SABR Nineteenth Century Committee

Overlooked Legend Award

2026 Final Election Nominees

Biographies compiled and edited by Adam Darowski and Joe Williams with contributions by Matt Albertson, Dan Neumann and Gary Passamonte. Tom Best, Sam Gazdziak, Larry McGill, Justin Mckinney, Eric Miklich, Ralph Peluso and Tom Zocco joined the others in selecting the Project's final nominees. These nominees were all a preliminary or final nominee in previous years, starting with our 2009 election. Credit is also due to former committee members, Charles Faber, Bob Gregory and Sam Reich, as well SABR's Nineteenth Century Committee for their participation over the years for assisting in selecting the previous final ballot nominees.

This is the final SABR Nineteenth Century Overlooked Legends election. From 2009 through 2025, 17 selections were made. This year, we will choose **8 additional selections**, completing the project with 25 Overlooked Legends.

This ballot is split into four tracks:

1. Players from the Major Leagues (1876–1900)
2. Pioneers/Contributors
3. Managers/Executives/Umpires
4. Black Baseball

This ballot is made up of **nine** candidates from each track (for a total of 36 candidates). You will **vote for ten (ranked) candidates** from the ballot, regardless of the track. The **top two vote-getters** from each track will be honored as Overlooked Legends, giving us **eight selections**.

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Players from the Major Leagues (1876–1900)

Tommy Bond

Born: April 2, 1856, **Died:** January 24, 1941
Years: 1874–84
Category: Player (Pitcher)
SABR Biography

Thomas Henry Bond was the best pitcher of the second half of the 1870s and the last living veteran of the National League’s inaugural season. Bond is the only NL pitcher to win 40 games three times, winning 123 games from 1877 through 1879. He paced the league in wins, ERA, and strikeouts two times each and is third all-time in strikeouts per walk (5.04) after active players Jacob deGrom (5.38) and Chris Sale (5.28). He got his start with the NL’s Brooklyn club in 1874 before joining Hartford the following year. While with the Dark Blues, Hall of Famer Candy Cummings taught the right-hander the secrets of his famous curveball, which ultimately led to Bond becoming the team’s ace pitcher. He won 50 of 79 decisions before being released from the team after making unproven accusations of throwing games against the team’s manager, Bob Ferguson. Bond signed with Boston for the 1877 season and won the first pitching Triple Crown, winning 40 games with a 2.11 ERA and 170 strikeouts. He led Boston to back-to-back pennants in 1877 and 1878. In 1879 he began to have arm soreness late in the year which led to a good but not great season in 1880. After throwing 3,359 innings in seven seasons, Bond’s effectiveness essentially disappeared when the mound was moved back to 50 feet in 1881, winning only 13 more games the rest of his major league career. After an eight-game stint with Worcester in 1882, his NL playing days were over. He was appointed a NL umpire for the 1884 season before joining Boston of the Union Association. He was released from Boston during the season and joined Indianapolis of the American Association for seven games to end his major league career. He finished his career ranked third with 234 wins against 163 losses, a 2.14 ERA, and 972 strikeouts (compared to only 193 walks). He attempted comebacks with Memphis of the Southern League in 1885 and Brockton of the New England

League in 1886. In between those minor league stints, he was an umpire for the NL in 1885. Bond was one of the first major league players born in Ireland and the first star pitcher from the Emerald Isle. Today, the top pitching honor in the Irish Baseball League is called the Tommy Bond Best Pitcher Award. Bond was an Overlooked Legend finalist from 2018–2025, finishing second last year.

Lave Cross

Born: May 12, 1866, **Died:** September 6, 1927
Years: 1887–1907
Category: Player (Third Baseman)
SABR Biography

Lave Cross was a third baseman (and a catcher in his early days) who played 14 of his 21 major league seasons in the city of Philadelphia. He split his Philadelphia tenure across four leagues—six seasons in the National League, five in the American League, two in the American Association, and one season in the Players' League. Cross started his lengthy playing career as a semi-pro in Sandusky, Ohio in 1885. He joined the Louisville club of the AA a few years later to play with his brother Amos. In his rookie year during the 1887 season he caught Toad Ramsey, who led the league with 355 strikeouts. Injuries and competition at the position of catcher led Cross to become a utility man before settling in as a full-time third baseman. A solid hitter and an excellent defender, Cross enjoyed his best offensive season in 1894, hitting .387 for the Phillies with a .424 on-base percentage, 132 RBIs, 128 runs scored, 210 hits, and only seven strikeouts. Cross finished his major league career in 1907 with 2,651 hits (fifth all-time upon his retirement) and 1,378 runs batted in (also fifth). He was also third all-time in games played. He retired with more games, total chances, putouts, and assists than any third baseman up to that point. He even had the best fielding percentage at the position. Cross continued his career playing and managing in the minors through 1912 when he played in 145 games for Haverhill of the New England League, batting .292 as a 46- year-old. His obituary published across the country in 1927 stated that he was "one of the greatest third basemen in the history of the game." Cross was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2020, finishing 11th.

George Gore

Born: May 3, 1854, **Died:** September 16, 1933
Years: 1879–1892
Category: Player (Outfielder)
SABR Biography

George Gore was a speedy center fielder from Maine who had a knack for getting on base and scoring runs. In 1,310 games, he scored 1,327 runs, including seven seasons of 100 or more

with two other seasons where he scored fewer than 100 runs but still led the league. He was a hard hitter who also took a walk, leading the league in bases on balls three times and finishing in the top seven in on-base percentage 10 times. Gore retired a .301 career hitter with a .386 on-base percentage. He was the table setter for many championship teams. He played on National League championship teams in 1880, 1881, 1882, 1885, and 1886 with Chicago, and world championship teams with the New York Giants in 1888 and 1889, beating the American Association pennant winners in the “World Series” while batting .455 and .333, respectively. On June 25, 1881, Gore stole seven bases in a single game, a record he shares with Billy Hamilton. At the age of 40 in 1894, Gore joined Binghamton of the Eastern League and batted .319 in 48 games. Gore was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2009 and 2011.

Paul Hines

Born: March 1, 1855, **Died:** July 10, 1935
Years: 1872–91
Category: Player (Outfielder)
SABR Biography

Paul Aloysius Hines, an outstanding defensive center fielder, was among the best all-around players in the game for 20 seasons despite battling significant hearing loss and was most likely baseball’s first deaf major league player. He started his career with Washington of the National Association before becoming a member of the Chicago White Stockings in 1874 and playing for the first National League champion in 1876. In 1878, he joined Providence and became baseball’s first Triple Crown winner when he led the league with four homers, 50 RBIs and a .358 batting average. He also led the league in total bases (125), slugging percentage (.486), and on-base plus slugging (.849). He followed his historic season with another batting title in 1879 (.357), while also leading the league in games (85), hits (146), and total bases (197) as the Grays won their first NL championship. In 1884, along with Old Hoss Radbourn, Hines led the Grays to the NL pennant before defeating the American Association's New York club to win the first “World Series.” Hines ended his career with 1,217 runs (sixth all-time), 2,133 hits (third), 549 extra-base hits (fifth), 855 RBIs (seventh), and a .302 batting average. Hines was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2009 and 2011–2025, finishing sixth last year.

Jim McCormick

Born: November 3, 1856, **Died:** March 10, 1918
Years: 1878–87
Category: Player (Pitcher)
SABR Biography

James McCormick was a workhorse pitcher, debuting with Indianapolis of the National League in 1878. He joined Cleveland in 1879 and started 60 of the club’s 82 games, winning 20 and

leading the league with 40 losses. His fortunes reversed in 1880, as he went 45–28 and led the league in wins, starts (74), complete games (72), and innings (657.2) while posting a 1.85 ERA. He continued to be Cleveland's first-choice hurler until jumping to Cincinnati of the Union Association during the 1884 season. As a member of the Outlaw Reds, he led the circuit in ERA (1.54), shutouts (7) and WHIP (0.786) with a 21–3 record. After the UA folded, he returned to the NL, going first to Providence before joining Chicago. With the White Stockings, he would win another 51 games (against just 15 losses) while helping them to back-to-back NL titles before retiring after an unsuccessful season with Pittsburgh. Overall, McCormick went 265–214 in 10 seasons. His 265 wins ranked third all-time when he retired while his 1,704 strikeouts were tops in history. His 2.43 ERA was lower than the two others who had over 4,000 innings pitched at the time (Mathews at 2.86 and Pud Galvin at 2.70). McCormick led the league in multiple categories over his decade of play, leading in wins, ERA, games, and innings pitched twice each, and complete games three times. McCormick has the highest Wins Above Replacement (76.0) for retired pitchers not in the National Baseball Hall of Fame besides recent candidates Roger Clemens (138.7) and Curt Schilling (80.5). McCormick was an Overlooked Legend Finalist in 2020, 2021 and 2025, finishing tenth last year..

Jimmy Ryan

Born: February 11, 1863, **Died:** October 29, 1923
Years: 1885–1903
Category: Player (Outfielder)
SABR Biography

James Edward Ryan was an outstanding outfielder and leadoff man who spent almost his entire career in Chicago. He joined the White Stockings in 1885, playing for a team that won back-to-back National League pennants. The rest of his career he mostly played on mediocre to poor teams. Ryan was a leading power hitter in his day, leading the NL in 1888 with 16 homers while finishing in the top 10 seven times. He led the NL in total bases in 1888 (283) and 1889 (297). He hit 22 lead-off homers in his career, a record until Eddie Yost passed him in 1959. He twice hit for the cycle (1888 and 1891) and once scored six runs in a game during the 1894 season. Ryan had one of the great arms in history and still ranks third all-time in outfield assists with 375 behind only Tris Speaker (449) and Ty Cobb (392). Famed sportswriter Hugh Fullerton wrote at the time of Ryan's death that "He was known as the most accurate and clever thrower in the history of the game." Ryan used that great arm to occasionally pitch, appearing in 24 games and 117 innings with a 6-1 record and a 3.62 ERA. Ryan retired with 2,014 games (third all-time), 1,643 runs (fifth), 2,513 hits (sixth), 451 doubles (fifth), 118 homers (fourth), 1,093 RBIs (12th), 726 extra-base hits (fifth), and 3,632 total bases (fourth) while batting .308 with a .375 OBP. He played and managed in the minors when his big league career was done, finishing up in 1908 with the Montgomery Senators of the Southern Association. Ryan was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2015 and 2017.

Jack Stivetts

Born: March 31, 1868, **Died:** April 18, 1930
Years: 1889–1899
Category: Player (Pitcher)
SABR Biography

John Elmer “Jack” Stivetts was a workhorse pitcher in the 1890s who was also an excellent hitter. As a 21-year-old rookie with the St. Louis Browns in 1889, he led the American Association in ERA (2.25) as the team’s third starter. The next season, Browns co-aces Silver King and Ice Box Chamberlain departed from the team, opening up the ace role for Stivetts. He responded by winning 27 and 33 games the next two seasons, while also leading the AA with 259 strikeouts in 1891. Stivetts also had a penchant for hitting home runs and his seven round-trippers in 1890 established a single-season record for pitchers that lasted until 1931. He followed that with seven more home runs in 1891, though three came as a right fielder. In 1892, Stivetts signed with Boston and won 131 games with them (against just 82 losses), including a career high 35 victories in 1892. His 4.12 ERA with Boston (in a hitter’s park) was better than the league average of 4.29. He also batted .305 with 21 homers as a member of the Beaneaters, with a career-high eight home runs coming in 1894 (four as a pitcher). In 1898, he was traded back to the St. Louis Browns, but refused to report. At this point, he was playing more in the outfield than on the mound. The Browns were then sold and Stivetts found himself a member of the 1899 Cleveland Spiders, widely recognized as the worst team in history. Stivetts was released after 18 games (seven on the mound) and retired from baseball with a 203–132 record (.606 winning percentage) and a 3.74 ERA to go along with his .298 batting average and 35 home runs. He hit 21 of his home runs as a pitcher, still 11th all time. Stivetts was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2021.

Mike Tiernan

Born: January 21, 1867, **Died:** November 7, 1918
Years: 1887–1899
Category: Player (Outfielder)
SABR Biography

“Silent Mike” Tiernan was a left-handed hitting right fielder who spent his entire 13-year, 1,478-game career playing for the New York Giants—a rarity for the 19th century. Tiernan broke in with the Giants at the age of 20 in 1887, batting .287 as a rookie. In 1890, Tiernan remained with the Giants despite watching six Hall of Fame teammates —John Montgomery Ward, Buck Ewing, Roger Conner, Jim O’Rourke, Tim Keefe, and Hank O’Day—depart for Ward’s upstart Players’ League. His loyalty (which was driven more by the salary ceiling imposed by the Players’ League) was repaid as he led the National League in home runs (13), total bases (274), and on-base plus slugging (.880). In 1891 after the Players’ League had disbanded, he again led the NL in round-trippers with 16 and OPS with .882. In his career, Tiernan had seven

seasons with a .300 batting average (maxing out at .369 in 1896), and scoring 100 or more runs (with a high of 147 in 1889). He stole 428 bases, including 25+ in 10 seasons with a career high of 56 in 1890. In addition to his skills, Tiernan is remembered for his gentlemanly personality. In *The New Bill James Historical Baseball Abstract*, James referred to Tiernan as a "better man than ballplayer." Tiernan's .311 batting average in the 19th century ranks 11th while his .392 on-base percentage ranks sixth and his .463 slugging percentage ranks fifth (6,000 or more plate appearances). His 106 home runs are fifth and 162 triples are seventh. Tiernan was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2021.

George Van Haltren

Born: March 30, 1866, **Died:** October 1, 1945
Years: 1887–1903
Category: Player (Outfielder)
SABR Biography

A pitcher in his early years with a 40–31 record, George Edward Martin Van Haltren became a premier center fielder and leadoff hitter with the New York Giants after earlier productive stops in Chicago (NL), Baltimore (AA and NL), Brooklyn (PL) and Pittsburgh (NL). When his major league career was over, he had accumulated 2,544 hits (fifth all-time), 1,642 runs (sixth), 161 triples (10th), 1,015 RBIs (17th), and 583 stolen bases (fifth) with a .316 batting average and a .386 on-base percentage. He scored over 100 runs 11 times and batted .300 or more 12 times. The mustached Van Haltren, a talented bunter and an outstanding defensive stalwart with a tremendous throwing arm (three times led the NL in assists from the outfield), finished in the top 10 in hits, triples, runs, batting average, stolen bases, total bases, and on-base percentage a grand total of 42 times. After he left the Giants, he took his talents to the Pacific Coast League where he played with Seattle in 1904 and as a playing manager for five seasons with Oakland (1905-1909). Van Haltren, who was born in St. Louis, Missouri, grew up in Oakland and launched his baseball career there in the California State League as a catcher in 1885. He never moved away from Oakland with any permanence. It was written around the time of his death in 1945 that Van Haltren was the last PCL player to sport a handlebar moustache. Van Haltren was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2010, 2014–2021, 2024 and 2025, finishing ninth last year.

Pioneers/Contributors

Joe Leggett

Born: January 14, 1828, **Died:** July 25, 1894
Years: 1856–1866

Category: Pioneer

Joseph Bowne Leggett was one of baseball's first stars and the first great catcher in baseball history. He was a field general, had a tremendous throwing arm that kept many base runners from attempting to steal, and popularized the catcher's positioning much closer behind the batter than other catchers of his time. Previously, the catcher stood more than 20 feet behind the plate. His positioning enabled the young superstar Jim Creighton, who he recruited after the Excelsior of Brooklyn fell to the Star Club in 1859, to throw swiftly as the two players formed the greatest battery in the game. Leggett, the Excelsiors' captain, was a powerful hitter who led all National Association of Base Ball Players clubs in runs scored in both 1859 and 1860. In 1858, he was chosen to represent Brooklyn in the Fashion Course Games, the first all-star games. During his career, he never wore a mask or used a glove.

Dick McBride

Born: June 14, 1847, **Died:** January 20, 1916
Years: 1861–76
Category: Pioneer

John Dickson McBride was the star pitcher of the Philadelphia-based Athletics. By combining his numerous "Amateur Era" victories and his 149 professional wins, McBride is considered by some historians to be baseball's first 300-game winner. The cricket standout and Civil War veteran first made his mark with the team as a shortstop, earning a spot on a Philadelphia all-star team in 1862. When not pitching, McBride was on the base paths scoring lots of runs, leading the National Association of Base Ball Players clubs in runs scored in 1866 with a 160 and finishing second the following year with 265. In the National Association and the National League, he scored 208 runs and drove in 177 runners in 240 games. McBride's pitching was the catalyst to the Athletics becoming among the best clubs of the late 1860s. As captain of the Athletics, the team won the 1871 NA championship with him going 18–5 and a league-leading .783 winning percentage. Over the next four seasons, he won 30, 24, 33 and 44 games. Only Al Spalding won more games than McBride in the NA. McBride's managerial record in the NA was 161-84, a .657 winning percentage.

Cal McVey

Born: August 30, 1849, **Died:** August 20, 1926
Years: 1868–79
Category: Pioneer
SABR Biography

Calvin Alexander McVey was a premier batsman and versatile ballplayer during his playing days. He gained prominence as a member of the legendary Cincinnati Red Stockings of 1869

and 1870. He joined Boston in the National Association for the next two seasons as catcher, helping the team win the NA championship in 1872. He played and managed Baltimore in 1873 but returned to Boston for two more seasons and two more NA championships while becoming a member of baseball's original "Big Four" with teammates Ross Barnes, Al Spalding, and Deacon White. When the NA ceased operations, McVey was the league's third leading career hitter with a .362 average while being third in hits (476), tied for fifth in homers (8), and first in RBIs (277). In 1876, the "Big Four" joined the National League's White Stockings with McVey as their first baseman and change pitcher. The team won the inaugural NL championship. After a two-year stint with Cincinnati, McVey gave up the majors and headed westward at the age of 29. He continued to play ball sporadically in California for almost another decade. When he left Cincinnati, he was the career leader in hits (869) and RBIs (449), third in runs (555), and fourth in games played (530) and batting average (.346). George Wright once offered his opinion and was quoted in 1909 as saying: "I should say that Cal McVey was the greatest player, being a good catcher, first baseman, right fielder, change pitcher and strong batter; a hard, earnest player, and strong in any of the above positions." McVey was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2020, 2021, 2023 and 2025, finishing eighth last year.

Dickey Pearce

Born: February 29, 1836, **Died:** September 18, 1908
Years: 1856–1877
Category: Pioneer
SABR Biography

Richard J. Pearce was the first great shortstop in baseball history and one of the first players to be paid. He revolutionized the game both on the field and at the plate. Prior to Pearce, shortstops were rovers that primarily backed up throws and handled relays from the outfield. Pearce, who had a strong throwing arm, positioned himself on the field according to the hitter at the plate. He would play in against weak hitters and back against stronger batsmen. At the plate, he was a "scientific" hitter who was primarily a leadoff batter. He has been credited with inventing the bunt, the fair-foul hit, and possibly the sacrifice bunt and the squeeze play. Pearce's greatest seasons were with the legendary Atlantics of Brooklyn teams that dominated the late 1850s and 1860s. From 1857 to 1869, the speedy Pearce played in 239 National Association of Base Ball Players games with 876 runs scored, including leading the NABBP in runs scored in 1861. In 1858, he played for Brooklyn in two of the Fashion Race Course games, baseball's earliest "all-star" games. The 5-foot-3½ pioneer played in the majors until 1877 but continued playing semi-pro and minor league baseball until 1883. He stayed close to the game for many years as an umpire and as a groundskeeper at Polo Grounds IV in 1890. Pearce was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2011, 2017–2019, 2022 and 2024.

Lip Pike

Born: May 25, 1845, **Died:** October 10, 1893
Years: 1865–1887
Category: Pioneer
SABR Biography

Lipman Emanuel Pike has been referred to as the first great Jewish baseball player and one of the first known paid players. Pike bounced around from team-to-team during his entire career despite being one of the game's most powerful hitters. In 1866, he slugged six homers in one game while a member of the Athletics of Philadelphia. In 1871, he joined Troy of the National Association and led the new league in homers with four. He played the next two seasons with Baltimore, again leading the league in homers both seasons and becoming the first player to lead a league in home runs for three consecutive seasons. He would lead the NL in homers in 1877 as well. His 16 homers in the NA are ranked first in the league's five-year existence and his 244 RBIs rank third. Other than a brief appearance for New York of the American Association in 1887, Pike's major league career ended in 1881, leaving with the second highest career slugging percentage (.469, minimum 1000 plate appearances), third most homers (21), and sixth highest batting average (.323). Pike was elected to the International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame in 1985. Pike was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2022 and 2024.

Francis Richter

Born: January 26, 1854, **Died:** February 12, 1926
Years: 1872–1926
Category: Pioneer

Francis Richter was a nationally renowned baseball journalist best known for his role as co-founder and editor of the *Sporting Life*. Richter's journalism career began in 1872 with the *Philadelphia Day* before moving to the *Sunday World* to report on baseball after the *Day* folded in 1880. He then joined the *Public Ledger*, where his son Thomas claimed Richter started the country's first sporting department. He then co-founded the *Sporting Life* in 1883, a sporting weekly dedicated to reporting baseball and other sports. At the 1887 winter meetings in Cincinnati, Richter joined with fellow reporters in founding the Base Ball Reporters' Association of America, whose object was to "perfect the scoring and scoring rules throughout the country", and was named to the Board of Directors. Also in December 1887, the *Sporting Life* published Richter's "Millennium Plan" which was "designed to help stabilize the minor leagues and stanch major league practices that caused leagues to lose clubs and ultimately shut down." Richter was a financier of the Union Association's Philadelphia club, supported the Players' League in 1890, and was influential in the amalgamation of the National League and American Association in 1892. Richter was named the first Editor-In-Chief of the *Reach Official Guide* in 1901, a post he would hold until his death in 1926. In 1914, *Richter's History and Records of Base Ball* was published. It was the first topically-arranged baseball record book that listed the individual and

team achievements in baseball history. Francis Richter dedicated his life to promoting, protecting and improving baseball. In 1946 he was placed on the Honor Rolls of Baseball by the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Joe Start

Born: October 14, 1842, **Died:** March 27, 1927
Years: 1859–86
Category: Player (First Baseman) & Pioneer
SABR Biography

Joseph Start was born in New York City in 1842. He had one of the longest playing careers in baseball history. His size and athletic ability made him one of the most powerful hitters of the 1860s and the game's finest defensive first baseman throughout his playing days. His career began in Brooklyn, first with the Enterprise Club in 1859 and then with the Atlantics in 1862. In the 1860s, Start scored 824 runs in 194 National Association of Base Ball Players (NABBP) games, leading the NABBP in runs in 1865 with 82 and in hits with 233 in 1868. From 1868 to 1870, he had 824 hits and 893 total bases in 154 games. In a game against the Eckfords on September 6, 1869, Start demonstrated his power by hitting four home runs with 23 total bases. On June 14, 1870, Start hit a crucial triple in the 11th inning that set up an Atlantics victory over Cincinnati to end the Red Stockings' famous 71-game winning streak. As early as 1869, Start became known as "Old Reliable" for his "steady play, cool pluck, and, above all, his fidelity to the Atlantic Club" as well as his integrity of character that went along with his skill in the field. The lefty hitter and thrower has often been credited as being the first to play off the bag at first base and was known as being a sure-handed receiver of balls thrown to him despite not wearing a glove. Start played with the New York Mutuals from 1871 to 1876 before joining the Hartfords of Brooklyn for the 1877 season. In 1878, as a member of the Chicago White Stockings, Start hit .351 and led the National League in hits (100) and total bases (125). He joined the Providence Grays in 1879 and stayed until the team folded after the 1885 season. Start played on several championship teams, including the 1864–1866 and 1869 Atlantics teams, the NL-pennant winning Grays in 1879, and in 1884, as the team's captain, the Grays won the first "World Series." Start played with Washington in 1886 until he was released on July 12, ending his career three months shy of his 44th birthday. He batted .300 in eleven NL seasons and led his league in fielding percentage at first base six times between 1872 and 1884. He retired ranked sixth in games (1,070), runs (852), hits (1,417) and total bases (1,744) while ranking seventh in RBIs (544). Start was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2012, 2019, 2021, 2023 and 2025, finishing seventh last year.

Harry Stevens

Born: June 14, 1855, **Died:** May 3, 1934
Years: 1887–1934

Category: Pioneer

Harry Mozley Stevens turned a small scorecard business into a multimillion-dollar concession business that helped to create the ballpark experience fans have been enjoying for over 125 years. Stevens was born in England in 1855. He moved his family to the United States in 1881. He settled in Niles, Ohio and became a traveling book salesman. Out on a sales trip in the summer of 1887, he attended a game in Columbus, Ohio where he had a revelation that he could produce better scorecards than the ones being distributed at the game. "Score Card Harry" struck a deal with the team for $500, before selling $700 worth of advertising to be placed on the scorecards. Stevens has been quoted as saying his big break was when Chris Von der Ahe recruited him to sell scorecards at the 1887 World Series. His success allowed him to expand to other venues in the Tri-State League before securing scorecard rights with major league clubs in Boston, Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C. In 1893, he scored his most important contract when he completed a deal with the New York Giants to sell scorecards at the Polo Grounds. Stevens' early success in part can be attributed to the standardization of the scorecard, its desirable and attractive design, and that they were printed the morning of the games, so they were as accurate as possible. He would expand the scorecard business to include food and beverages such as ham and cheese sandwiches, peanuts, pies, ginger ale, sarsaparilla, beer, and eventually frankfurters. Stevens did not invent the hot dog and was not the first to sell them at sporting events, but he can be credited with popularizing the iconic baseball meal. Stevens ventured outside of baseball by selling goods at other sporting and non-sporting events, and at venues like Madison Square Garden. Well known in the Midwest before 1894, Stevens became a baseball titan after his success in New York. He would secure the concessions at Hilltop Park in 1904, establishing a long-time relationship with the New York Highlanders/Yankees. The "Hot Dog King" died in Manhattan in 1934. Harry M. Stevens Inc. continued operating another 60 years before Aramark purchased the company in 1994. His legend lives on in the city of Niles with an annual Harry Stevens Hot Dog Day.

William Wheaton

Born: May 7, 1814, **Died:** September 11, 1888
Years: 1837–1846
Category: Pioneer
SABR Biography

William Rufus Wheaton was a lawyer and baseball pioneer, notably a founding member of two early base ball clubs. Finding cricket to be “slow and lazy” and three-cornered cat to be too dangerous for adult play, Wheaton and other local young professionals turned to base ball for physical exercise. In an 1887 article in *The Daily Examiner* (San Francisco) entitled: “How Baseball Began: A Member of the Gotham Club Fifty Years Ago Tells About It,” Wheaton reflects upon the 1837 formation of the Gotham Baseball Club. The Gothams immediately disallowed the ability to retire a player by striking him with the ball. A few months after the Gothams were founded, Wheaton recorded the rules the club had been using. The rules remained mostly intact

when Wheaton was a founding member (and vice president) of the Knickerbocker Base Ball Club in 1845. Wheaton served on the Committee of By-Laws with William Tucker and drafted the first set of formal rules, adopted in September of 1845. Within a few months, Wheaton resigned from the Knickerbockers and returned to cricket before leaving for California during the Gold Rush in 1849. He accumulated great wealth in California where he established himself as an attorney and politician. In 1876, he was appointed by President Ulysses S. Grant as the Register of the General Land Office of the United States, a position he held until he resigned in 1886.

Managers/Executives/Umpires

Frank Bancroft

Born: May 9, 1846, **Died:** March 31, 1921
Years: 1878–1920
Category: Manager
SABR Biography

Frank Carter Bancroft was the manager of seven different major league teams in nine years. More of a businessman than an on-field leader, he would often cede tactical leadership to a team captain while focusing on turning a profit for investors. Born in 1846 in Lancaster, Massachusetts, Bancroft joined the Civil War at the age 15 as a drummer for the New Hampshire 8th Infantry. After the war, he played baseball (but not professionally) while getting into the hotel and theater business. He managed the Worcester (MA) minor league team in 1879, scheduling a full season of league and exhibition games followed by the very first barnstorming tour of Cuba by an American team. Worcester joined the National League in 1880, but Bancroft moved on to the Detroit Wolverines for 1881-82 and the Cleveland Blues for 1883. In 1884, he became manager of the Providence Grays and managed them to both a pennant and a championship as his Grays faced off against Jim Mutrie's New York Metropolitans in the first "World Series." After leaving Providence following the 1885 season, Bancroft's business interests included skating rinks and roller polo. Bancroft started the 1887 and 1889 seasons managing Philadelphia and Cincinnati, respectively, but didn't last the full season either time. In 1892, he was hired to be Cincinnati's business manager by John Brush. In 1895, he had the mayor of Cincinnati throw out the first pitch on Opening Day and is often cited as the "Father of Opening Day." Bancroft arranged two barnstorming tours of Cuba in 1908 and 1909, which led to the Reds signing Rafael Almeida and Armando Marsans and clearing the path for Cubans in the major leagues. Bancroft remained business manager of the Reds through the 1920 season before he died in March of 1921. Bancroft was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2023 and 2025.

John T. Brush

Born: June 15, 1845, **Died:** November 26, 1912
Years: 1887–1912
Category: Executive
SABR Biography

John Tomlinson Brush was the owner of three major league franchises, most notably the New York Giants. Born in 1845, Brush served in the Civil War before opening a department store in Indianapolis in 1875. His investments in baseball were originally intended to promote his store. In 1887, Brush bought the St. Louis Maroons and moved them to Indianapolis, where he already owned a stadium, and called them the Hoosiers. Brush created a plan that would split players into five groups based on their performance, each group having a salary cap. His fellow owners approved the “Brush Classification Plan” and the players revolted, leading to the formation of the Players’ League in 1890. After the Hoosiers folded following the 1889 season, Brush purchased stock in the New York Giants. The next year he purchased the Cincinnati Reds and owned the club until 1902. That August, Giants owner Andrew Freedman turned over control of the team to Brush. The pair stocked the Giants with talent by trading Christy Mathewson from the Reds to the Giants and purchasing the American League’s Baltimore Orioles so they could release (and then sign for the Giants) John McGraw and Joe McGinnity. Brush purchased the Giants outright in 1903 and oversaw pennants in 1904, 1905, 1911, and 1912 (and a World Series win in 1905). He died after the 1912 season. In 1946, he was placed on the Honor Rolls of Baseball by the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Brush was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2025.

Bob Emslie

Born: January 27, 1859, **Died:** April 26, 1943
Years: 1890–1924
Category: Umpire
SABR Biography

Robert D. Emslie was born in Guelph, Ontario, Canada. He began his baseball journey on the sandlots of London, Ontario. Emslie developed a curveball and first played for pay around 1878 for the Harrison Brown Stockings. In 1882 he landed with the Merritt Club of Camden, New Jersey. The 1883 Camden club participated in the inaugural season of the Interstate Association. Emslie was 14-3 with a 0.82 ERA when the team folded in July. The righty soon found himself playing for Baltimore of the American Association, debuting on July 25, 1883. The 1884 season was his best season as a player, going 32-17 with an ERA of 2.75 and 264 strikeouts. Injuries took a toll on him and by 1887 he was umpiring in the International League. He umpired in the American Association in 1890. He began the 1891 season with the Western Association before joining the National League later in the season. During his 34-year NL tenure, Emslie was a well-liked, respected arbitrator who was considered a master of the rule

book. He was selected to umpire the Temple Cup Series in 1894, 1896 and 1897. He is most remembered for his involvement in the “Merkle’s Boner” game of September 23, 1908, when Fred Merkle was called out for not touching second base, ending the game as a tie and eventually costing the New York Giants the NL pennant that year. Emslie retired as an umpire after the 1924 season. He left the game with records for umpiring in the most seasons with 35 and for the most games umpired with 4,229. He was ranked second with most games umpired behind the plate with 2,357. Emslie served the NL as chief of umpires and in advisory roles after his retirement from the field. Although he has been denied a plaque in Cooperstown, he has been honored many times over. In 1946, he was placed on the Honor Rolls of Baseball by the National Baseball Hall of Fame. In 1953, the baseball field at Pinafore Park in St. Thomas, Ontario was renamed Emslie Field. He is enshrined in the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame (1986) and the Guelph Sports Hall of Fame (2004). Emslie was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2025.

John Gaffney

Born: June 29, 1855, **Died:** August 8, 1913
Years: 1884–1900
Category: Umpire

John H. Gaffney was arguably the preeminent umpire of the nineteenth century. He was called Honest John and the King of Umpires. The great Gaffney started out in baseball as a player, but an arm injury during the winter of 1879 ended his playing career. In 1884, he was umpiring collegiate games when Nick Young signed him to umpire in the National League. He quickly became widely respected and perceived to be one of the league’s best umpires, especially when it came to calling balls and strikes. In August 1886, Gaffney took a break from umpiring when he was named manager of the last-place Washington club. The team finished the 1887 season with a 46-76 record, and he was released as manager. He wasn’t out of work long when he was chosen to work in an experimental two-umpire crew with John Kelly during the 1887 “World Series” between Detroit (NL) and St. Louis (AA). He was awarded the Dauvray medal for his perfect umpiring during the series. In 1888, he became the highest paid umpire in the game ($2,500 plus road expenses) when the AA hired him. While in the AA, he became the first umpire to make regular practice of calling the game from behind the batter but would move to stand behind the pitcher’s box once a runner got on base. Prior umpires would stand in either place but would not go back and forth like Gaffney. Another innovation he introduced was calling a ball fair or foul based on where the ball went over the fence instead of where it landed. He has also been credited as the first umpire to wear a chest protector. Before jumping to the Players’ League in 1890, he umpired all the 1888 and 1889 “World Series” games – setting the record of 34 for most postseason games umpired in the century. Gaffney returned to the NL in September 1891. Despite a drinking problem, he umpired in the NL until 1894 and returned for parts of another three seasons from 1898 to 1900. In 1946 he was placed on the Honor Rolls of Baseball by the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Jim Mutrie

Born: June 13, 1851, **Died:** January 24, 1938
Years: 1883–1891
Category: Executive & Manager
SABR Biography

James J. Mutrie, an amateur and minor league shortstop and pitcher, was a major league manager for nine seasons, compiling a 658-419 record for the third-highest winning percentage (1,000 or more games) in major league history. His .611 mark trails only active manager Dave Roberts (.621) and Hall of Famer Joe McCarthy (.615). Mutrie teamed up with businessman John B. Day to bring major league baseball to New York City. The team emerged in 1880 as an independent team known as the Metropolitans with Mutrie as their manager. Talks with both the American Association and National League led Mutrie and Day to establish two teams in New York, the Metropolitans in the AA and a NL team that would later become known as the Giants. Mutrie stayed with the AA team for the 1883 and 1884 seasons. The 1884 team won the AA pennant and played in the first "World Series," losing to the NL's Providence team. Mutrie became the manager of the other New York team in 1885 and led them to back-to-back NL pennants and "World Series" victories over the AA's St. Louis and Brooklyn clubs in 1888 and 1889, respectively. Historian Peter Mancuso sums up Mutrie's contribution to the game quite well: "Mutrie's true legacy cannot be measured by statistics and championships, however, no matter how impressive those numbers and victories. Mutrie's lasting contribution is nothing less than the establishment of major-league baseball in New York City, which has prospered for more than a century-and-a-quarter after his arrival on the New York baseball scene." Mutrie was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2022 and 2024.

Jack Sheridan

Born: April 30, 1862, **Died:** November 2, 1914
Years: 1890–1914
Category: Umpire
SABR Biography

John F. Sheridan was among the most prominent and respected umpires during his era and is among a handful of umpires that has been bestowed the title of "Dean of Baseball Umpires." He was born to Irish immigrants in Decatur, Illinois in 1862. His family moved to Northern California the following year. Jack began playing baseball in 1882 and umpiring in 1884. He played second base, shortstop and outfield for the Renos and the Haverlys, both of San Francisco. The first game he umpired may have been in an October 1884 game between the Occidental and Star clubs of San Francisco. In 1885 he left the Haverlys to play for the Chattanooga club of the Southern League. He was released in late April but stayed in the league to umpire. After his first few weeks as an umpire in the league he was already being praised by the *Atlanta Constitution* for his "faultlessly" and "fairest of fair" umpiring that went "without having a decision questioned."

A few months later he played a few games in center field for the Rochester club of the New York State League, before becoming an umpire in that same league. "Sherry returned home to be an umpire in the California League from 1886 to 1890. In 1890 he began umpiring and playing in the California Players' League before agreeing to work for the California League's upcoming season. On June 19 his wife died of an illness. He then resigned from the California League to work in the Players' League, replacing Ross Barnes who recently resigned. He made his major league debut on July 4, pairing up with John Gaffney. After the Players' League folded, Sheridan returned to the California League for the 1891 campaign. The *Los Angeles Times* called him "the best umpire California has ever seen." He worked for the National League in 1892 (plus a 3-game series in August 1893 in Brooklyn filling in for Gaffney), the Southern League in 1893, and the Western League in 1894 and 1895 before rejoining the NL for 1896 and 1897. Ban Johnson brought him back to the Western League in 1898 and he stayed working for Johnson through the end of the 1914 season as an umpire in the American League. Sheridan has been credited with popularizing crouching behind the catcher to call balls and strikes. He was chosen to umpire the Temple Cup Series in 1896 and four World Series matchups in 1905, 1907, 1908 and 1910. He umpired the World's Tour of 1913-14 of the Chicago White Sox and the New York Giants with Hall of Famer Bill Klem. He mentored Hall of Famer Billy Evans as well as several other umpires during his career. Sheridan died of a heart attack after the 1914 season and 2,177 major league games. In 1946 he was placed on the Honor Rolls of Baseball by the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Ben Shibe

Born: January 23, 1838, **Died:** January 14, 1922
Years: 1873–1922
Category: Pioneer & Executive
SABR Biography

Benjamin Franklin Shibe was an innovator, baseball manufacturer, baseball stakeholder, executive and owner. Born in Philadelphia's impoverished Kensington neighborhood, Shibe worked as a streetcar driver and his family's leather working facility where he began making baseballs. By 1873, Shibe and his brother John founded J.D. Shibe & Company, which manufactured baseballs and sporting goods and sold them to retailers. In the mid-1870s, Shibe sponsored an amateur team in Philadelphia. In 1882, Shibe withdrew his interest from J.D. Shibe & Company, and joined former Athletic and then sporting goods dealer Al Reach in a new venture, the A.J. Reach Company. Shibe's manufacturing knowledge combined with Reach's sales experience resulted in the largest sporting goods manufacturing business in the nation. Part of this success was due to Shibe's invention of a machine that cut pieces of horsehide and punched holes in the leather to be used as baseball covers. The innovation allowed the A.J. Reach Company to mass produce a better-quality baseball at a better price. At some point in the 1880s, Shibe also became a stakeholder in the American Association's Philadelphia Athletics. In 1901, Shibe purchased a half-interest in the American League's Philadelphia Athletics and was elected the club's president, a position he held until his death in 1922. *The*

Sporting News called Shibe “the Edison of the sport.” Of his many patents, perhaps Shibe’s most important was for the cork-centered baseball in 1909; the first “live ball.” Shibe was the driving force behind the building of the first concrete-and-steel stadium that was appropriately named Shibe Park after the baseball pioneer. Shibe was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2022 and 2024.

Arthur Soden

Born: April 23, 1843, **Died:** August 15, 1925
Years: 1882–1906
Category: Executive
SABR Biography

Arthur Henry Soden, who made a fortune in the roofing business, was the driving force of the Boston franchise now known as the Atlanta Braves for over 30 years. He was born in 1843 the son of a Boston publisher. Twenty years later he served in the Union Army during the Civil War. In the summer of 1874, Soden traveled with the ballplayers from the Boston and Philadelphia clubs of the National Association to England for a baseball tour. He participated in a cricket match and played center field in a baseball game for Spalding’s Nine on the tour. He eventually became a minority owner of the Boston club before gaining control of the team in 1877 with James "J.B." Billings and William Conant to form the "Triumvirate" that would stay intact until Soden and Conant bought out Billings in 1904. Soden was named president and took control of the team’s finances by cutting expenditures, often at the expense of the players. Boston won pennants in both 1877 and 1878 before losing Jim O’Rourke and George Wright to Providence for the 1879 season over a dispute with O’Rourke concerning uniform cleaning expenses. This inspired Soden to propose what is now known as the "Reserve Clause" at the National League meeting in September 1879. The proposal was adopted and allowed teams to take five players off the market so other teams would not purchase their services for the upcoming season. The reserve system lasted for 95 seasons. Soden, who strongly opposed gambling and game-fixing, served as the interim president of the NL when William Hulbert died in 1882. After Boston won the pennant in 1883, the team had a few down years on the field, so they became big spenders on players starting in 1887 with the purchase of King Kelly for $10,000 and John Clarkson in 1888 for the same amount. Other players would follow. He hired Hall of Famer Frank Selee as manager in 1890. Selee led the team to pennants from 1891 through 1894 and again in 1897 and 1898. The American League raid on NL players and the failed attempt to form the "National Baseball Trust" ultimately led to Soden selling the team and stepping down as president in 1906. Soden died in 1925. In 1946 he was placed on the Honor Rolls of Baseball by the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Soden was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2023.

Nick Young

Born: September 12, 1840, **Died:** October 31, 1916

Years: 1867–1907
Category: Executive & Pioneer

Nicholas Ephraim Young was born in Amsterdam, New York in 1840. The Civil War veteran played cricket in his youth and during the war. The *New York Clipper* covered a cricket match in a camp near White Oak Church, Virginia that took place on April 27, 1863, stating “the Russell Brigade, under the generalship of young Nick Young, distinguished themselves.” Soon after that match he was introduced to baseball, playing his first game while serving the Union. Following the Civil War, he became a clerk for the U.S. Treasury Department in Washington, DC and stayed employed by the federal government until 1897. He also became a member of the Olympic Club of Washington, playing right field and first base for the team through 1870. He continued to play cricket during this period as well and represented Washington in an international cricket match held in Philadelphia in 1868. Young became secretary of the Olympics and is credited with suggesting the meeting that led to the formation of the National Association in 1871. He was named secretary of the NA during the meeting and held an officer’s position for the entirety of the league’s five-year existence. After the 1871 season, Young organized a new Baltimore club that would finish second to Boston in 1872. He joined the Washington club for the 1873 season before heading to Chicago in 1874. During the NA’s existence, Young umpired 71 games, something he did while with the Olympics during his playing days. When the National League was formed in 1876, Young became its secretary-treasurer, a position he held for 27 seasons. This was done in conjunction with his reign as the president of the NL from 1885 through 1902. “Uncle Nick”, as Young was often referred to in his later years, was well liked by all accounts. A critique of his tenure has been that he was a figurehead who was often dominated by the wishes of the NL owners. Historian Peter Morris in *Base Ball Pioneers* states that his characterization as a weak-kneed executive was unfair and that the NL’s presidency wasn’t even his full-time job with the owners not giving him the authority to exert much power. His tenure as president included labor disputes that led to the formation of the Players’ League in 1890. He also oversaw the merger of the American Association and the NL in 1892 and dealt with the rise of the American League under Ban Johnson in 1901. In 1905, he was appointed to the Mills Commission, formed to determine the origins of baseball, which led to the Doubleday Myth. Young died at his son’s home in Washington, DC in 1916 after being ill for an extended period. In 1946, he was placed on the Honor Rolls of Baseball by the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Young was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2025.

Black Baseball

Harry Buckner

Born: October 27, 1872, **Died:** March 26, 1938
Years: 1896–1917

Category: Player (Pitcher & Outfield)
SABR Biography

Harry Edward Buckner, a two-way player in early Black Baseball, was born in Hopkinsville, Kentucky in 1872. He pitched and played right field from 1896 to 1917. A right-hander with an underhanded delivery and a powerful bat, Buckner played for a number of teams in his long career. He was often recruited by the top managers in Black Baseball, such as Bud Fowler for the London Creole GIants in 1896, Frank Leland for the Chicago Union Giants in 1902, Sol White for the Philadelphia Giants in 1903, and Grant Johnson for the Cuban X Giants in 1904. In the winter of 1904–05, he played his first of four winters in Cuba, becoming one of the first Black players to play in Cuba. In eight games against White major league teams, Buckner hit .519/.606/1.148 with two doubles, three triples, and three home runs (one of the home runs came against Eddie Plank in 1906). He also pitched in six of those games, throwing 43⅓ innings with a 3-2 record and 2.91 ERA. Overall, Seamheads credits him with a 167 OPS+ and 106 ERA+ in Black Baseball and a 105 OPS+ and 101 ERA+ in Cuba (in a total of just 221 known games against top competition across 22 seasons). Following his career, he spent 18 years as the trainer for the Milwaukee Brewers of the American Association. He died of a heart attack in 1938.

Octavius Catto

Born: February 22, 1839, **Died:** October 10, 1871
Years: 1866–71
Category: Pioneer
SABR Biography

Octavius Valentine Catto was born in Charleston, South Carolina in 1839. He would later move during his youth to Philadelphia, a city he would establish himself as a renaissance man. Catto was an educator and a civil rights activist. He was also the founder, team captain, and a middle infielder for baseball's first great black baseball club. The Pythian Base Ball Club of Philadelphia was founded in 1866, and emerged under Catto's leadership as arguably the top black nine in the country. Catto, an outstanding cricket player, saw baseball as a way for blacks to assimilate into mainstream America, so on October 16, 1867, he sought club membership in the Pennsylvania Association of Amateur Base Ball Players which would have allowed the Pythian Club to play white teams. On that date, one of several of baseball's racial dividing lines were drawn when the club was refused membership. In December of that year, the National Association of Base Ball Players formally banned black players and clubs from the NABBP. Despite these disappointing outcomes, the Pythian Club would play in what has been considered the first widely-publicized interracial game between white and black ballplayers when the club played the Olympic Ball Club of Philadelphia on September 3, 1869. The game paved the way for other clubs of different skin color to play each other. Tragically, on October 10, 1871, Catto, an activist for the right of black citizens to vote, was assassinated on election day. With his death, the Pythians disbanded by 1872. In 2017, a statue of Catto was unveiled at

City Hall in Philadelphia. Catto was an Overlooked Legend finalist in 2023, 2024 and 2025, finishing fifth last year.

S.K. “Cos” Govern

Born: October 16, 1854, **Died:** November 3, 1924
Years: 1881–1896
Category: Executive & Manager
SABR Biography

Stanislaus Kostka Govern was born in St. Croix, Virgin Islands and came to America as a teenager. He may be best known as one of the founders and manager of the Cuban Giants Club, but his influence on early Black Baseball extends well beyond his association with the Cuban Giants. Govern was instrumental in laying the groundwork for the future Negro Leagues and was one of the earliest promoters and entrepreneurs in Black Baseball. Hall of Fame pioneer and author Sol White called Govern a “smart fellow and a shrewd baseball man.” Govern’s managerial career began in 1881 with the Washington Manhattans. He left the Manhattans in 1884 and helped form the Cuban Giants in 1885. Govern became the Giants’ first manager and held that position until 1890, winning the Colored championship in 1888. He moved to the “Big Gorhams” in 1891 as manager and was out of baseball by 1892, although it has been speculated that he managed the Cuban X-Giants in 1896. It has also been posited that Govern may have taken the Manhattans and Cuban Giants to Cuba in the 1880s giving him claim as being the father of Latin American winter ball. Following his baseball days, Govern became a labor leader, journalist, and actor. He died in 1924 after being struck by a train.

Charlie Grant

Born: August 31, 1874, **Died:** July 9, 1932
Years: 1896–1913
Category: Player (Second Base) & Pioneer
SABR Biography

Born near Cincinnati, Charlie Grant was a solid player at second base for several teams in Black Baseball during the late 1890s and early 1900s, including the Page Fence Giants and the Cuban X-Giants. Grant stood only 5-foot-8 and weighed 175 pounds, small even for his time. A second baseman by trade, by some accounts Grant also starred as a pitcher in the 1890s, and Negro League historian John Holway writes that Grant may have invented the screwball. During his career he starred alongside several future Hall of Famers such as Rube Foster, Pop Lloyd, and Pete Hill. Grant is best known for the efforts of legendary manager John McGraw to bring him to the Baltimore Orioles in 1901. McGraw claimed that Grant was an American Indian and bestowed him with the name of “Chief Tokohoma.” McGraw had discovered Grant in Hot Springs, Arkansas, where Grant worked as a hotel bellhop. The signing of “Tokohoma” was

announced in the press, but backlash and questions about Grant's true racial identity led McGraw to abandon the experiment. Unfortunately, McGraw said little about the aborted signing for the rest of his life, so details on the legendary manager's thinking are hard to determine. Grant returned to Black Baseball, where he remained until his retirement around 1913. Grant died in Cincinnati in 1932 after being struck by a car.

Grant "Home Run" Johnson

Born: September 23, 1872, **Died:** September 4, 1963
Years: 1895–1914
Category: Player (Shortstop)
SABR Biography

Grant U. Johnson was one of the finest shortstops in the history of baseball. In 1894, he played with Bud Fowler on the semi-professional Findlay club where he would become known as "Home Run" Johnson and "the greatest hitter in the west." Baseball lore suggests he slugged 60 homers during the season while the team won 96 of 112 games. The following year he was playing in Adrian, Michigan as the captain and shortstop of the famed Page Fence Giants, a team he and Fowler founded with the financial backing from fence magnate J. Wallace Page. Fowler departed during the 1895 season, and Johnson guided the Giants to a 118-36-2 record. Following the 1898 season (in which he reportedly hit 30 home runs as the Giants went 107-10), Johnson and several of his Page Fence teammates moved to Chicago's Columbia Giants. In 1900, Johnson joined the Chicago Unions before rejoining the Columbia Giants for two more seasons. He played with the Cuban X-Giants in 1903 and 1904 before signing with the great 1905 Philadelphia Giants. From there, he joined the Brooklyn Royal Giants while spending his winters playing in Cuba. In 1910, Johnson was signed by the Leland Giants before spending his last few seasons with the New York Lincoln Giants. Johnson also played several winters in Cuba, first traveling with Cuban X-Giants in 1903 and 1904 and then joining Cuban League teams Fé (in 1906-07) and Habana (for several seasons). According to the statistics available on Seamheads.com, Johnson, a disciplined hitter who rarely struck out, batted .310 with an OPS+ of 158 in 405 career games. Johnson was an Overlooked Legend finalist from 2021-2025, finishing fourth last year. He was also a finalist on the National Baseball Hall of Fame's Early Baseball Era ballot in 2021.

Frank Leland

Born: 1869, **Died:** November 14, 1914
Years: 1887–1912
Category: Executive & Manager

Frank C. Leland was a pioneering executive in the Pre-Negro Leagues era. Born in 1869, Leland graduated from Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee in 1886. He began his baseball

career as a member of the Washington Capital City Club of the League of Colored Baseball Clubs, but the league (which also featured the famed Philadelphia Pythians) folded before the Washington Club played its first official game. When the Washington club folded, Leland moved to Chicago. Before the start of the 1888 season, he helped to organize the Chicago Unions with William Peters and became their starting right fielder. The Unions became the premier black club in the Midwest and often played top white semi-professional teams in and around Chicago. In 1890, Leland was named field manager and was responsible for signing players. In 1894, he became the club's secretary and traveling manager on road trips which included handling his administrative duties while on the road. Sol White calculated the Chicago Unions during their 12-year reign won 613 games, lost 118 and tied 12 for an .814 winning percentage. In 1901, Leland signed players from the Unions and the Columbia Giants to form the Chicago Union Giants and became owner and business manager. In 1905, they would be called the Leland Giants. In 1907 he hired Rube Foster to act as pitcher and manager of the club. The two parted ways after the 1909 season with Leland and Foster both claiming the team name and the 1909 pennant for their new clubs. A legal battle awarded the pennant to Leland and the name "Leland Giants" to Foster's new club (with Leland forming the Chicago Giants). Foster's Leland Giants would go on to become the Chicago American Giants, operating into the 1950s. Leland left baseball after 1912 and died in 1914 "after a long illness from the effects of stomach troubles." Sol White wrote in his *History of Colored Base Ball* that Leland (along with Peters) had a "high rating in the ranks of pioneers of baseball" for their long and continuous participation in the sport.

Carlos Royer

Born: 1874, Died: July 26, 1938
Years: 1890–1911
Category: Player (Pitcher) & Pioneer

Carlos Royer was a pitching star in his native Cuba and was part of the first traveling Cuban baseball team in the United States. Perhaps even better known as "Bebé," the right-hander began his career as an infielder in 1890-91 with Habana. In the 1890s, he led the Cuban League in games five consecutive times (interrupted for two years due to the Cuban War of Independence). In the fifth season, he began pitching full-time and thrived. After the 1899 Cuban season, Abel Linares put together an All-Star team of top players from the Cuban League. Known as the "All Cubans," they were the first Latin American team to tour the United States. In the winter of 1899-1900, the US-based Cuban X-Giants became the first all-Black team to play in Cuba. The X-Giants went 13-3 (per Seamheads), but Royer was 2-2 against them. Royer reached another level as a pitcher after the turn of the 20th century, going 19-6 with a 0.73 ERA in 1901 (in box scores collected by Seamheads). He followed that up with a perfect 17-0 winter 1901-02 season. The following season, he started and completed all 33 Habana games, going 21-12 with a 1.92 ERA. The following season, he was 13-3 with a 1.27 ERA. He didn't pitch as often in his 30s, but still showed flashes of his prior brilliance. He finally faltered in 1910-11 with Fé, going 0-5. Royer holds Cuban League records for most wins in a season (21),

most consecutive wins in a season (17), and most consecutive wins overall (20). He also completed 50 games in a row, a Cuban League record. His statistics on Seamheads show a career record of 91-50 for a .645 winning percentage, 131 complete games pitched in 150 starts, a 1.87 ERA, and an ERA+ of 142. He died in 1938 and was inducted in the Cuban Baseball Hall of Fame in the inaugural 1939 class.

George Stovey

Born: May 1866, **Died:** March 22, 1936
Years: 1886–97
Category: Player (Pitcher) & Pioneer
SABR Biography

George Washington Stovey is considered by many to be the greatest African American pitcher of the 19th century. The left-hander was denied the opportunity to display his talent in the major leagues due to the color of his skin. He started out his career with a semi-pro team in the Williamsport, Pennsylvania area, his hometown, in 1884 and ended it there in 1897 with the city's Central Pennsylvania League team. In between, he was a star in the top minor leagues and with Black Baseball's greatest clubs of the time. The curveballer, who had a tremendous pick-off move to first base, emerged with the Jersey City club of the Eastern League in 1886. He started 31 games and completed them all, going 16–15 with a 1.13 ERA and 203 strikeouts in 270 1/3 innings while walking just 43 batters. In 1887, he joined Newark of the International Association where he teamed up with catcher Fleet Walker to form the first black battery in integrated organized baseball. He led the league with 33 wins and had a 2.46 ERA in 424 innings. As baseball's color line was being drawn, Stovey moved around between top black teams, including the Cuban Giants and New York Gorhams, and integrated-league teams. He went 60–40 with a 2.17 ERA in 102 games in the top minor leagues. He became an umpire in the minors and around Williamsport when his playing days were over. He has also been credited with coaching two Williamsport natives who made it to the majors, Johnny Lush and Weldon Wyckoff. Stovey was an Overlooked Legend finalist from 2018–2025, finishing third last year.

George Williams

Born: March 1864, **Died:** January 9, 1918
Years: 1882–1906
Category: Player (Second Base/First Base) & Pioneer

George L. Williams emerged as a baseball star with the Orion Base Ball Club of Philadelphia from 1882 through 1884. He was the captain and an infielder on the first nationally known professional Black Baseball team, the Cuban Giants. The lineage of the Cuban Giants traces back to the 1885 Argyle Hotel in Babylon, New York. Frank P. Thompson recruited a team of top

Black ballplayers to entertain guests. In August of 1885, the hotel team merged with the Orions of Philadelphia and the Manhattans of Washington D.C. to form the Cuban Giants. The Giants, based in Trenton, joined the Middle States League in 1889 as the only Black club in an otherwise all-white league. In 1890, Williams and many of his Cuban Giants teammates joined the York Colored Monarchs in the Eastern Interstate League, an otherwise all-white league. York was in first place when the league disbanded, thus, winning the league championship. Williams captained the team and led the league in batting with a .386 mark and in slugging with a .582 percentage. Teammate Sol White hit .350 while William Selden hit .330 with a 15-6 record on the mound for the Monarchs. Williams joined the New York Gorhams in 1891. In 1892 he joined the Philadelphia Police Department. During his career as a patrolman, he played ball for the Ninth District against amateur teams and other police districts. He resigned from the PPD in 1905 so he could organize and manage the Wilmington Giants, who joined the International League of Independent Professional Base Ball Clubs during the 1906 season. He returned to the PPD in 1906 and in 1909 he became Philadelphia's first black detective. He was killed on the job on January 9, 1918 when he responded to a fight in a saloon, becoming the first African American police officer to die in the line-of-duty in Philadelphia. In 2006, Williams was included on the Committee on African-American Baseball's preliminary ballot of National Baseball Hall of Fame candidates, but he did not make the final ballot.