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Article Summary: In 1892, the Nebraska State League for baseball was partially integrated. Controversy abounded over whether "colored" players had both the ability to play and the ability to be "colored gentlemen." The rhetoric of race was sometimes based on principle, other times spoken to cover up one's own questionable actions. The League's early demise was only partially due to the rampant racial controversy. Finances and contract jumping also played a part.

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# "Too Much Dirty Work"

## Race, Manliness, and Baseball in Gilded Age Nebraska

BY GREGORY BOND

In the spring of 1892 the Hastings, Nebraska, correspondent to *The Sporting News*, a national sporting weekly published in St. Louis, described the state baseball league for his readers: "The Nebraska Coon League will open the season Sunday, May 1st. The reason it is called the Coon League is that all the teams with the exception of Hastings and Grand Island have one or more colored players."<sup>1</sup>

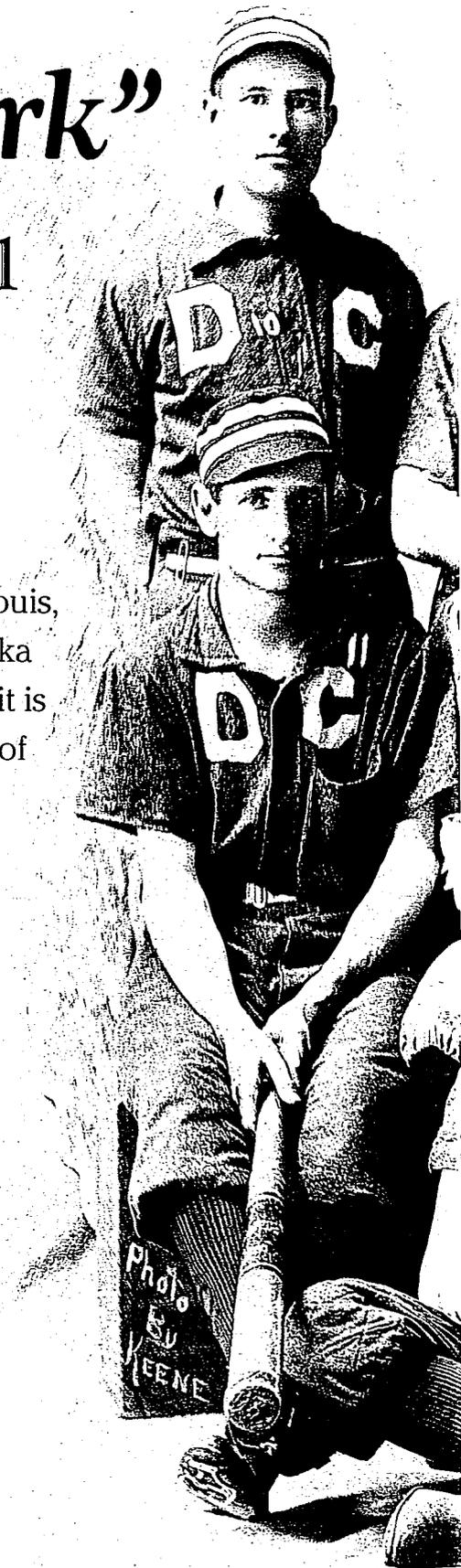
**T**True to the word of the Hastings reporter, six African-American athletes represented three cities in the Nebraska State League. The NSL, composed of teams in seven midsize communities—Beatrice, Fremont, Grand Island, Hastings, Lincoln, Kearney, and Plattsmouth—was the only integrated league in the nation competing under the auspices of organized baseball in 1892. The six athletes were the only African Americans on otherwise white professional teams.

The NSL's brief experiment with integration was not without controversy. African Americans accounted for only about 7 percent of the league's players, and, more generally, in 1890 blacks comprised less than 1 percent of

Nebraska's population. Despite the small number of African-American players, vocal proponents of Jim Crow consistently attacked integration during the NSL's short and turbulent existence. Segregationist players, fans, journalists, and league officials objected to the inclusion of black athletes and succeeded in problematizing integration to such a degree that after the NSL folded in July 1892 no black professional ballplayers returned to the state until after World War II.

The contentious events in Nebraska mirrored national trends. Beginning in 1883 many leagues had experimented with limited integration, and dozens of black players found positions on professional teams from Vermont to New Mexico. African Americans who played on white squads, though, encountered frequent opposition, and by 1892 most

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leagues had abandoned the experiment.<sup>2</sup>

Concurrent with these battles over integration, baseball's boosters were waging a parallel fight to legitimize the game and to make the sport acceptable to middle-class sensibilities. Bourgeois spectators and reformers expected players to behave honorably and bring credit to themselves, the sport, and the cities they represented. The keepers of the game strove to control the athletes' actions and make players conform to the proper standards of middle-class "gentlemanly" behavior.<sup>3</sup>

Cognizant of these dual struggles, segregationists frequently stigmatized African Americans as dishonorable and ungentlemanly and thus as ineligible for the honorable pastime of baseball. The debates over integrated play in Nebraska, as in other states, revolved around differing interpretations of the character and manliness of African-American players. Supporters of integration defended black athletes as "gentlemen," while proponents of Jim Crow, like the Hastings correspondent, derided African Americans as "coons," and justified disruptive segregationist agitation by the supposed ungentlemanly nature of black players.

Although 1892 was the first year black players represented Nebraska teams in a national association, it was not the first year black players had played in the state. Seven years earlier minor league teams in Omaha and Lincoln had played against integrated clubs. The pioneering black player Bud Fowler, who would return to play in the 1892 Nebraska State League, was a member of teams in the Western League in 1885 and 1886. In 1885 he played several games in Omaha as a member of the Keokuk, Iowa, team. The following year he was with the Topeka team, a Lincoln rival.

More immediately, in 1889, players from the state's small African-American population formed the all-black Lafayettes, an Omaha semi-professional team. The next year, a white business-



Infielder John Patterson (second from right), played for the Lincoln Giants, the NSL, and went on to a career in black baseball. He is shown here with the Page Fence Giants of Avian, Michigan, in 1897. National Baseball Hall of Fame Library, Cooperstown, N.Y.

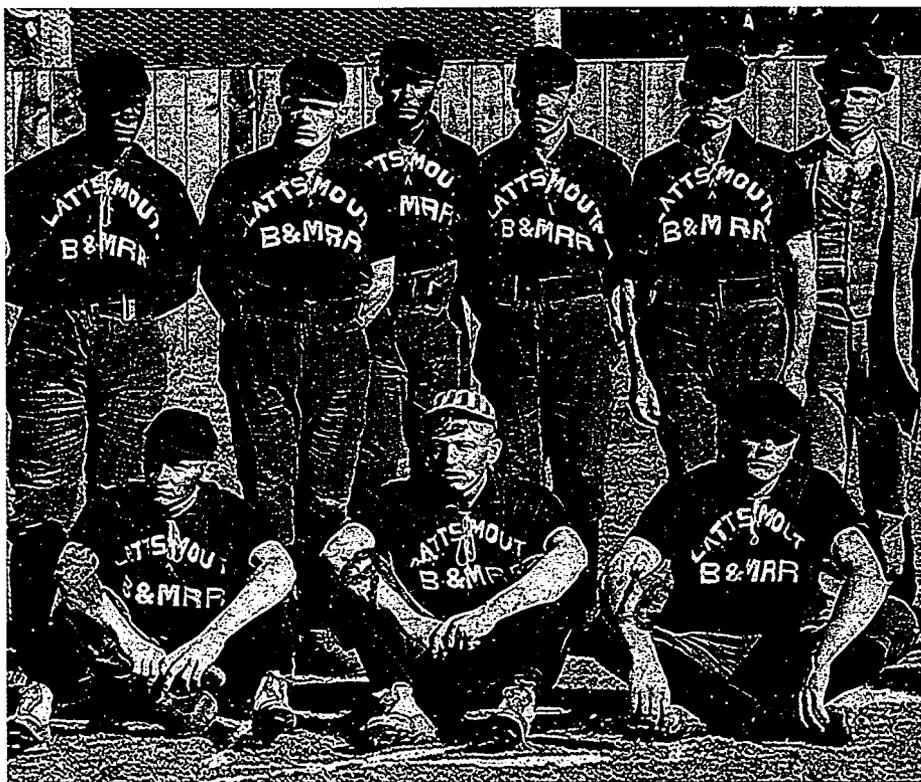
man from Lincoln, William M. Pope, and a local black manager, William Lewis, raided the roster of the Lafayettes and organized their own black team, the Lincoln Giants.<sup>4</sup>

Pope and Lewis saw their barnstorming club as a moneymaking proposition, and signed players to professional contracts. The two entrepreneurs improved their team with black athletes from distant cities including Detroit and Washington, D.C., and among the players they brought to the state were pitcher Jack Reeves and catcher Frank Maupin, both Kansas City natives, and infielder John Patterson from Starkville, Mississippi. They also recruited pitcher George William "Will" Castone and first baseman George Taylor from the defunct 1889 Colorado State League. The versatile Castone's arrival had a profound effect on the course of black

baseball in Nebraska. During his three-year stay in Lincoln he became the most well known black ball player in the state, variously filling the roles of pitcher, batter, captain, manager, promoter, sportswriter, and league booster.

The Lincoln Giants were an immediate success on the field. They frequently overmatched their opponents, and in their debut season compiled a gaudy 45-5 record. They quickly earned a considerable nationwide reputation, and, as early as July 1890 *The Sporting News* hailed this "boss colored club" as "one of the strongest . . . ever organized in the West."<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately for the team's promoters, financial success did not immediately follow the Giants' athletic achievements. Two months into the team's first season, Manager Lewis resigned and William Pope abruptly



Frank Maupin (back row, left), a versatile and well liked catcher, played for the Lincoln Giants and later joined Plattsmouth, the first integrated team in Nebraska. Cass County Historical Society Museum, Plattsmouth, Neb.

left town, leaving behind substantial unpaid salary obligations. With the team on the verge of collapse, pitcher Will Castone came to the rescue, assuming the dual responsibilities of captain and manager. He immediately reorganized the team on a "co-operative" basis, with the players sharing revenues and expenses equally. Under the new management, the Giants finished the 1890 season and regrouped for 1891.<sup>6</sup>

Will Castone, the new young manager, understood that the Giants faced a precarious existence as a barnstorming team with no fixed schedule or regular opponents, and looking for any advantage, he supplemented his managerial position with a job as the Lincoln correspondent to *The Sporting News*, a position he used tirelessly to promote his team. In one column he shamelessly advertised the Giants as "first-class club"

ready to "locate in some minor league."<sup>7</sup>

Castone's scheme was ultimately unsuccessful, but he followed the lead of New York's famous all-black Cuban Giants, who played in otherwise white associations for several seasons in the late nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> Without league structures, Castone could not stop other teams from stealing his players, and the Lincoln Giants finally broke up in August 1891, when several independent professional teams, tired of repeated losses to the black squad, raided the Giants' roster. The collapse of the Lincoln Giants introduced integrated teams to the state and paved the way for the Nebraska State League's turbulent 1892 campaign.

**I**mportant to understanding Nebraska baseball's racial turmoil, however, are the conceptions of race and gender that

### Lincoln Giants Rosters<sup>9</sup>

#### 1890

Jesse Brown 2B/SS  
 Bullock P  
 Ed Carr OF/C  
 George William Castone P/OF  
 James Hightower 1B/SS  
 George Hughbanks 1B/2B  
 Hugh Hughbanks OF/SS  
 William Lewis OF  
 William Lincoln SS  
 Joseph "Kid" Miller P  
 Frank Maupin C  
 William Newman 1B/C  
 John Patterson 3B/1B  
 Jack Reeves P/2B  
 George Taylor OF/1B

#### 1891

Broadus OF  
 Bullock P  
 Ed Carr OF/C  
 George William Castone P/OF  
 Dean OF  
 Dobbs 3B  
 Harding P/OF  
 James Hightower 1B/SS  
 George Hughbanks 2B  
 William Lincoln SS  
 Frank Maupin C  
 Joseph "Kid" Miller P  
 John Patterson 3B/1B  
 Jack Reeves P/2B  
 Smith OF  
 George Taylor OF/1B  
 George Timpson OF

permeated middle-class Americans' perception of the new national pastime. Contemporary observers understood baseball and other athletic activities to be exclusively the province of men, and the booming popularity of sports in the late nineteenth century played an important role in the lives of American males who felt increasingly threatened by turbulent societal changes. The rampant and seemingly uncontrollable trends of urbanization, industrialization, and immigration profoundly changed

**African-American Populations in 1890<sup>10</sup>**

	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Black Population</b>	<b>Percent Black</b>
United States	62,622,250	7,470,070	11.93%
Nebraska	1,058,410	8,913	0.85%
Lincoln	53,758	1,360	2.50%
Beatrice	13,477	351	2.60%
Hastings	13,255	322	2.43%
Plattsmouth	8,303	88	1.06%
Kearney	8,033	38	0.47%
Grand Island	7,501	30	0.39%
Fremont	6,715	26	0.38%

the nature of American life in those years, and many middle-class men struggled to adjust to the new realities.

Those embattled men felt powerless to control their own destinies in the emerging governmental and corporate bureaucracies that employed them, and they sought new ways to demonstrate their manliness. Many rejected traditional Victorian notions of manhood for an updated, rigorous, and physical understanding of their manly nature. Societal ideas about men's proper gender roles did not change immediately or completely, however, and African Americans exploited the uncertainty surrounding these evolving definitions to stake their own claim to manliness and manly pursuits.<sup>11</sup>

For much of the 1800s bourgeois men had sought to demonstrate their manhood by mastering their emotions and cultivating such gentlemanly traits as diligence, independence, and self-control. Historian Gail Bederman has written that "[Victorian] middle-class parents taught their sons to build strong, manly 'character' as they would build a muscle, through repetitive exercises of control over impulse. . . . The mingled honor, high-mindedness, and strength stemming from this powerful self mastery were encapsulated," Bederman concludes, "in the term 'manliness.'"

Urban working class men, however, consistently rejected this honorable Victorian ideal and embraced a concep-

tion of manliness emphasizing emotions and valuing strength, endurance, and physicality. Eliot Gorn asserts that to "working class men . . . manliness had more to do with valor, strength, and prowess than with upright behavior."<sup>12</sup>

Unable to attain the independence and self-sufficiency that advocates of self-control had promised them, beleaguered middle-class men began to question the Victorian model of manhood. In that atmosphere, the formerly disreputable, rigorous and physical manliness of urban workers became more attractive. Unwilling, however, to embrace whole-heartedly the vice-ridden underworld of lower-class urban males, bourgeois men sought a happy medium by moderating the excesses of both conceptions of manliness. They forged a new understanding of their gender identity by combining an attention to honorable behavior with an emphasis on physical development and athletic prowess.

Elliot Gorn has described the process: "The result for the old Victorian ethos was not destruction, but its reshaping. The ideal of character took on a strenuous quality. . . . Here the martial values of hardiness, courage, and endurance took their place beside the older Victorian ideals of piety and earnest hard work." In *American Manhood*, E. Anthony Rotundo concurs, writing, "In the late nineteenth century, men took a second look at their 'animal

nature' and found it just as useful—and just as necessary to their manhood—as reason. Of course," he contends, they thought that "civilization still had its place, [and] they clamored [for] a better balance between civilization and the inner savage."<sup>13</sup>

Many commentators suggested the athletic field as an ideal forum in which to instill this dualized manliness of physical ability and gentlemanly behavior. Supported by the disposable income of middle-class clerks and bureaucrats, sports, both participatory and spectator, spread across the country. Buttressed by ideologies like Muscular Christianity, American men in the Gilded Age enthusiastically developed their bodies, exercised, and played sports, but did not abandon the Victorian ideals of honesty, virtuousness, and fair play. Theodore Roosevelt aptly described the ideal manly combination in his famous book, *The Strenuous Life*: "In life, as in a football game, the principle to follow is: Hit the line hard; don't foul and don't shirk but hit the line hard."<sup>14</sup>

It was not only white men who eagerly embraced the Gilded Age's manly sporting culture. African Americans, too, participated in a wide range of athletic activities, and many middle-class whites had not yet made a final judgment on this African-American claim to manliness. David Gerber, writing on northern blacks in the late nineteenth century, argues, "With black citizenship firmly established in the law, the restraints which had kept higher-status whites from recognizing a basis for solidarity with their black counterparts had somewhat lessened."

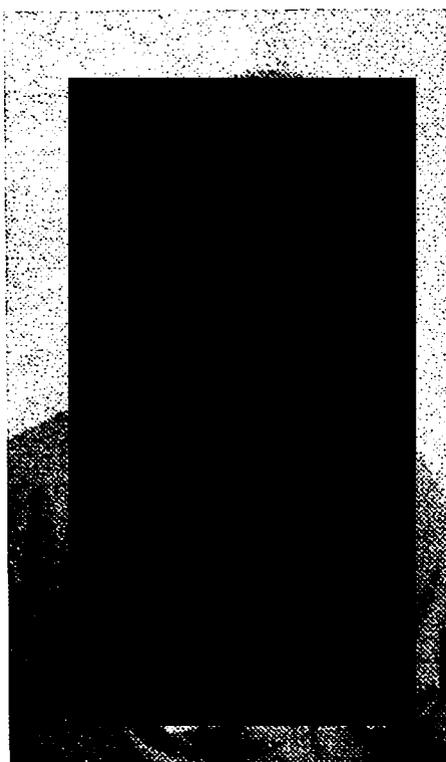
He continues, "there were whites who were sincere enough in their egalitarian ideals to act against the color line, whether through direct confrontation or simply through the exercise of tolerance in every day life." These integrationists, he argues, "believed that society should aspire to be more open to educated, accomplished, and conventionally refined Negroes."<sup>15</sup>

Such white Americans were not color blind, but they accepted a degree of equal opportunity, particularly for African Americans who lived up to this high manly standard. For those black men, sympathetic whites created the category "colored gentleman," deemed eligible for manly activities such as baseball. By its very definition, the notion of a "colored gentleman" implied that most ordinary "gentlemen" were white. Nevertheless, integrationists recognized this hybrid category for men who embodied all the qualities of "manliness" except its racial component.

Few people who saw Nebraska's African-American players doubted their athletic ability. Indeed, with the Lincoln Giants routinely defeating all comers, and with many white professional teams scrambling to sign the best black players in the state, knowledgeable fans could hardly deny the quite evident skill of the black athletes. Segregationists, though, could still impugn the manliness of African Americans by questioning their gentlemanly nature. It was this half of the manly ideal that figured prominently in the fight over the color line in the Nebraska sporting community.

Proponents of Jim Crow justified their position by pointing out the supposed dishonorable behavior of black ball players. Integrationists, on the other hand, recognized this tactic as the strongest weapon in their opponents' arsenal, and they countered with forthright and frequent confirmations of the gentlemanly stature and manly disposition of black athletes.

Integrationists first established the ball playing and athletic credentials of black athletes to bolster their argument for integration. Catcher Frank Maupin, for instance, was a crowd favorite in Nebraska, and he received frequent praise for his skills. *The Sporting News* wrote that he "was a crack catcher [and although] a colored man. . . [was] as fine a catcher as any in the state." Similarly, a Lincoln fan writing in the



**First baseman George Taylor played for Beatrice "in a style that would turn some of the big ones green with envy." He later joined the Page Fence Giants in Michigan.** National Baseball Hall of Fame Library, Cooperstown, N.Y.

*Nebraska State Journal* claimed that, after watching "several" major league teams he "had yet . . . to find a catcher who has any license over Maupin." Black first baseman George Taylor also impressed many fans, and a Beatrice commentator wrote that "Taylor play[s] in a style that would make some of the big ones turn green with envy."<sup>16</sup>

Some observers recognized that Nebraska's integrated diamonds were out of step with baseball in the rest of the country, and they understood that local African-American ball players would have had trouble finding employment elsewhere. Will Castone, in particular, often received sympathy for his plight. The sports editor of Lincoln's *Nebraska State Journal*, for example, contended that "Castone . . . would probably have been among the way-ups

had it not been for his color." The Omaha correspondent to *The Sporting News* agreed and claimed that "Lincoln . . . has secured a first-class pitcher in Castone, who will land his team pretty near the top. If it were not for his color he would be in faster company today."<sup>17</sup>

The sporting community in Nebraska, however, saved its highest praises for John W. "Bud" Fowler, whom Castone recruited to Lincoln in 1892. The celebrated Fowler had been playing professionally—almost exclusively with white teams—since 1878, and the local fans were thrilled to welcome a player of such note and accomplishment. One sportswriter proclaimed excitedly: "Bud Fowler will be put on second base so that he can play everywhere. Every one knows who he is. His fame is not as obscure as his face. The latter is very obscure in the dark, but he can play ball. He ought to, for he has been in the arena now for twenty-four years."<sup>18</sup>

Another scribe agreed and made even more grandiose claims for the veteran infielder:

Fowler on second needs no introduction as he has played ball all over America, and a report has come out lately that he used to play with an Indian team long before America was discovered. He covers more ground in his position, makes as many hits and runs and has more stolen bases and is probably worth more to a team than any man in the league.<sup>19</sup>

The Lincoln and Kearney franchises (Lincoln transferred its team to Kearney soon after the season began) paid Fowler, whom fans in Nebraska knew as "Dad" or "Grandpa," the ultimate compliment by appointing the knowledgeable black veteran team captain in 1892.<sup>20</sup> Team captains wielded substantial power and routinely set lineups and chose strategies and tactics. Fowler's ascendancy was a powerful testament to his superior baseball skill and to the broad respect he enjoyed. Even though a black man had been put in a powerful position to direct and command white men, no one in Lincoln or Kearney registered a complaint. Fowler, who had briefly served as a co-captain of an

# LINCOLN'S VICTORY.

## THE COONS OUT-PLAY THE KEARNEYS ALL AROUND.

### Lincoln Beats Kearney 10 to 5 in the Game Yesterday—The Boys Will Turn the Tables To-Day

Unable to criticize the outstanding play of the black NSL players, segregationists and even the press resorted to attacking the "ungentlemanly" nature of African Americans. The derogatory word most often used to denigrate black players was "coon." *Kearney Daily Hub*, May 24, 1890

independent team in Montpelier, Vermont, in 1887, maintained his post throughout the 1892 season. He was the only African-American team captain on an integrated team in organized baseball in the nineteenth century and the last until after World War II.<sup>21</sup>

The athletic skill of Nebraska's black players was in little doubt, so segregationists focused their attention elsewhere. Athletic ability represented only half the middle-class ideal of manliness. Honorable and gentlemanly comportment composed the other half of the paradigm, and the battle over integration was contested largely in that area. Integrationists frequently proclaimed the gentlemanly credentials of black athletes to establish fully the manly *bona fides* of African Americans on the diamond. Will Castone tried the tactic in advertising his Lincoln Giants. In 1891, he tried to drum up business with a letter to *The Sporting News* emphasizing both aspects of his players' manliness: "We have a good club," he wrote, "and

all my men are gentlemen and good ball players." Earlier, a Lincoln reporter had expressed similar sentiments when the Giants threatened to disband. "This state of affairs is to be regretted," he declared, "as the team is composed of gentlemen, who have put up exhibitions of ball playing equal to the best."<sup>22</sup>

Sympathetic observers often praised the gentlemanly stature of individual African Americans. A reporter in Lincoln described the indomitable Will Castone as "a first-class ball player and as fine a gentleman as ever appeared in uniform in this city. He has the best wishes of all the fans in Nebraska," the writer continued, "and not an enemy among them."

Along the same lines, Plattsmouth regretted the loss of its black players after the failure of the NSL: "John Patterson and John Reeves, two of Plattsmouth's colored base ball players will leave the city this evening to return to their homes. Both were gentlemanly ball players," the *Daily Journal* asserted, "and leave many friends here to regret

their departure." Frank Maupin impressed local fans, and one reporter described him as simply "the gentlemanly and sturdy young catcher."<sup>23</sup>

While supporters of integrated baseball advertised and affirmed the gentlemanly stature of local black players, segregationists took the opposite tack and denigrated the manliness of objectionable African Americans and focused their criticisms on their behavior and comportment. The sporting community of Hastings, Nebraska, was frequently among the most vocal and forceful critics of integration. The town's leading baseball boosters consistently opposed black players, and in so doing, they always criticized the ungentlemanly nature of African Americans. In the spring of 1892, for example, the Hastings correspondent to *Sporting Life* made his segregationist case: "It is reported that Plattsmouth has signed several colored players," he wrote, "[and] I think that is a mistake. The colored men who played with visiting

teams in this city last year gave exhibitions of dirty ball, and the base ball fans here will not attend games where colored players participate."<sup>24</sup>

The manager of the Hastings team, Ulysses S. Rohrer, tried to keep his team out of the league entirely because of the inclusion of black players. After receiving an invitation to an organizational meeting, the Hastings manager met with several prominent local citizens, and a reporter described the result:

Rohrer, upon receipt of the letter, consulted a number of the fans as to the advisability of sending a representative. There seems to be opposition here to entering the state league if colored players are to be permitted to play in any of the teams. Hastings stands ready to put a team in the Nebraska state league, providing it is composed entirely of white players. The people here say they witnessed too much dirty work by colored players last season.<sup>25</sup>

These characterizations of Nebraska's black ball players did not sit well with integrationists. A white *Sporting Life* columnist from Kansas took exception to the insults from Hastings, and penned a strong response: "I wish to say in defence [sic] of the colored players who were in Nebraska last year that there was never a more gentlemanly lot of fellows." He further explained that the "colored players. . . are well liked in every base ball city in the State except Hastings." He finished his letter by turning the tables and attacking the manliness of the segregationists. "It is a well-known fact that the Hastings team of last season was one of the worst gang of 'bluffers' ever gotten together, and if they could not win a game one way, they would [win it] another." He accused the Hastings team of constantly complaining, bickering, and arguing with umpires, and, in closing, he alleged that Hastings' fans treated opponents "like dogs."<sup>26</sup>

Despite such protests, segregationists carried on their battle, and the rhetoric they used to denigrate black ball players is instructive. The derogatory word they most often applied to African

Americans was "coon." The Hastings *Sporting News* correspondent's characterization of the entire integrated association as the "coon league" was quoted earlier. Similarly, in a game against the Lincoln Giants, a player on a rival team tried, poetically, to inspire his teammates to victory: "By the ebony-hued hide of the Lincoln coons, [they] can't roast me when I go home. Let's play to beat [them] or bust." The *Kearney Daily Hub* even announced the defeat of its hometown team in headline form, saying simply "the Coons out-play the Kearneys all around."<sup>27</sup>

Opponents of integration chose their words carefully, and the word "coon" carried well understood connotations. Minstrel show writers had created the stock character "Zip Coon" in the mid-1800s as an urban counterpart to the rural "Jim Crow." Historian James Dormon describes this staple of the minstrel show as a "black dandy, sporting his flashy attire and projecting a slick, urbane persona . . . within . . . the overall demeanor of the ignorant black buffoon mimicking . . . sophisticated white folks."

Although nearly half a century old, the word "coon" gained widespread currency as a racial epithet in the 1880s when a steady stream of "coon songs" captured white imagination. According to Dormon, these wildly popular songs portrayed blacks as "ignorant, indolent . . . devoid of personal honesty or personal honor . . . given to drunkenness and gambling [and] utterly without ambition." In short, he argues, African Americans were depicted "as dangerous . . . to white bourgeois culture . . . [and] a threat to the American social order." Opponents of integration used the "coon" image to portray blacks as cheating, drunken, thieving, dishonorable louts, explicitly challenging the alternative portrayal of African Americans as "colored gentlemen" with a claim to manliness or manly pursuits.<sup>28</sup>

Throughout the short and turbulent existence of the Nebraska State

League—from the association's first meetings in February until the league's failure in July—integration remained a contentious issue. Some segregationists actively campaigned to keep black players out of the league; others tried to sabotage the performance of bi-racial teams; and still others physically assaulted African Americans. Regardless of their methods, segregationists succeeded in keeping attention on the divisive issue.

Proponents of Jim Crow nearly scuttled the NSL before it even got off the ground. After failing to find a minor-league circuit for the Lincoln Giants, Will Castone started organizing a state league himself, and in the winter of 1891–92 set up a meeting with baseball boosters from several promising cities. Castone's original plan called for the all-black Giants to represent the capital city, but obstinate segregationists, led by Ulysses S. Rohrer and the Hastings delegation, strongly opposed that idea and Castone's high-profile role. Boosters from Hastings published columns in *Sporting Life* and the *Nebraska State Journal* criticizing the undertaking and advocating the color line.<sup>29</sup>

The opposition from Hastings quickly stirred up public sentiment against Castone's team. "It is quietly understood (so the reports have it)," wrote one Lincoln journalist, "that no colored team will be admitted. There may and will be colored players, but no team where all are colored players." The University of Nebraska student newspaper also read the situation accurately, writing "the management of Hastings ball club, and that of other minor ball clubs of the state, object to entering a league with the Lincoln colored giants. They are anxious to secure Lincoln in their circuit if a club of other than colored men can be organized."<sup>30</sup>

With uncertainty surrounding the Nebraska State League, other interested parties hijacked Castone's scheme. Will Houseworth, a Lincoln businessman and long-time baseball supporter, took over the planning and called a meeting

to rival Castone's. In his appeals, Houseworth explicitly distanced himself from his African-American adversary. Writing to the segregationists in Hastings he emphasized that his meeting "will be separate and independent of the one called by William Castone." Houseworth's plans received popular support, and a newspaper in Hastings exulted that "Castone, the colored gentleman from Lincoln, is being ignored in the formation of a base ball league for the state. This is right and proper."<sup>31</sup>

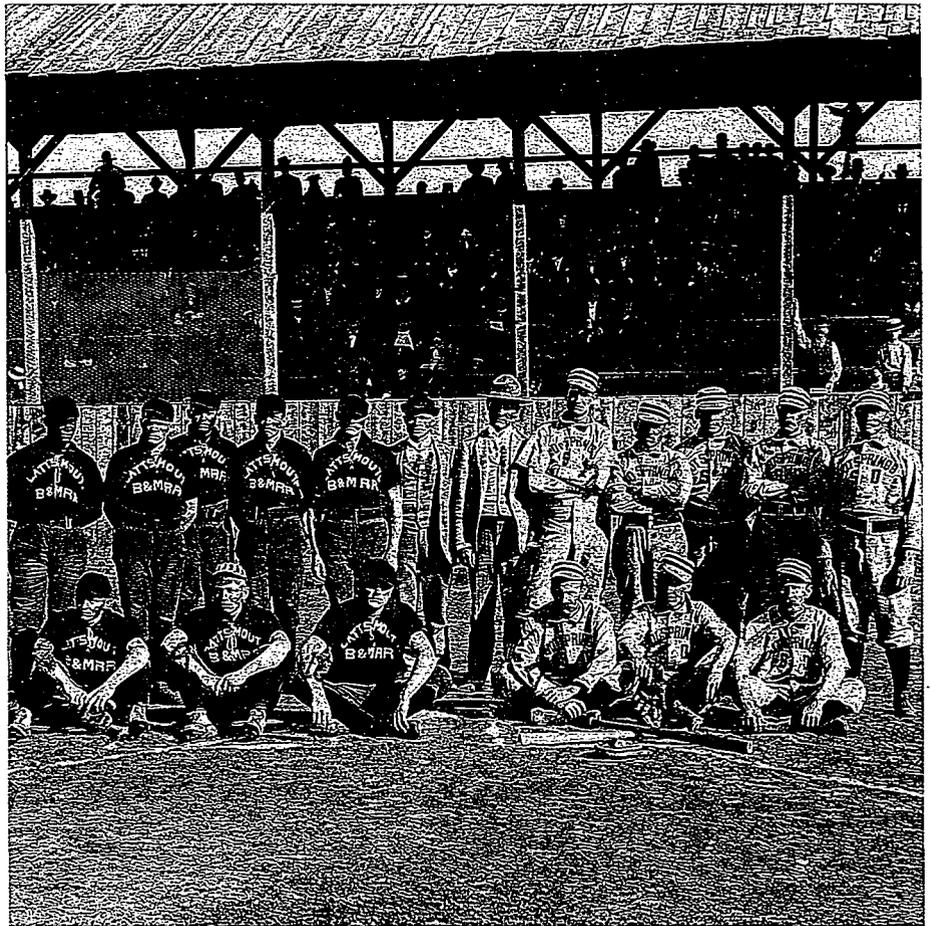
His plans defeated, Castone reluctantly represented the Lincoln Giants at Houseworth's meeting. With important segments of the white sporting community arrayed against him, though, he had few prospects. Afterwards, he explained the situation to *The Sporting News*:

It was supposed that Lincoln would be represented by the famous Lincoln Giants (colored), one of the strongest organizations of the kind in the west. . . but such [was] not the case, as Mr. Houseworth, who represented the capital city at the meeting has taken the management of Lincoln, and consequently the Giants for this season are not in it.<sup>32</sup>

Castone, who had reportedly turned down an invitation to join the Cuban Giants, stayed in Lincoln and eventually signed with Houseworth's team.<sup>33</sup>

In the end, the African-American pitcher had the last laugh. To thwart the Giants, the rival Lincoln franchise had quickly thrown together financial backing, but from the beginning, the team was on shaky ground. After several rainouts in early May, Houseworth's squad went bankrupt, and the league transferred the franchise to Kearney.<sup>34</sup>

Segregationists had rallied successfully against Castone's highly visible role in the proceedings and demonstrated their political power by defeating the black promoter's plans. The elimination of the Lincoln Giants limited the number of African Americans in the league, and, more importantly, allowed segregationist whites to re-exert control over baseball in the state. By marginalizing Castone, recalcitrant whites decisively established their authority over the sport



Plattsmouth at Hot Springs, South Dakota, 1891. Problems on the Plattsmouth team were blamed on white players' objections to black teammates, but evidence suggests the troublemakers raised the race issue primarily to justify leaving the team to improve their prospects elsewhere. Cass County Historical Society Museum, Plattsmouth, Neb.

and demonstrated their ability to dictate their own terms. Although not initially strong enough to completely segregate the organization, they served notice that the inclusion of black players was a controversial issue, and throughout the summer, powerful segregationists continued the fight.

After the season began in May with six African-American players on three squads, segregationist players took the lead from their allies on the sidelines.<sup>35</sup> Early in the year *Sporting Life* observed, "The Nebraska League is the only league in the country which permits the employment of colored players. Quite a number of negroes are playing on the

various teams, but their white fellows make their lives burdensome."<sup>36</sup>

In particular, white players in Plattsmouth conspired against their African-American teammates and sabotaged the team's season. With three African-American players—pitcher Jack Reeves, catcher Frank Maupin, and infielder John Patterson—Plattsmouth was the most integrated NSL team, as well as the most volatile. Throughout the early 1890s, Plattsmouth's management had proved friendly to the state's black players. The team's signing of two African Americans in late 1891 signaled the beginning of integration in Nebraska baseball and caused the dissolution of

the Lincoln Giants. Furthermore, the squad was the first league club to have an integrated roster when it signed catcher Frank Maupin the following February.<sup>37</sup>

Despite Plattsmouth's trailblazing role, the team's integrated roster did not sit well with several white players. Trouble sprang up in mid-May when a Plattsmouth newspaper suggested that

is on foot to sign the old Lincoln Giants to represent this city and release the white players. This meets with favor in some quarters and disfavor in others. To our mind it seems best to give [the] manager . . . full and unlimited control of the team. Let him sign whom he please[s] so long as he gets a team. If he wants white players and can sign them let him do it. If the colored players are what he wants let's have them. [Just] give us a ball team by all means.<sup>40</sup>

in St. Joseph, Missouri, and Long went to Watertown, Wisconsin. With the troublemakers gone, but with few replacements available, Plattsmouth limped along and folded soon after.

The three Plattsmouth slackers were not the only athletes who objected to black players in the league. Another highly publicized incident from the first month of the season demonstrated the

racial turmoil that swirled around the league. During a game at Grand Island in May, Bud Fowler played second base for the visiting Kearney Cotton Pickers. With a man on first, the black second baseman fielded a grounder and applied a hard tag to the

#### African-American Players in the 1892 Nebraska State League

William Castone, Lincoln-Kearney	May 1, 1892–July 13, 1892	Kearney disbands July 13
Bud Fowler, Lincoln-Kearney	May 1, 1892–July 13, 1892	Kearney disbands July 13
Frank Maupin, Plattsmouth	May 1, 1892–June 26, 1892	Plattsmouth disbands June 26
John Patterson, Plattsmouth	May 1, 1892–June 26, 1892	Plattsmouth disbands June 26
John Reeves, Plattsmouth	May 1, 1892–June 26, 1892	Plattsmouth disbands June 26
George Taylor, Beatrice	May 1, 1892–July 5, 1892	Beatrice disbands July 5

“a general shaking up of the entire team” was in order. As the team fell toward last place, the reason slowly became clear. “The continued defeat of [Plattsmouth],” the *Omaha Evening Bee* reported, “can only be laid to the fact that the club is torn with dissensions. The white players are . . . combined against the colored men, and it is said that three of the men . . . have played sulky ball . . . and take no interest in the team.”<sup>38</sup>

Three days later, the crisis came to a head when the team hosted Kearney for a doubleheader. Once again, the *Bee* was on top of the story: “The disorganized Plattsmouth team was defeated twice today. The result was easily accomplished [because] the home team played a lifeless indifferent game, and apparently did not care to win.”<sup>39</sup> After two “lifeless” games, the local fans were fed up with the team and suggested radical steps to solve the situation. An exasperated reporter summed up local sentiment:

It has now come to pass that the Plattsmouth ball club is in desperate straits. The local management is in great doubt as to what move to make. A project

In mid-June, the Plattsmouth correspondent to *The Sporting News* finally identified the clique of segregationists who had ruined the season. “Kennedy at first has played ragged ball,” he wrote. “The man is dissatisfied with the team and is opposed to playing with negroes [sic] and wants to leave . . . Myers . . . has alternated in centerfield and pitcher and has played a spiritless fielding game and pitched indifferent ball. He is in the same boat with Long and Kennedy and does not like the colored boys.”

A. S. Kennedy, William Myers, and “Froggy” Long were all veterans of several minor league seasons, and all hailed from north of the Mason-Dixon Line. Kennedy's hometown was Cedar Bluffs, Kansas; Myers came from Carroll, Iowa; and Long was from Chicago. The NSL was a member league of the National Agreement, and the players risked being blacklisted for their actions. Nevertheless, Kennedy continued his intentionally poor playing until Plattsmouth finally sold him to Beatrice. Myers and Long jumped their contracts and deserted Plattsmouth in midseason. Myers headed to an independent team

stomach of the runner, Grand Island's captain, W. A. Rourke. Rourke, took exception to the play, and attacked Fowler. The Kearney defensive players quickly separated the two, but the incident caused a sensation. One Grand Island newspaper thought that Fowler had “knocked the wind” out of Rourke by unnecessarily “pound[ing] both his fists” into the runner. Despite singling out Fowler as the instigator, the reporter conceded that “both men are perhaps equally to blame,” an assessment that might suggest Rourke had previously done something—perhaps abusing Fowler with epithets or spiking him—to precipitate the unpleasantness.<sup>41</sup>

Another Grand Island reporter, criticized Rourke's “apparently un governable temper,” and advised that if Rourke had been “physically injured, in an intentional and unprofessional manner by the saffron-hued individual on second, recourse should have been had to the proper authorities . . . instead of taking the law into his own hands.” This sportswriter condemned ungentlemanly activities like “slugging” and “scrapping matches” and warned that the public would quickly “express its

disapproval of such things."<sup>42</sup>

Regardless of the particulars, most commentators explicitly assumed a racial angle. Indeed, after the game, one reporter suggested that "the second base incident was virtually a debate on the question: 'Should colored players be allowed in the state league.'" After gauging sentiment from the grandstand, he decided, "the judges [had] decided in favor of the negative." When word of the violence spread, Ulysses S. Rohrer, the league secretary, along with the league president—who also hailed from Hastings—promised to investigate the matter. Their objectivity immediately came under suspicion, however, when they admitted to the *Nebraska State Journal* that "they were opposed to colored players."<sup>43</sup> Not surprisingly, nothing ever came of the matter, and Grand Island's Rourke was not disciplined for his assault.

Throughout the 1892 season, agitators in Nebraska consistently lobbied for Jim Crow and battled to exclude African Americans. A closer examination, however, reveals that some troublemakers opportunistically used the color line as a means to advance agendas unrelated to issues of integration. In particular, by constantly labeling the state's black ball players "coons" and by harping on their supposed lack of gentility and proclivity for "dirty work," white segregationists were able to deflect attention from their own dishonorable and unsavory actions and to mask their own questionable behavior.

The leading baseball segregationist in Nebraska was undoubtedly Hastings' Ulysses S. Rohrer. He consistently advocated Jim Crow and repeatedly denigrated black athletes. He inspired his allies in Hastings to write segregationist letters to the *Nebraska State Journal* and *The Sporting News*, and helped sabotage Will Castone's original 1892 Nebraska State League. Before his campaign against African-American ball players, however, Rohrer had already been a well known and controversial

figure in the state. Many observers held Rohrer responsible for the Hastings team's reputation for arguing, complaining, and fighting. After the 1891 season, a writer in the *Fremont Daily Tribune* bitterly denounced the Hastings leader and declared "The conduct of . . . Ulysses S. Rohrer . . . was not only ungentlemanly and outrageous, but [his] slugging proclivities [resulted] . . . in a cowardly, low-lived assault upon [the] umpire." It was, perhaps, no surprise that Rohrer continued to stir up trouble with segregationist agitation. In response to one of his many anti-black pronouncements, one correspondent sighed wearily, "Rohrer has a wheel in his head."<sup>44</sup>

In 1892 the Hastings ringleader took his "outrageous" behavior to another level. During the season, Rohrer orchestrated his election to the position of league secretary, and, soon after, in clear violation of the NSL's constitution, he took over as manager and shortstop of the Hastings team. As the league secretary, Rohrer oversaw the NSL's umpires and was responsible for assigning and disciplining the league's arbiters. Rival teams in the league quickly denounced this obvious conflict of interest. A reporter in Beatrice declared that Rohrer was "a menace to clean ball playing" and predicted that umpires would make an extra effort to please the league secretary-shortstop.<sup>45</sup>

Despite howls of protest Rohrer refused to step down, and a Plattsmouth sportswriter angrily wrote "Secretary Rohrer of Hastings comes in for a large share of criticism and to [this] writer it certainly looks as if he richly deserves it. Ever since his election the entire league has been manipulated in Hastings' favor, and if the league is a failure he alone should be responsible." The Fremont franchise took great exception to the "manifestly unfair" situation and, with "no remedy" in the league constitution, Fremont withdrew, helping to bring about the NSL's downfall.<sup>46</sup>

Rohrer no doubt knew of his nega-

tive reputation, but rather than change his behavior and live up to the lofty standards of Gilded Age manliness, he chose to confuse the issue and to divert attention from his own actions. Throughout the short lifespan of the NSL, he crusaded against the league's African Americans. As Rohrer became embroiled in controversy because of his triple role as manager, shortstop, and league secretary, he continued to deflect the issue and ensured that his duplicity was not the biggest story. To further fan the flames of controversy, Rohrer told the *Nebraska State Journal*—in his capacity as league secretary—that he "opposed colored players." As long as racial turmoil continued to swirl around the NSL, Rohrer could be confident that his questionable behavior paled in comparison to the "dirty work" of the league's "coons."<sup>47</sup>

Other white agitators brazenly adopted the rhetoric of segregation to achieve personal goals unconnected to racial matters. Plattsmouth first baseman A. S. Kennedy, for example, refused to give his best effort and played "ragged ball" throughout the season. He was reportedly unhappy, because he was "opposed to playing with negroes."<sup>48</sup> Kennedy's dissatisfaction, however, began well before he took the field with black teammates. After playing for Beatrice in 1891 he signed a contract to play the next year with Plattsmouth. He later changed his mind and signed a second contract to return to Beatrice. The league frowned on his double-dealing and awarded Kennedy back to Plattsmouth. Before the 1892 season, though, his dissatisfaction was obvious. A sportswriter observed, "It is apparent that Kennedy is not desirous of playing with [Plattsmouth]."<sup>49</sup>

When the season began, Kennedy played half-heartedly and continued lobbying unsuccessfully for his release. Only at the end of May—one month into the season and two months after he had originally agreed to play in Plattsmouth—did he publicly declare an opposition to his African-American

teammates. His "ragged play" persisted, and, finally, in June, the exasperated Plattsmouth management sold his contract to Beatrice. Kennedy happily joined his new team and finished the season uneventfully. Beatrice, however, also had an integrated roster including African-American infielder George Taylor. Despite this new black teammate, Kennedy no longer seemed "opposed to negroes," and he actually played his best. His calm tenure on the new integrated team calls into question the motivation for his conspiratorial behavior in Plattsmouth.

One final case further illustrates the opportunistic use of the color line. In early June, Hastings catcher Pierce Chiles jumped his contract and went to St. Joseph, Missouri, leaving behind a debt of forty dollars. Criticized in the press, the young catcher justified his actions in a letter to the *Hastings Daily Nebraskan* by writing that he objected to "playing against colored men."<sup>50</sup> Chiles had not previously expressed an aversion to African Americans and because of his unpaid debt people in Nebraska were skeptical. Even the *Hastings Daily Nebraskan*, no friend of integration, labeled the "excuse . . . lame and . . . so ridiculous that none will accept it."<sup>51</sup>

Regardless of their true motives Kennedy and Chiles understood that the rhetoric of race provided political cover for their questionable actions. Normally ungentlemanly activities like jumping a contract and skipping out on a debt or playing intentionally "ragged ball" to orchestrate a trade would have incurred the wrath of the sporting community. With the integrated diamonds of Nebraska already in turmoil, however, Kennedy and Chiles could plausibly justify their actions and successfully confuse the issue by mimicking the deeds of other segregationists. Their convenient adoption of Jim Crow allowed them to get away with otherwise unmanly behavior.

Arguments over Nebraska's black athletes, though influenced by national

Standings of the 1892 Nebraska State League <sup>52</sup>			
First Season			
Team	W	L	GB
Beatrice	27	10 [a]	-
Grand Island	25	15	3.5
Kearney	18	21 [d]	10
Hastings	17	20	10
Fremont	11	18 [b]	12
Plattsmouth	11	24 [c]	15

[a] Beatrice disbands on July 5, 1892. The three remaining teams start a new season.  
 [b] Fremont drops out of the league June 20, 1892.  
 [c] Plattsmouth disbands on July 9, 1892.  
 [d] Lincoln franchise transferred to Kearney on May 13, 1892.

Second Season			
Team	W	L	GB
Kearney	2	2 [a]	-
Hastings	2	2 [a]	-
Grand Island	2	2 [b]	-

[a] Hastings and Kearney disband on July 13, 1892.  
 [b] Grand Island disbands on July 9, 1892, leaving a two-team league.

political and athletic trends, were intensely local, and the convoluted nature of the color line—whether based on principle or on situational convenience—did not follow strict political party allegiances. In these contentious debates individual Nebraskans often made personal decisions that conflicted with their own stated political affiliations and that seem surprising and out of step with their political philosophies. In short, the color line in the Gilded Age was not strictly a party-line issue, and people of all political persuasions fell on each side of the issue.

The complexity of Jim Crow is aptly demonstrated by the experiences of two Nebraskans who most forcefully represented the opposing sides. Ulysses

Rohrer of Hastings was the very public face of the segregationist contingent in Nebraska. Rohrer, born in Sterling, Illinois, consistently opposed integration; yet in writing his biography in 1890 he described himself as "a staunch Republican in politics." Similarly, the *Hastings Daily Nebraskan*, a self-defined Republican newspaper, never wavered in its support of Rohrer and his segregationist policies. Although in the 1890s the party of Lincoln was quickly backpedaling from its radical reconstruction promises, most Republican politicians still paid lip service to equal opportunity and did not lead highly publicized campaigns for segregation.<sup>53</sup>

In contrast, Thomas M. Patterson, the manager of the Plattsmouth team, was a leading advocate of integrated baseball. In 1891 Patterson lured two players away from the Lincoln Giants and became the first manager of a white professional team in the state to sign African Americans. The following year he signed a third black player, the first NSL manager to do so. When the 1892 campaign started, Patterson's team, with three black athletes, was the most integrated in the league. Although Kennedy and Chiles sabotaged the team's fortunes with their segregationist rhetoric, Patterson refused to release any African Americans.

Patterson was the scion of Plattsmouth's leading Democratic family. At various times his father had served as a Democratic city treasurer, county treasurer, state legislator, and state senator. His brother had recently won election as city treasurer, and Thomas Patterson was just starting to follow in his father's footsteps in banking and in politics. Even though the national Democrat party was the avowed champion of white supremacy in the 1890s, Patterson supported the rights of local African-American athletes. In towns and cities across the country, prominent citizens like Rohrer and Patterson debated the color line and ultimately decided the fate of integration. This complex and controversial issue did not follow the

patterns of national electoral politics and frequently resolved itself locally on the basis of local conditions.<sup>54</sup>

The Nebraska State League finally sputtered to a close in mid-July 1892. Reasons for the failure were plentiful: bad weather, shaky finances, contract-jumping players, and, not least of all, racial turmoil. Sensing the increasingly inhospitable racial climate, most of the black NSL veterans left the state. Bud Fowler and George Taylor continued their baseball careers into the twentieth century, playing for some of the best all-black teams in the country. Jack Reeves and Frank Maupin later played on integrated semi-professional and amateur teams in Nebraska, and both probably eventually returned to their hometown Kansas City, but their whereabouts after the early 1890s is unknown.

John Patterson went on to a storied career in black baseball that lasted until 1907. Immediately after the failure of the NSL in 1892, however, he returned to his home in Starkville, Mississippi, and some of his friends in Plattsmouth attempted to find him new employment. Seemingly unaware of the growing segregation in the national pastime, or even of the contemporary political situation in the South, one reporter wrote, "If some of the Mississippi League teams need a great infielder and a heavy hitter, we can all recommend John Patterson."<sup>55</sup>

George William Castone, the state's most important and versatile black ballplayer, also left Nebraska after 1892. Unable to rebuild his Lincoln Giants in the midst of the Panic of 1893 and unable to compete with white segregationists determined to hijack or scuttle his plans, he moved to Chicago. Inexplicably, it appears that Castone never again played professional baseball, either with an integrated squad or with any of the important black teams of the era, and it is not known what he did after leaving Nebraska. His last known correspondence appeared the following year in *The Sporting News*.

Each spring the weekly paper printed "situations wanted" advertisements as a service for unemployed athletes and minor league teams looking for players. For several weeks in May of 1893 the following ad appeared:

George W. Castone, the well-known pitcher of the Kearney club of 1892, who pitched that club to the top; and in 1891 won the state amateur championship for Beatrice [and] in 1890 the same for Lincoln, is still unsigned. Any club wishing the services of a first-class pitcher would do well by corresponding with him.<sup>56</sup>

Castone's ad went unanswered, and this true baseball Renaissance man remained unemployed. Certainly his varied skills—pitching, hitting, managing, organizing, promoting, and writing—would have been an asset to some club. With Jim Crow looming over the game, however, there were few positions available for an African American, no matter how gentlemanly or competent.

#### Notes

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<sup>1</sup> B.W.E. "Hastings's League Club," *The Sporting News*, May 1, 1892, 5. The writer was a little off the mark. Fremont joined Hastings and Grand Island in fielding all-white rosters.

<sup>2</sup> For further discussion of baseball's racial troubles in the late nineteenth century, see Jerry Malloy, "Out at Home," *The National Pastime* 2 No. 1 (Fall 1983): 14–29; Robert Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970), chs. 2–4; Mark Savoie, "Drawing the Line: The Trials of African-American Baseball Players in the International League (1886–1889)," *Nine: a Journal of Baseball History and Social Policy Perspectives* 1, No. 1 (Fall 1992), 43–60; Gregory Bond, "Whipped Curs and Real Men: Race, Manliness, and the Segregation of Organized Baseball in the Late Nineteenth Century" (Master's Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> For the unruly behavior of Gilded Age players and baseball's attempts to curb such excesses, see Harold Seymour, *Baseball: The Early Years*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960; reprint 1988), ch. 12; and Steven Riess, *Touching Base: Professional Baseball and American Culture in the Progressive Era*, rev. ed. (Urbana, Illinois:

University of Illinois Press, 1999), 156–167.

<sup>4</sup> For articles on the formation of the Omaha Lafayettes and the Lincoln Giants, see *Detroit Plaindealer*, Jan. 3, 1890, 4; and "Ready to Play Ball: Lincoln's Colored Team on Hand," *Nebraska State Journal*, May 4, 1890, 3.

<sup>5</sup> *The Sporting News*, July 12, 1890, 5.

<sup>6</sup> For articles on the financial troubles of the Lincoln Giants, and their subsequent reorganization, see *Nebraska State Journal*, June 27, 1890, 3; June 28, 1890, 2; June 29, 1890, 3; July 1, 1890, 2; July 2, 1890, 2.

<sup>7</sup> Wm. [George W.] Castone, "Here is a Good Chance," *The Sporting News*, Jan. 31, 1891, 2. Castone's first column in *The Sporting News* appeared on July 12, 1890, 5. Other columns ran on Jan. 31, 1891; July 11, 1891; Aug. 8, 1891; Feb. 13, 1892; and Mar. 12, 1892.

<sup>8</sup> The Cuban Giants, along with the New York Gorhams, another all-black team, played in the 1889 Middle States League. In 1890 The Giants, playing under the name of the York Colored Monarchs, belonged to the Eastern Inter-State League. In 1891, the Cuban Giants played in the short-lived Connecticut State League for their final appearance in organized baseball. See *Sol White's History of Colored Baseball*, ed. Jerry Malloy (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska, 1998), pages 162–168.

<sup>9</sup> Lincoln Giants rosters compiled from press accounts in Lincoln and other Nebraska cities.

<sup>10</sup> Population data from *The Compendium of the Eleventh Census (1890) of the United States of America*.

<sup>11</sup> Many historians have written about the emerging sporting culture of the late nineteenth century. See, for example: Steven Riess, *City Games: The Evolution of American Urban Society and the Rise of Sports* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989); Dale Somers, *The Rise of Sports in New Orleans, 1850–1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972); Stephen Hardy, *How Boston Played: Sport, Recreation, and Community, 1865–1915* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1982); and Benjamin Rader, *American Sports: From the Age of Folk Games to the Age of Spectators* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1983), especially part II. Scholars have also given the Gilded Age's so-called crisis of masculinity much attention. Two good surveys are: E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993); and Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: The Free Press, 1996). Some scholars have examined the intersection of race and gender in this time period. See especially: Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995); Glenda Gilmore, *Gender*

and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896–1920 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986); and Martin Summers, *Manliness and Its Discontents: The Black Middle Class and the Transformation of Masculinity, 1900–1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

<sup>12</sup> Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*; Eliot Gorn, *The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Prize Fighting in America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 141 and 252.

<sup>13</sup> Gorn, *The Manly Art*, 188, 191; Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 232. For a similar analysis, see Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, especially his discussion of nineteenth century athletics, 137–141.

<sup>14</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life*, quoted in Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 243.

<sup>15</sup> David Gerber, *Black Ohio and the Color Line* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976), 51, 59.

<sup>16</sup> "The Plattsmouth Club," *The Sporting News*, Mar. 26, 1892, 8; *Nebraska State Journal*, June 20, 1890, 3.; "Beatrice Boys," *The Sporting News*, Jan. 7, 1893, 4.

<sup>17</sup> *The Sporting News*, Apr. 9, 1892, 1; "Baseball For Nebraska," *Nebraska State Journal*, Apr. 24, 1892, 12.

<sup>18</sup> "Baseball For Nebraska," *Nebraska State Journal*, Apr. 24, 1892, 12.

<sup>19</sup> "Kearney Playing Great Ball," *The Sporting News*, June 25, 1892, 6.

<sup>20</sup> For "Dad Fowler," see *Nebraska State Journal*, Apr. 29, 1892, 4. For "Grandpa Fowler," see *Nebraska State Journal*, Apr. 24, 1892, 5. For discussions of Fowler's appointment, see "Lincoln Note," *The Sporting News*, Apr. 9, 1892, 5; "The Lincoln Team at Work," *The Sporting News*, Apr. 30, 1892, 1. For a story about a game protested by Captain Fowler, see *Nebraska State Journal*, May 7, 1892, 5.

<sup>21</sup> For a discussion of Fowler as captain of the Montpeliers, see *Rutland Daily Herald*, Aug. 17, 1887, 4; and (Montpelier) *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Aug. 17, 1887, 1. Bert Wakefield, an African-American second baseman, captained the integrated Troy Trojans of the independent 1895 Kansas State League, which had not signed the National Agreement. He is the last known black captain of an integrated professional team until mid-twentieth century. For information on Wakefield, see Gregory Bond, "The Segregation of Professional Baseball in Kansas, 1895–1899: A Case Study in the Rise of Jim Crow During the Gilded-Age," *The Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture, 2002*. Alvin Hall, editor. (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2003), 65.

<sup>22</sup> "They Challenge Everybody," *The Sporting News*, July 11, 1891, 5; *Nebraska State Journal*, June 28, 1892, 2.

<sup>23</sup> "Base Ball in Lincoln," *Lincoln Daily Sun*, Feb. 24, 1892, 1; *Plattsmouth Daily Journal*, July 13, 1892, 4; "Again in Good Trim," *Nebraska State Journal*, May 15, 1892, 2. See similarly: *Nebraska State Journal*, Aug. 14, 1892, 2.

<sup>24</sup> Doc., "Hastings Redivivus," *Sporting Life*, Mar. 26, 1892, 13.

<sup>25</sup> "Opposed to Colored Players," *Nebraska State Journal*, Feb. 6, 1892, 6. See similarly, "The Color Line," *Sporting Life*, Feb. 13, 1892, 1.

<sup>26</sup> "Why Not Kansas?" *Sporting Life*, Feb. 27, 1892, 9.

<sup>27</sup> "Glory for Kearney," *Kearney Daily Hub*, May 26, 1890, 4. The inspiring words seemed to work, as Kearney rallied from a 5-1 deficit in the bottom of the ninth inning to beat the Lincoln Giants 6-5; "Lincoln's Victory," *Kearney Daily Hub*, May 24, 1890, 4. Segregationists liberally used the word "coon" to describe the targets of their invective, but I have been unable to find a single contemporary Nebraska example of a different derogatory name for black players.

<sup>28</sup> James H. Dormon, "Shaping the Popular Image of Post-Reconstruction American Blacks: The 'Coon Song' Phenomenon of the Gilded Age," *American Quarterly* 40, No. 4 (Dec. 1988), 450–471; quotations from pages 451, 455, and 466. Another good analysis of the etymology of the word "coon" appears in David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness* (New York: Verso Press, 1991), ch. 5.

<sup>29</sup> For articles on Castone's organizational plans, see George W. Castone, "A Nebraska State League," *The Sporting News*, Feb. 13, 1892, 5; "Nebraska Moving," *Sporting Life*, Feb. 13, 1892, 4; and "A Nebraska League" *Nebraska State Journal*, Feb. 1, 1892, 15; "The Color Line," *Sporting Life*, Feb. 13, 1892, 1; and "Opposed to Colored Players," *Nebraska State Journal*, Feb. 6, 1892, 6.

<sup>30</sup> "Base Ball in Lincoln," *Lincoln Daily Sun*, Feb. 24, 1892, 1; *Hesperian* Feb. 15, 1892, 7.

<sup>31</sup> "Not Favorable," *Hastings Daily Nebraskan*, Feb. 12, 1892, 1; *Ibid.*, Feb. 22, 1892, 1.

<sup>32</sup> George W. Castone, "The Nebraska State League," *The Sporting News*, Mar. 12, 1892, 1.

<sup>33</sup> For Castone and the Cuban Giants, see "A State League Assured," *Nebraska State Journal*, Feb. 20, 1892, 8; and "Base Ball in Lincoln," *Lincoln Daily Sun*, Feb. 22, 1892, 1.

<sup>34</sup> For articles on the financial straits of the Lincoln NSL franchise, see "The League Falls Down," *Nebraska State Journal*, Apr. 13, 1892, 6; and "Lincoln is—Left Out," *Nebraska State Journal*, May 10, 1892, 2.

<sup>35</sup> Some sources indicate a seventh black player in the 1892 NSL. *Sol White's History of Colored Base Ball* lists Ben Holmes as a third baseman for Fremont (1892). None of the contemporary sources in Nebraska, however, mention Holmes or any

other African American on the Fremont team. The *Fremont Daily Herald*, Apr. 12, 1892, 4, lists an "F. Holmes" at third base.

<sup>36</sup> *Sporting Life*, June 11, 1892, 2.

<sup>37</sup> For Plattsmouth's initial signing of two black players in 1891, see *Nebraska State Journal*, Aug. 17, 1891. For Maupin's signing, see *Lincoln Daily Sun*, Feb. 24, 1892, 1.

<sup>38</sup> *Plattsmouth Daily Journal*, May 18, 1892, 4; *Omaha Evening Bee*, May 31, 1892, 5.

<sup>39</sup> *Omaha Evening Bee*, June 3, 1892, 5.

<sup>40</sup> *Plattsmouth Evening News*, June 3, 1892, 4.

<sup>41</sup> "Kearney Downed," *Grand Island Independent*, May 30, 1892, 4.

<sup>42</sup> *Grand Island Weekly Times* June 2, 1892, 8.

<sup>43</sup> "Kearney Downed," *Grand Island Independent*, May 30, 1892, 4; "State League Gossip," *Nebraska State Journal*, June 1, 1892, 5.

<sup>44</sup> *Fremont Daily Tribune*, Sept. 7, 1891, 4; Charley Grimes, "Out in Nebraska," *The Sporting News*, Apr. 16, 1892, 5.

<sup>45</sup> *Beatrice Daily Democrat*, June 21, 1892, 4.

<sup>46</sup> *Plattsmouth Daily Journal*, July 1, 1892, 4; "No Longer in the League," *Nebraska State Journal*, June 21, 1892, 5.

<sup>47</sup> "State League Gossip," *Nebraska State Journal*, June 1, 1892, 1.

<sup>48</sup> Charley Grimes, "Plattsmouth Doing Poorly," *The Sporting News*, June 11, 1892, 3.

<sup>49</sup> *Plattsmouth Daily Journal*, Apr. 8, 1892, 4.

<sup>50</sup> For a discussion of Chiles's debt, see *Nebraska State Journal*, June 10, 1892, 6. For the letter, see *Hastings Daily Nebraskan*, July 9, 1892, 1.

<sup>51</sup> *Hastings Daily Nebraskan*, July 9, 1892, 1.

<sup>52</sup> Standings are from the *Nebraska State Journal*, June 27, 1892; July 10, 1892; and July 14, 1892.

<sup>53</sup> For a short biography of Ulysses S. Rohrer, see *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Adams, Clay, Hall, and Hamilton Counties Nebraska* (Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1890), pages 305–306. The *Daily Nebraskan* gives its political affiliation as "Republican" in *N. W. Ayer & Sons Newspaper Annual* (Philadelphia: N.W. Ayer and Son, 1892), 448.

<sup>54</sup> For a brief description of Thomas M. Patterson, and a more thorough biography of his father, James Madison Patterson, see *Portrait and Biographical Album of Otoe and Cass Counties, Nebraska*, Vol. II (Chicago: Chapman Brothers, 1889), 757–759.

<sup>55</sup> Charley Grimes, "Gossip From Plattsmouth," *The Sporting News*, July 23, 1892, 2.

<sup>56</sup> *The Sporting News*, May 27, 1893, 5.