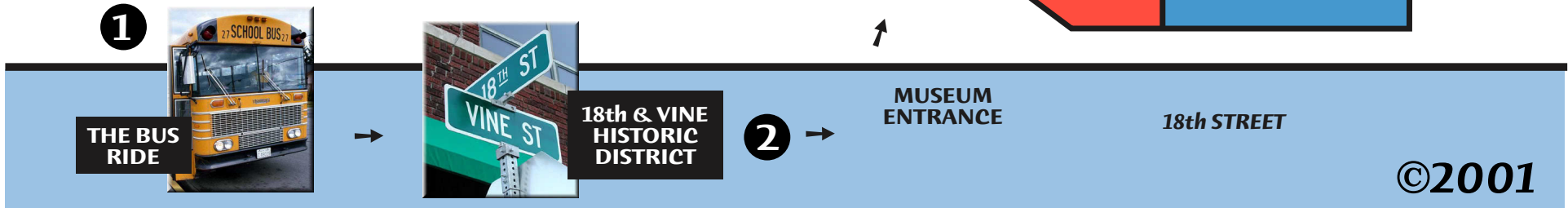
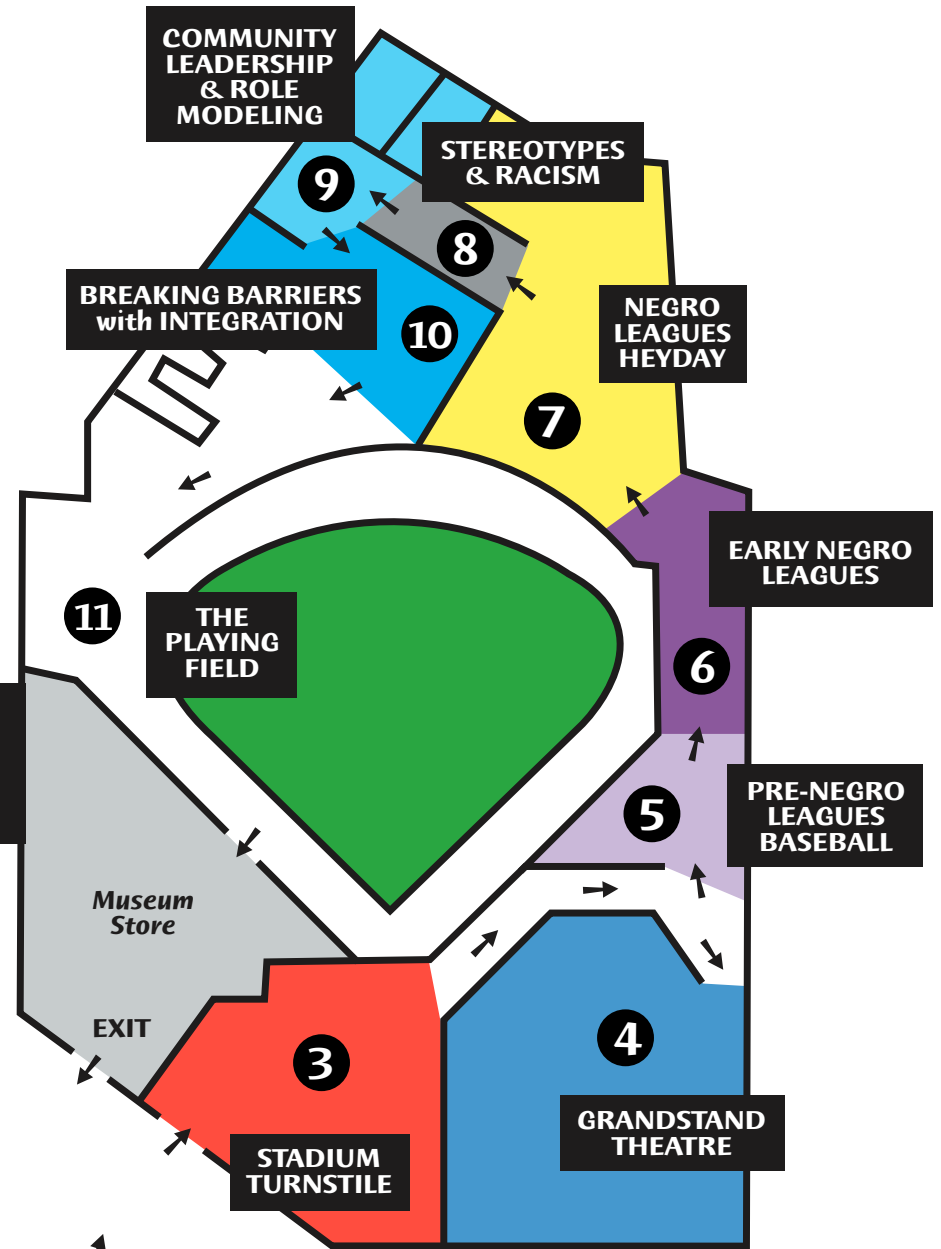




# Teacher's Field Trip Guide

*A Journey to Understanding and Learning from the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum*

## 11 Important Reflections on the Way





## Teacher's Field Trip Guide

# Welcome and Introduction

This guide was developed to lead students from the middle to upper grade levels on a reflective journey through the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum and enhance their comprehension of the museum exhibits. The ultimate goal is help students understand the museum's message and learn from what they see. They can explore the museum's legacy through eleven important "Reflections" along the way:

- 1 - **The Bus Ride:** *life on the road for young Black players;*
- 2 - **18th & Vine Historic District:** *the atmosphere of this historic Black neighborhood;*
- 3 - **The Stadium Turnstile:** *exploring the scope of the Negro Leagues;*
- 4 - **The Grandstand Theatre:** *the feeling of sitting in a segregated stadium at a Negro Leagues baseball game;*
- 5 - **Pre-Negro League Baseball:** *the effects of enforced segregation in baseball and society;*
- 6 - **Early Negro Leagues:** *the need for and development of the Negro Leagues by Rube Foster;*
- 7 - **Negro Leagues Heyday:** *the development of baseball as a predominant influence on Black society;*
- 8 - **Stereotypes & Racism:** *the effects of clowning within the Negro Leagues and society's stereotypical beliefs about Blacks;*
- 9 - **Community Leadership & Role Modeling:** *the relationship between Black athletes and their communities;*
- 10 - **Breaking Barriers with Integration:** *the integration of baseball and eventual decline of the Negro leagues;*
- 11 - **The Playing Field:** *reflecting on the legacy that the pioneers of Negro League baseball left for society.*

**Teachers are encouraged to be creative with this guide:**

- Read through the guide ahead of time and incorporate topics into lesson plans.
- Develop your own classroom activities relating to concepts presented here.
- Use this guide as a talking paper (it can be particularly helpful if a museum guide is not present during your tour).
- Share with other teachers.
- Let the museum staff know what kind of activities you came up with- they can share them with other teachers!
- Enjoy your journey!

### FROM NEGRO TO AFRICAN AMERICAN

Negro baseball leagues emerged when Negro baseball players were restricted from competing in the White major league baseball clubs. Although this exclusionary type of competition was prevalent as early as 1871, Negro baseball began forming leagues of their own as early as the 1890s.

The term "Negro Leagues" derived from the different Black teams who competed against one another, but were considered separate franchises. Although the Negro Leagues were considered to have "professional" status, their status restricted the Black players from competing in the White major leagues.

It has often been asked why the term "African American" has not been substituted for "Negro" as times have changed. It is simple. To change from Negro to African American would come to negate the inequalities that were taking place during that time. The Negro Leagues were formed during the era of "Jim Crow" laws, a time of intense racism, segregation, and discrimination.



## Teacher's Field Trip Guide

# Museum Information

### MUSEUM MANNERS & RULES

- The Museum Complex is a smoke-free environment.
- Gum, food and drinks should be disposed of in the waste containers.
- A coat check desk is available for umbrellas, backpacks, briefcases, large purses and photographic equipment.
- Photography of any kind is not permitted in the complex.
- Please maintain normal voice levels.
- To ensure preservation of artifacts, please refrain from touching or leaning against exhibits.
- Only assistive animals are permitted in the Museum.
- Children under age 12 should be accompanied by an adult at all times.

### TOUR TIPS

- The museum is arranged chronologically, with a timeline of dates and facts about African American history along the base of the exhibits.
- The exhibits flow around the central baseball diamond featuring statues of great Negro League players. You can access the field by following the exhibit timeline. The tour ends on the field and the exit is through the Museum Store.
- There are hundreds of photos and text panels to read and view in the exhibits, so use your time wisely!

### What Students Thought About the Museum:

- *loved the interactive hands-on technology*
- *video in the Grandstand Theatre was impressive*
- *combination of baseball and the lifestyle of the times showed how players lived*
- *students should get information about the museum before they go so they will understand more*
- *don't like scavenger hunts; too much concentrating on finding things and not enjoying the museum*
- *tour guides can make it fun- but small groups work best so you can ask more questions*
- *museum staff should get feedback from kids about what they liked*

### CREDITS

This project was conceptualized, created and tested by a team of faculty members from Kansas State University's College of Education, Manhattan, KS.

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The following students from the **Lee's Summit, MO School District** were instrumental in helping determine what students were interested in at the museum and ways that students could get more out of their visit:

**Lacy Haden**, Summit Lakes Junior High School

**Nathan Jones**, Lee's Summit North High School

**Kent Kelly**, Bernard Campbell Junior High

**Brett Martin**, Lee's Summit North High School

**Bobby McMillan**, Pleasant Lea Junior High School

**Luke Nichols**, Bernard Campbell Junior High School

*We appreciate all their suggestions!*



## Teacher's Field Trip Guide

# Pre-Field Trip Preparation

We are all very aware of the critical importance of preparing students for a field trip. Topics to include: expectations of students once they arrive at the site, overview or purpose of the trip, note-taking requirements, do's and don'ts, and anticipated learning outcomes. The "warm up" can help students benefit from and to be ready for the experiences. This experience will focus on the **Negro Leagues Baseball Museum**.

The following activity is presented for your consideration. It requires students to become involved, makes them think critically, helps them practice writing skills, and involves interaction with their peers and the teacher. This learning activity is called **K-W-L (Know-Want-Learned)**.



## K-W-L (Know-Want-Learned)

### Part 1.

- Have students draw lines on a piece of paper to divide it into thirds.
- Write "K," "W," and "L" across the top, one letter per column.
- On the overhead, chalkboard, or whiteboard do the same.
- For 3 minutes, have students write under the "K" column everything they **KNOW** about the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum.
- If they have nothing to list, that is a key.

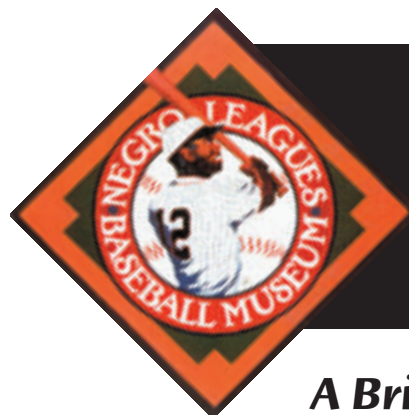
Ask for volunteers to present what they have listed. The teacher should write student's answers on the board under the "K" responses.

### Part 2.

- For 3 minutes, have students write under the "W" what they **WANT** to know.
- Have students present their responses and the teacher should write student's answers on the board under the "W."

### Part 3.

- The teacher should distribute the Student Guide regarding the museum and have students read it silently, underlining or highlighting things they did not know or found interesting. After reading the article have students take 5 minutes to write under the "L" everything they learned.
- Have students raise their hand to respond to things they learned. Have them put a check mark by answers on the board under "L" - see/compare if there were any answers under the "Know" column that were actually true.



# Student Guide to the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum

## A Brief History...

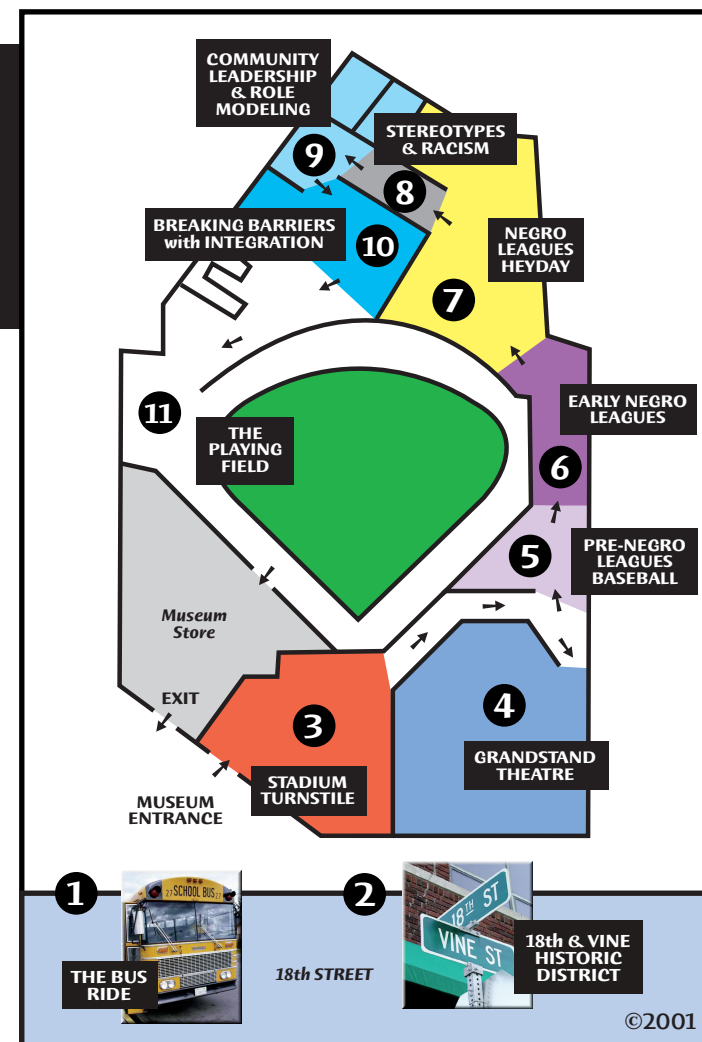
African Americans began to play baseball during the Civil War. They eventually found their way to professional teams with White players, However, racism and "Jim Crow" laws would force them from White professional leagues by 1900. Thus, Black players formed their own teams, "barnstorming" around the country to play anyone who would challenge them.

In 1920, an organized league structure was formed under the guidance of Andrew "Rube" Foster, a former player, manager, and owner for the Chicago American Giants. In a meeting held at the Paseo YMCA in Kansas City, Missouri, Foster convinced seven other Midwestern team owners to join him in forming the Negro National League. Soon, rival leagues formed in eastern and southern states, bringing the thrills and innovative play of Black baseball to major urban centers in the United States, Canada, and Latin America. The Negro Leagues maintained a high level of professional skill and became centerpieces for economic development in many Black communities.

In 1945, Major League baseball's Brooklyn Dodgers recruited Negro League shortstop Jackie Robinson from the Kansas City Monarchs. Robinson would be recognized as the first African American in the modern era to play on a White professional team. While this historic event was a key moment in baseball and civil rights history, it also marked the decline of the Negro Leagues. The best Black players would soon be signing contracts with the Major Leagues, and Black fans followed. The last Negro League teams folded in the early 1960s, but their legacy lives on through the surviving players and the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum.

## 11 Areas to Reflect on for Your Field Trip

- 1 **The Bus Ride:** Black players had to travel across the country to play, through towns where Black people were not allowed to eat, sleep or work with White people. The bus was home.
- 2 **18th & Vine Historic District:** Years ago this area was the hub of culture for the Black community of Kansas City. The finest musicians, singers and athletes could be found here.
- 3 **Stadium Turnstile:** As you enter, you can view the game in progress through the eyes of a Black manager. Many Black players had this view of the Major Leagues—outside looking in.
- 4 **Grandstand Theatre:** During the era of segregation and discrimination, singing the National Anthem was the only time Black players and fans felt they were truly Americans.
- 5 **Pre-Negro League Baseball:** Even though the 14th Amendment proclaimed freedom for Black people, they were prohibited from participation in many activities— including baseball.
- 6 **Early Negro Leagues:** Rube Foster saw the need for central leadership for Black teams.
- 7 **Negro Leagues Heyday:** During the Depression and World War II, baseball became the national pastime. Black and White Americans alike flocked to the ballparks to watch their favorite teams.
- 8 **Stereotypes & Racism:** Clown teams were created to bring entertainment to the game of baseball, but they also strengthened common Black stereotypes.
- 9 **Community Leadership & Role Modeling:** Black baseball players were not only highly visible in their communities, but also role models for young Black men.
- 10 **Breaking Barriers with Integration:** With the integration of baseball, many of the best Black athletes signed with the Major Leagues and the Negro leagues slowly declined.
- 11 **The Playing Field:** Remembering the pioneers of Negro League baseball help remind us that baseball has often mirrored cultural currents and national attitudes.



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# The Bus Ride



### TEACHER NOTE:

As you prepare your students for what they are going to see at the museum, we suggest that you use the time in the bus to help create a learning environment. The bus can be seen as a metaphor to raise issues of segregation, stereotyping, integration, economics, travel, and society in general. The bus gave the Negro Leagues players freedom to see the world. As these teams traveled across the country, both White people and Black people began to change their views of each other. The bus could once again serve as a metaphor when Rosa Parks refused to move to the back of the bus in Montgomery, Alabama on December 1, 1955. We suggest that you read the following material with your students prior to the field trip to the NLBM. You may wish to have the teachers who travel with the students discuss sections while they are traveling to the museum.

Most of us have ridden a school bus. Perhaps just a short ride from home to school. Or perhaps to an athletic event or other school activity. Although fun for a short time, riding on a school bus gets old pretty fast. What do you think it would be like to live on this bus everyday? Because Black baseball teams were not allowed to play against White teams, Black players had to travel across the country to play baseball. They traveled into and through some towns where Black people were not allowed on the streets after dark; were not allowed to eat, sleep or work with White people; and were often treated with hostility and violence. While they were on the road, the bus was their diner and often their bedroom... it was their home.

The bus is where the younger players sat in the dark feeling homesick for their families, sometimes hundreds of miles away. It is where they learned the rules of the road, what they could do and what they could not do. They sang and joked and made the best friends of their lives. The baseball team was like a family. They saw the world from the windows of their bus as they traveled across the country earning a living playing baseball. The bus ride was always an adventure.

Are any of you a little nervous about leaving your neighborhood and going into a community that is not familiar to you? If you are even a little anxious, just imagine how some of the Black baseball players must have felt. As you look out the window at fast food restaurants and other shops, you know that you can go into any store you want and make a purchase. If you were riding with the players in the Negro Baseball Leagues, there would have been many places where you were not welcome. They were never certain of the type of reception they would receive.

Today, as we begin our trip to the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, think about what it might have been like to be a member of the Kansas City Monarchs in 1935. Although one of the very best baseball teams in the country, the Monarchs were not allowed to play against White major league teams. Consequently, they, and other teams, had to create a league made up of Black teams from across the country. When we get to the museum we will learn about some of these teams and some of the most famous Negro Leagues players.

What are you thinking now as you travel across Kansas City? Have you ever been in area of 18th Street and Vine? This is one of the most famous cross streets in America. Have you ever heard the song "Kansas City"? That song was written about the neighborhood that we are going to visit today. The museum is not just about baseball. It is about an exciting and important time in this country. The story of the Negro Leagues is the story of the journey toward integration.

### QUESTION FOR REFLECTION:

- *What do you think it would be like to live on a bus everyday?*



# 18th & Vine Historic District

### TEACHER NOTE:

*In a racially segregated America that dictated a separate game for White and Black fans, there necessarily developed two distinct baseball cultures. As you step off the bus, encourage your students to keep in mind the life styles and struggles Black baseball players endured as they traveled throughout different cities entertaining Black and White fans who came to watch the most talented Black athletes play baseball.*

For many years, Kansas City's Eighteenth and Vine district was the center of social and cultural activity for the Black community of Kansas City. It flowed with cool Kansas City jazz and blues. The finest musicians, actors, singers, and athletes in the country could be found here. The Blue Room and the Gem Theater are two of the famous places still featuring live musical entertainment.

The Negro Leagues were very important to the Black communities like the one here at 18th and Vine. This once thriving community is where students are introduced to the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum as they step off the bus and walk into the experience of Black baseball players.

Get ready now to walk through the doors of the museum that represents the importance of pride, historic figures, and the exploits of baseball's forgotten heroes. The Negro Baseball Leagues were a source of pride for Black Americans in both the North and South. The Negro Leagues showcased the greatest baseball talent of all time, and had a special essence that was all its own. This pride is represented by images, memorabilia, and exhibits that depict a past and present concept as it relates to historic events in America, as well as the history of baseball for the Negro Leagues.



### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- *What do you think life was like for Negro League baseball players during the 1920s?*
- *What type of jobs did the Black athletes have before they played baseball for the leagues?*
- *Do you think Black baseball players who played in the Negro Baseball Leagues had the same privileges as White players?*
- *Why do you think baseball was a "stepping stone" for Black baseball athletes during the 1920s?*



## Stadium Turnstile

**TEACHER NOTE:**

As you approach the turnstile and look to your left, you will have a view of the field from the perspective of a manager in the Negro Leagues. The statue looking out over the field is that of Buck O'Neil, a true ambassador for the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum. As your students look onto the field with Buck, they can gain a sense of the color and excitement of Black baseball in the first half of the 20th century. This image will help students to think of the sport as it was during the years when baseball was truly "king" for Black Americans.

As you step through the turnstiles, take a moment to view the game in progress behind the chicken wire through the eyes of Buck O'Neil, a famous Black baseball manager.

Stop and visualize what that must have been like to stand near the dugout on a hot summer night when the air was still and the bugs thick as you watched your team compete for a victory. This is your first view of baseball in the Negro Leagues. Looking through the fence onto the field also is symbolic for the Black baseball players looking into the major leagues from the outside. Have you ever been on the outside looking in?

Black baseball players were required by custom and circumstances to play in their own separate leagues. They were forced to establish their own professional teams and leagues, play in segregated ball parks, and pay inflated rates to rent stadiums. They did all of this for the love of the game known as "baseball."

As you turn from the view of the field you will see a map of the United States showing the geographic location of each of the Negro League teams. Next to this map is a chart showing all of the teams, the length of time they existed and the league to which they belonged.

Consider for a moment just how many Negro League teams there were in the country and where they were located. Do you see any patterns to their location and can you tell from the chart which teams existed for the longest period of time?



**QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:**

- *What is it like to be left out of something that was important to you?*
- *What is the difference between being included and being excluded?*





# Grandstand Theatre

### TEACHER NOTE:

Before students walk into the theatre, ask the students, "How many of you have had an opportunity to attend a professional baseball game?" If you have had an opportunity, what was your experience when you walked into the stadium for the first time? "Did you look for your seats, or did you race down the stairs toward the rail to get a closer view of the field?" When you purchased your ticket, did you have the option to select where you wanted to sit or were you told you could only sit in a certain section? Imagine being told that you could only sit in a certain section. How would that have made you feel? This is how the Black fans were treated when they attended games in the stadiums.

As you walk into the theatre, you will be able to sit where you choose. If you were a Black person during the time of segregation, you would have been forced to sit in certain sections of the grandstand separate from White fans when you came to watch and support the Negro League players who played in White-owned stadiums.

The grandstand for Blacks symbolized life, a sense of freedom. This sense of freedom was the only time Blacks and Whites could sit in the same arena without being judgmental of others based on race.

You will be asked to rise for the singing of the National Anthem. An Indy Clowns player named Gordon stated that, "during the era of segregation, racial divide, and discrimination, singing the National Anthem was the only time we, as Negro players, felt we were truly Americans...part of the nation...as one." While the National Anthem symbolizes America's struggle for freedom from the British, the Black National Anthem (see Appendix 3) symbolizes a different type of freedom for Blacks. It symbolized a sense of birthright, heritage, and equality in America. Did you know there was a Black National Anthem?



### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- *Why do we sing the National Anthem before athletic events?*
- *What does the National Anthem symbolize?*
- *What does the Black National Anthem symbolize?*
- *Why was the National Anthem sung at the opening ceremony of the games and not the Black National Anthem?*



# Pre-Negro League Baseball

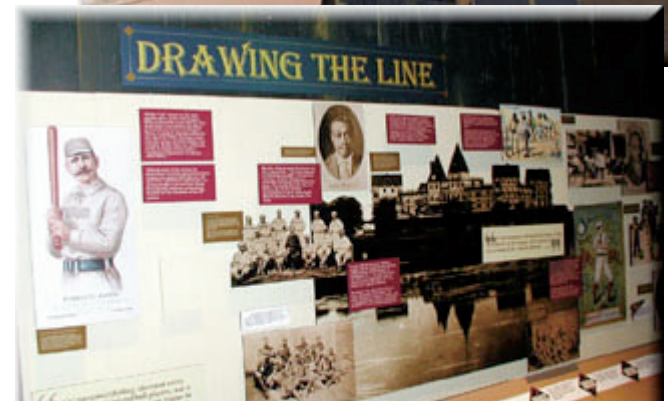
**TEACHER NOTE:**

*As you prepare your students for what they are going to see regarding early baseball, have them think about the necessity of forming a separate league for Black players.*

Coming into the museum, you viewed the baseball field from behind chicken wire. This barrier prevented you from being able to fully participate in the museum's exhibits. You are about to begin your journey to the playing field but first you must experience what it feels like not to be allowed direct access to the park.

From the 1880s into the 1960s, a majority of American states enforced segregation through Jim Crow Laws (named after a Black character, "Jumpin' Jim Crow, who appeared in minstrel shows). From Delaware to California and from North Dakota to Texas, many cities and states could impose legal punishments on people for interacting with people from another ethnic group. The most common types of laws ordered business owners and public institutions to keep their Black and White clientele separated.

Our journey starts shortly after the Civil War. Even though the 14th Amendment proclaimed freedom for Black people, they were still prohibited from participation in many activities. One of those activities was the fast growing sport of baseball. As you walk through the exhibit, look for those men who were pioneers of Black baseball. Look carefully at the photographs, the memorabilia, and the artifacts, and think about how baseball, and society, has changed over the years.



**QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:**

- *Why was it necessary to form a separate league for Black players?*
- *What do the baseball artifacts reveal about what it was like to be a Black baseball player playing early baseball in America?*



# Early Negro Leagues

**TEACHER NOTE:**

Rube Foster was a primary force in the development of the Negro Leagues. Stopping at his life size statue provides an opportunity to think of the man behind the Leagues and the role he played in keeping Negro League baseball in the "hands" of Black Americans.

The focus at this station is on that venerable man who formalized the Negro Leagues, Mr. Andrew "Rube" Foster. As you will note from earlier exhibit pictures and written content, Rube Foster was one of the stars of "Blackball," as it was identified in the earlier years. He seemed to have a sense of the loose organization of Black baseball and his early experiences likely led to his pivotal role in the later organization of the Leagues. This man had faith in himself and a feeling of power about his role with Blacks and Black baseball. By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, Rube Foster could see the need for central leadership from Blacks with the Black ball teams. He knew if the Blacks did not take an active role, the White interests would completely take over. By 1920 Rube Foster initiated the Negro Leagues.

Study this life-size statute of Rube Foster. Look at his features. Do you see a man of conviction with an air of determination, and a person who was committed to completing the task of bringing together the Black baseball teams into a league. Look at the size of his hands, and the length of his fingers. This shows his control of the ballgame, both as a pitcher and as the one who brought it all together.



**QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:**

- What do you see in this statute that tells you Rube Foster was a leader?
- What in Rube Foster's background would lead you to believe he would have the skills to organize and lead an effort to unify Black baseball?
- Would you believe Rube Foster died in poverty? Consider how this might have happened.



# Negro Leagues Heyday

**TEACHER NOTE:**

*As your students enter this part of the exhibit, Negro League Baseball has reached its pinnacle. Ask your students to look at the pictures and think about how the Negro League teams helped make baseball the "national pastime."*

Negro League Baseball thrived between 1920 and 1945. Baseball had a profound influence on all aspects of society. It represents one of the predominant influences on Black society in the first half of the twentieth century. It influenced the daily lives of players and fans as well as society at large. It was in many ways a cornerstone of life in Black America.

During the Depression and World War II, baseball truly became the national pastime. In the midst of the hard economic times and the desperate circumstances of war, people could escape to baseball and find a sense of comfort in the sport. Americans flocked to the ballpark to watch and root for their favorite teams. Negro League games were the social event of the week. Imagine what it would have been like to attend a Kansas City Monarchs baseball game!

The players of the Negro Leagues often had to work hard to make a living wage and to increase fan support, particularly during the Depression. Teams engaged in many activities to maintain interest in the game, including "barnstorming" across the country playing challenge games to make extra money. In 1929, J.L. Wilkinson, owner of the Kansas City Monarchs, used his life savings to build baseball's first functional lighting system to facilitate night games. He did it for the survival of his team. Working people, Black and White, were unable to come to games during weekdays. He gambled that night games would increase attendance, and it did. Night ball drew full houses in the cool evenings and was a great success in the heartland.



**QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:**

- *What was it like for ordinary citizens to go to a Negro League baseball game?*
- *What were some of the ways Negro League teams helped make baseball America's national pastime?*
- *What was the impact of the Negro League teams on Black society?*



## Stereotypes & Racism

### TEACHER NOTE:

Engaging your students in studying the historical events of the Negro Baseball Leagues will take them on many incredible journeys. One such journey is that of the Negro Baseball League's "Clowns." Although there is very little information written about the clowns, according to some, because of the reluctance on the part of historians to embrace the novelty of clowning at games by Black players, it was felt that such behavior only intensified stereotypical beliefs of Blacks in general and that such display would be best if not highlighted... but forgotten.

Nonetheless, investigating with students the "effects" of clowns on Blacks during the Negro Baseball League era (1920's - 1950's) can provide tremendous learning opportunities about how Blacks had to endure many hardships. Stereotypical beliefs, such as being stupid, shiftless, and lazy, were very disturbing barriers to overcome.

Many Black teams added showmanship to their games to draw in more fans when they went barnstorming. Clown teams were created to bring entertainment to the game of baseball. The clown teams introduced Blackball icons such as "pepper ball" and "shadow ball." Some teams wore grass skirts or clown outfits, painted their faces, and played barefoot to the beat of drums.

The comedy routines they introduced captivated audiences, but they also strengthened common Black stereotypes, and were frowned upon by league management and the Black press. Only one clown team, the Indianapolis Clowns, was admitted into the Negro Leagues. The Negro League players themselves drew sharp distinctions between the clowning comedians and the "real" ball players.

Because of the strong "entertainment" power of the clown teams, that style of play came to stand for the Negro League's style in the minds of the public.



### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- *Were the clown teams good ballplayers?*
- *What is a stereotype?*
- *How did the clown teams stereotype?*
- *How long did the "clowning" teams last during the Negro League Baseball era?*



# Community Leadership & Role Modeling

**TEACHER NOTE:**

*This area of the museum represents the influence of Negro League baseball on the surrounding community and the life and times of players outside the playing field. Help your students pick out pictures and comments which demonstrate how the community reacted to Negro League baseball, and ask them to point out ways the players were viewed by others in the community.*

The Kansas City Monarchs played an important part of life in Kansas City. They had a special relationship with their hometown. When the Monarchs played in Kansas City, the community joined in the fun and excitement. The team provided fans with an enormous sense of pride and satisfaction as well as entertainment.

Not only were the Black baseball players highly visible in their communities and contributors to the welfare of the community, they were also role models for the young men of the Black communities. Young Black males looked up to the Black ball players just as young White males had their favorite White ball players.

Think about who your role models are in the adult world, regardless of whether they are from sports or entertainment or from other walks of life. What are these people like? What is it that you admire about the adults who may be your heroes? How would you like to be like them?



**QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:**

- Who do you consider to be a role model?
- What are some characteristics of a good role model?
- What could you do to be a role model for someone else?
- Why were the Kansas City Monarchs important to the community in Kansas City?



## Breaking Barriers with Integration

### TEACHER NOTE:

While Black athletes were trying to maintain their sense of identity and connection throughout the Negro Baseball Leagues, the history of baseball was beginning to take on new horizons. Although there was subtle integration in various aspects of American life, segregation in America was still the mode of the day.

Two notable events that impacted segregation were World War II and baseball. Although the color line was finally broken during World War II, baseball remained the cornerstone of the racial divide. That would soon change when Branch Rickey signed Negro League player Jackie Robinson to play for the Major League's Brooklyn Dodgers.

Ironically, the half-century or so leading up to Jackie Robinson's major league debut featured more games with Black and White players than ever before, but they were always in the form of exhibitions and barnstorming tours. In 1947, Jackie Robinson's debut into the majors may have opened doors, but as Negro League player J. Black stated, "He carried on his shoulders the burden of 21 million Black Americans, and that's where his pressure came from... it wasn't the guy pitching the baseball."

With the integration of baseball, two factors brought about the decline of the Negro Leagues: a) the best Black athletes were signed by the Major League organizations, and b) the interests of Black fans moved away from the Negro Leagues as they focused their attention on Jackie Robinson and other Black athletes who were participating in the Major Leagues.

As Black athletes began to sign with the Major Leagues, the Negro Leagues slowly declined. The year 1955 signaled the end of the Negro Leagues and the glory of Black athletes participating in their own leagues.



### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- How do you think Black soldiers felt knowing they could go to war with White soldiers, but they could not play baseball with them?
- Why do you suppose the games featuring both Black and White baseball players were played, even though they were exhibition games?
- Although Jackie Robinson was a famous athlete and most would think he was always accepted, what do you think he experienced when he became the first Black baseball player in the Major Leagues?



## The Playing Field

### TEACHER NOTE:

*The baseball diamond is one of the most exciting parts of the museum. It is the ideal place to bring the tour to an end. As your students conclude their visit to the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum and stand on this field to look at the statues of some of the greatest baseball players of all time, help them reflect on the fact that these men were pioneers.*

Slavery and compulsory discrimination in the United States had a profound effect on Black citizens' education, ability to own property, and ability to obtain gainful employment. While other factors also contributed to each generation's quality of life, it would be difficult to contest the effect that being a Black American in the United States had on the young men who made up the Negro Baseball Leagues.

The idea that baseball is the "national pastime," and "America's game" is true in that it was invented here, flourished here, and has been exported all around the world. It is America's oldest and most important professional sport. It is supposed to reflect American values such as fairness, honesty, and democracy. As a national phenomenon, baseball has long served to mirror cultural currents and national attitudes. However, from its inception, baseball's racial attitudes have mirrored those of society.

Invented, played, and adored by Americans, baseball can only be as good as the society which fosters it. It should come as no surprise, then, that other major American institutions began to integrate shortly after baseball did. It is without wonder that we observe the landmark Supreme Court decision of 1954, *Brown vs. Board of Education*. American society was ready to begin integration; it just happened to make its largest start with baseball.



### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- *What freedoms do we have today that the men who played in the Negro Baseball Leagues did not have?*
- *How did the game of baseball influence society?*
- *What legacy do the Negro League baseball players leave Black and White Americans?*





# Glossary

## **Artifacts**

Objects such as equipment, photos and posters remaining from a particular period of time.

## **Barnstorming**

When teams traveled from place to place, challenging local teams in small towns and rural areas.

## **Clown Teams**

Novelty baseball teams that performed comic routines that included numerous exaggerations of racial stereotypes coupled with extraordinary baseball skills.

## **Discrimination**

Prejudiced or prejudicial outlook, action, or treatment.

## **Integration**

Incorporation as equals into society or an organization of individuals of different groups (as races).

## **Jim Crow laws**

Ethnic discrimination, especially against blacks by legal enforcement or traditional sanctions. ("Jim Crow" was a stereotyped black man in a 19th century song-and-dance act.)

## **Minstrel Show**

A troupe of performers typically giving a program of black American melodies, jokes, and impersonations and usually wearing blackface (makeup applied to a performer playing a black person).

## **Prejudice**

An irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual, a group, a race, or their supposed characteristics.

## **Racism**

A belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race.

## **Stereotype**

A standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment.



# Resources

## Books:

- **The Negro Leagues**  
James A. Riley, 1997, Chelsea House Publishers.
- **The Negro Baseball leagues: A Photographic History, 1867-1955**  
Phil Dixon and Patrick Hannigan, 1992, Amereon House.
- **The Negro Leagues Book**  
Dick Clark and Larry Lester, 1994, The Society for American Baseball Research.
- **Only the Ball was White: A History of Legendary Black Players and All-Black Professional Teams**  
Robert Peterson, 1970, Prentice-Hall Publishers.
- **I Was Right On Time**  
Buck O'Neil, 1996, Fireside Books, Simon & Schuster.
- **When the Game was Black and White**  
Bruce Chadwick, 1992, Abbeville Press.
- **The Kansas City Monarchs: Champions of Black Baseball**  
Janet Bruce Campbell, 1991, University of Kansas Press.
- **Maybe I'll Pitch Forever**  
Le Roy "Satchel" Paige and David Lipman, 1993, University of Nebraska Press.
- **Baseball's Greatest Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy**  
Jules Tygiel, 1997, Oxford University Press.

## Websites:

- **Negro League Baseball Museum**  
[www.nlbm.com](http://www.nlbm.com)
- **Negro League Baseball Dot Com**  
[www.negroleaguebaseball.com](http://www.negroleaguebaseball.com)
- **Black Baseball's Negro Baseball Leagues**  
[www.blackbaseball.com](http://www.blackbaseball.com)
- **Shadowball: The Story of the Negro Leagues**  
[library.thinkquest.org/3427/](http://library.thinkquest.org/3427/)
- **Shadowball: Recalling the Negro Leagues**  
[www.negro-league.columbus.oh.us/](http://www.negro-league.columbus.oh.us/)
- **A Look at Life in the Negro Leagues**  
[www2.educ.ksu.edu/projects/nlbm](http://www2.educ.ksu.edu/projects/nlbm)

## Videos:

- **Only the Ball Was White**  
MPI Home Video. (30 min.)
- **There Was Always Sun Shining Someplace: Life in the Negro Baseball Leagues**  
1984, Refocus Films. (58 min.)
- **Kings On the Hill: Baseball's Forgotten Men**  
San Pedro Productions. (60 min.)



# Lift Every Voice and Sing (The Black National Anthem)

Words by: James Weldon Johnson, 1900

Music by: J. Rosamond Johnson

*Lift every voice and sing,  
Till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the listening skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of the faith that the  
dark past has taught us,  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun, let us march on till  
victory is won.  
Stony the road we trod,  
Bitter the chastening rod,  
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;  
Yet with a steady beat,  
Have not our weary feet come to the place for which our fathers  
sighed?  
We have come over a way that with tears have been watered,*

*We have come, treading our path through the blood of the  
slaughtered,  
Out from the gloomy past,  
Till now we stand at last where the white gleam of our bright  
star is cast.  
God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears,  
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;  
Thou who hast by thy might led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.  
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God,  
Where we meet thee;  
Lest our hearts drunk with the wine of the world,  
We forget thee,  
Shadowed beneath thy hand,  
May we forever stand,  
True to our God,  
True to our native land.*

This song was originally written by Johnson for a celebration in honor of the birthday of Abraham Lincoln.