtually the entire Americanos team came from the Negro Leagues. The roster of the Americanos team was:

Americanos All Star Team (1937-38)

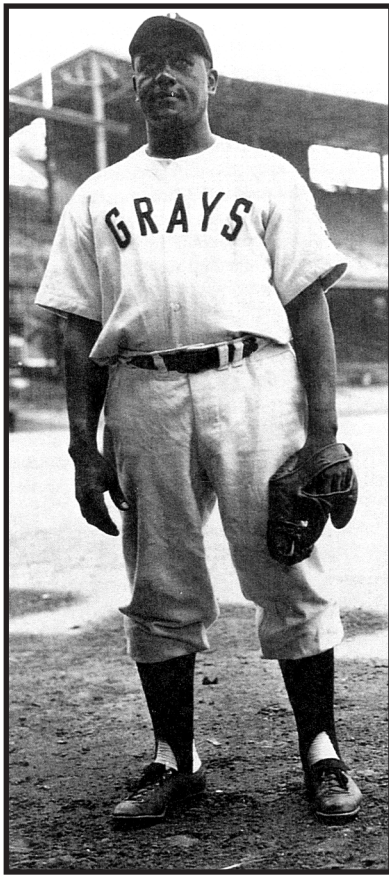
Newt Allen	(2B)	Bill Perkins	(C)
Sam Bankhead	(OF)	Hilton Smith	(P)
Ray Brown	(P)	Clyde Spearman	(OF)
Ray Dandridge	(3B)	ED Stone	(1B)
Frank Duncan	(C)	Harry Williams	(INF)
Bob Griffith	(P)	Willie Wells	(SS)

The Cubans won the game by a score of 2 to 1.



Santa Clara Leopards (1938-39)

(Jose Delfino Garcia, Rafael Ruiz, Sam Bankhead, Antonio Rodriguez, Lazaro Salazar and Miguel Solis)



Sam Bankhead
Homestead Grays

After the 1938 Negro National League season, Sam joined the Homestead Grays when they traveled to Cuba to play in the American Series. The American Series was a six game exhibition series that was played at La Tropical Stadium in Havana, Cuba. Besides the Grays there were three Cuban teams (Habana, Almendares and the Picked Nine) playing in the series. The format of the tournament was for Homestead to play two games against each of the three Cuban teams. The Grays brought a strong team that included: Sam Bankhead, Barney Brown, Ray Brown, Josh Gibson, Vic Harris, Buck Leonard, Roy Partlow and Willie Wells. Even with all this Negro League talent, the Grays could only manage a third place finish in the tournament with a 2-4 record. Habana and the Picked Nine team each won both their games with the Grays.

Bankhead joined the Santa Clara Leopards after the 1938 American Series. Grays players Ray Brown and Josh Gibson were also recruited by Lazaro Salazar to play for the Leopards for the 1938-39 season. Behind the pitching of Brown (11-7) and the hitting of Gibson (11 homeruns, 39 runs batted in and a .356 batting average), Santa Clara won back to back league championships. The Leopards finished the season with a record of 34-20 (.630) five games ahead of the Habana Leones. Bankhead played shortstop for Santa Clara, but had an off year at the plate as he hit a meager .229. His hitting was, however, very timely as he connected for 5 homeruns (second in the league behind Gibson) and had 44 runs batted in (second in the league behind teammate Santos Amaro's 49 RBIs).

Bankhead returned to Cuba to play with the Homestead Grays in the 1939 American Series. Homestead brought a star studded team to Cuba that included: Sam Bankhead, Josh Gibson, Vic Harris, Sammy Hughes, Fats Jenkins, Henry Kimbro, Buck Leonard, Roy Partlow and Willie Wells. The Grays had an excellent tournament and finished with a perfect 6-0 record. Bankhead helped lead Homestead with 8 hits in 24 at bats and drove in 5 runs.

After the American Series, Bankhead rejoined his old team the Santa Clara Leopards for the 1939-40 Cuban Winter League season. Unfortunately for the Leopards Lazaro Salazar, Cocaina Garcia, Josh Gibson and Ray Brown were gone. New Negro League recruits like Vic Harris, Roy Partlow and Hilton Smith couldn't keep Santa Clara from finishing in third place with a losing record of 24-27 (.471). Bankhead, however, had a good year at the plate with a .321 batting average.

When the 1940-41 Cuban Winter League season started, Bankhead had changed teams to the Almendares Alacranes. The Alacranes and Bankhead both had terrible seasons. Almendares finished in last place in the league with a record of 20-31 (.392) and Sam hit .244 with no homeruns and only 16 runs batted in.

Bankhead's last appearance in Cuba was in 1949 when he led the Spur Cola (Panamanian League champions) team to their appearance in the first ever Caribbean World Series. The Caribbean World Series was held in Havana (Cuba) and included the winter league champion teams from Cuba (Almendares), Panama (Spur Cola), Puerto Rico (Mayaguez) and Venezuela (Cerveceria Caracas). Cuba, behind the hitting of Negro League star Monte Irvin, won the series with a perfect 6-0 record. Spur Cola finished in third place with a 2-4 record. Bankhead had an outstanding series as he collected 8 hits in 23 plate appearances for a .348 batting average.

Puerto Rican Winter League Career

When the 1941 Negro League season was over, Sam Bankhead traveled to Puerto Rico to play for the Ponce Leones of the Puerto Rican Winter League. Behind a strong group of Negro League players, the Leones had an excellent season. Negro League players on the 1941-42 Ponce team were Francisco “Pancho” Coimbre (.372), Howard Easterling (.360), Sam Bankhead (.351) and George Scales (.333). Negro League pitchers Ray Brown (12-4) and Juan Guilbe (11-2) anchored the Leones pitching staff. George Scales was also the manager of Ponce. With all the tools available to him, Scales led Ponce to a winter league season record of 30-13 (.698). The Leones won the Puerto Rican Winter League championship by a game and a half over Guayama. Sam was selected to play for the Southeast team in the Puerto Rican All Star game at the end of the season.



Ponce Leones (1941-42)
Puerto Rican Winter League
(Bankhead – front row second from right)

Bankhead did not return to Puerto Rico until 1944 when he was signed by his old team the Ponce Leones to play for them in the 1944-45 winter league season. Besides Bankhead the Leones had the league’s two leading hitters who had also recently played in the Negro National League. These players were Francisco “Pancho” Coimbre (.425) and Marvin Williams (.378). With the pitching of Latin star and future Negro League player Tomas Quinones (16-3), the Ponce Leones easily won the Puerto Rican Winter League championship with a record of 28-11 (.718). They finished seven and half games ahead of the Santurce Crabbers (22-20). At the end of the season, Bankhead was selected to play for the Estrellas Importados in the Puerto Rican League All Star game at the end of the season.

George Scales, manager of the Ponce Leones, convinced Sam to return the next season (1945-46) to play for the Leones. Even with a strong group of Negro League players on the Ponce team, they struggled and finished the season in third place in the league standings with a record of 21-20 (.512). Besides Bankhead who hit .290 for the season, the Leones roster included Negro Leaguer hitters Fernando “Bicho” Pedroso (.368), Pancho Coimbre (.333) and Felo Guilbe (.311). The Ponce pitching staff was anchored by Negro League pitchers Tomas Quinones (10-6) and Roy Partlow (6-3). In addition to his .290 batting average, Sam tied for the Puerto Rican Winter League homerun title with three (3) homeruns.

Sam did not play in Puerto Rico during the 1946-47 season, but did return in the winter of 1947 to play for the Caguas-Guyama Criollos for the 1947-48 Puerto Rican Winter League season. Fellow Negro League player Quincy Troupe managed the Caguas-Guayama team. Troupe had a solid team that was led by Juan “Tetelo” Vargas (.363), Lorenzo “Piper” Davis (10 homeruns and 51 RBI) and Sam Bankhead (.321). At the end of the regular season of play the Criollos were in second place 5 ½ games behind the Mayaguez Indios who finished the season with a record of 33-26 (.559). The Criollos and Indios met in a playoff series and the Caguas-Guayama team was victorious. They defeated Mayaguez four games to three.

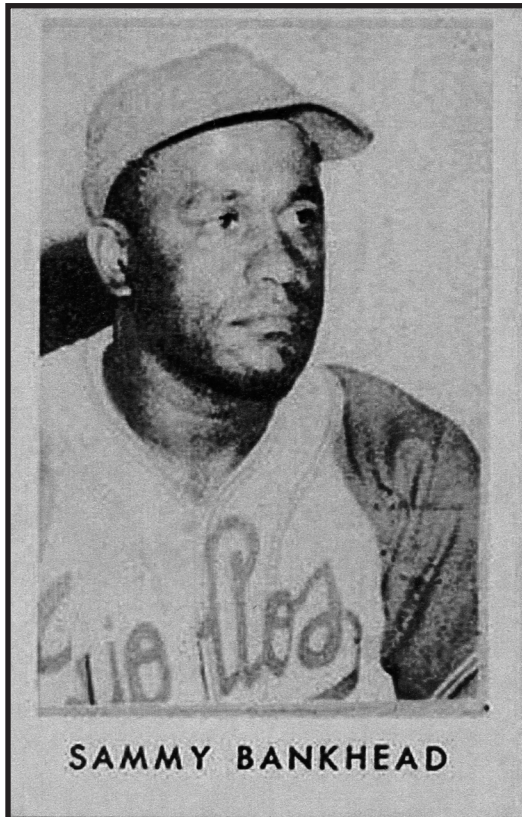
Stops in Venezuela and Panama

After the 1946 Negro National League season, Bankhead was recruited to coach and pitch for the Vargas Sabios (Wise Men) of the Liga Venezolana de Beisbol Profesional (LVBP) in Venezuela. The Vargas team also included Negro League players Hilton Smith, Bill Cash, Henry Miller and Marvin Williams.

In January of 1947 tragedy struck the baseball world when the legendary Josh Gibson passed away on January 20th. Sam Bankhead had been very close to Gibson and was the godfather to his son Josh Gibson, Jr. Bankhead got the news of Josh’s passing at his hotel in Caracas (VZ). According to Bill “Ready” Cash who was a teammate of Sam’s with Vargas, they (Bankhead, Cash, Hilton Smith and Henry Miller) were at the hotel playing pinochle on January 21st when Sam got the telegram telling him that Josh had died. When interviewed about the incident, Cash had the following to say:

“He (Bankhead) went out, got drunk and tore up everything in his room. They had to send him home.”

(Bill Cash – Vargas teammate)



1949-50 Toleteros Baseball Card
(Puerto Rico)

Bankhead returned to Venezuela after the funeral and resumed his duties with the team. Vargas had a good season and beat Caracas in the playoffs for the 1946-47 Liga Venezolana de Beisbol Profesional (LVBP) championship. The highlight of the Venezuelan season was when Vargas played a four game series against the New York Yankees of the American League in March of 1947. In addition to the strong team that he already had, the owner of the Sabios wanted to bolster his roster for the series with the Yankees. He brought in the following Negro League players to add to his Vargas roster: Ray Dandridge, Ducky Davenport, Gentry Jessup, Lenny Pearson and Hank Thompson.

In 1948 Sam was recruited by Spur Cola of the Panamanian League. He helped lead the Spur Cola team to a league championship for the 1948-49 season. Bankhead had an off season for him, as he batted only .271 for the season. After the season had concluded Spur Cola was invited to play in the first ever Caribbean World Series. The tournament was held in Havana, Cuba and included teams from Cuba (Habana Leones), Puerto Rico (Mayaguez), Panama (Spur Cola) and Venezuela (Caracas).

Life after the Negro Leagues

After the 1949 baseball season, Sam Bankhead went to work for the City of Pittsburgh as a sanitation worker. When he returned home from Farnham after the 1951 Canadian Provincial League season, both he and Josh Gibson, Jr. went to work full time for the City of Pittsburgh in the Sanitation Department. Josh and Sam worked together for the City for many years. According to his wife Helen, Sam liked working for the sanitation department because his supervisor was a baseball fan who remembered him as a player. His boss would let him off work to play an occasional ball game for money and gave him the best shifts with the easiest work assignments.

Even though Sam retired from professional baseball after the 1951 season, he continued to play baseball on an occasional basis for local teams from 1952 to at least 1955. Sam Bankhead was well known in the East, was a good draw at the box office and still could play competitive baseball. In early 1952 Sam and Vic Harris reorganized the Homestead Grays and scheduled games in and around the Pittsburgh area. Their version of the Grays included several former Grays players like: Clarence Bruce, Robert Gaston, Josh Gibson (Jr.) and Willie Pope. Unfortunately, gone were the glory days of the Negro National League and all that remained for black baseball teams were the small town venues. The Homestead Grays of the early to mid 1950's were reduced to playing small towns like Amity, Connellesville, Frederick and Yatesboro. It is unclear how long Sam Bankhead and Vic Harris kept their version of the Homestead Grays afloat. Sam also played occasionally for the Brooklyn Cuban Giants and the Homestead Grays team that Walter Hughes organized in 1955.

Sam retired from the City of Pittsburgh in 1972, but according to Helen he did not receive a City pension because he had not filled out all the right paperwork nor joined the credit union when he first went to work for the City. This left the Bankheads with only social security to live on and that wasn't enough. In 1975 Sam went back to work. He got a job as a dishwasher and bellman at the William Penn Hotel in downtown Pittsburgh.

Sam Bankhead had left baseball as a bitter man. Conjecture is that the character of Troy Maxson in August Wilson's Pulitzer winning play Fences is based on the later years of Sam Bankhead's life. Bankhead had always been a drinking man, but his drinking got significantly worse after his baseball playing days. It seemed like the older he got the more the bitterness and resentment took over his life. It has been rumored that Sam never even went to see his brother Dan play for the Brooklyn Dodgers when he made the Major Leagues.

Tragedy struck the Bankhead family in 1976. First Dan Bankhead passed away from throat cancer in a Veteran's Hospital in Houston, Texas on May 2, 1976. Then on July 24, 1976 Sam had just finished working his shift at the William Penn Hotel when he got into a nasty argument with a fellow employee by the name of Nelson Cooper. The argument was over who worked the hardest at the hotel. Cooper said that the argument turned into a fight when a drunken Bankhead slapped him two times. When Sam turned to walk away, Cooper shot him in the back of the head. Bankhead died instantly at the scene. In a moment one of the great ball players of Negro League baseball history was gone. His death was as tragic as the life he lived after his baseball days had passed him by.

Negro Pros Here Sunday

Sponsored by the McCurdy Field Athletic Commission, two of the best professional Negro baseball clubs in the East will play at the municipal ballpark here on Sunday at 3 p. m.

Homestead Grays, reorganized under Vic Harris and Sam Bankhead after being off tour for the past two years, are readied to take up where they left off in 1950 after the death of the former owner who led the Grays to Negro National League and World's Championships from 1937-1945 inclusive.

Brooklyn Cuban Giants, headed by a 19-year old star first-sacker, Roosevelt Taylor, is sludded with Canadian League players including Pitchers Russ Valentine and Alvin Green, formerly with Brandon and Winnipeg respectively in the Manitoba circuit. The Giants have a 667 percentage in independent play among Negro Southern League teams on their current barnstorming trip towards Canada.

A few old faces and many new ones will appear on the Homestead Grays lineup, since they last played in Frederick against the Hustlers. The father of Josh Gibson, Jr., third-baseman caused sensa-

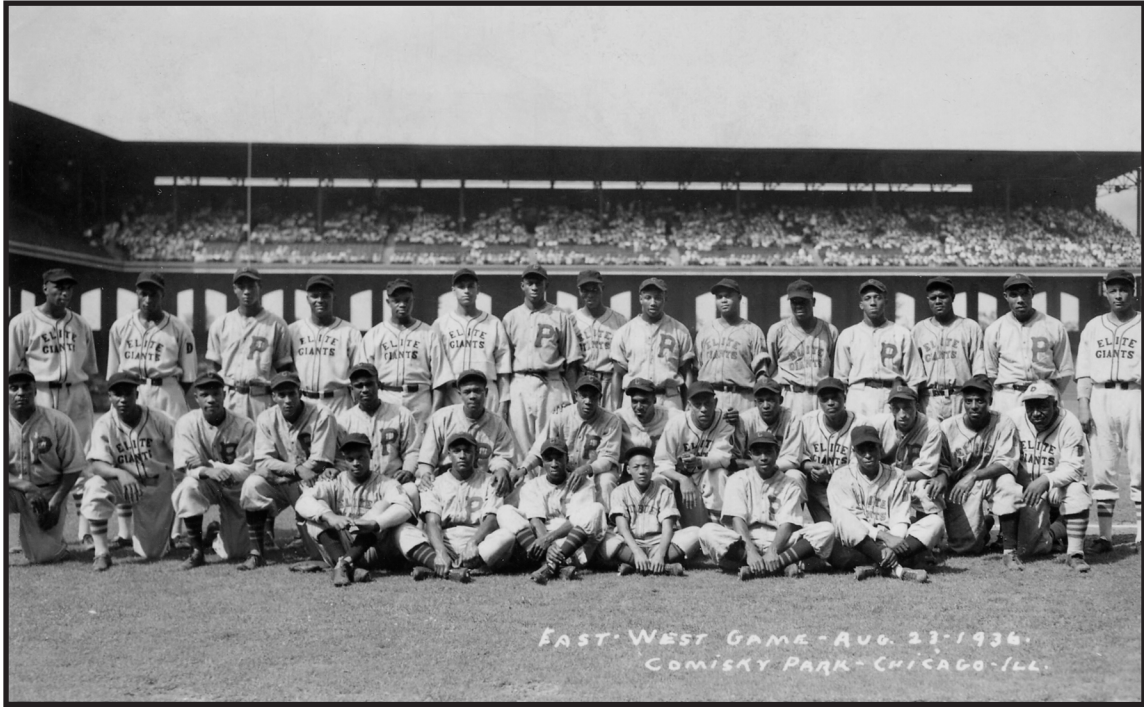
tions by his play which Grays say the son can now duplicate.

Roster of the 1952 Homestead Grays includes Outfielders H. Harris, G. Patterson, L. Riley, Infielders C. Bruce, Gibson, Taylor, Sam Bankhead (brother of Dan Bankhead, Brooklyn Dodgers), Pitchers Kimbro, Lucas, Peaterson, Pope, Gorden and Catchers Gaston, Brown.

Vic Harris and
Sam Bankhead's
Homestead Grays

News
Frederick, MD
06-11-52

Sam Bankhead – Perennial Negro League All Star



East-West All Star Game (1936)
(Bankhead - kneeling first on left)



East-West All Star Game (1938)
(Bankhead – front row first on right)

Assessing Sam Bankhead's Career

When analyzing Sam Bankhead's professional baseball career, it is important to keep the following factors in mind:

- The primary asset that Sam Bankhead had as a player was his **versatility**. Some researchers have labeled him as a utility player which couldn't be farther from the truth. A utility ball player is generally a player who is not a starter, rides the bench and has the ability to enter a ball game at a number of different positions. Sam Bankhead was an everyday starting ball player who had the ability to play virtually every position on the field if that was what was needed. His best positions were shortstop and right field.

His versatility is best exemplified in that he was selected to start nine (9) East-West All Star games at five (5) different positions for three (3) different teams (Nashville, Pittsburgh and Homestead). Besides being one of the best defensive players in Negro League history, he could also hit. Sam batted .387 in these nine All Star games.

- Sam Bankhead was a **“winner.”** Some ball players have the knack for always being on a winning team. Some of it is that obviously the best ball players are generally signed by the best teams and sometimes the play of an individual ball player brings out the best in his teammates. Sam was a valuable player to have on your roster because of his versatility, defensive play and his clutch hitting. This was particularly important during the years in which he played because rosters were significantly smaller than they are today.

Over the course of Sam's 23 seasons in professional baseball, he played on twenty-five (25) championship teams. Some of the most outstanding teams were Ciudad Trujillo (1937), Wilson's Elite Giants (1932-33 and 1933-34), Pittsburgh Crawfords (1935-1936), Santa Clara Leopards (1937-38), Ponce Leones (1941-42) and the Homestead Grays (1943-1945).

- **Consistency** as a hitter. Some researchers have categorized Sam Bankhead as only an average hitter. One problem that has existed in analyzing Sam's career batting average with the existing published resources is that different researchers have completely different numbers. The best examples of this are found when looking at currently published seasonal batting averages by four different researchers for Bankhead's 1943 to 1946 season batting averages.

Sam Bankhead – Season Batting Average (Statistical Comparison)

Year	John Holway	Larry Lester & Dick Clark	James Riley	Mc Millan Encyclopedia	Point Diff. High to Low
1943	.483	.261	-	.286	222
1944	.345	.286	.287	.278	67
1945	.262	.301	.282	.465	203
1946	.265	.308	.277	.265	43

One problem is that some researchers only report “league” games and others combine “league” and “nonleague” games in their statistics. Two other problems are the number of box scores analyzed and different researchers not all analyzing the same box scores.

The Center for Negro League Baseball Research (CNLBR) breaks down hitting statistics into very specific categories that are easily defined. In addition our research presents only statistics for which primary documentation (actual box scores) have been found. From our perspective categorizing Sam Bankhead as only an average hitter is far from the truth. Bankhead was a solid clutch hitter his whole career. When you add up all of his hitting statistics from everywhere he played, he has a career batting average of .311. Over the

course of 23 seasons, playing basically 12 months a year with little or no break and playing into his late 40's this (.311) is an outstanding career batting average. Bankhead hit everywhere he played through his entire career. Some examples of Sam's outstanding hitting are as follows:

1. Hit .387 in nine (9) East West All Star games.
2. In twenty-one (21) games against Major League pitchers Sam went 27 for 79 for a .342 batting average.
3. Compiled a career batting average in the California Winter League of .351.
4. Led the Cuban Winter League in batting (.366) and slugging percentage (.451) for the 1937-38 season.
5. In 1941 at the age of 36 he hit .351 with a .521 slugging average for Monterrey in the Mexican League.
6. In 1946 at the age of 41, Bankhead compiled a Negro National League season batting average of .308. (Only "league" games were counted in the "official" statistics.)
7. Dominated "non-league" opponents. In the fifty-two (52) games for which we have box scores Sam hit .433 with a slugging average of .572.

In short he hit when he was young during the early part of his career and could still hit the ball well when he was in his 40's at the end of his career.

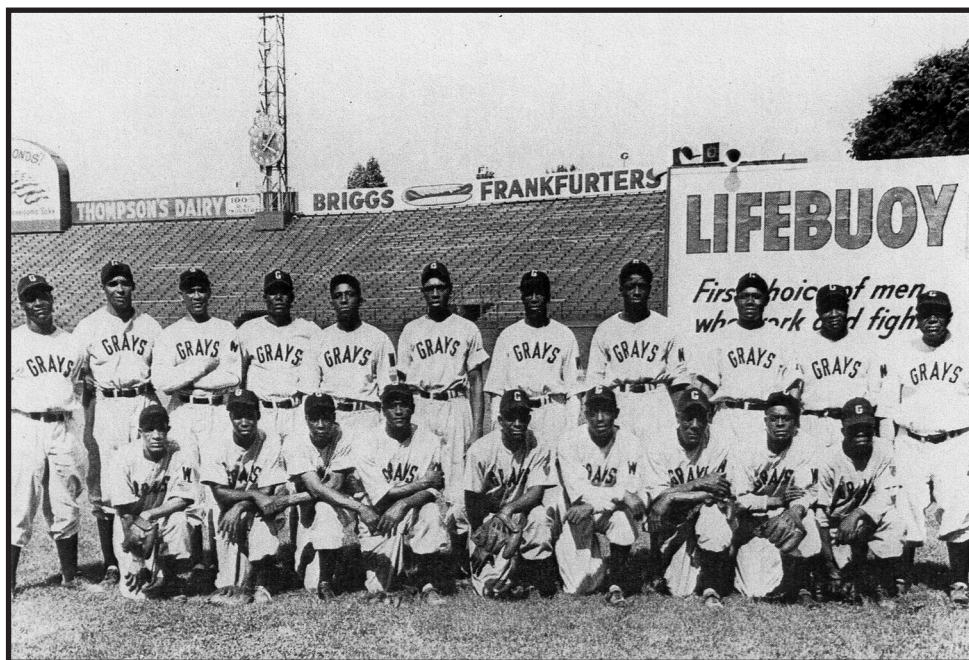
- **Missing documentation.** A significant number of Bankhead's batting statistics are still missing. Examples of these are as follows:
 1. Most Negro League seasons are not complete. Many box scores are still missing.
 2. Most of his Negro League Playoff and World Series statistics are not reported.
 3. Missing a significant number of "non league" games. Conservatively, Bankhead played hundreds of "non-league" games during his career and we only have a small handful of box scores (52 games). For the box scores that we have found, Sam hit .437 in 215 plate appearances. Looking at Bankhead's 1949 and 1950 barnstorming seasons provides excellent insight into the problem of missing documentation for Sam's career. Newspaper reports have the Homestead Grays playing in excess of 200 games for these two seasons, yet we only have found box scores for 15 games or less than 10 % of the games in which Bankhead could have played.
 4. Missing all of his Venezuelan and Panamanian statistics.
 5. Missing bits and pieces of numerous other seasons, especially extra base hits, runs batted, etc.
- **Late getting started.** It is also important to note that Sam Bankhead's professional career did not really get started until 1933 when he became the starting centerfielder for the Nashville Elite Giants. Sam was 28 years of age. He had played in a few Negro League games from 1929 to 1932, but his career really didn't take off until he was 28 years old. Bankhead lost eight to ten of what could have been his most productive years in professional baseball.
- **Longevity** of his career especially when you take into consideration that he played professional baseball virtually 12 months a year for 23 years. He started playing professional baseball in 1929 and played every regular season through 1951. In addition from 1952 to 1955 he continued to play ball on a part time basis.

In the final analysis, Sam Bankhead was an excellent ball player with a long and illustrious career. He is truly one of the great ball players of the Negro Leagues.

Playing Career

Regular Season:

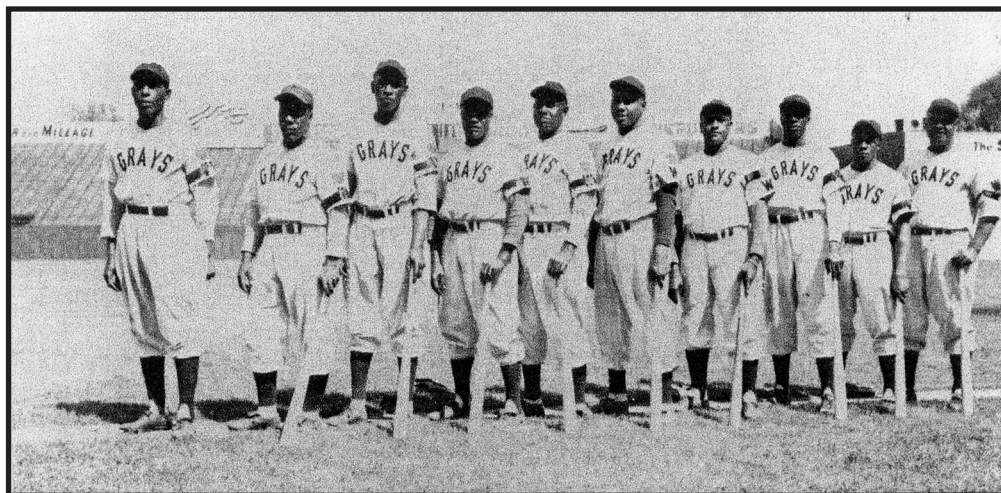
Year	Team	League
1929	Birmingham Black Barons	Negro National League
1930	Nashville Elite Giants	Negro National League
1931-1932	Birmingham Black Barons	Negro Southern League
1932	Louisville Black Caps	Negro Southern League
1932	Nashville Elite Giants	Negro Southern League
1933-1934	Nashville Elite Giants	Negro National League
1934	Kansas City Monarchs	Independent
1935-1936	Pittsburgh Crawfords	Negro National League
1937	Cuidad Trujillo Dragonos	Dominican League
1937	Trujillo All Stars	U.S. and Canadian Barnstorming Tour
1938	Pittsburgh Crawfords	Negro National League
1939	Toledo Crawfords	Independent
1939	Homestead Grays	Negro National League
1940-1941	Monterrey Carta Blanca	Mexican League
1942-1947	Homestead Grays	Negro National League
1948	Washington Homestead Grays	Negro National League
1949	Homestead Grays	Negro American Association
1949-1950	Homestead Grays	Independent
1951	Farnham Pirates	Canadian Provincial League
1952	Homestead Grays	Independent
1952	Brooklyn Cuban Giants	Independent
1955	Homestead Grays	Independent



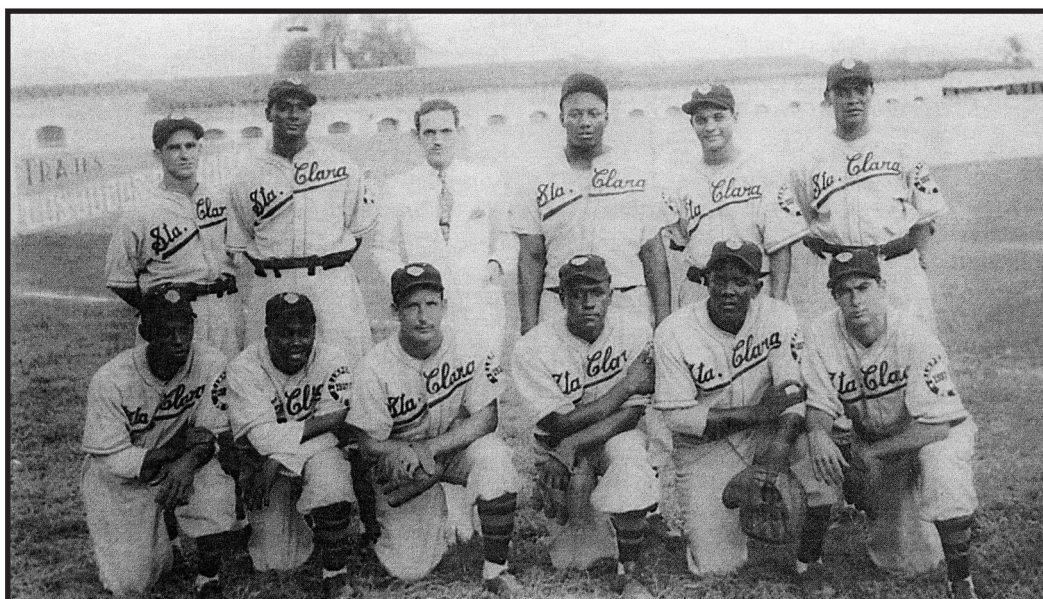
Homestead Grays (1945)
 Negro National League Champions
 (Bankhead – kneeling fourth from left)



Kansas City Monarchs (1934)
Denver Post Tournament
(Bankhead – kneeling fourth from left)



Homestead Grays (1946)
(Bankhead – fourth from right)



Santa Clara Leopards (1938-39)
(Josh Gibson – back row third from right and Sam Bankhead – kneeling third on right)

Post Season Play and Winter Leagues:

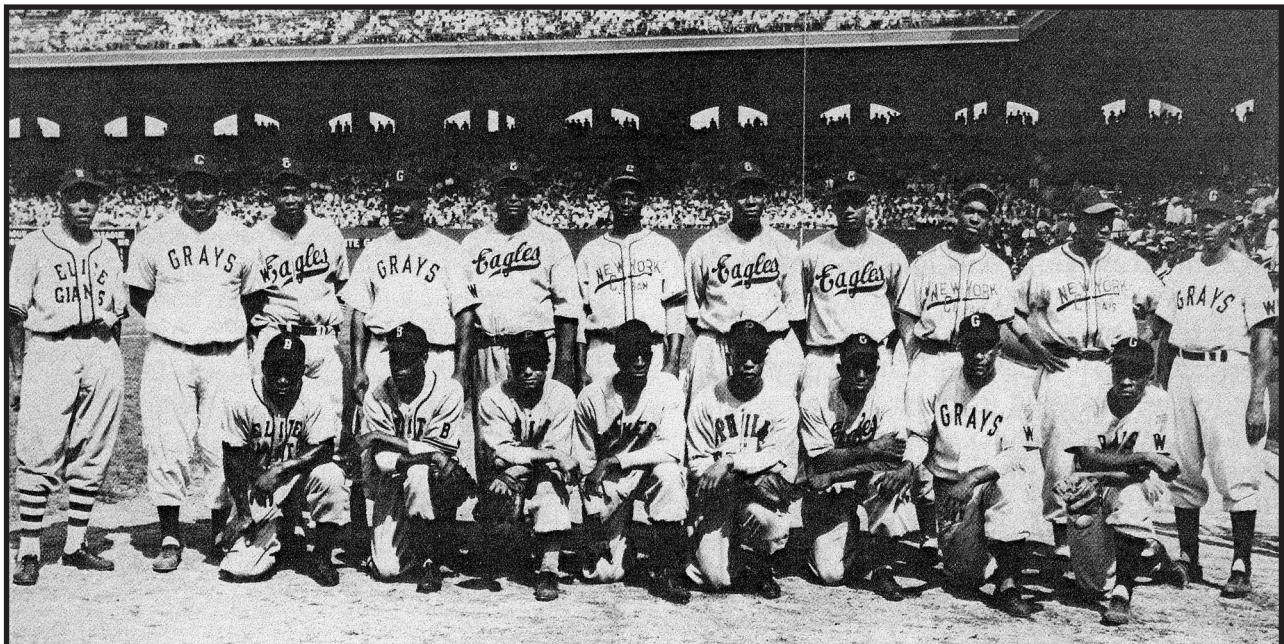
1932	Nashville Elite Giants	Playoff Series vs Chicago American Giants
1932-33	Wilson's Elite Giants	California Winter League
1933	Nashville Elite Giants	Playoff Series vs Pittsburgh Crawfords
1933-34	Wilson's Elite Giants	California Winter League
1933	Wilson's Elite Giants	Game vs Portland Beavers
1934	Kansas City Monarchs	Denver Post Tournament
1935	Pittsburgh Crawfords	Playoff Series vs New York Cubans
1935	Pittsburgh Crawfords	Game vs Dayton Shroyers w/ Dizzy Dean
1936	Colored All Stars	Five Game Series vs Major League All Stars
1936	Pittsburgh Crawfords	Three Game Series in Mexico vs Major League All Stars
1937	Cuidad Trujillo	Denver Post Tournament
1937	Trujillo All Stars	United States and Canadian Barnstorming
1937	Trujillo All Stars	Four Game Series vs Wisconsin All Stars (Canada)
1937	Cuban All Stars	United States and Canadian Barnstorming
1937	Negro National League Stars	United States and Canadian Barnstorming
1937	Dominican Republic	Doubleheader vs Negro National League All Stars
1937-38	Santa Clara Leopards	Cuban Winter League
1937-38	Americanos	Cuban Winter League All Star Game
1938	Homestead Grays	American Series (Cuba)
1938-39	Santa Clara Leopards	Cuban Winter League
1939	Homestead Grays	Playoff Series vs Philadelphia Stars
1939	Homestead Grays	Playoff Series vs Baltimore Elite Giants
1939	Homestead Grays	American Series (Cuba)
1939-40	Santa Clara Leopards	Cuban Winter League
1940-41	Almendares Alacranes	Cuban Winter League
1941	Mexican League All Stars	United States Barnstorming Tour
1941-42	Ponce Leones	Puerto Rican Winter League
1942	Southeast Squad	Puerto Rican League All Star Game
1942	Homestead Grays	Game vs Dizzy Dean's All Stars
1942	Homestead Grays	Negro League World Series vs Kansas City Monarchs
1943	Homestead Grays	Negro League World Series vs Birmingham Black Barons
1943	Homestead Grays	Two Game Exhibition Series vs Birmingham Black Barons
1943	South All Star Team	North-South All Star Game
1944	Homestead Grays	Negro League World Series vs Birmingham Black Barons
1944-45	Birmingham Black Barons	California Winter League
1944-45	Ponce Leones	Puerto Rican Winter League
1945	Estrellas Importados	Puerto Rican League All Star Game
1945	Homestead Grays	Negro League World Series vs Cleveland Buckeyes
1945-46	Ponce Leones	Puerto Rican Winter League
1946-47	Vargas Sabios	Venezuelan Professional Baseball League
1947	Vargas	Four Game Series vs New York Yankees (Venezuela)
1947-48	Caguas-Guayama Criollos	Puerto Rican Winter League
1948	Homestead Grays	Negro League World Series vs Birmingham Black Barons
1948	Jackie Robinson's All Stars	Barnstorming Tour
1948-49	Spur Cola	Panamanian League
1949	Luke Easter's All Stars	West Coast Tour vs Bob Feller's All Stars
1949	Spur Cola	Caribbean World Series I (Cuba)

Managerial Career

Year	Team	League
1949	Homestead Grays	Negro American Association
1949-1950	Homestead Grays	Independent
1951	Farnham Pirates	Canadian Provincial League

Championship Teams

Year	Team	League
1932-33	Wilson's Elite Giants	California Winter League
1933-34	Wilson's Elite Giants	California Winter League
1935	Pittsburgh Crawfords	Negro National League
1936	Pittsburgh Crawfords	Negro National League
1937	Cuidad Trujillo Dragones	Dominican League
1937	Trujillo All Stars	Denver Post Tournament Champions
1937-38	Santa Clara Leopards	Cuban Winter League
1938-39	Santa Clara Leopards	Cuban Winter League
1939	Homestead Grays	Negro National League
1939	Homestead Grays	American Series Champions (Cuba)
1941-42	Ponce Leones	Puerto Rican Winter League
1942	Homestead Grays	Negro National League
1943	Homestead Grays	Negro National League
1943	Homestead Grays	Negro League World Series Champions
1944	Homestead Grays	Negro National League
1944	Homestead Grays	Negro League World Series Champions
1944-45	Birmingham Black Barons	California Winter League
1944-45	Ponce Leones	Puerto Rican Winter League
1945	Homestead Grays	Negro National League
1946-47	Vargas Sabios	Venezuelan League
1947-48	Caguas-Guayama Criollos	Puerto Rican Winter League
1948	Washington Homestead Grays	Negro National League (2 nd Half of Season)
1948	Washington Homestead Grays	Negro League World Series Champions
1948-49	Spur Cola	Panamanian League
1949	Homestead Grays	Negro American Association



East-West All Star Game (1946)
 East All Star Team
 Comiskey Park (Chicago)

(Kneeling – Henry Kimbro, Jonas Gaines, Murray Watkins, Bill Ricks, Gene Benson, **Leon Day**, **Sam Bankhead**, Howard Easterling. Standing – Felton Snow, **Josh Gibson**, **Monte Irvin**, **Buck Leonard**, **Raleigh “Biz” Mackey**, Pat Scantlebury, Lennie Pearson, **Larry Doby**, Fernando Pedroso, Silvio Garcia and Vic Harris)

Career Statistics – Hitting (Regular Season – “Official” Negro League Games)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1931	Birmingham	3	12	2	5	2	2	0	-	0	.417	.917
1932	Louisville	14	34	5	8	1	1	0	-	1	.235	.324
	Birmingham											
	Nashville											
1933	Nashville	29	112	23	33	2	2	1	18	5	.295	.375
1934	Nashville	32	130	20	42	4	1	0	1	6	.323	.369
1935	Pittsburgh	42	169	39	58	11	5	1	9	6	.343	.485
1936	Pittsburgh	38	147	26	45	10	1	0	11	2	.306	.388
1937	Pittsburgh	7	27	5	6	1	0	1	2	0	.222	.370
1938	Pittsburgh	22	89	16	24	2	0	2	11	9	.270	.360
1939	Homestead	27	104	18	33	4	2	2	10	6	.317	.452
	Toledo											
1942	Homestead	42	150	28	44	4	4	1	27	2	.293	.393
1943	Homestead	60	218	37	57	3	1	1	27	14	.261	.298
1944	Homestead	49	189	42	54	7	4	0	30	7	.286	.365
1945	Homestead	19	73	6	22	3	1	0	7	1	.301	.370
1946	Homestead	34	133	19	41	4	0	3	23	1	.308	.406
1947	Homestead	22	81	6	25	4	1	0	12	5	.309	.383
1948	Homestead	14	59	8	12	1	0	0	5	0	.203	.220
	Totals	454	1727	300	509	63	25	12	193	65	.295	.381

Career Statistics – Hitting (Regular Season – Non League Games)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1935	Pittsburgh	2	8	3	5	1	0	0	1	-	.625	.500
1936	Pittsburgh	6	27	12	15	4	2	1	2	1	.556	1.037
1938	Pittsburgh	1	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	.200	.200
1939	Homestead	2	8	4	4	2	0	0	1	2	.500	.750
1942	Homestead	2	7	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	.429	.429
1944	Homestead	1	5	1	2	0	1	0	4	1	.400	.800
1945	Homestead	2	8	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	.375	-
1946	Homestead	6	22	8	8	2	0	0	2	-	.363	.455
1947	Homestead	6	30	10	9	1	0	0	-	1	.300	.333
1948	Homestead	9	39	15	18	1	0	0	1	-	.462	.487
1949	Homestead	4	11	4	7	2	0	0	3	-	.636	.818
1950	Homestead	11	45	15	18	5	0	1	5	3	.400	.578
	Totals	52	215	75	93	18	3	2	19	8	.433	.572

Career Statistics – Hitting (Negro League Playoff Series)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1933	Nashville	1	4	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	.500	-
1935	Pittsburgh	6	26	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	.269	-
1939	Homestead	6	23	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	.304	-
	Totals	13	53	-	16	-	-	-	-	-	.302	-

Career Statistics – Hitting (Negro League World Series)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1942	Homestead	-	8	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	.250	-
1943	Homestead	-	13	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	.231	-
1944	Homestead	-	18	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	.389	-
1945	Homestead	-	16	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	.063	-
1948	Homestead	No records available										
	Totals	-	55	-	13	-	-	-	-	-	.236	-

East-West All Star Games

Sam Bankhead appeared in nine East-West All Star games during his career and batted .387.



East-West All Star Game (1942)
Comiskey Park
(Bankhead – fifth from left)



East-West All Star Game (1946)
Comiskey Park
(Bankhead – kneeling second from right)

Career Statistics – Hitting (East-West All Star Games)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1933	West	1	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	.500	.500
1934	West	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	.333	.333
1936	East	1	4	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	.500	.750
1938	East	1	4	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	.500	.500
1942	East	2	8	3	4	1	0	0	2	0	.500	.625
1943	East	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
1944	East	1	3	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	.333	.333
1946	East	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
	Totals	9	31	7	12	2	0	0	4	2	.387	.452

Career Statistics – Hitting (Exhibition Games vs Major Leaguers)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1935	Pittsburgh	1	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	.250	-
1936	Pittsburgh	2	8	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	.375	-
	Totals	3	12	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	.333	-

Career Statistics – Hitting (Dominican League)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1937	Cuidad Trujillo	17	68	10	21	1	0	2	13	-	.309	.412

Career Statistics – Hitting (Mexican League)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1940	Monterrey	93	384	80	122	19	11	8	74	32	.318	.487
1941	Monterrey	101	405	74	142	21	12	8	85	19	.351	.521
	Totals	194	789	154	264	40	23	16	159	51	.335	.504

Career Statistics – Hitting (Canadian Provincial League)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1951	Farnham	122	435	46	119	20	2	2	51	12	.274	.343

Career Statistics – Hitting (California Winter League)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1932-33	Elite Giants	33	114	-	42	6	6	4	-	-	.371	.632
1933-34	Elite Giants	45	157	-	54	10	2	4	-	-	.344	.510
1944-45	Birmingham	2	5	-	1	0	1	0	-	-	.200	.600
	Totals	80	276	-	97	16	9	8	-	-	.351	.562

Newspaper Coverage

The lineup:

	AB	R	H	E
Greenville	3	0	0	0
Wertz cf	3	0	0	0
Saxe ss	3	0	0	0
McKay 3b	3	0	0	0
Henderson 1b	3	0	0	0
Borczyk lf	3	0	1	1
Stegkamper c	2	0	1	2
Hinkin 2b	3	0	1	2
Hutchison rf	3	0	0	1
Miller p	1	0	0	0
*Deasport 2b	0	0	0	1
**Gosnell p	2	0	1	0

Total 27 0 4 7
 *Replaced Hinkin in 2nd
 **Replaced Miller in 4th.

	AB	R	H	E
Homestead	7	5	4	1
Richardson ss	7	1	3	0
Gary cf	7	1	4	0
Fields lf	6	2	2	0
Leonard 1b	7	2	3	0
Kaiser rf	7	3	1	0
Bankhead 2b	7	2	2	0
Clifford c	7	1	4	0
Gibson 3b	7	1	4	0
Blair p	7	2	2	0

Total 63 28 28 1
 Homestead 11 5 5 0 8 1 2 1—28
 Greenville .. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0—0
 Two-base hits, Richardson, Gary, Bankhead 3, Clifford. Three-base hits, Fields, Leonard, Gibson, Blair. Home runs, Fields, Gibson, Richardson 2. Hits off, Miller 17, off Gosnell 11, off Blair 4. Stolen bases, Fields, Gary 2. Struck out, by Blair 4, by Gosnell 1. Bases on balls, off Blair 1, off Miller 8, off Gosnell 1. Umpires, Dalfonzo, Tate.

Grays Trounce Greenville
The Record Argus
 Greenville, PA
 08-09-50

BASEBALL!!

HOMESTEAD GRAYS

vs

N. Y. BLACK YANKEES

Tomorrow Night—8 P.M.

(Wednesday, April 19th)

ARMORY FIELD

Lumberton, N. C.

TICKETS ON SALE AT:

- DIAMOND SANDWICH SHOP
- DIAMOND BARBER SHOP
- CONGO GRILL
- S. LUMBERTON BEAUTY NOOK

Homestead Grays vs New York Black Yankees
Robeson
 Lumberton, NC
 04-18-50

No 498

PRESS

COMISKEY PARK

NATIONAL COLORED ALL STAR

BASEBALL GAME

Sun., Aug. 16, 1942

—3:00 p.m.—

If legal game is not played, this rain check to be refunded. See daily papers for notice and manner of refund.

East-West All Star Game
 Comiskey Park (Chicago)
 08-16-42

Grays	AB	R	H	E
Marquez	5	1	3	0
Bankhead, ss	4	2	3	0
Thurman, rf	4	2	1	0
Easter, 1b	5	1	1	0
Boston, lf	5	0	1	0
Bruce, 2b	5	0	2	0
Gaston, c	5	1	0	0
Gary, 3b	3	1	2	0
Bell, p	3	0	0	0
Walker, 6th, p	2	0	0	0
*Leonard	1	1	1	0

Totals 42 9 14 0

*—Leonard batted for Boston in

9th	AB	R	H	E
Forge	4	1	1	0
Murphy, 3b	5	1	2	0
Petrowski, 2b	4	0	1	1
Morrison, 1b	3	1	1	0
John Randinelli, ss	4	0	1	0
Rosequist, c	4	0	1	0
Unterreiner, cf	4	0	1	0
Joe Randinelli, lf	4	0	0	0
Caffrey, p	1	1	1	0
McGraw, rf	3	1	1	0
Whitaker, p	1	0	0	0
* Galbreth	1	1	1	0
Hines, p	0	0	0	0
** Gagliardi	1	0	0	0

Totals 35 6 10 1

*—Caffrey batted for McGraw in 6th.

**—Gagliardi, batted for Hines in 9th.

Grays 002 200 005—9 14 0
 Forge 003 030 000—6 10 1

Summary: 2b hits Leonard, Petrowski; 3b hit—Thurman; home run, Marquez; walks—off Bell 2, off Walker 0, off Caffrey 1, off Whitaker 5, off Hines 0; strike outs—by Bell 3, by Walker 4, by Caffrey 2, by Whitaker 5, by Hines 0. Hit by pitcher—John Randinelli (by Walker). Winning pitcher—Walker. Losing pitcher—Whitaker.

Bankhead Goes 3-4
Warren Times Mirror
 Warren, Ohio
 06-03-48

Career Statistics – Hitting (Cuba)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1937-38	Santa Clara	-	243	47	89	6	5	2	34	8	.366	.457
1938	Homestead	6	25	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	.240	.240
1938-39	Santa Clara	-	227	42	52	7	2	5	44	5	.229	.344
1939	Homestead	6	24	4	8	1	0	0	5	0	.333	.375
1939-40	Santa Clara	-	209	41	67	8	2	3	29	7	.321	.421
1940-41	Almendares	-	123	9	30	3	1	0	16	2	.244	.285
	Totals	-	851	143	252	25	10	10	128	22	.296	.384

Career Statistics – Hitting (Puerto Rico)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1941-42	Ponce	-	168	33	59	16	3	0	35	-	.351	.482
1944-45	Ponce	-	144	21	39	-	-	-	23	-	.271	-
1945-46	Ponce	-	155	30	45	3	1	3	24	12	.290	.439
1946-47	Caguas-Guayama	-	234	36	75	-	-	-	27	-	.321	-
	Totals	-	701	120	218	19	4	3	109	12	.311	-

Career Statistics – Hitting (Caribbean World Series)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1949	Panama	6	23	5	8	3	0	0	5	4	.348	.478

Career Hitting Statistics (Totals)

	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
Negro League	454	1727	300	509	63	25	12	193	65	.295	.381
Non League Games	52	215	75	93	18	3	2	19	8	.433	.572
Playoff Series	13	53	-	16	-	-	-	-	-	.302	-
World Series	-	55	-	13	-	-	-	-	-	.236	-
East West Games	9	31	7	12	2	0	0	4	2	.387	.452
Exhibition Games	3	12	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	.333	-
Dominican Republic	17	68	10	21	1	-	2	13	-	.309	.412
Mexico	194	789	154	264	40	23	16	159	51	.335	.504
Canada	122	435	46	119	20	2	2	51	12	.274	.343
California	80	276	-	97	16	9	8	-	-	.351	.562
Cuba	-	851	143	252	25	10	10	128	22	.296	.384
Puerto Rico	-	701	120	218	19	4	3	109	12	.311	-
Caribbean World Series	6	23	5	8	3	0	0	5	4	.348	.478
Totals											
Totals	950	5236	860	1626	207	76	55	681	176	.311	-

Managerial Record

Year	Team	League	Won	Lost	%
1949	Homestead Grays	Negro American Association	24	2	.923
1949	Homestead Grays	Independent	97	15	.866
1950	Homestead Grays	Independent	64	8	.889
1951	Farnham Pirates	Canadian Provincial League	52	71	.423
	Totals		237	96	.712

Batting and League Leader Titles

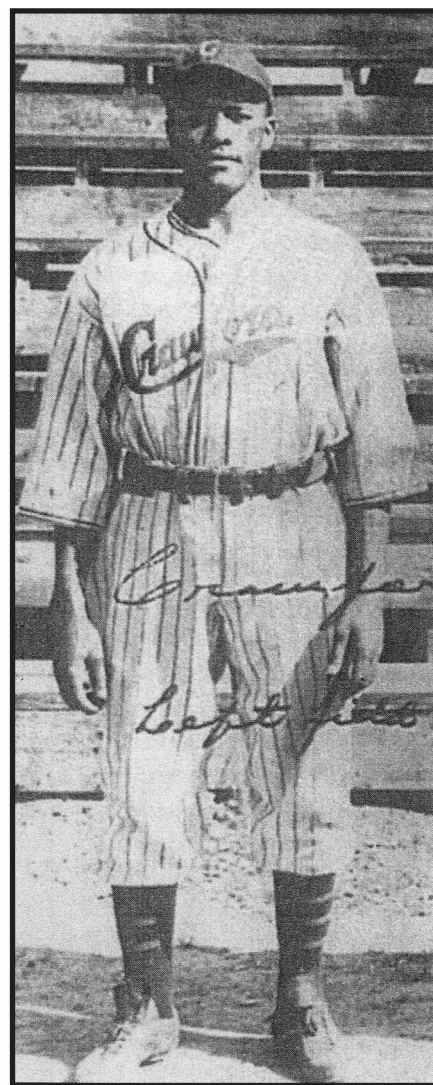
Category	Year	League	Number
Batting	1937-38	Cuban Winter League	.366
Slugging Percentage	1937-38	Cuban Winter League	.457
At Bats	1937-38	Cuban Winter League	243
	1939-40	Cuban Winter League	209
Runs Scored	1937-38	Cuban Winter League	47
	1939-40	Cuban Winter League	41
Hits	1937-38	Cuban Winter League	89
	1939-40	Cuban Winter League	67
Doubles	1949	Caribbean World Series I	3
Triples	1932-33	California Winter League	6
	1937-38	Cuban Winter League	5
Homeruns	1945-46	Puerto Rican Winter League	3
Runs Batted In	1937-38	Cuban Winter League	34
Stolen Bases	1940	Mexican League	32
	1945-46	Puerto Rican Winter League	12
	1949	Caribbean World Series I	4



Homestead Grays (1946)
 Negro National League
 (Dan Wilson, Luis Marquez, Matt Carlise, Sam Bankhead and Buck Leonard)

Selected Career Highlights

- Hit the game winning homerun to clinch the Dominican League championship for the Cuidad Trujillo Dragones in 1937.
- Won the 1937-38 Cuban League batting title with a .366 batting average. Also led the league in slugging percentage with a .457 slugging average. Sam led the league in seven (7) hitting categories during the 1937-38 season.
- Selected to nine (9) East-West All Star games during his Negro League career: 1933, 1934, 1936, 1938, 1942 (both games), 1943, 1944 and 1946. Compiled a .387 batting average for these nine All Star games.
- Member of twenty-five (25) championship teams during his 23 years in professional baseball.
- From 1942 to 1945 he played in four (4) straight Negro League World Series as a member of the Homestead Grays.
- Played on the Homestead Grays teams that won the Negro League World Series in 1943, 1944 and 1948.
- Compiled a career batting average of .311 for 20+ seasons in professional baseball.
- Selected to the 1937-38 Cuban Winter League All Star team (Americanos).
- Selected to the 1942 and 1945 Puerto Rican Winter League All Star teams.
- As player-manager for the Homestead Grays led them to a Negro American Association title for the first half of the season with a 24-2 record in 1949. Standings were not published for the second half of the Negro American Association in 1949.
- As player-manager for the Homestead Grays in 1949 and 1950, managed them to a record of 161-23 (.875) for their independent schedule over these two seasons.
- Became the first African American to manage a predominately “white” professional team when he managed the Farnham Pirates of the Canadian Provincial League in 1951.
- Bankhead was named to the All Time Negro League baseball team by the Pittsburgh Courier in 1952. Because of his phenomenal versatility he was selected as the team’s utility player.



Sam Bankhead
Pittsburgh Crawfords



Homestead Grays (1942)
(Bankhead – kneeling fourth from right)



Homestead Grays (1944)
(Bankhead – fourth from left)