

The Life and Legacy of Andrew “Rube” Foster:  
Baseball’s Forgotten Legend

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2483 Words

"If the talents of Christy Mathewson, John McGraw, Ban Johnson, and Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis were combined in a single body, and that body were enveloped in a black skin, the result would have to be named Andrew 'Rube' Foster."<sup>1</sup>

### **Jim Crow and the Color Line**

Baseball has always been regarded as our "national pastime," but just two years following the Civil War, a color line was established barring blacks from playing in organized baseball.<sup>2</sup> The Philadelphia Pythians<sup>3</sup> (see Appendix A) applied for membership in the National Association of Base Ball Players (NABBP) along with 236 other clubs, but theirs was the only club excluded from membership.<sup>4</sup> The *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported, "It is presumed that whites and blacks played against and with one another during the 1860s. Yet when the Pythians of Philadelphia, an African-American club, applied for membership in the NABBP in 1867, the nomination committee unanimously voted to bar any club "composed of one or more colored persons."<sup>5</sup> This, and other so-called "gentleman's agreements,"<sup>6</sup> pacts between white owners to exclude black ballplayers, effectively kept them out of the organized and professional ranks for the next eighty years.<sup>7</sup> It was during this eight decade chasm that a charismatic figure came to the forefront to ensure that although the playing field was separate, the most talented black ballplayers were recognized for their skills and paved the way to a time when baseball would indeed become our "national pastime" with full integration being achieved.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Peterson, Robert. *Only the Ball Was White*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970. Print. Pg. 88

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Pg. 12

<sup>3</sup> *Philadelphia Pythians Scorecard, June 28, 1867*. Digital image. *Scorecard: Philadelphia Pythians vs. Washington Mutuals*. Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission, n.d. Web. 12 Nov. 2014. <<http://explorepahistory.com/displayimage.php?imgId=1-2-45>>.

<sup>4</sup> "Octavius V. Catto." *Octavius V. Catto*. Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission, n.d. Web. 12 Nov. 2014. <<http://explorepahistory.com/hmarker.php?markerId=1-A-14>>.

<sup>5</sup> "Committee Accepts Over 200 Teams." *Philadelphia Inquirer* [Philadelphia, PA] 2 Nov. 1867: Print.

<sup>6</sup> Peterson, Robert. *Only the Ball Was White*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970. Print. Pg. 19

<sup>7</sup> "Octavius V. Catto." *Octavius V. Catto*. Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission, n.d. Web. 12 Nov. 2014.

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<sup>8</sup> Dixon, Phil S. *Andrew "Rube" Foster: A Harvest of Freedom's Field*. New York: XLibris, 2010. Print. Pg. 6

## The Emergence of Andrew “Rube” Foster

The gentleman who led the way toward integration was born deep in the segregated South in Calvert, Texas, and lived his entire life in the shadow of Jim Crow,<sup>9</sup> the laws and statutes that promoted segregation and discrimination. Unlike blacks in his generation who had limited hopes in both vocation and education due to the suffocating laws that limited their advancement, he had a unique talent that would lead him to fortune and fame.<sup>10</sup> Simply put, he was one of the best pitchers in baseball history.<sup>11</sup> His name was Andrew “Rube” Foster.

Foster left school at age fourteen to make a career in baseball. The raw talents of Foster were unquestionable, and he was signed by a local black club, the Waco Yellow Jackets.<sup>12</sup> During the season, he caught the attention of more established clubs and was signed by the Chicago Union Giants, the top black team in the Midwest.<sup>13</sup> Then, he jumped to the Cuban X-Giants and immediately became their ace pitcher. In his first full season with the club, Foster helped the X-Giants to the black baseball championship when they defeated his future team, the Philadelphia Giants.<sup>14</sup>

“Foster’s Speed Frightens in Loss,” was one memorable headline that would surface in newspapers covering organized black baseball<sup>15</sup> (see Appendix B). Foster was a frightening figure on the mound, standing at 6’2” and weighing 260 pounds<sup>16</sup> (see Appendix C). Many

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<sup>9</sup> Odzer, Timothy. "Rube Foster." *SABR Baseball Biography Project*. Society of American Baseball Research, n.d. Web. 29 Oct. 2014. <<http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/fcf322f7>>.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Lester, Larry. *Rube Foster In His Time: On the Field and in the Papers with Black Baseball's Greatest Visionary*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012. Print. Pg. 44

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* Pg. 57

<sup>14</sup> Odzer, Timothy. "Rube Foster." *SABR Baseball Biography Project*. Society of American Baseball Research, n.d. Web. 29 Oct. 2014. <<http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/fcf322f7>>.

<sup>15</sup> "Foster's Speed Frightens in Loss." *Indianapolis Freeman* [Indianapolis, Indiana] 2 Oct. 1909: n. pag. Print.

<sup>16</sup> *Rube Foster, Pitcher*. Digital image. *Rube Foster Hall of Fame Biography*. National Baseball Hall of Fame, n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2014. <<http://baseballhall.org/hof/foster-rube>>.

historians believed Foster was able to pitch so hard because of his size and brute strength.<sup>17</sup> This giant on the pitcher's mound soon evolved into a giant of the game.

Although the game was segregated, the top black teams of their leagues played against white major leaguers in the off-season.<sup>18</sup> These “barnstorming” events helped players earn extra income, but to Foster and the other top baseball stars, it offered them a chance to prove their skills on a level playing field.<sup>19</sup> Barnstorming refers to teams that would travel the nation, usually to small towns, and play exhibition games to earn extra income in the off season see (see Appendix D).<sup>20</sup> Foster also fared well in these barnstorming matchups against legendary pitchers such as “Cy” Young and Mordecai Brown.<sup>21</sup> Foster supposedly acquired the nickname “Rube” from his victory over future Hall of Famer George “Rube” Waddell in 1902.<sup>22</sup> Frank Chance, a player and manager of the Chicago Cubs, said that Foster “is the most finished product I’ve ever seen in the pitcher’s box,”<sup>23</sup> while Pittsburgh great Honus Wagner suggested Foster was “one of the greatest pitchers of all-time.”<sup>24</sup> Clearly, Foster earned the respect of his peers.

### **Foster Evolves as a Leader**

However as Foster’s pitching career waned, he took his first steps toward becoming a leader in the black leagues where he assumed the role of manager of the Leland Giants in 1907. Foster proved to be an innovator by using strategies that exploited his team’s greatest strength-speed. He would have his players bunt, steal, and use the hit-and-run play to near perfection.<sup>25</sup> “Foster was an absolute genius in handling men and in devising strategies of defense and attack,”

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<sup>17</sup> White, Sol. *Sol White's Official Base Ball Guide*. Philadelphia: n.p., 1907. Print. Pg. 34

<sup>18</sup> Odzer, Timothy. "Rube Foster." *SABR Baseball Biography Project*. Society of American Baseball Research, n.d. Web. 29 Oct. 2014. <<http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/fcf322f7>>.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Original Capitol City Giants*. Digital image. *Negro Leagues: Barnstorming History*. Negro League Baseball Museum, n.d. Web. 11 Jan. 2015. <[NLBM.org/barnstorming/OrgCCGiants.htm](http://NLBM.org/barnstorming/OrgCCGiants.htm)>.

<sup>21</sup> White, Sol. *Sol White's Official Base Ball Guide*. Philadelphia: n.p., 1907. Print. Pg. 43

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* Pg. 45

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* Pg. 20

<sup>24</sup> "World Champions Barnstorm Midwest." *The Sporting News* 22 Oct. 1909: n. pag. Print.

<sup>25</sup> White, Sol. *Sol White's Official Base Ball Guide*. Philadelphia: n.p., 1907. Print. Pg. 51

stated Dave Malarchar, a star on Foster's Chicago team.<sup>26</sup> By utilizing the strengths of his team, pitching, speed, and strong defense, he brought out the best in all his players and in the process, helped modernize the game.<sup>27</sup>

He was also keen on discipline and fined players for missing signs and failing to slide at all times. Historian Sol White cites an example of Foster administering a ten dollar fine, a hefty sum at that time, to two of his players for missing bunt signs in a critical game.<sup>28</sup> Despite his strict on-field demeanor, Foster was admired by his players.<sup>29</sup> Foster did anything for his players, including taking money out of his own pocket to pay their wages.<sup>30</sup>

Foster split with the Leland Giants and organized his own team for the 1910 season. He signed players away from both the old Leland Giants and the Philadelphia Giants to form, in his words, "the greatest baseball talent ever assembled."<sup>31</sup> He managed and pitched for the Giants, leading them to a 128-6 record proving his boasts to be accurate.<sup>32</sup>

In 1911, Foster sought and gained a partnership with White Sox owner Charles Comiskey that allowed Foster's team to play at the White Sox's old stadium, South Side Park; through this partnership and Foster's playing, managing, and ownership skills, the Chicago American Giants became one of the most prominent black baseball teams. John McGraw, the great manager of the New York Giants, is rumored to have told Foster that he would gladly have taken nine of Foster's players if they were white.<sup>33</sup> In fact, McGraw even hired Foster in the off-season to

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* Pg. 50

<sup>27</sup> Lester, Larry. *Rube Foster in His Time: On the Field and in the Papers with Black Baseball's Greatest Visionary*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012. Print. Pg. 87

<sup>28</sup> White, Sol. *Sol White's Official Base Ball Guide*. Philadelphia: n.p., 1907. Print. Pg. 66

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* Pg. 90

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* Pg. 94

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* Pgs. 100-1

<sup>32</sup> Lester, Larry. *Rube Foster In His Time: On the Field and in the Papers with Black Baseball's Greatest Visionary*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012. Print. Pg. 87

<sup>33</sup> White, Sol. *Sol White's Official Base Ball Guide*. Philadelphia: n.p., 1907. Print. Pg. 105

assist members of his own pitching staff.<sup>34</sup> Christy Mathewson, regarded by many historians as one of the greatest pitchers of his era,<sup>35</sup> said he learned his famous “fade away” pitch from Foster’s tutelage.<sup>36</sup> Ironically, many in the white press would compare Foster to Mathewson,<sup>37</sup> but perhaps it should have been the other way around. By the conclusion of the 1915 season, Foster pitched less and focused more of his efforts on the operation of the American Giants.<sup>38</sup>

However, by 1919, Foster was becoming frustrated.<sup>39</sup> The top black baseball teams were disorganized, and unlike their Major League counterparts, there was no true championship at the conclusion of each season.<sup>40</sup> “Foster realized that this was a critical issue in helping the black teams spread across the nation from ever gaining the respect they so longed for from the all-white Major Leagues, the press, and even the fans. An organized league, a schedule, and a championship would elevate the level of black baseball.”<sup>41</sup>

The Great Migration, which began in 1916, also impacted baseball at this time. It was a phenomenon that had tremendous personal and business repercussions for both Foster and his new hometown of Chicago.<sup>42</sup> “Near the conclusion of World War I blacks migrated from the Deep South attracted to the North by jobs and opportunity. Railroads ran from the Mississippi Delta right into Chicago. This provided a tremendous infusion of talent into the developing Negro Leagues but also led to great anxiety as competition for available jobs and housing led to racial tension that would soon erupt into violence.”<sup>43</sup> The ensuing race riots of 1919 left thirty-

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<sup>34</sup> Lester, Larry. *Rube Foster in His Time: On the Field and in the Papers with Black Baseball's Greatest Visionary*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012. Print. Pg. 101

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* Pg. 103

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* Pg. 104

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* Pg. 106

<sup>38</sup> Odzer, Timothy. "Rube Foster." *SABR Baseball Biography Project*. Society of American Baseball Research, n.d. Web. 29 Oct. 2014. <<http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/fcf322f7>>.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Ruck, Rob. "The Legacy of Andrew "Rube" Foster." Personal interview. 25 Sept. 2014.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

eight dead and reinforced the malaise of Chicago's black community.<sup>44</sup> Compounded with the notion that blacks were "inferior both athletically and intellectually,"<sup>45</sup> and that very few strides were made in regard to civil rights in the early decades of the 1900's, "the accomplishments of Foster as a leader in the black community seem even more remarkable when placed into the proper historical context of the times."<sup>46</sup>

### **Forging a Legacy through Tireless Leadership**

Oddly, it was the Chicago Race Riots of 1919 that motivated Foster toward his greatest accomplishment.<sup>47</sup> Wanting desperately to prove that black ballplayers were, at the very least, equal to their white counterparts, he called together the owners of the top black clubs across the Midwest and spearheaded the organization of a league with a similar structure to the Major Leagues where the season culminated in a world championship.<sup>48</sup> "Foster hoped this would end the disorganization that plagued black baseball and make people notice the level of talent that existed among the top teams."<sup>49</sup> The race riots spurred Foster's natural leadership instincts that led to the formation of the Negro National League. "He was a personification of the 'New Negro' which we also see evident in the likes of Langston Hughes and Claude McKay of the Harlem Renaissance."<sup>50</sup> Of all the owners present at the 1920 meeting at the YMCA in Kansas City, Missouri (see Appendix E), it was Foster who, "presented the clearest vision of how the

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<sup>44</sup> Odzer, Timothy. "Rube Foster." *SABR Baseball Biography Project*. Society of American Baseball Research, n.d. Web. 29 Oct. 2014. <<http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/fcf322f7>>.

<sup>45</sup> Ruck, Rob. "The Legacy of Andrew "Rube" Foster." Personal interview. 25 Sept. 2014.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Lester, Larry. *Rube Foster in His Time: On the Field and in the Papers with Black Baseball's Greatest Visionary*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012. Print. Pg. 123

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* Pg. 126

<sup>49</sup> Ruck, Rob. "The Legacy of Andrew "Rube" Foster." Personal interview. 25 Sept. 2014.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

league would organize.”<sup>51</sup> The Negro National League was then founded later that year; Foster’s unceasing efforts, helped form the first nationally recognized black baseball league.<sup>52</sup>

Rube Foster’s Negro National League achieved notoriety shortly after being established in 1920.<sup>53</sup> The players made fair wages and gained a measure of respect from white players and owners.<sup>54</sup> However, since some struggled economically, Foster again took these financial matters into his own hands.<sup>55</sup> As the owner of one of the more successful teams in the league, both in terms of on-field and financial success, he personally bankrolled struggling teams through difficult economic periods for the betterment of the entire league.<sup>56</sup> Foster’s legacy can be seen in today’s Major League Baseball which recently adopted a revenue sharing plan to assist small market teams.<sup>57</sup>

Throughout the growth and development of the Negro National League in the 1920’s, Foster also encouraged the top stars of the league to become involved in barnstorming games after the conclusion of the season just as he had done during his playing days.<sup>58</sup> Negro League great, Leroy “Satchel” Paige said, “I don’t think there was a coal mining town or a ballpark that I didn’t pitch in over my career.”<sup>59</sup> During these barnstorming matchups, Foster encouraged his teams to play against the top white teams on the barnstorming circuit.<sup>60</sup> Foster wanted the top

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<sup>51</sup> Lester, Larry. *Rube Foster in His Time: On the Field and in the Papers with Black Baseball's Greatest Visionary*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012. Print. Pg. 131

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* Pg. 133

<sup>53</sup> Odzer, Timothy. "Rube Foster." *SABR Baseball Biography Project*. Society of American Baseball Research, n.d. Web. 29 Oct. 2014. <<http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/fcf322f7>>.

<sup>54</sup> Dixon, Phil S. *Andrew "Rube" Foster: A Harvest of Freedom's Field*. New York: XLibris, 2010. Print. Pg. 99

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* Pg. 102

<sup>56</sup> Lester, Larry. *Rube Foster in His Time: On the Field and in the Papers with Black Baseball's Greatest Visionary*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012. Print. Pg. 151

<sup>57</sup> Maxcy, Joel. "Revenue Sharing in MLB." *The Effects of Revenue Sharing*. Holy Cross University, n.d. Web. 9 Jan. 2015. <[http://college.holycross.edu/RePEC/spe/Maxcy\\_Transfers.pdf](http://college.holycross.edu/RePEC/spe/Maxcy_Transfers.pdf)>.

<sup>58</sup> Hogan, Lawrence D. *Shades of Glory: The Negro Leagues and the Story of African-American Baseball*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2006. Print. Pg. 55

<sup>59</sup> Paige, Satchel, and Hal Lebovitz. *Pitchin' Man: Satchel Paige's Own Story*. Westport, CT: Meckler, 1992. Print. Pg. 121

<sup>60</sup> Lester, Larry. *Rube Foster in His Time: On the Field and in the Papers with Black Baseball's Greatest Visionary*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012. Print. Pg. 89



stars of the Negro National League to gain recognition, and more importantly, respect.<sup>61</sup> His tactic worked. Although the record keeping in these games was very inconsistent, those records that do exist show that the top black teams usually had winning records against their white counterparts. “The white players claimed they didn’t try that hard against us,” stated Mahlon Duckett, a star second basemen of Negro Leagues in the 1930’s. “They said that these games didn’t matter. Well...they mattered to us. We played for pride,” Duckett concluded.<sup>62</sup>

By the late 1920’s, Foster’s Negro National League had achieved a level of economic viability that made it one of the most successful black-owned businesses in the nation.<sup>63</sup> However, the stress of running the league almost single-handedly took a toll on the health of “Rube” Foster.<sup>64</sup> After suffering a severe nervous breakdown, Foster was committed to an asylum where he would pass away on December 9, 1930 at age fifty-one.<sup>65</sup> Over 3000 mourners paid their respects at his funeral.<sup>66</sup> With the passing of Foster and because of the effects of the Great Depression’s growing grip on the nation’s economic structure, Foster’s Negro National League folded in 1931.<sup>67</sup> However, the following year, the original teams of the league regrouped and expanded with enough teams to support two leagues.<sup>68</sup> In a structure that mirrored the Major Leagues, the Negro National League and the Negro American League

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<sup>61</sup> Odzer, Timothy. "Rube Foster." *SABR Baseball Biography Project*. Society of American Baseball Research, n.d. Web. 29 Oct. 2014. <<http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/fcf322f7>>.

<sup>62</sup> Kelley, Brent P. *Voices from the Negro Leagues: Conversations with 52 Baseball Standouts of the Period 1924-1960*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1998. Print. Pgs. 198-199

<sup>63</sup> Peterson, Robert. *Only the Ball Was White*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970. Print. Pg. 96

<sup>64</sup> Odzer, Timothy. "Rube Foster." *SABR Baseball Biography Project*. Society of American Baseball Research, n.d. Web. 29 Oct. 2014. <<http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/fcf322f7>>.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Lester, Larry. *Rube Foster in His Time: On the Field and in the Papers with Black Baseball's Greatest Visionary*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012. Print. Pg. 203

<sup>67</sup> Odzer, Timothy. "Rube Foster." *SABR Baseball Biography Project*. Society of American Baseball Research, n.d. Web. 29 Oct. 2014. <<http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/fcf322f7>>.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

culminated each season with the Negro League World Series and established an annual all-star game beginning in 1933.<sup>69</sup>

### **An Enduring Impact**

“The 1930’s and 1940’s were halcyon days for the Negro Leagues,” claimed author Phil Dixon.<sup>70</sup> Stars like pitcher “Satchel” Paige and catcher Josh Gibson became legends during this era and proved that their talents were at the very least equal to if not superior to their white Major League counterparts.<sup>71</sup> Sean Gibson, great grandson of Hall of Famer slugger Josh Gibson stated, “My grandfather was called the ‘Black Babe Ruth,’ but in Pittsburgh’s Hill District, people called Ruth the ‘White Josh Gibson.’”<sup>72</sup> As the stars of the Negro Leagues gained not only recognition but respect, members of the black press began the push to end segregation in the national pastime. Chester Washington, a reporter for *Pittsburgh Courier*, sent a telegram to Pittsburgh Pirates manager Harold “Pie” Traynor urging him to sign the top Negro League players and make his team an instant contender (see Appendix F)<sup>73</sup>. “If you added the talents of Josh Gibson, ‘Satchel’ Paige, and ‘Cool Papa’ Bell to the Pirates, they could have been as good, if not better than the New York Yankee dynasty of the 1930’s,” Sean Gibson explained.<sup>74</sup> Although, the Pirates declined this offer,<sup>75</sup> the pathway was laid for full integration.

Following World War II and due to the continuing success of the Negro Leagues, Major League Baseball was finally ready for the “Great Experiment.”<sup>76</sup> With new baseball commissioner Albert Chandler in place, Brooklyn Dodgers owner Branch Rickey signed a young

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<sup>69</sup> Peterson, Robert. *Only the Ball Was White*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970. Print. Pg. 54

<sup>70</sup> Dixon, Phil S. *Andrew "Rube" Foster: A Harvest of Freedom's Field*. New York: XLibris, 2010. Print. Pg. 145

<sup>71</sup> Peterson, Robert. *Only the Ball Was White*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970. Print. Pg. 128

<sup>72</sup> Gibson, Sean. "'Rube' Foster's Impact on My Great Grandfather and Baseball History." Personal interview. 30 Dec. 2014.

<sup>73</sup> Washington, Chester. *Telegram to Pie Traynor*. Digital image. Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, n.d. Web. <[www.riversofsteel.com](http://www.riversofsteel.com)>.

<sup>74</sup> Gibson, Sean. "'Rube' Foster's Impact on My Great Grandfather and Baseball History." Personal interview. 30 Dec. 2014.

<sup>75</sup> Foor, James. "Harold 'Pie' Traynor." *Harold 'Pie' Traynor*. Society of American Baseball Research, n.d. Web. 7 Jan. 2014. <<http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/85500ab5>>.

<sup>76</sup> Breslin, Jimmy. *Branch Rickey*. New York: Viking, 2010. Print. Pg. 189

second basemen named Jackie Robinson to a minor league contract.<sup>77</sup> Two years later on April 15, 1947, he made his Major League debut forever breaking the color barrier.<sup>78</sup> The legacy of Andrew “Rube” Foster was now fulfilled. “Jackie Robinson is a true hero and an icon, but without the efforts of ‘Rube’ Foster in establishing the Negro Leagues and raising the black ballplayers to gain the respect of white players and owners, we may have had to wait much longer to see baseball fully integrated.”<sup>79</sup> Sean Gibson said, “Each time I watch the Pirates play, I can’t help but look at players like Andrew McCutchen and Josh Harrison and reflect not only on my grandfather’s legacy, but of the legacy of the men like Mr. Foster who made it all possible.”<sup>80</sup>

In 1981, Foster received baseball’s highest honor at long last when he was inducted into the Hall of Fame.<sup>81</sup> The efforts of Foster’s visionary leadership and enduring legacy have reverberated throughout baseball history. Although the names Jackie Robinson and Josh Gibson have become an integral part of baseball lore, name of Andrew “Rube” Foster must never fade into obscurity. “His legacy is too precious to ignore. It transcended baseball and represents almost an epilogue of the Jim Crow era that flowed out of Reconstruction and a prologue of the modern Civil Rights Movement. Yes, Foster is that important in the fabric of American history!”<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.* Pg. 234

<sup>78</sup> Povich, Shirley. "Jackie Scores Winning Run." *Washington Post* [Washington, DC] 16 Apr. 1947: 1B. Print.

<sup>79</sup> Ruck, Rob. "The Legacy of Andrew "Rube" Foster." Personal interview. 25 Sept. 2014.

<sup>80</sup> Gibson, Sean. "'Rube' Foster's Impact on My Great Grandfather and Baseball History." Personal interview. 30 Dec. 2014.

<sup>81</sup> "Rube Foster." *Rube Foster Hall of Fame Biography*. National Baseball Hall of Fame, n.d. Web. 17 Jan. 2015. <<http://baseballhall.org/hof/foster-rube>>.

<sup>82</sup> Ruck, Rob. "The Legacy of Andrew "Rube" Foster." Personal interview. 25 Sept. 2014.



Appendix B



"Foster's Speed Frightens in Loss." *Indianapolis Freeman* [Indianapolis, Indiana] 2 Oct. 1909: n. pag. Print.

**Foster was one of the greatest pitchers to ever play the game. He stole headlines even when his team was on the losing end of a ballgame. Sadly, due to the disorganization of the top black leagues in the nation, poor record keeping, and limited press coverage, his exploits were never given their just due, especially in comparison to his white counterparts.**

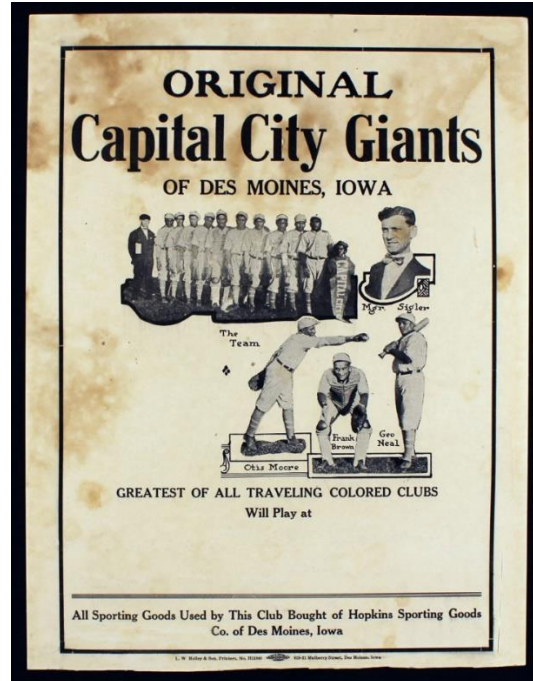
## Appendix C



*Rube Foster, Pitcher.* Digital image. *Rube Foster Hall of Fame Biography.* National Baseball Hall of Fame, n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2014. <<http://baseballhall.org/hof/foster-rube>>.

**Simply put, “Rube” Foster was a massive, intimidating figure on the pitching mound. His brute strength made his fastball nearly unhittable. Foster stood 6’2” and weighed at least 260 pounds during his best days as a pitcher. He was literally and figuratively a giant of the game.**

## Appendix D



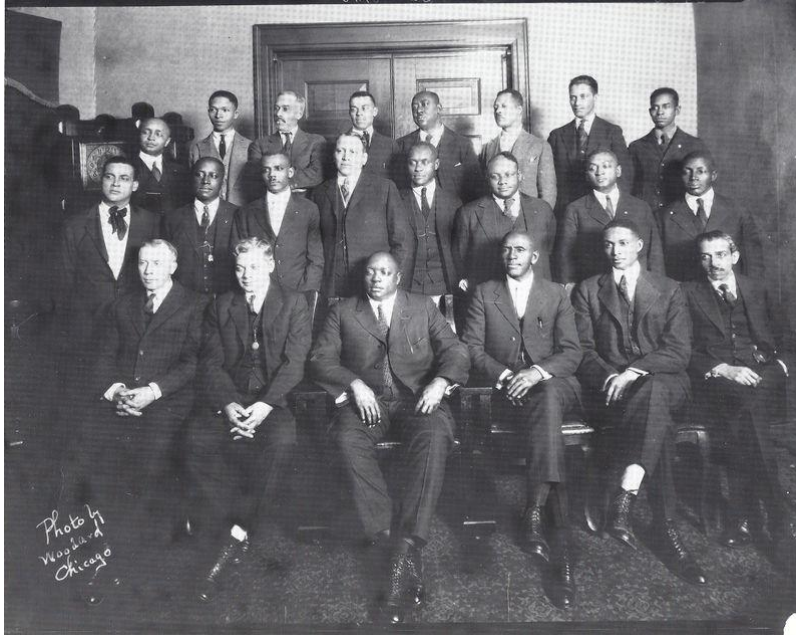
*Original Capitol City Giants*. Digital image. *Negro Leagues: Barnstorming History*. Negro

League Baseball Museum, n.d. Web. 11 Jan. 2015

<[NLBM.org/barnstorming/OrgCCGiants.htm](http://NLBM.org/barnstorming/OrgCCGiants.htm)>.

**“Rube” Foster encouraged his players to barnstorm during the off-season. He felt it served two important outcomes for the segregated black ballplayers. First, they could earn extra income. Secondly, and more importantly to Foster, they could prove their talents against white competition and earn respect. This was, in the eyes of Foster, an important step toward full integration.**

## Appendix E

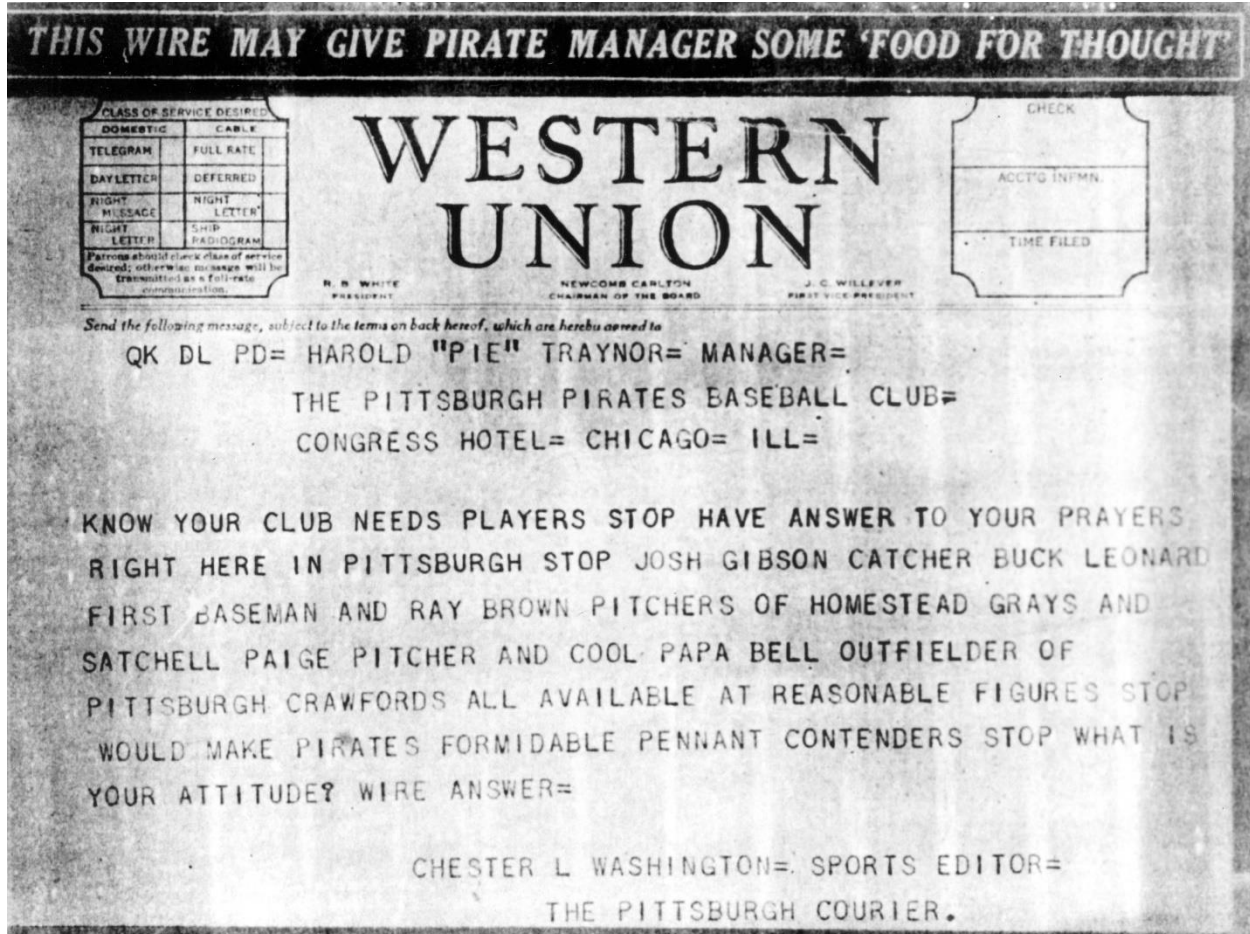


*Negro National League Executive Meeting Circa 1920. Digital image. Rube Foster Hall of Fame Biography. National Baseball Hall of Fame, n.d. Web. 11 Dec. 2014.*  
<<http://baseballhall.org/hof/foster-rube>>.

**Foster, seated third from the left in the front row, was instrumental in bringing together the top black baseball clubs under the direction of a single league. The league ran on a set schedule and culminated with a championship at the end of the season. This was instrumental in black ballplayers gaining the respect they longed for and deserved and paved the way toward integration. The fruition of Foster's leadership skills and his enduring legacy rest here.**



Appendix F



Washington, Chester. *Telegram to Pie Traynor*. Digital image. Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, n.d. Web. <[www.riversofsteel.com](http://www.riversofsteel.com)>.

**One of the more important and telling artifacts in the history of Negro League Baseball was Chester Washington’s telegram sent to Pittsburgh Pirate manager Harold “Pie” Traynor. The telegram encouraged him to sign the top stars of the Homestead Grays, a Pittsburgh-based Negro League. Due to pressure from other Major League owners, the offer was declined, but it was an important step toward full integration.**

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## Primary Sources

"Committee Accepts Over 200 Teams." *Philadelphia Inquirer* [Philadelphia, PA] 2 Nov. 1867: n. pag. Print.

**In 1867, the Philadelphia Pythians, a black baseball team, applied for membership in the National Association of Base Ball Players, but they were denied based on race. This is the first documented case of a “color line” being drawn in professional baseball. Subsequent agreements would segregate black ballplayers from the “national pastime” for eighty years. This resource was critical in the opening section of my research paper which sets the stage for the necessity of the Negro National League.**

"Foster's Speed Frightens in Loss." *Indianapolis Freeman* [Indianapolis, Indiana] 2 Oct. 1909: n. pag. Print.

**Andrew “Rube” Foster was, according to accounts of his era, one of the top pitchers in baseball history. This 1909 article details Foster’s performance against a white team in Indianapolis in a barnstorming game. Although his team suffered the loss, his exploits on the mound stole the headlines. I chose to use this article because it shows Foster’s dominance as a pitcher and because it was one of the earliest accounts of his exploits on the mound. This image can be found in Appendix B of my research paper.**

Kelley, Brent P. *Voices from the Negro Leagues: Conversations with 52 Baseball Standouts of the Period 1924-1960*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1998. Print.

**Editor Brent Kelley conducted interviews with numerous former Negro League stars who recounted their careers during the era of Jim Crow laws and segregation. I chose to use quotes from Kelley's interview with former star second basemen of the Negro League's Philadelphia Stars Mahlon Duckett which reflected the pride that he and other players had in their profession and the respect that they earned in their head-to-head contests against white teams in their barnstorming games.**

*Negro National League Executive Meeting Circa 1920.* Digital image. *Rube Foster Hall of Fame Biography.* National Baseball Hall of Fame, n.d. Web. 11 Dec. 2014.  
<<http://baseballhall.org/hof/foster-rube>>.

**Another image that I used in my paper is found in Appendix D. It was of an executive meeting of the owners and executives of the Negro National League. Foster's prominence among this group is clear as he is seated front and center. I felt that this image truly portrays the leadership that Foster possessed in the creation of the league and his status among fellow owners.**

*Original Capitol City Giants.* Digital image. *Negro Leagues: Barnstorming History.* Negro League Baseball Museum, n.d. Web. 11 Jan. 2015. <[NLBM.org/barnstorming/OrgCCGiants.htm](http://NLBM.org/barnstorming/OrgCCGiants.htm)>.

**Barnstorming games were very important to the success and popularity of Negro League Baseball. These games were played during the fall and early spring following or just prior to the start of the regular season. They gave players an opportunity to earn extra income, but more importantly, they gave black ballplayers a chance to prove their skills on a level playing field. Records of these games show that the black teams preformed at a high level and earned the respect of their white counterparts in the process. This was always a main goal of Rube Foster. This image can be seen in Appendix E of my research paper.**

Paige, Satchel, and Hal Lebovitz. *Pitchin' Man: Satchel Paige's Own Story*. Westport, CT: Meckler, 1992. Print.

**Leroy “Satchel” Paige was one of the true legends of Negro League Baseball. Within the context of my paper is a quote from Paige taken from his autobiography detailing his rigorous schedule and his travels on the barnstorming circuit.**

*Philadelphia Pythians Scorecard, June 28, 1876*. Digital image. *Scorecard: Philadelphia Pythians vs. Washington Mutuals*. Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission, n.d. Web. 12 Nov. 2014. <<http://explorepahistory.com/displayimage.php?imgId=1-2-45>>.

**Another key resource that can be viewed in Appendix A of my paper is a rare scorecard of an 1867 game between the Philadelphia Pythians and the Washington Mutuals. This scorecard shows the dominance of the Pythians over their competition. Despite their obvious greatness, the team was denied access into the National Association of Base Ball Players due to their race. The first “color line” in professional baseball was established in Philadelphia just two years following the conclusion of the Civil War.**

Povich, Shirley. "Jackie Scores Winning Run." *Washington Post* [Washington, DC] 16 Apr. 1947: 1B. Print.

**The crowning event of the legacy of Andrew “Rube” Foster was the Major League debut of Jackie Robinson on April 15, 1947. This broke the color barrier established eighty years earlier with the Philadelphia Pythians and paved the way for other stars of the Negro Leagues such as “Satchel” Paige, Hank Aaron, and Willie Mays into stardom in the Majors. This article chronicles this historic event of Robinson’s first game and the fulfillment of Foster’s legacy.**

*Rube Foster, Pitcher*. Digital image. *Rube Foster Hall of Fame Biography*. National Baseball Hall of Fame, n.d. Web. 22 Sept. 2014. <<http://baseballhall.org/hof/foster-rube>>.

**Foster was an imposing figure on the pitcher's mound. Standing 6'2" and weighing at least 220 pounds, his brute strength allowed him to have a blazing fastball that made him one of the most sought after talents in the early years of black baseball. This image of Foster is shown in Appendix C.**

Washington, Chester. *Telegraph to Pie Traynor*. Digital image. Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, n.d. Web. <[www.riversofsteel.com](http://www.riversofsteel.com)>.

**Provided by Rivers of Steel National Historic Area director, Ron Baraff, this key primary resource can be seen in Appendix F of my research paper. Chester Washington, in an attempt to break the color barrier, encouraged Pittsburgh Pirate manager Harold "Pie" Traynor to sign the top stars of the Homestead Grays, a Pittsburgh-based Negro League team. The offer was turned down, but it was a critical step toward integration.**

White, Sol. *Sol White's Official Base Ball Guide*. Philadelphia: n.p., 1907. Print.

"World Champions Barnstorm Midwest." *The Sporting News* 22 Oct. 1909: n. pag. Print.

**Possibly my most important resource was Sol White's first-hand account of segregated black baseball in the latter 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. White was a contemporary of Foster and helped to preserve his exploits not only as a star pitcher, but also in his growing role as a leader when he began to manage some of the top black teams across the country paving his way toward the creation of the Negro National League.**

## Secondary Sources

Breslin, Jimmy. *Branch Rickey*. New York: Viking, 2010. Print.

**While in the process of conducting my research, I wanted to learn more about Jackie Robinson's breaking of the color barrier in 1947. Since Branch Rickey played such a key role in this event and since this book was available in my school library, I used this resource to find the information I needed to complete this most critical portion of my paper.**

Dixon, Phil S. *Andrew "Rube" Foster: A Harvest of Freedom's Field*. New York: XLibris, 2010. Print.

**One of the first books I consulted was Dixon's biography of "Rube" Foster. This resource was instrumental in telling the story of his rise to prominence through the Negro Leagues as a player, a manager, and eventually as an organizer and executive. Dixon's work also tells of his lasting legacy and his 1981 induction into the Baseball Hall of Fame.**

Foor, James. "Harold 'Pie' Traynor." *Harold 'Pie' Traynor*. Society of American Baseball Research, n.d. Web. 7 Jan. 2014. <<http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/85500ab5>>.

**After finding the telegram that Chester Washington, a reporter of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, sent to Pirates manager "Pie" Traynor, I referred to this website to find more information on Traynor and a possible explanation as to why he did not accept the offer of signing stars of the Negro Leagues for his team. Foor explains that the Pirates and Traynor were influenced by other Major League owners to decline the offer. Integration of the "national pastime" was only nine years away.**

Gibson, Sean. "'Rube' Foster's Impact on My Great Grandfather and Baseball History." Personal interview. 30 Dec. 2014.

**I had the distinct privilege to conduct an interview with the great grandson of Negro League slugger and Baseball Hall of Famer Josh Gibson. Sean Gibson is the director of the Josh**

**Gibson Foundation based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Mr. Gibson detailed the legacy of “Rube” Foster on the Negro Leagues, his great-grandfather, and Major League baseball right up to today.**

Hogan, Lawrence D. *Shades of Glory: The Negro Leagues and the Story of African-American Baseball*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2006. Print.

**Another early resource that was quite useful in the initial stages of my research was Hogan’s 2006 history of Negro League baseball. This work help put into perspective Foster’s role in the development of the Negro National League and how his influence on black baseball was still being felt long after his untimely death in 1930.**

Lester, Larry. *Rube Foster in His Time: On the Field and in the Papers with Black Baseball's Greatest Visionary*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012. Print.

**My most important print resource was Lester’s 2012 work on Foster’s career and lasting legacy. His book is based exclusively on primary-based research and provided a contemporary account of Foster’s leadership skills, his desire for respect among both the black and white players and owners, his dream of integration, and his lasting legacy on the game of baseball which is still felt eighty-five years after his death. I cannot emphasize how important this book was to research and development of this project.**

Maxcy, Joel. "Revenue Sharing in MLB." *The Effects of Revenue Sharing*. Holy Cross University, n.d. Web. 9 Jan. 2015. <[http://college.holycross.edu/RePEc/spe/Maxcy\\_Transfers.pdf](http://college.holycross.edu/RePEc/spe/Maxcy_Transfers.pdf)>.

**When Foster organized the Negro National League in 1920, he was determined to see all teams had a strong financial base. In the early years of the league, however, only Foster’s team, the Chicago American Giants and their rival Kansas City Monarchs, achieved steady financial footing. It was therefore necessary for Foster to sometimes assist teams with**

**struggling finances out of his own pocket. This, of course, is similar to the structure used in Major League Baseball today with revenue sharing. This website helped explain how revenue sharing works and allowed me to compare Foster's efforts with those of Major League Baseball today.**

"Octavius V. Catto." *Octavius V. Catto*. Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission, n.d. Web. 12 Nov. 2014. <<http://explorepahistory.com/hmarker.php?markerId=1-A-14>>.

**The opening of my research paper details the creation of baseball's first "color line." This online resource was very beneficial in both providing details about the story of the Philadelphia Pythians, along with primary sources that I would also use in the development of my paper. I wanted my introduction to not only set the tone for my telling of "Rube" Foster's leadership and legacy, but also to detail his motivation for bringing about these necessary changes. This webpage was most beneficial in that regard.**

Odzer, Timothy. "Rube Foster." *SABR Baseball Biography Project*. Society of American Baseball Research, n.d. Web. 29 Oct. 2014. <<http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/fcf322f7>>.

**My most important online resource was Timothy Odzer's biography of Foster. Odzer, a member of the Society of American Baseball Research, helped to summarize key aspects of Foster's career which was very important to me in the early stages of my research in determining key events that proved his leadership and how his on-going legacy still influences professional baseball to this very day.**

Peterson, Robert. *Only the Ball Was White*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970. Print.

**When I first began my research, my teacher recommended Petersen's *Only the Ball Was White*. I referred to this resource on numerous occasions throughout my research process. In fact, I began my paper with a quote from this book that I feel sums up both Foster's leadership**



**and legacy. This book was also useful in providing me with a full account of the rich history of Negro League Baseball.**

"Rube Foster." *Rube Foster Hall of Fame Biography*. National Baseball Hall of Fame, n.d. Web. 17 Jan. 2015. <<http://baseballhall.org/hof/foster-rube>>.

**Yet another online resource that I accessed during my research was Foster's biography on the National Baseball Hall of Fame webpage. Although the biography was brief, it did summarize both aspects of this year's theme: leadership and legacy. It also provided me with primary source images of Foster that I would use in my appendices.**

Ruck, Rob. "The Legacy of Andrew "Rube" Foster." Personal interview. 25 Sept. 2014.

**Possibly my most important secondary resource, along with Lester's *Rube Foster in His Time: On the Field and in the Papers with Black Baseball's Greatest Visionary*, was my interview with University of Pittsburgh history professor Rob Ruck. Ruck is regarded as the preeminent expert in Southwestern Pennsylvania on Negro League Baseball and the socioeconomic conditions facing African Americans in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. I used several quotes from my interview with Dr. Ruck in my paper. I'm both grateful and thankful that I had the opportunity to discuss with him both the attributes that made Foster a leader and his ongoing legacy on the sport and business of professional baseball.**