

Historical Timeline of Black Baseball in Birmingham

- mid 1870's** The origins of black baseball can be traced back to the company mining and milling teams that were instrumental in the founding of the City of Birmingham.
- 1897** The Birmingham Unions become the first professional black baseball team in in Alabama. They played in the short lived Southern Colored League.
- 1904** C.I. Taylor moves to Birmingham and forms the Birmingham Giants. The Giants share West End Park with the “white” Birmingham Barons.
- 1907** The Birmingham Giants claim the title of “Colored Champions of the South.”
- 1908** The Birmingham Giants are declared the “Colored Champions of the South” for the second year in a row.
- 1909** Rickwood Field is built by Birmingham industrialist Allan Hervey “Rick” Woodward. Rickwood Field becomes the home of the Birmingham Barons and Birmingham Black Barons.
- 1910** On March 12, 1910 The Freeman (nationally known black newspaper) reports that a new team by the name of the “Acme Grays” was being formed to replace the Birmingham Giants.
- 1914** Birmingham Athletics are formed and play their home games at Delta View Park.
- 1919** Birmingham defeats the Atlanta Cubs for the Colored Southern Championship.
- 1920** In mid February, the Negro National League is formed by Rube Foster.
- 1920** On March 2nd just two weeks after Foster founded the Negro National League, a meeting is held in Atlanta (Georgia) to form the Negro Southern League. Birmingham businessman Frank M. Perdue was the driving force behind the formation of the Negro Southern League.
- 1920** Frank Perdue’s team the Birmingham Stars joins the Negro Southern League along with teams from Atlanta, Jacksonville, Knoxville, Montgomery, Nashville, New Orleans and Pensacola.
- 1920** The Birmingham Stars quickly change their name to the Birmingham Black Barons to play off the “white” minor league team also located in Birmingham.
- 1921** The Bessemer Stars field a team in the Negro Southern League but fold before the end of the season.
- 1922** George “Mule” Suttles is signed by the Birmingham Black Barons. Suttles played for Birmingham from 1922 through 1925. Suttles would be elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 2006.
- 1922** Will Holt of Birmingham leads the Negro Southern League in hitting with a .87 batting average.

- 1922** John Juran of the Black Barons pitches a 4-0 no-hitter against Atlanta on July 26th.
- 1922** A team by the name of the Birmingham Gray Sox play a brief independent schedule.
- 1923** Birmingham hotel owner, Joe Rush, buys the Birmingham Black Barons from Frank Perdue.
- 1923** From May 18th to May 26th, Birmingham Black Barons pitchers hurl 68 consecutive scoreless innings against the Memphis Red Sox. They recorded seven consecutive shutouts by the scores of 6-0, 6-0, 2-0, 16-0, 5-0, 3-0 and 6-0.
- 1923** The Birmingham Black Barons win the Negro Southern League championship.
- 1923** In July Birmingham and Memphis leave the Negro Southern League and join the Negro National League as “associate” members.
- 1924** The Birmingham Black Barons become a full member of the Negro National League.
- 1925** Poindexter Williams leads the Black Barons in hitting with a .343 batting average.
- 1926** The Birmingham Black Barons and Memphis Red Sox leave the Negro National League and join the newly reformed Negro Southern League.
- 1926** On August 26th Harry Salmon pitches a no-hitter against the Albany Giants. Birmingham wins the game by a score of 8-0.
- 1927** The Birmingham Black Barons (winners of the first half of the season) defeat the Memphis Red Sox (winners of the second half of the season) in a play-off series for the Negro Southern League title.
- 1927** The Birmingham Black Barons rejoin the Negro National League.
- 1927** Satchel Paige is signed by the Birmingham Black Barons. Paige played for the Black Barons from 1927 to 1930.
- 1927** In his rookie season, Roy “Red” Parnell leads Birmingham in hitting with a .436 batting average.
- 1927** The Birmingham Black Barons win the second half of the Negro National League season.
- 1927** The Chicago American Giants beat the Birmingham Black Barons in four straight games to claim the Negro National League championship.
- 1928** Robert Poindexter (Black Barons) throws a no-hitter against the Chicago American Giants.
- 1928** Leroy “Satchel” Paige posts an 11-4 record with a 2.32 earned run average in “league” games. Paige’s 121 strikeouts in 132 innings lead the Negro National League.

- 1929** Satchel Paige strikes out 17 Cuban Stars as he leads the Black Barons to 6-2 victory on opening day of the Negro National League season.
- 1929** On July 29th Satchel Paige strikes out 17 Detroit Stars in route to a 5-1 victory.
- 1929** Satchel Paige sets a Negro League record with 164 strikeouts in one season.
- 1929** Birmingham player-manager, Clarence Smith, leads the team in hitting with a .378 batting average.
- 1930** In “league” games only, rookie Herman “Jabbo” Andrews leads the Negro National League in hitting with a .399 batting average for the season.
- 1931** E.A. Frazier forms the Birmingham Red Sox in an attempt to bring another Class A black baseball team to Birmingham. The team is short lived and receives little notoriety.
- 1931** The Birmingham Black Barons rejoin the Negro Southern League, but also retain an associate member status in the Negro National League.
- 1931** Walter Calhoun of the Birmingham Black Barons and Birmingham Industrial League fame (ACIPCO) pitches an 11-0 no-hitter against Fort Benning on July 18, 1931.
- 1931** George McAllister led the Black Barons in hitting during the 1931 season with a .388 batting average. Harry Salmon was the team’s top pitcher with a 6-4 record.
- 1932** Buford “Geechie” Meredith who was one of the early stars of the Birmingham Black Barons and managed the team in 1931 is killed in a mining accident in January of 1932.
- 1932** The Birmingham Black Barons don’t even make it to the mid-point of the season before they drop out of the Negro Southern League in June of 1932.
- 1933** The Birmingham Black Barons play a limited number of games during the season as an Associate Member of the Negro National League.
- 1932** The Birmingham All Stars are organized and play an independent schedule.
- 1933** The Birmingham Monarchs and Birmingham Foxes both play an independent schedule during the season.
- 1934** After the Birmingham Black Barons fail to organize at the start of the season, E.A. Frazier, owner of the Birmingham Red Sox, forms the Birmingham Monarchs to play in the Dixie League. The team is short lived.
- 1934** The Birmingham Black Barons play in the Negro Southern League and are also associate members of the Negro National League.
- 1934** Jerry Benjamin (RF), Matthew Carlisle (2B) and Columbus Vance (P) are selected to represent Birmingham in the inaugural North-South game.

- 1935** American Cast Iron and Pipe Company (ACIPCO) win the Birmingham Industrial League title with an unbelievable record of 83-5 (.943).
- 1936** The Birmingham Black Barons win the first half of the Negro Southern League season with a record of 15-4 (.789)
- 1937** The Negro American League is formed.
- 1937** The Birmingham Black Barons join the Negro American League in its inaugural year.
- 1937** Stockham wins the Birmingham Industrial League title, breaking ACIPCO's streak of seven consecutive industrial league titles.
- 1938** Parnell Woods becomes the first Birmingham Black Baron to appear in an East-West All Star game.
- 1938** Major Robert R. Jackson, President of the Negro American League, suspends Henry L. Moore (owner of the Birmingham Black Barons) and forfeits Birmingham's franchise in the Negro American League. The actions by Jackson were taken in response to Moore's involvement in an unauthorized East-West All Stars game.
- 1939** It is questionable whether or not the Birmingham Black Barons fielded a team for the 1939 season.
- 1939** In December Tom Hayes (Memphis undertaker) purchases the Birmingham Black Barons.
- 1940** Former Birmingham Giants player Candy Jim Taylor returns to Birmingham to manage the Birmingham Black Barons. Candy Jim won more than three times as many games as any other manager in Negro League baseball history. Taylor's tenure with the Black Barons only lasted one season.
- 1940** Led by Lorenzo "Piper" Davis (.450), Jimmie Shamberger (.431) and Artie Wilson (.411), ACIPCO wins the Birmingham Industrial League championship.
- 1943** Artie Wilson wins the Birmingham Industrial League batting title with an amazing .559 batting average.
- 1943** Alvin Gipson of the Birmingham Black Barons sets a Negro American League record by striking out twenty (20) batters in a game against the Philadelphia Stars on August 21st. Gipson struck out the side in four of the nine innings he pitched. Birmingham won the game 5-1.
- 1943** Gread McKinnis pitches the Birmingham Black Barons to a 5-1 victory over the Chicago American Giants to capture the first half of the Negro American League season.
- 1943** The Birmingham Black Barons defeat the Chicago American Giants three games to two in a play-off series to win the Negro American League title.

- 1943** The Homestead Grays defeat the Birmingham Black Barons four games to three in the Negro League World Series.
- 1944** Birmingham pitcher Al Saylor is the top Negro American League pitcher with a 14-5 won-loss record and a 2.74 earned run average.
- 1945** The Birmingham Black Barons win both halves of the season and repeat as Negro American League champions.
- 1944** The Homestead Grays defeat the Birmingham Black Barons four games to one in the Negro League World Series.
- 1944** The Birmingham Black Barons play in the 1944-45 California Winter League season and win the league title.
- 1945** Jackie Robinson breaks the color barrier when he signs with the Montreal Royals (Brooklyn Dodgers farm club) on October 25, 1945.
- 1945** The Birmingham Black Barons return to California to play in the 1945 California Winter League.
- 1946** The Birmingham Black Barons finish in second place in the Negro American League with a record of 18-11 (.621) for the first half of the season. The Kansas City Monarchs (25-8-1) win the title.
- 1947** Jackie Robinson breaks the color barrier in Major League baseball on April 15th when he plays for the Brooklyn Dodgers of the National League.
- 1948** Former Black Barons star Tommy Sampson forms the Birmingham All Stars and then the Birmingham Clowns. They barnstorm all over the United States and Canada. Both teams also played briefly in the Negro Southern League.
- 1948** Willie Mays signs with the Birmingham Black Barons.
- 1948** Artie Wilson wins the Negro American League batting title with a .402 batting average. Wilson is the last player to hit over .400 in a “major” league.
- 1948** Jimmy Newberry is one of the top pitcher in the Negro American League with a won-loss record of 14-5 and a 2.18 ERA. Newberry also led the “league” in strikeouts with 112.
- 1948** Birmingham Black Barons pitcher Bill Powell is the winning pitcher in the East-West All Star game. Powell is credited with three straight 20 game winning seasons from 1948 to 1950.
- 1948** The Birmingham Black Barons win the first half of the Negro American League season and defeat the Kansas City Monarchs (winners of the second half of the season) in a play-off series three games to one to win the Negro American League title.
- 1948** The Homestead Grays defeat the Birmingham Black Barons in the Negro League World Series. Homestead wins four games to one game for Birmingham.

- 1948** The Negro National League folds after the Negro League World Series.
- 1949** The Negro American League absorbs several of the teams from the Negro National League. The Negro American League divides into two divisions. The Birmingham Black Barons play in the Western Division along with the Chicago American Giants, Kansas City Monarchs, Memphis Red Sox and Houston Eagles.
- 1949** Tom Hayes, owner of the Birmingham Black Barons, sells Lorenzo “Piper” Davis’ contract to the Boston Red Sox of the American League for \$ 7,500.
- 1950** Birmingham attempts to put a team (Birmingham Red Sox) in the Negro Southern League but is dropped from the “league” for failing to meet contractual obligations.”
- 1950** Vic Harris is signed to manage the Birmingham Black Barons. The Black Barons players respond to Harris’ management style and finish second in the Negro American League with a record of 52-25 (.675). Harris only manages Birmingham one season.
- 1950** Tom Hayes, owner of the Birmingham Black Barons, sells Willie Mays contract to the New York Giants of the National League for \$ 10,000. Mays is assigned to the New York Giants’ farm club in Minneapolis.
- 1950** The Birmingham Red Sox are organized with James Canada as their manager. The team doesn’t make it through their first season.
- 1951** Hill Harris (owner) forms the Birmingham Black Eagles (also referred to as the Birmingham Bears). Both teams play briefly in the Negro Southern League. The teams only last one season. A team by the name of the Birmingham All Stars also briefly play in the Negro Southern League during the 1951 season.
- 1951** Former Black Barons player Sam Bankhead becomes the first African American to manage in “white” organized baseball. Bankhead managed the Farnham Pirates of the Canadian Provincial League during the 1951 season.
- 1951** Sam Hairston becomes the first African-American player to play for the Chicago White Sox of the American League.
- 1951** Willie Mays plays his first game in the Major League with the New York Giants. May’s Major League career lasted 22 years and culminated with him being elected into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown in 1979.
- 1952** William “Soo” Bridgeforth becomes the owner of the Birmingham Black Barons.
- 1952** Veteran George Scales is hired to manage the Birmingham Black Barons. Scales leads the team to a second place finish in the Negro American League with a record of 51-36 (.586). Scales only stays in Birmingham one season.
- 1952** The Birmingham Black Barons win the second half of the Negro American League season.

- 1952** Birmingham pitcher Frank “Groundhog” Thompson is the top pitcher in the Negro American League with a record 13-6 record.
- 1952** The Birmingham Black Barons lose a twelve game play-off series to the Indianapolis Clowns for the Negro American League championship. Indianapolis won seven games to five for Birmingham.
- 1954** The Birmingham Black Barons trade a bus to Louisville for the contract of future Country Music Hall of Fame member Charlie Pride and Jessie Mitchell.
- 1954** Danny Wright (Birmingham) pitches a 5-0 no-hitter against the Memphis Red Sox.
- 1954** Soo Brifgeforth sells the Birmingham Black Barons to Syd Lyner and Floyd Meshad.
- 1955** The Birmingham Black Barons win the first half of the Negro American League season.
- 1956** Floyd Meshad sells the Birmingham Black Barons to Dr. Anderson Ross of Memphis.
- 1956** John Williams leads the Negro American League in hitting with a .357 batting average.
- 1957** Jessie Mitchell (outfielder for the Black Barons) wins the Negro American League Triple Crown. Mitchell hit 17 homeruns, drove in 67 runs and compiled a .338 batting average.
- 1958** According to an article that appeared in the Birmingham World, the Birmingham Black Barons won the Negro American League championship with a won-loss record of 84-17.
- 1959** The Birmingham Black Barons claim the Negro American League title.
- 1959** Earnest “Oink” Harris (Birmingham rookie outfielder) goes three for four in the East-West All Star game at Comiskey Park in Chicago. Harris hit an inside the park home run and scored the winning run in an 8-7 West victory.
- 1960** Wardell Jackson buys the Birmingham Black Barons and immediately becomes involved in a dispute over using the name “Black Barons.” Jackson considers using the name “Birmingham Giants.” The dispute is resolved and the Birmingham Black Barons continue their play in the Negro American League.
- 1962** Frank Evans manages the Birmingham Black Barons in their last Negro American League season.
- 1962** According to an article that appeared in the Birmingham World, the Birmingham Black Barons met the Kansas City Monarchs in a Play-Off Series for the Negro American League title. The Birmingham Black Barons won the first two games, but no other information was reported as to the final outcome of the series.
- 1962** The Negro American League folds after the East-West All Star game. Team owner Wardell Jackson moves the Black Barons team to Champaign, Illinois.

- 1962** Bull Conner, Commissioner of Public Safety for the City of Birmingham, closes all local baseball fields, the City golf course and City swimming pools rather than comply with a federal court order to desegregate.
- 1963** The Birmingham Black Barons play independent baseball and barnstorm for one more season before calling it quits.
- 1964** The Birmingham Barons of the Southern League integrate. Their opening day roster included former Birmingham Black Barons pitcher Stanley Jones from Bessemer. Latin shortstop Dagoberto "Bert" Campaneris and first baseman Santiago Rosario were also on the opening day roster when the season started. Later in the season African American players Tommie Reynolds and John "Blue Moon" Odom were added to the roster.
- 1965** Lorenzo "Piper" Davis becomes the manager of the Stockham Value and Fitting Industrial league baseball team. The first thing Piper did was recruit and entire squad of former Negro League ball players for Stockham.
- 1965** Stockham won three different league titles (Birmingham Industrial League, Birmingham City League and the Alabama-Georgia League) titles in 1965. The Stockham team won the Industrial League championship four consecutive years from 1965-1968 and would dominate the Y.M.C.A. Industrial League for the next 10 years.
- 1967** Reggie Jackson helps lead the Birmingham A's to a Southern League championship with a record of 82-57 (.604). Jackson had 17 homeruns, 58 runs batted in and a .293 batting average for the season. Jackson went on to play 21 seasons in the Major League and was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1993.
- 1969** Vida Blue posts a record of 10-3 and helps lead the Birmingham A's of the Southern League to a second place finish with a record of 78-62. Blue went on to a 17 year career in the Major Leagues where he posted a career won-loss record of 209-161.
- 1994** National Basketball Hall of Famer Michael Jordan joins the Birmingham Barons of the Southern League. Jordan's baseball career lasted only one year. He hit .202 in 127 games for the Barons and .252 in the Arizona Fall League.
- 1996** The first Rickwood Classic is held at Rickwood Field to honor the Birmingham Black Baron's. The event becomes an annual affair.
- 2006** ESPN Classic broadcasts a throw back game from Rickwood Field to honor the Birmingham Black Barons.
- 2015** The "Negro League Southern Museum" is opened in Birmingham to commemorate and preserve the history of black baseball in America.