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Mark E. Eberle
Cover image: Loudonville (Ohio) Walk-Over baseball team advertising or souvenir card, 1906. Charles Follis is standing, third from the right. He is wearing his uniform for the Starlight Champs of Cleveland. The Starlight Champs was a Black team he also played for that summer. Image courtesy of the Cleo Redd Fisher Museum, Loudonville, Ohio.

Integrated Baseball in Ohio, 1891–1907: Chavous, Harrison, Fountain, and Follis

Mark E. Eberle

People familiar with baseball in Ohio during the late nineteenth century probably know that Moses Fleetwood Walker played for the major league Toledo Blue Stockings in 1884, as did his brother, Welday (Weldy). Fleet also played for minor league clubs in Toledo (1883) and Cleveland (1885), and Welday did the same in Cleveland (1885) and Akron (1887). In addition, John W. “Bud” Fowler played on Findlay’s integrated teams in 1894 and 1899, among other integrated teams, as did Grant “Home Run” Johnson in 1893 and 1894. The Walkers and Johnson were Ohio natives. Fowler, born in New York, is the first known Black professional baseball player and has been inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame. All four of these Black ballplayers are the subjects of biographies.1

Other Black residents of Ohio also had the opportunity to play for predominantly white town teams in their home towns and nearby communities during the last decade of the nineteenth century and first decade of the twentieth century. Some were involved in games that pitted two integrated town teams against each other at a time when segregation was the rule. Presented here are the stories of four of these baseballists from northern Ohio.

James H. Chavous

James H. Chavous was born in Marysville, Ohio on 17 January 1869, according to his obituary. His parents were Anderson and Caroline Chavous, originally from North Carolina.2 Anderson was not listed with the family in the 1880 census for Marysville. The same census listed 11-year-old James Chavous as a servant at the home of Fred F. Hazen, a local grocer. As an adult, Chavous operated a barbershop and played baseball, mostly as one of only one or two Black players on integrated town teams in Marysville and elsewhere, as well as the Page Fence Giants, composed only of Black players (Table 1).

The first mention found of Chavous playing baseball was from July through September 1891, when he was the primary pitcher for the town team in Marysville. Box scores were found for 13 games in which he played that year, and line scores with summaries were found for two more. Marysville’s record in these games was 10–5. Chavous pitched complete games in nine contests and parts of two other games, with a record of 6–4 (the pitcher of record in one game could not be determined). When not pitching, Chavous played third base and shortstop.3 In 1892, Marysville hired a pitcher from Newark, Ohio rather than retaining Chavous. The team also imported a second pitcher in the early part of the season. As the summer wore on, yet another pitcher hired by Marysville was unable to play on August 13 because of an injured arm. In his place, “Chavous was put in the box for the first time this year.” Marysville defeated the Shamrocks from Springfield, Ohio, 15–2, to run their record to 17–6. The imported players were then released because patronage at the games was insufficient to keep
the baseball association out of debt if it had to continue paying salaries to the players in addition to other expenses. Although the team officially disbanded, the hometown talent wanted to continue playing, and Chavous was chosen as the team’s pitcher. Marysville easily won three games against teams from smaller towns through Labor Day.4

In 1893, Chavous was busy again, pitching for Marysville in June and July, but once again, he was not the team’s pitcher to begin the season. Marysville hired a pitcher named Corey, who only pitched one game on May 11, giving up 11 hits and 10 walks in eight innings in Marysville’s 14–1 loss. Corey was immediately released, and a search was conducted to find a replacement. Yet, Chavous was not among the candidates contacted. The decision

Table 1.—Baseball teams on which James H. Chavous played in intercity competition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>City/Team</th>
<th>Integrated</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Columbus Grove, OH</td>
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<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>Marysville, OH</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>Page Fence Giants, Adrian, MI</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Broadway, OH *</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>Wilberforce University, Wilberforce, OH (?)</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marysville, OH</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Page Fence Giants, Adrian, MI</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>Marysville, OH</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Marysville, OH</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ostrander, OH *</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mt. Victory, OH (?) *</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All-American Black Tourists, Findlay, OH</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>All-American Black Tourists, Columbus, OH</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marysville, OH</td>
<td>●</td>
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<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Marion, OH</td>
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<td>Marysville, OH</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East Liberty, OH *</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Richwood, OH *</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bellefontaine, OH</td>
<td>●</td>
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<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>Marysville, OH</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Newman Terrance, Columbus, OH</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chavous only played once for the team to bolster the roster. There might be other such teams that were not found.
was made to hire Harry Owens, who had been playing for the team in Celina, Ohio. He won Marysville’s second game of the year, 13–7, but his arm was sore, so another imported pitcher was hired for the first game of a doubleheader on Decoration Day (Memorial Day). Owens umpired that game and pitched in the afternoon contest. Two weeks later, in a game at Marysville against the team from Delaware, Ohio, Owens “was knocked out of the box in the fifth inning, and by request of his many friends, Jim Chavous” was called upon to take his place. He allowed no runs the remainder of the game. To this point in the summer, “Jim has not had any practice, let alone pitching in a regular game.” After he was replaced by Chavous in the game on June 14, Owens’ sore arm continued to bother him, and Chavous pitched most of the games for Marysville until the team disbanded on July 14. The last three games were losses on the road to the team in Mansfield, Ohio, a member of the Ohio-Michigan League. A Mansfield newspaper, as quoted in the Marysville Tribune, derogatorily referred to Chavous as “Rastus,” but admitted that he “is a good ball player.” As in 1892, Marysville’s team disbanded because the salaries of the imported players and other costs were not being covered by gate receipts.5

Chavous and some of the other Marysville players then signed with the team in Columbus Grove, Ohio. Little information was published in available newspapers (none from Columbus Grove), but Chavous pitched well in a pair of games in September against the strong Findlay team that featured a local Black shortstop named Grant Johnson (soon to be nicknamed “Home Run” Johnson). On September 13, Findlay defeated Columbus Grove, 6–0. Chavous pitched in relief for the last three innings, giving up one hit and no runs. The next day, he pitched a complete game for Columbus Grove, handing Findlay only its second loss in its last 23 games. The final score was 8–7. In the ninth inning, Chavous gave up a double to the first hitter, but he retired the next three batters to leave the tying run stranded on second base. Chavous effectively shut down a good Findlay team late in both games.6

Baseball was slow to get started in Marysville in 1894. In May, the team hired another outside battery, this time from Nelsonville, Ohio. Once again, apathy among the local fans and the cost of imported players led to a reorganization of the team in late July. Shortly before the imported battery was released, Chavous was brought in to pitch for Marysville in the second inning of a game against the strong team from Charleston, West Virginia, who had already defeated Marysville three times. Marysville was ahead until the eighth inning, when Charleston scored three runs to take a 9–7 lead. In the ninth inning, Chavous partially atoned for surrendering the lead by driving in a run with a triple, making him the tying run on third. Unfortunately, his teammates stranded him there. On August 8, the Marysville Tribune reported that “the base ball fever in Marysville appears to have died out.”7

After being bypassed for lesser pitchers in Marysville, Chavous got the opportunity to play for the Page Fence Giants of Adrian, Michigan, composed of Black players under the guidance of Bud Fowler and Grant Johnson. It was one of the best independent teams of the nineteenth century. Chavous played briefly for the Giants in May and June 1895, but returned home because he had “been afflicted for some time with an injured leg and was compelled to give up his place on the team.” No mention was found of him playing again until he pitched for Broadway, Ohio, who defeated nearby East Liberty in September.8
Chavous’ time with the Page Fence Giants was longer in 1896, and it began later in the year. In April, he reportedly agreed to pitch for the team at Wilberforce University, a historically Black university founded in 1856 in the city of Wilberforce, Ohio. No reports of him playing with the college team were found, and he did not pitch for the team on May 15. On June 9, he played in a game for Marysville. Chavous joined the Page Fence Giants in mid-July, playing in the outfield and pitching. This time, he remained with the team through the end of the season in early October, and he helped them win a championship series against the Cuban X Giants, the top Black team in the Northeast. After the Page Fence Giants lost the first two games, Chavous was the winning pitcher in game three, the beneficiary of a 26–6 offensive outburst. Details for some of the games were meager, but Chavous also won game six (10–7), won their last victory in game 16 (8–6), lost game nine (8–5), and umpired game 11 (the Page Fence Giants won, 17–8). The total number of games played was 19, but the Page Fence Giants considered the championship to be based on the first 15 games, followed by four exhibition matches. They won regardless of how many games are counted—10 of 15 or 11 of 19. In early October, Chavous returned home, proudly wearing his silver medal presented to the members of the team in recognition of their championship season.9

In December 1896, Marysville’s Union County Journal reported that Chavous had two job offers for 1897. One was managing the team at Wilberforce University. The other was returning to the Page Fence Giants. It is unknown if he managed the college team, but he did not return to the Giants. A white town team in Marysville composed solely of local players was organized and started playing in mid-June with pitchers named Brodrick and Otte.10 In 1898, the only record found of Chavous actively engaged in baseball was a game in June that he pitched for a Black team representing Marysville in a victory over a Black team from Mechanicsburg, Ohio.11

In August and early September 1899, Chavous pitched for the predominantly white town team in Marysville (with catcher Webb Harrison, the subject of the next essay), as well as nearby Ostrander and possibly Mount Victory. He then left for Findlay, where he joined Bud Fowler’s touring team, the All-American Black Tourists. The plan was for the team to earn money as they played their way to California and returned through the South during the winter. The Black Tourists opened with two games against the Findlay Rough Riders on September 12 and 13, losing both. Not all of the players who were expected to play with the Tourists had arrived, so local players were added to the lineup, which shifted some players to positions in which they had little experience. In the first game, Chavous (listed as Chavis) was the catcher, and he had only two passed balls. In game two, Chavous (listed as Charvous) was the shortstop, and he committed 3 errors in 10 chances. The Black Tourists then headed west but made it only as far as Decatur, Indiana. The team was reorganized during the trip, with Chavous (listed as Chavious) being one of only two players retained by Fowler. Cold weather in the Midwest caused many of the town teams to disband, leaving the Black Tourists with no means of earning money as they traveled to the West Coast. Thus, the financial backer of the project, Findlay dentist William H. Drake, disbanded the team and gave each player a train ticket home.12
In 1900, Chavous and Webb Harrison (sometimes listed as Harris) began the season with Bud Fowler’s second edition of the All-American Black Tourists, organized this time in Columbus, Ohio. The duo played for the Tourists from late April to early May but were not in the lineup on May 23 or 27. Chavous played for the Tourists again in Marion, Ohio on June 13, just before the team disbanded. In July and August, Chavous was home, pitching for Marysville, with Harrison sometimes catching.

Efforts began in Marion, Ohio in mid-April 1901 to organize a “semiprofessional” baseball team. At the time, the term “professional” was usually reserved for major and minor league clubs, but the intention of the Marion boosters, like those in many cities, was to hire salaried players. M.S. Hogan was chosen to manage the team, and he began the process of quickly securing players, one of whom was Webb Harrison. The team won its first game against a team from Ohio Wesleyan University in Delaware, Ohio on April 28. Branch Rickey caught for Wesleyan that spring, but he did not play in the Marion game.

As Marion continued its season, Manager Hogan sent a letter to Chavous, which he received on May 21. In it, Hogan inquired about the salary Chavous would want to pitch for Marion. Chavous considered the offer and thought he would play a “trial game soon.” Marion expected him to play on Decoration Day (Memorial Day), when they hosted the Victors of Columbus, but he did not. He finally decided to join the team for a game on July 4, in which Marion defeated Mansfield, 9–3. Chavous struck out eight, walked one, and gave up seven hits.

Harrison and Chavious [sic] made a splendid battery. They played together in the old Black Tourist club, and though it has been two years since they have been together as a battery, they soon got down to fine work and knew exactly where they were at. It was Chavios’ [sic] first game in two years as a pitcher, but he had good control and speed.

Marion played few games, and Chavous was found in only two additional box scores. He started a July game as the third baseman and an August game two weeks later as the shortstop. Final performance summaries published in the Marion Star gave Chavous’ batting average as .137 and his fielding percentage as .812. He was really at his best as a pitcher. The box scores found reported that he had one hit in ten at bats (.100) and one error in ten chances (.900), which indicate that he played in at least one other game for which data were not found.

In 1902 and 1903, Chavous played for the Marysville town team and those of smaller communities, including Bellefontaine, East Liberty, Milford Center, and Richwood. From July to October 1903, he pitched for the Newman Terrance team of Columbus, a successful Black team. In doing so, he turned down an offer to play for the Xenia town team. Marysville’s Union County Journal reported that Newman Terrance had a record of 35–7 that summer. Chavous pitched in 12 of those games and earned a record of 10–2. “We congratulate Jim on his good showing.” In addition to playing for various teams, Chavous traveled to Ostrander with the “Junior base ball team” from Marysville in June 1903 to serve as an umpire.
Chavous continued to umpire in 1904 for the “High School team,” which played all summer. In April and May, their opponents were other high schools, but they mostly played teams from small communities during the summer. Chavous also umpired in 1905 and 1906, usually for teams of white players engaged in intercity competition. A Black umpire for intercity games between white teams at any level during the Jim Crow era was extremely rare, because it placed the Black umpire in a position of authority over the white players.

In March 1904, Chavous had signed to play for the Newman Terrance team again, but that plan was ended by an injury. While practicing baseball at the ballpark in Marysville on May 16, he attempted “to stop a swift ‘liner’” and “the ball struck the index finger of his right hand, snapping the bone.” The injury became worse, and on June 2, Chavous’ finger was amputated at a hospital in Columbus. The loss of his index finger not only ended the righthander’s career as a pitcher, “it will also handicap him for a time in his work as a barber.” However, within a few days, Chavous was back on the diamond in his new role as an umpire. On July 1, some of the older players, including a few of Chavous’ former Marysville teammates, arranged a benefit game for the injured barber. Their opponents would be the younger players of the city. The “Charley Horses” came up one run short, losing to the younger players, 7–6. The winning run was scored in the ninth inning. Sadly, the crowd was small. “The receipts, such as they were, were turned over to ‘Jim’ Chavous, who thoroughly appreciated the interest that had been exerted in his behalf.”

As a barber, Chavous opened his own shop in March 1903 after managing the barbershop of the late William Tabern for his widow. Two other barbers took over management of the Tabern shop when Chavous and Al Rogers opened their own business. The location of their barbershop changed through the years, but Chavous and Rogers remained in business together. Their shop was the site of more than just the tonsorial arts. Chavous and Rogers were fans of checkers. In September 1908, the two champion checker players of Marysville and Mechanicsburg played to a 2–2–2 draw at the barbershop. In 1912, touring checker champion S.S. Bell competed against six Marysville players in a single event. This time, it was held at the fire station and witnessed by a “large crowd.” Two of the six Marysville players were Chavous and Rogers. Bell won 36 of the 39 games, with three draws against Union County champion Earl Wilson. In addition to being used for checkers competitions, the Chavous and Rogers barbershop was also a polling place in November 1908.

During the winter of 1903–1904, Chavous considered taking a break from barbering and baseball. He sought the position of porter for the Ohio House of Representatives. It was a political patronage position, and with Republicans expected to control the House, “Mr. Chavous has been quietly at work among his Republican friends[,] securing their endorsement.” The position had been held by the late William Tabern, which probably explains Chavous’ interest. Despite local Republican support, his bid was unsuccessful.

James Chavous remained a barber for the rest of his working life—“about fifty years” in all. He passed away at the County Home Hospital on 22 August 1942, at the age of 73, after an unspecified illness of about six months. He never married and was survived by only one sibling, a sister living in Cleveland. James Chavous was buried at Oakdale Cemetery in Marysville.
Edward Webster “Webb” Harrison

Although his first name was rarely used in contemporary sources, Edward Webster Harrison was the name on his 1901 marriage license and his 1918 draft registration card. Webb Harrison, as he was commonly known, was born on 15 July 1878, according to his draft card. The 1900 census gave his birthdate as July 1877, and his marriage license indicated it was 15 July 1879. The June 1880 census listed his age as 2 years old, which suggests that 15 July 1877 is correct, but information in his obituary indicates it was 1878.

Webb Harrison was born in the village of Mingo, Ohio, about 14 miles west of Marysville. His parents were Robert and Mary (Artis) Harrison. According to the 1880 census, they were born in Virginia about 1820 and North Carolina about 1842, respectively. Their children were all born in Ohio. In the 1900 census, Webb was listed as a “woodworker wagon” in Woodstock, just a few miles east of Mingo. He married Mary Alberta Hicks on 9 January 1901. She was listed as Mary A. Harrison in the 1910 census and Alberta Harrison in subsequent documents, which was apparently her preferred name. The marriage license listed Webb’s occupation as “wheelwright” in North Lewisburg, just a few miles north of Woodstock. Mary’s occupation was given as “seamstress,” and her hometown was Woodstock. Her father, Reverend John Hicks, performed the marriage ceremony.

The baseball career of Webb Harrison (Table 2) had begun by August 1899, when he served as the catcher for the Marysville town team, which also featured James Chavous. Marysville won the slugfest, 21–20, over Milford. “Harrison distinguished himself by swatting in two home runs and a three bagger.” A few days later, a player named Harrison was part of the battery for Milford in a 22–12 loss to Urbana, Ohio. It was reported in September that Harrison was to join the All-American Black Tourists being organized by Bud Fowler in Findlay, Ohio, but no report of him playing for the short-lived touring team was found. However, Harrison (sometimes as Harris) and Chavous began the following season in April 1900 with Bud Fowler’s second All-American Black Tourists, organized in Columbus, Ohio. Harrison apparently left the team in mid-May. Later in the year, Harrison and Chavous served as the battery for Marysville.

On 7 April 1901, the Chicago Tribune listed “Webb Harris” as a catcher for the Columbia Giants, but no report of him playing for the team was found under the name Harris or Harrison. Instead, he caught for the otherwise white town team in Marion, Ohio on April 27 and continued to play for Marion until August. Chavous also pitched in a few games for Marion later in the season. Harrison caught and played at second and third, plus part of one game at shortstop. The statistics for each player published at the end of the team’s season in August reported Harrison’s batting average as .384 (second highest on the team) and his fielding percentage as .874 for all of the positions combined.

In 1902, Harrison was again associated with the Columbia Giants. As in 1901, the Chicago Tribune listed him as catcher Webb Harris, but he played third base. The newspaper correctly listed his last name as Harrison in April box scores. His stay with the Giants was brief, and he returned to Ohio in May, where he played occasionally with Chavous for Marysville and town teams in smaller communities.
Webb and Alberta Harrison moved to Lima, Ohio in 1903, where they would raise a family and where baseball would continue to be a part of Webb’s life—but with a difference. Most of Harrison’s playing time in Lima would be with a Black town team, the Lima Giants, rather than an integrated town team. The team was founded in April 1897 as the Hottentots, but the name was changed to the Webster Giants in July of that year. As the Giants began to play more teams from other towns, the name transitioned to the Lima Giants in mid-summer 1900.  

Harrison began playing for the Lima Giants in 1903, sometimes serving as the catcher for Fred Fountain (a subject of the next essay). The Giants were not organized every year, but Harrison played for the team, at least occasionally, from 1903 to 1906 and 1908 to 1909. Little could be learned about Harrison’s playing time and performance with the Giants because little detail was published about their games. However, that changed in 1909. During that season, running from May to September, a few box scores were published. He played third base in addition to catching, and he served as the team captain. A person

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>City/Team</th>
<th>Integrated</th>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>All-American Black Tourists, Findlay, OH (?)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>All-American Black Tourists, Columbus, OH</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marysville, OH</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Milford Center, OH *</td>
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<td>1903</td>
<td>Giants of Lima, OH</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1922</td>
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<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Police Department of Lima, OH</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Harrison only played once for the team to bolster the roster. There might be other such teams that were not found.

Table 2.—Baseball teams on which Edward Webster “Webb” Harrison played.
named Collins, probably pitcher Wilkie Collins, served as the manager. Near the end of the season, in the first game of a doubleheader on August 22, Harrison was catching when an unspecified accident caused him to be “badly hurt.” According to the article, the “ligaments on his left side, between the lungs and ribs, were torn loose.” The actual nature of his injury is uncertain. However, it caused him to miss a couple of weekend games. Then, on September 6 (Labor Day), he reportedly hit a double, but what position he played is unknown. After 1909, the Giants did not take the field for the next four years.

In July 1907, during a summer when reports of the Lima Giants were absent from local newspapers, Harrison played first base for the predominantly white Lima town team in a 16–10 victory over the Toledo Colts. One of the headlines in the Lima Times-Democrat proclaimed, “Webb Harrison Was a Star Performer at Bat and on First.” No details to support the claim were included in the article, and no box score was published, but a bold headline is reasonably easy to take at face value. He also played for Lima a week later against the team from Wapakoneta, as they split a pair of weekend games. Harrison possibly played later in the season, but the Lima team had trouble staying organized that summer.

No reports were found of Harrison playing again until 1914. In June, Webb Harrison, Wilkie Collins, and other veterans of the earlier Lima Giants played two games on back-to-back Sunday afternoons against the younger Black players. The “vets” won the first game, 2–1. No box score was published, but the game summary reported that George Cook caught and Guy Shores played third base, so Harrison’s position is unknown. In the second game, the young Lima Giants were better prepared and won easily, 18–4. Collins, Cook, and Harrison were listed as the battery for the vets, which suggests that Harrison and Cook split time as the catcher. In 1915, Harrison reorganized the Giants as the Colonial Baseball Club, serving as the team’s secretary (manager) and first baseman. The team played from May to September, but little information about their games was published in the available newspapers. Seven years later, in early 1922, Harrison again tried to organize a Black team, including some imported players, but that effort apparently fizzled.

In addition to baseball and raising a family, Harrison was busy at his day (or night) jobs after moving to Lima. One of his early jobs was a janitorial position at the US Post Office building, which, at the time, was considered a political patronage position. In 1907, he scored 98 on a civil service exam that put him in line for a position as a city patrolman. However, it was not until September 1912 that he was appointed to that position. Three and a half years later, politics intruded through a rumored conflict in the department, and the Service Director conducted an investigation of Harrison. Harrison was given the opportunity to submit his resignation, which he did on 7 February 1916, effective on March 1, and the unspecified matter was dropped. The Lima Times-Democrat, apparently not a supporter of the mayor, noted a year later that Harrison had “a good many friends among both the white and colored people” who held the opinion “that Webb was ‘framed.’” Harrison found a job in a steel foundry and took the civil service exam again in October 1917. A month later, he was rehired as an “extra” patrolman and was given permanent employment when six new positions were filled in January 1918. In April 1922, Harrison was made a “night desk sergeant.” He was a well-known and well-liked police officer.
It was also in the spring of 1922 that Chief of Police T.A. Lanker decided to organize a baseball team composed of his officers under the guidance of the department’s old baseballist, Webb Harrison. They proved to be a tough opponent, playing teams of other government employees, such as the fire department, city hall, and courthouse, with money earned going to charitable organizations. Civic clubs and a local newspaper were also acceptable opponents. Harrison caught and played second base for the police. “There are not very many young men on the cops’ team, but they don’t slow up much when it is necessary to get around fast on the diamond and in the gardens.” The team was active for two years, but Harrison was spiked in his right leg while sliding into second base during a game in July 1923. “His injuries will keep him out of the game for the remainder of the season, it was stated.”

On 22 September 1924, announcements were published in Lima newspapers for an upcoming game between Black teams from Lima and either Pandora or Paulding, Ohio (depending on the newspaper). It was to be the main athletic event during the Emancipation Day celebration in Lima the following day. Webb Harrison was the captain of the Lima team and was to play third base. The outcome of the game was not found, but it was almost certainly Harrison’s last time on the diamond.

In March 1925, a Black baseball team was being organized in Lima. However, Webb Harrison played no part. On March 8, it was reported that he had been “off duty for a few weeks and confined to his bed on account of sickness.” As the spring progressed, he had an unspecified operation at St. Rita’s Hospital and was reported to be improving. At the time of his illness, Harrison had been working for two years as a traffic officer in downtown Lima at Market and Elizabeth Streets, but when he returned to duty, he was assigned to the night desk to give him time to recuperate. Upon his return, he was also presented with a gift of $96 raised by fellow officers from the citizens of Lima. Sadly, his recovery was brief. On May 17, he was reported to be “in St. Rita’s in a very serious condition,” but he returned to his home at 223 South Baxter Street by ambulance the next day. Edward Webster “Webb” Harrison passed away at his home on May 28, just short of his 47th (or 48th) birthday. He was survived by his wife, four daughters, his mother, and a brother, who still lived in Mingo. The cause of death was reported to be “dropsy” (edema), which is an abnormal accumulation of fluids. In this case, it was likely a symptom associated with the malfunction of an organ, such as the heart, kidneys, or liver.

Webb Harrison’s funeral on Monday, June 1, was reported in unusual detail in the Lima Republican-Gazette. An estimated “600 or more” people were in attendance at the Second Baptist Church. “More than 100 persons” were unable to get into the church and waited outside until the services ended to view the body and pay their respects. “It was a cosmopolitan gathering, men and women from every walk of life.” City offices were closed the afternoon of the funeral, and several municipal leaders, including the city manager and city commissioners, as well as “prominent businessmen,” attended. Every police officer wore a black ribbon below his badge during the period of mourning. At the funeral, a dozen officers, led by the chief and his immediate subordinates, formed an honor guard of two rows, “hats doffed,” through which the casket was carried from the church. About 200
people attended the graveside service at Woodlawn Cemetery, “where the body reposed under a veritable flower garden.” This was not a typical funeral, and it honored a Black man during the era of Jim Crow.

William Fountain and Brothers Andrew and Frederick

Little was learned about the Fountain brothers of Lima, Ohio, in part because they all died at a relatively young age. The spelling of their last name in contemporary sources varied, mostly as Fountain or Fountaine, and occasionally as Fontaine. Fountain was used in the 1870 and 1880 censuses, and Fontaine in the 1900 census. Fountain seemed to be used most often among the newspapers and censuses, so it is used here.

Among the five sons born to Joshua and Adeline Fountain, the three youngest participated in baseball on teams in Lima. William was the eldest of the three ballplayers and was born about 1872 according to the 1880 census. The other two brothers were also found in the 1900 census, which gave Andrew’s birthdate as May 1876 and Frederick’s as May 1878, one year later for both of them than indicated in the 1880 census if the months are correct. All five brothers were born in Ohio, but their parents were born in the South. Joshua was born into slavery in Virginia. The year of his birth taken from the censuses of 1870, 1880, and 1900 ranges from about 1824 to about 1833. Adeline was born in South Carolina about 1848 or 1850.

The earliest report found of any of the Fountains playing baseball was 1893. On June 6, the Findlay, Ohio team, with Grant “Home Run” Johnson in the lineup, hosted the team from Lima, which had a Black player named Fountain (no first name given). His position was not mentioned, but he was not part of the battery. It was probably William, who would have been about 21 years old, about 4–6 years older than his siblings. He hit a homerun in the seventh inning, but it was not enough to prevent Findlay from winning the contest, 11–10.

In July 1895, one of the Fountains pitched for an integrated local team. Although no first name was given, it was likely Fred, the pitcher among the brothers, who would have been 17 years old at the time. A year later, one of the Fountains was listed as part of the battery for the public high school. Again, it seems likely that it was Fred pitching. William was a catcher, but he would have been about 24 years old.

The Fountains began to appear more often in baseball reports in 1897. A Black team was organized in Lima that was originally called the Hottentots but soon became the Webster Giants. Few details other than the scores were usually given for their games, but Fred and William sometimes served on the team’s battery, either together or one of them working with another player. Prior to a game in 1897, the Lima Times-Democrat announced that “Fred Fountain, the kid wonder,” would pitch for the Giants. In their first two years, the opponents of the Webster Giants were typically other local teams, but in May 1899, they traveled to Findlay, where they lost, 7–4. The Findlay Courier published a box score for the game. John W. “Bud” Fowler played second base for Findlay. Fred and William Fountain were the battery for the Giants. “They are a clever pair.” Fred struck out three, walked one, and gave up ten hits. Two of the hits were doubles by Fowler. Fred had no
hits in four at bats, while William had one. Games against teams from other, usually smaller towns continued in subsequent years, and the team became known as the Lima Giants.44

In July 1900, the Defiance Crescent News published a pair of box scores for games between the local Island Parks and the Lima Giants. The Giants won the first game, 6–5, behind the pitching of Fred Fountain. He struck out eight, walked two, and allowed seven hits. In center field was Andrew Fountain. William did not accompany the team on the trip to Defiance. The Giants lost game two, 10–5, with Fred at third base and Andrew back in center field. In these two games, Andrew was the better hitter of the two, with 5 hits in 10 at bats, while Fred had only 1 hit in 9 at bats.45

In 1903, Webb Harrison became the catcher for the Lima Giants. Fred and Andrew remained with the team, but William had moved the previous year to Lorain in northeastern Ohio. Fred and Webb worked together as the Giants' battery.46 It was at this point that the lives of the Fountain brothers took tragic turns.

On 21 April 1903, William Fountain died in Lorain. He was about 32 years old. The cause of death was given as pneumonia. Two years later, on 5 May 1905, Andrew Fountain passed away from “consumption” (tuberculosis) at age 29 after an illness of six months. He had been married about three years but had no children. Then, on 11 February 1906, Frederick Fountain also died of tuberculosis just short of his 28th birthday after suffering from the disease about nine months. All three were survived by their mother. Their funerals were held at the Second Baptist Church in Lima, and Fred's obituary reported that he was buried in Woodlawn Cemetery.47

Charles W. Follis

Charles W. Follis was born in Cloverdale, Virginia on 3 February 1879 to former slaves James and Catherine Follis. The family is recorded in the 1880 census for nearby Amsterdam. The two towns are within five miles of each other just north of Roanoke. Charles was the third of nine children, seven of whom survived infancy. In 1885, the family moved to Wooster, Ohio, where James worked as a farm laborer, as he had in Virginia. Charles attended school in Wooster and graduated from high school in 1900. He then attended Wooster University in 1901 and 1902.48

Although Follis played baseball, he is best known for his brief football career and one event in particular. He started by organizing and serving as the captain of the integrated football team at the high school in Wooster in 1899. He also played for the Wooster Athletic Association (sometimes referred to as the Wooster Athletic Club) from 1899 to 1901. He was a fast halfback, which earned him the nickname “Black Cyclone.” Two of Wooster's games in 1901 were against the strong Shelby (Ohio) Athletic Association, and Follis played so well that Shelby's manager, Frank Schiffer, enticed him to play for them beginning in 1902. Among Follis' teammates and friends who played occasionally on the team in Shelby was Branch Rickey, who would later sign Jackie Robinson with the Brooklyn Dodgers, breaking the color line in major league baseball. Rickey reportedly attempted to play for Shelby under a pseudonym, presumably to safeguard his eligibility at Ohio Wesleyan University, even
though his actual name was published in Shelby game summaries. The Shelby Athletic Association and Follis also played against Ohio Wesleyan and Rickey. Follis and Rickey both spent the warmer months as catchers, which might have contributed to their friendship. Of importance to Follis’ legacy is the change in football that occurred during this time in Ohio. In 1903, the team in Massillon hired four players from Pittsburgh for their final game of the season. In 1904, other teams followed Massillon’s example, including Shelby. In September 1904, Schiffer signed Follis to a season-long contract, making him the first known Black professional football player. Two years later, his brief football career ended with an injury on Thanksgiving Day 1906, one of several he had suffered through the years.49

In addition to football, Follis was a talented catcher, and his career in intercity baseball ran from 1900 to 1909 (Table 3). He played for teams representing the city of Wooster from 1900 to 1906, as well as Wooster University in the springs of 1901 and 1902. His one chance to compete against Branch Rickey in intercollegiate baseball in May 1901 was rained out.50

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>City/Team</th>
<th>Integrated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Nick Amsters of Wooster, OH</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perryville, OH *</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Wooster, OH</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>Six Eagles of Wooster, OH</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>Wooster, OH</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Killbuck, OH *</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shelby, OH *</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>Wooster (OH) Giants (Trolley League)</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bucyrus, OH (only played on Sundays)</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>Wooster (OH) Giants (Trolley League)</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loudonville (OH) Walk-Overs</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Steel Tube Company of Shelby, OH *</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Starlight Champs of Cleveland, OH</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loudonville (OH) Walk-Overs</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wooster (OH) Giants (Trolley League)</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Starlight Champs of Cleveland, OH</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Leonard Sofa Company of Cleveland, OH *</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Cleveland (OH) Giants</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Starlight Champs of Cleveland, OH *</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>Cuban Giants</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Follis only played once or a few times for the team to bolster the roster. There might be other such teams that were not found.
From 1900 to 1903, Follis primarily caught for the Wooster town team, but he was occasionally imported by other teams to bolster their rosters. In 1900, the town team in Wooster was named the Nick Amsters after a local merchant who provided uniforms and equipment. In 1901, it was back to just the Wooster team, with initial funding coming from advance sales of season and family tickets. The 1901 team stayed busy during the season, unlike the 1902 team, which did not really get going until August. In 1902, the team played under the name Six Eagles, which was presumably taken from the Six Eagles Mining Company based in Olympia, Washington. The mining company had a Wooster agent who sold shares beginning in May 1901, with articles and advertisements in local newspapers increasing in 1902 and 1903. The 1903 town team was again without a name other than that of the city, but it played from June to August. Frank Schiffer also arranged for Follis to occasionally play for the baseball team in Shelby. “He is a star at baseball as well as at football and will greatly strengthen the team.” After Akron defeated the visitors from Wooster, 15–2, the Akron Beacon Journal praised the athleticism of Follis, whose reputation in baseball and football was growing in the region. Follis had one of Wooster’s three hits (a triple) and scored one of the two runs.51

The Wooster team was practically the same as the one which was here last summer. Its catcher, Follis, the colored boy, is well known to athletic lovers in this city. ... As a player he is a strong catcher, an accurate thrower, a hard hitter and a speedy base runner. He is the best base runner on the Wooster team. His abilities as a foot ball player were such that he was known as one of the best players on the Shelby team.52

In 1904, Follis began playing for multiple teams on a regular basis. Wooster adopted the name Giants that year and joined the regional Trolley League of cities connected by an interurban electric trolley. Although the name Giants was often identified with Black teams at the time, Follis was the only Black player on Wooster’s roster. He was the team’s catcher and one of its top players on offense. In a game on July 6 against the team from Grafton, he hit two triples in a single inning. Three days later in Grafton, he hit a homerun, “on which he was called out for failing to touch the loose piece of a grain sack known by the Grafton management as second base.” His footprint in the mud indicated he missed the base by three inches. Nevertheless, Wooster won the game. On August 9, Follis suffered from a knee injury, but he still took his place behind the batter and threw out a runner trying to steal second base. However, Follis had to be replaced by a pinch runner. By the end of the month, Follis felt “that he must[,] in justice to himself[,] take a rest.” In late September, Wooster hired a catcher who had been playing in the Southern League, and Follis was shifted to other positions in the outfield and infield during the last few games against non-league teams after the Trolley League season had ended. Wooster claimed the league championship, and the trophy cup presented to the Giants by the Cleveland & Southwestern Traction Company (the trolley service) went on display in Wooster in October. In addition to the Giants, who played trolley league games Monday through Saturday, Follis caught for the town team in Bucyrus, which only played on Sundays.”53
In 1905, Wooster was again a member of the “Cleveland & Southwestern Trolley League,” but Elyria was the league champion. Bucyrus was also confident of getting Follis to play for them again that year, but they wanted to add weekday games, and Follis was committed elsewhere. As the season was about to get underway, Wooster and the Loudonville Walk-Overs, sponsored by Frank Petot’s Walk-Over Boot Shop, agreed to loan each other players occasionally. One of those players was Follis.54

In 1906, the Trolley League was organized hastily with four teams, including Wooster. It was hoped that “Follis can be induced to stay in Wooster, as he is one of the strong factors of our team.” Once again, he played for both Wooster and Loudonville. With Follis playing for multiple teams, Wooster secured another catcher, and Follis often filled other positions. However, he was most at home behind the plate. “Charley Follis caught part of the game Thursday, and he showed that his old place behind the bat was just where he liked to be, or he had a smile on his face just all the time he was there. Charley certainly has the hearts of the fans hereabouts, and they like to see him in the game.” However, Wooster floundered in the league, struggling to win, largely because some of the best players of the last two seasons had moved on to other opportunities. Wooster finished with a record of 5–16, as Elyria won its second title.55

In addition to Wooster and Loudonville, Follis played numerous games from May to October 1906 with a third team. It marked a transition in his baseball career, illustrated by the uniform he wore in the Loudonville team photo on the front cover of this publication.

In January 1906, Follis agreed to catch for the Starlight Champs, a new team being organized in Cleveland with a roster composed only of Black players. It was the Starlight Champs uniform he wore when he was in Loudonville on the day the team photo was taken. Follis’ batterymate with the Champs was a promising young pitcher by the name of Johnny Bright, who was only 18 years old. The Champs were competitive against other teams in Cleveland and nearby, both Black and white. Follis returned to the Champs in 1907 and moved his residence from Wooster to Cleveland. Injuries might have ended his football career in 1906, but opportunities in baseball remained.56

In 1907, Follis would no longer catch for Bright. The teenager earned the opportunity to pitch for the Cuban Giants, a prominent Black team in the Northeast. The Cleveland Leader even published a portrait photograph of Bright in his Starlight Champs jersey with the report that he was joining the Cuban Giants. He pitched well enough to remain with the team the entire season. Sadly, Johnny Bright passed away in Cleveland on 24 June 1908 at age 20 after battling “pulmonary tuberculosis” for four months. The official death record listed Bright’s occupation as “ballplayer.”57 A promising career cut short.

The Starlight Champs were still active in 1908, and Follis played for them at least twice.58 However, he primarily played for another Black team—the Cleveland Giants—perhaps because it was engaged in an attempt to establish an intercity league of Black teams in the region’s major cities—Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, Indianapolis, and Pittsburgh. Follis was to accompany the Giants’ manager, W.H. Ford, to an organizational meeting in Indianapolis in February. This was the most serious effort to organize a Black league that year, but another plan to start a league was proposed at the same time. This effort was based
in Pittsburgh. Neither league was successfully established, so Cleveland joined other cities in the state in organizing the Ohio Colored League. When league play began, the six cities were Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Springfield, and Xenia, but Cincinnati was soon dropped. The league struggled and faded from newspapers.

Despite these setbacks, the Cleveland Giants played games against a variety of teams. Initially they played other members of the state league, but their opponents also included top-tier teams from other states. They embarked on extended road trips, though Follis did not travel with the team.

One such trip to Kentucky in early July did not turn out well. The Giants had trouble getting their "$40 a day for the week, whether they played or not,” which meant they went hungry some days and could not pay their bills when they were ready to leave Louisville. They finally received a token payment of $80 and made the trip back to Cleveland, with an unexpected stop in Columbus. Their $80 payment had included counterfeit bills—one-dollar bills altered to look like five-dollar bills. The Columbus police accepted their explanation that the money came from their hosts in Louisville and released the players. The police also notified the US Secret Service office in Cincinnati.

A trip to Indiana went more smoothly, although the Giants lost three games to the Indianapolis A.B.C.s, and the scores were not close (14–7, 15–7, and 9–2). Back at home, the Cleveland Giants hosted the Leland Giants of Chicago for two games in mid-July and lost both, 6–2 and 5–0. The only box score found was for the shutout pitched by Leland’s Rube Foster. Follis caught for Cleveland in that game and had one of only four hits for the team (a single). He was also involved in a double play—pitcher to first base to catcher. After the two losses, the Cleveland Gazette, a Black-owned newspaper, praised Rube Foster (a “wonder”) and the Leland Giants’ players, in general, along with one player from the Cleveland Giants. “Follis is a good, ‘heady’ catcher; his throwing to bases was above average.” Later in July, Cleveland hosted the Cuban Giants, the team Johnny Bright had pitched for the previous year. No box score was found, but the line score listed Follis as the catcher. Again, Cleveland lost, 8–3, and managed to get only four hits.

Following the five weeks in June and July encompassing the losses to the A.B.C.s, Leland Giants, and Cuban Giants, the Cleveland Giants “signed several new players.” This included “an entire new infield,” as well as two pitchers. Former pitchers Garrison and Gans had jumped to the Leland Giants and Cuban Giants, respectively. Whether or not Follis remained with Cleveland is uncertain. He did not play in Akron on August 23, the only game for which a box score or details about the players was found after the roster was overhauled. The Giants lost to the Akron Lakesides, 14–2. The headline in the Akron Beacon Journal stated that the “Cleveland Giants Play Like [a] Bunch of School Boys.” The game summary opened by noting that Giants’ lefthanded pitcher Sloane and catcher Follis did not play. It later noted that Sloane had been “called away … on business,” but the reason for the absence of Follis was not given. However, the fact that Follis was mentioned as an absent player suggests he was still with the team.

Perhaps the Cuban Giants took notice of Follis when he played against them in 1908, because he signed with the team in 1909. He played for the Cuban Giants from May
through September, but for some reason did not play during the first week of October in the final two games of a series against their rivals that season, the Pullmans of Buffalo, New York. In addition to New York, the Cuban Giants toured Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Follis was primarily a catcher but also played in the outfield and at first base when Clarence Williams caught. It was not possible to compile a meaningful dataset to assess Follis’ performance, given the absence of published box scores for numerous games. In addition, several published box scores omitted the number of at bats or errors. However, the fact that Follis remained with the team throughout the season suggests he did well.66

The Cuban Giants received their most widespread newspaper coverage in 1909 for a tragic incident that occurred in Atlantic City, New Jersey on August 26. As the Giants took fielding practice before a game, an unexpected bolt of lightning struck and instantly killed second baseman William Bedford after he fielded a groundball and raised his arm and leg to throw. The raised shoe, with copper cleats, and his cap were burned and torn. Charles Follis and shortstop Wallace Gordon were knocked down by the shock of the lightning strike but were otherwise unhurt. Gordon was the first to reach the stricken Bedford. About 1,000 spectators in the grandstand and bleachers witnessed the lightning strike and its result. Understandably, the game was not played. During the intermission between games of a doubleheader the following day, Cuban Giants players passed the hat among the fans and collected $101 to be used to transport Bedford’s body home to Cairo, Illinois and to pay for his funeral. To this was added $13 collected the day of his death, and an official with the local ball team contributed $12 to reach the $126 needed to cover the costs.67

While a lightning strike is a rare event in terms of harming a Black athlete, racist verbal and physical attacks by other athletes and spectators was common, though rarely reported in white-owned newspapers. When the story of Follis as a football player is told, it often includes two instances of racist attacks directed at him while he was the only Black football player for the Shelby Athletic Association.68

The first incident was reported by the Shelby Globe and came during a home contest with the visiting team from Marion, Ohio on 11 October 1903, which was won by Shelby, 40–0. Shelby’s halfbacks, Follis and Bushey, were two of the participants in the altercation, along with an unnamed player for Marion. “The game as a whole was free from anything pertaining to dirty ball playing except at the very close of the game when one of the visitors attempted to spike Follis and put him out of the game. This was resented by Dave Bushey who gave the visitor a jab in the same place the chicken got the ax.”69

The second incident was reported by the Toledo News-Bee. It came during a game played in Toledo on 26 November 1905, which was won by Shelby, 6–0. The only touchdown was made on an 80-yard run by the Shelby quarterback, Davidson, who was singled out by the News-Bee as the star player for Shelby that day. Even when the rules were followed, football was a violent game, and deaths were not uncommon at this time. The game in Toledo was no exception. Shelby’s fullback was knocked unconscious and taken to a Toledo hospital. Davidson was also hurt and had to leave the game. In the case of Follis, however, he suffered verbal abuse from some of the Toledo spectators advocating violence against him.70
Follis, ... one of the Shelby halfbacks, is a negro [sic] and the crowd got after him early, advising the local players to put him out of the game. [Toledo] Captain Tattersall, however, showed that he was a good sportsman by addressing the crowd[,] saying: “Don’t call Follis a [n____]. He is a gentleman and a clean player and please don’t call him that.” He was applauded for his sentiment and the colored player was not molested during the remainder of the game.71

Follis also experienced these sorts of racism while playing baseball, as did other Black ballplayers of the era, whether they were members of integrated teams or Black teams. For example, on 28 June 1906, Follis played with the Loudonville Walk-Overs in nearby Ashland. Accounts vary depending on who was telling the story, but they all generally agreed that some of the fans continually taunted the Loudonville players with “foul, insulting remarks,” especially Follis, and they “seemed to delight in calling him [n____].” There were also accusations that some Ashland players attempted to spike Follis and participated in the taunting. A response from Ashland claimed that their players “appreciate that Follis is a gentleman and a thorough sportsman and not one made any comments on his color.” The response admitted, however, in a disappointingly forgiving tone that some of their fans who “had more enthusiasm than sense tried to roast him, but they were requested to desist by the Ashland management.” The story was picked up by the Wooster News and published on page one under the headline “Follis Was the Mark in Walk-Over Game. Local Fans Openly Insulted Wooster Player. Tried to Spike Him and Called Him a [N____].”72

The following year, Follis’ former teammate with the Starlight Champs, Johnny Bright, had a similar experience while playing for the Cuban Giants in southwestern Pennsylvania. The Giants split a pair of games against the team in Connellsville, losing the first and winning the second, with Bright pitching. They then traveled to Uniontown for a game on April 27. Only the Uniontown Morning Herald was available online, but the April 29 edition was missing (the paper was not published on Sunday, April 28). However, the Connellsville Courier published a box score and details of the game, mixed with opinions.73

According to the Connellsville Courier, Uniontown’s 3–2 victory over the Cuban Giants and pitcher Johnny Bright was due in large part to bad decisions by the umpire, “and some of them were rawer than new made sauer kraut [sic].” Uniontown took a 3–1 lead in the second inning, but “Bright had the best of the contest.” The umpire then followed with questionable calls, including one in the eighth inning in which he called the second of two Giants’ runners out at the plate even though he beat the ball. That run would have tied the score. In addition, the Cuban Giants had to endure taunting from the spectators. In the words of the Courier, “Those Uniontown fans have sweet dispositions. Such terms as [n____,] ‘yellow hammers,’ ‘mutton heads,’ ‘chimpanzee’ and the like were handed the visitors.”74

Despite the challenges, the desire to play baseball was strong. In March 1910, the Wooster News reported that Follis had signed to play a second year with the Cuban Giants. Sadly, he died from pneumonia in Cleveland on April 5. He was only 31 years old. In its announcement of his death, the Cleveland Plain Dealer noted that the other star of the 1906
Starlight Champs battery, Johnny Bright, had also passed away in Cleveland in 1908. The funeral for Follis was held at the Baptist Church in Wooster “and was one of the most largely attended funerals held in the city for many months.” The church was filled to overflowing, with some people unable to be inside during the service. Charles W. Follis was buried in the Wooster Cemetery.75

Fleet Walker, Welday Walker, Bud Fowler, Grant Johnson, James Chavous, Webb Harrison, William Fountain, and Charles Follis are but a few of the Black baseballists who played for predominantly white teams in Ohio engaged in intercity competition during the sport’s era of segregation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. All of these players deserve to be identified and have their stories told. A study of more than 80 such athletes in Kansas was published in 2022, followed in 2023 by studies with smaller numbers of players in California and Missouri.76 Similar studies in Ohio and other states, especially in the Midwest and Northeast, would contribute to a more complete understanding of where, when, and why integration occurred in baseball during this period.

Acknowledgements

Newspapers were accessed online through Newspapers.com, GenealogyBank.com, NewspaperArchive.com, Google News Archive (https://news.google.com/newspapers), the Community History Archive of the Findlay–Hancock County Public Library [Findlay, Ohio] (https://findlaylibrary.advantage-preservation.com/), the Community History Archive of the Wayne County Library [Wooster, Ohio] (https://wcpl.advantage-preservation.com/), and the Community History Archive of the Marvin Memorial Library [Shelby, Ohio] (https://marvin.advantage-preservation.com/). Censuses and other documents were accessed through Ancestry.com. Articles published in the Coffin Corner were obtained through the website of the Professional Football Researchers Association (https://profootballresearchers.com/index.html). Kenny Libben, Curator at the Cleo Redd Fisher Museum in Loudonville, Ohio, provided permission to use the cover image of Charles Follis and the Loudonville baseball team, as well as information about the team.

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Eberle, Mark E. 2023c. *John W. “Bud” Fowler in Colorado, California, and Ohio.* Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas.


Endnotes


2 Marysville Evening Tribune, 24 August 1942, p 2.

3 Union County Journal, 9 July 1891, p 4; 16 July 1891, p 5; 23 July 1891, p 5; 30 July 1891, p 4; 6 August 1891, p 5; 20 August 1891, p 5; 27 August 1891, p 4; 3 September 1891, p 4; 10 September 1891, p 5.

4 Marysville Tribune, 27 April 1892, p 5; 1 June 1892, p 1; 17 August 1892, p 4. • Union County Journal, 2 June 1892, p 4; 18 August 1892, p 8; 1 September 1892, p 4; 8 September 1892, p 5.

5 Marysville Tribune, 17 May 1893, p 7; 24 May 1893, p 7; 5 July 1893, p 7; 19 July 1893, p 3. • Union County Journal, 25 May 1893, p 4; 1 June 1893, p 1; 8 June 1893, p 1; 15 June 1893, p 1; 29 June 1893, p 4; 6 July 1893, p 1; 20 July 1893, p 5.


7 Marysville Tribune, 9 May 1894, p 6; 16 May 1894, p 5; 23 May 1894, p 1; 27 June 1894, p 1; 8 August 1894, p 5.

8 Marysville Tribune, 19 June 1895, p 5; 18 September 1895, p 1. • Union County Journal, 25 April 1895, p 5. • Lutzke (2018, pages 75, 109).


10 Union County Journal, 3 December 1896, p 5; 17 June 1897, p 3; 24 June 1898, p 8; 1 July 1897, p 8; 8 July 1897, p 8; 5 August 1897, p 8.

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12 Dayton Daily News, 23 September 1899, p 3; 25 September 1899, p 3. • Findlay Daily Courier, 4 September 1899, p 3; 12 September 1899, p 3; 13 September 1899, p 3; 14 September 1899, p 3. • Findlay Republican, 29 September 1899, p 8. • Marysville Evening Tribune, 2 August 1899, p 3; 3 August 1899, p 3; 21 August 1899, p 3; 8 September 1899, p 2; 12 September 1899, p 2; 14 September 1899, p 2. • Sidney Daily News, 21 September 1899, p 3.

13 Canton Evening Repository, 7 May 1900, p 2. • Columbus Evening Dispatch, 23 April 1900, p 9; 24 May 1900, p 9; 27 May 1900, p 10. • Marion Daily Star, 14 June 1900, p 5.

14 Marysville Tribune, 1 August 1900, p 6. • Richwood Gazette, 19 July 1900, p 4; 2 August 1900, p 4.

15 Marion Daily Star, 19 April 1901, p 5; 23 April 1901, p 8; 29 April 1901, p 8.

16 Marysville Tribune, 22 May 1901, p 1. • Marion Daily Star, 29 May 1901, p 8; 31 May 1901, p 4; 5 July 1901, p 3.

17 Marion Daily Star, 5 July 1901, p 3.

18 Marion Daily Star, 24 July 1901, p 8; 7 August 1901, p 5; 20 August 1901, p 3.

19 Marysville Evening Tribune, 18 April 1902, p 3; 27 June 1902, p 2; 5 July 1902, p 3; 8 August 1902, p 3; 2 September 1902, p 2; 20 June 1903, p 2. • Richwood Gazette, 31 July 1902, p 4; 25 September 1902, p 1; 9 July 1903, p 1. • Union County Journal, 2 July 1903, p 8.

20 Columbus Evening Dispatch, 28 July 1903, p 2. • Marysville Evening Tribune, 27 July 1903, p 3; 31 July 1903, p 3; 8 August 1903, p 3; 13 August 1903, p 2; 27 August 1903, p 2. • Union County Journal, 15 October 1903, p 5.

21 Marysville Evening Tribune, 18 June 1903, p 2.

22 Marysville Evening Tribune, 7 May 1904, p 2; 23 May 1904, p 2; 28 May 1904, p 3; 11 June 1904, p 2; 16 June 1904, p 2; 23 June 1904, p 2; 13 August 1904, p 3; 31 August 1904, p 3; 3 June 1905, p 2; 5 Sept 1905, p 3; 16 June 1906, p 3. • Richwood Gazette, 21 April 1904, p 1. • Union County Journal, 31 August 1905, p 7.
You can learn about the early history of baseball played by teams throughout Kansas in the book *Kansas Baseball, 1858–1941*, published in 2017 by the University Press of Kansas and available in paperback or e-book through bookstores and online retailers.

The book explores the early game played by hundreds of town teams composed of white males, as well as teams of women, African Americans, American Indians, and Mexican Americans. Also described are the regional minor leagues and major league tours, along with the histories of towns still playing baseball in the state’s oldest ballparks constructed between 1924 and 1940.

The history of integrated baseball in Kansas prior to 1946–1947, when Jackie Robinson broke the color line in organized baseball, is explored in an open-access pdf book or a print-on-demand paperback, which are available through [https://scholars.fhsu.edu/all_monographs/33/](https://scholars.fhsu.edu/all_monographs/33/).

The book includes biographies of more than 80 Black baseballists who played for predominantly white minor league clubs and town teams or umpired games involving at least one white team. The questions of when and where integrated teams played are examined and placed within the broader context of segregation and exclusion in the community.