

No League of Their Own

Baseball, Black Women,
and the Politics of Representation

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In July 1992, *A League of Their Own*, a film documenting the early days of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL), premiered to sold-out theaters nationwide. Critics and audiences applauded the film for its convincing performances, diverse portrayal of women, good-natured humor, and “all-American enthusiasm.”¹ Alongside the celebration of the barrier-breaking “girls of summer” and the exploration of the gender politics of the 1940s, *A League of Their Own* nods briefly to the AAGPBL’s segregation. In a scene lasting twenty-one seconds, a ball rolls away from the Rockford Peaches’ practice to the feet of a black woman. When Geena Davis, portraying the Peaches’ star catcher, calls for the ball, the black woman steps into a hard throw and fires the ball into Davis’s glove, leaving her reeling from the impact. Rubbing her hand, Davis stares back at the black woman, who offers a nod and sardonic smile as if to say, “I can play too,” before walking away. A league of their own, indeed.

This article focuses on three of the “other” girls of summer who could have easily been that hard-throwing bystander.² Toni Stone, Connie Morgan, and Mamie “Peanut” Johnson were African American women who, after being turned away from the AAGPBL, played baseball for the Negro Leagues. The women played for three seasons (1953–55) and added a measure of much-needed publicity to a black baseball league slowly in decline. The varied representations of the athletic careers

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of Stone, Morgan, and Johnson reveal contested ideas about black femininity and physicality in the 1950s while also expanding current understandings of sports and politics in the civil rights era.

From the integration of professional sports leagues to the iconic image of raised black fists at the 1968 Olympics, historians have documented the political significance of sports in the black freedom struggle.³ Often, however, the gendered parameters of sports and politics are muted. Political representations of black women athletes in the 1950s and 1960s are just beginning to receive scholarly attention.⁴ Black newspapers celebrated black women like Althea Gibson and Wilma Rudolph, portraying their sporting success against white women as a “testament to the race” in similar fashion to portrayals of male athletes like Jackie Robinson.⁵ Yet the black press’s representations of Stone, Morgan, and Johnson were much less celebratory. Some black and white businesspeople, attempting to generate publicity and profit for black baseball, invested in glorifying these women in the press. However many black sportswriters, particularly those who had played important roles in the integration of Major League Baseball (MLB), lambasted the women’s participation. The contrasting representations of Stone, Morgan, and Johnson illuminate how black institutions navigated the challenges of integration as Jim Crow was legally dismantled. Furthermore, the portrayals of these women underscore shifting ideas about black womanhood in the postwar era.

In direct contrast to their experiences as players, however, all three women became popularized in the late twentieth century. As part of an evolving popular narrative within post–civil rights America, Stone, Morgan, and Johnson were recovered as “national heroes,” embodying an evolving narrative of racial tolerance and multiculturalism in a modern democracy.⁶ Historians have skillfully demonstrated the political investments that propel and shape popular narratives of American history, especially the history of slavery and the civil rights era.⁷ Focusing on the “political uses of the past,” recent scholarship considers how societies commemorate the past in monuments, living history museums, and memorials.⁸ While there were no memorials erected for Stone, Morgan, or Johnson, their stories still circulated in the public sphere through journal articles, newspapers, plays, and books. Journalists, biographers, politicians, and curators positioned them as part of an evolving popular narrative within post–civil rights America. This popular narrative memorialized these women as path breakers and hard workers who transcended both racism and sexism to achieve their dreams.⁹ Yet this celebratory treatment of the past obscured the complicated realities of Johnson’s, Stone’s, and Morgan’s historical context and athletic careers.

As both Jim Crow–era players and post–civil rights icons, Johnson, Stone, and Morgan attempted to negotiate, capitalize on, and challenge the way others depicted them. These athletes’ efforts to control how they appeared in the public eye and how they were remembered merit consideration, not simply to showcase

them as individual actors but rather to discuss the ultimate results of their inability to control how they were represented. Their effective silencing first by white owners and the black male sporting establishment in the 1950s and then by journalists and politicians in the 1990s illuminates the politics and power dynamics behind their simplified stories. For as much as this study is about the actual black women ball-players to which *A League of Their Own* alludes, it is also about the image that has developed of these women's lives: silent, nodding, and half smiling—saying everything and nothing at all.

Black Women's Athletics in the Postwar Years

Stone, Johnson, and Morgan grew up in different areas of the United States, yet their respective athletic experiences prior to entering professional baseball underscore the widespread institutional growth of black women's athletics in the mid-twentieth century. Stone, born in 1921, was raised in Saint Paul, Minnesota, where her devoutly Catholic, working-class family resided in the primarily black neighborhood of Rondo. While her given name was Marcenia Lyle, Stone went by Toni from an early age, and by adolescence she had picked up another nickname—Tomboy. An outstanding athlete who excelled at a variety of sports, Stone quickly turned heads in the school and citywide sports leagues. By the time she was fifteen years old Stone had lettered in tennis, track and field, and softball for Hammond Junior High School. She also achieved honors from the citywide Junior High School Girls Athletic Association and became the first girl to earn three separate letters in one year.¹⁰ The school-based girls' athletic leagues in which Stone competed were common in black institutions by the interwar era.

Johnson was born in South Carolina in 1935 but spent her adolescence in both New Jersey and Washington, DC. Despite her small frame, she was naturally athletic, with a long history of formal and informal athletic participation. Black girls in northern cities largely participated in athletic leagues through organizations such as the Police Athletic League (PAL), Catholic Youth Organization (CYO), and Young Woman's Christian Association (YWCA). In New Jersey Johnson joined the local PAL that sponsored a wide array of sporting leagues and activities. However, the PAL-sponsored baseball league was all white and mostly male. While Johnson was intent on playing baseball, the New Jersey PAL was initially reluctant to admit her, relenting only after witnessing her skill on the field.¹¹

Morgan was also born in 1935 and raised in a northern city, Philadelphia, yet her experience in organized sports differed markedly from Johnson's. Some citywide teams were certainly all white and male, but Philadelphia also had a long tradition of organized sport leagues for black girls. The Dolly Vardens, for instance, were a Philadelphia-area black women's professional baseball team founded in 1867.¹² Divided between the Chester Dolly Vardens and Philadelphia Dolly Vardens, these "colored female base-ball nines" would meet on a field in Lamokin Woods and earn

money playing each other.¹³ In 1935 Philadelphia had two separate teams in the Colored Women's Basketball League, the Germantown Hornets and the Philadelphia Quicksteppers. In 1949, after playing a variety of sports in high school, Morgan joined a local colored women's softball team, the North Philadelphia Honey Drippers.¹⁴

The opportunity for Stone, Johnson, and Morgan to play organized sports in the 1930s and 1940s came, in part, from the efforts of black middle-class physical educators in the early twentieth century who had encouraged black women to "take up athletics."¹⁵ E. B. Henderson, a well-known black physical educator, extolled the "prominence" of "national exponents of women's sport." Henderson argued that the athletic skill and character of black women should be "displayed . . . to a wider extent," adding that "the race of man needs the inspiration of strong virile womanhood."¹⁶ Henderson's arguments underscore the connections between women's athletics and an emergent black identity in postemancipation America. Although athletics carried the stigma of being "not truly feminine" for black women, they also provided an opportunity to demonstrate the strength and health of the race. While black physical educators and sportswriters still invested far fewer resources and less energy in girls' athletics than they did in black males' athletics, the lack of widespread animosity toward girls in sports allowed sports to blossom within black institutions.

While black institutions supported women's athletics, the *type* of sport was often limited. Golf and tennis were seen as the most respectable sports for black girls to play, but due to the often prohibitive cost of equipment for these sports, track and basketball, instead, gained great popularity among black athletes in cities and in rural areas. As softball rose to prominence in the 1930s, black high schools, colleges, and recreation centers began offering softball for girls in lieu of baseball. However, many black women still played baseball informally in neighborhood games, and sandlot ball was especially common in rural black communities. Stone and Johnson both grew up playing softball formally for their schools while playing Little League and sandlot ball with the boys after school. Stone, like some women, found softball to be an inadequate replacement for her love of baseball. Stone wanted to "devote all her time to hard ball"—and she would soon have the chance.¹⁷

"Here to Play Ball" and Fill Seats: Black Women in the NAL

In the years following Robinson's integration of the white major leagues, there was a slow but steady exodus of Negro Leaguers to the "big leagues." The influx of black players in the MLB also brought an influx of black baseball fans. Baseball's integration coincided with postwar migration and metropolitan growth that created major demographic shifts in urban neighborhoods. Ultimately, this meant that MLB stadiums that once stood in the white ethnic enclaves were now situated in increasingly or predominantly black areas. Moreover, white flight and the rise of television

meant that many white baseball fans were opting to stay in the suburbs and watch the games at home. MLB teams attempted to remedy their gate losses by capitalizing on black fans. Indeed, black baseball fans continued to follow and support their favorite Negro League stars by following and supporting their new MLB team. Additionally many integrationist-minded blacks flocked to MLB stadiums to cheer on the small number of high-achieving black players. Yet the growth of black MLB players and fans came at the expense of the Negro Leagues, which struggled to fill stadium seats. Moreover, black baseball owners were rarely compensated for the players who were signed by MLB teams. Negro League owners were hemorrhaging players, fans, and revenue and desperately looking for a way to stop the bleeding.

The Negro National League (NNL) folded in 1948, ending the famous East-West game between the NNL and the Negro American League (NAL). In subsequent years, the NAL operated as the only professional Negro baseball league.¹⁸ In 1952 Hank Aaron left the Indianapolis Clowns for the Milwaukee Braves farm system. Concerned about losing the latest Negro League star, Clowns owner Syd Pollock went searching for a player who could help the team on the field but especially at ticket gates. After scouring the barnstorming Negro minor leagues, Pollock came across a player who he thought would meet his needs: Stone.

After graduating high school, Stone had left Minnesota for California. Now in her twenties, she was determined to play baseball. While she had only played it recreationally during high school, her passion for the game was fueled by exposure to barnstorming Negro League teams and from hanging around local “old-timers” who frequently exchanged stories about their playing days.¹⁹ In California, Stone gained a roster spot on an independent local team called the San Francisco Sea Lions. In 1948 she caught the eye of a semiprofessional team, the New Orleans Creoles, who invited her to tour with the team. While her semiprofessional barnstorming did not generate huge press, local sportswriters used her presence as a selling point when advertising the barnstorming games. “A girl second-sacker . . . should be something to see here Sunday,” advertised the *Atlanta Daily World*, labeling Stone as “more than a novelty but slightly a miracle.”²⁰ When Pollack heard about Stone, he saw her as an attractive commodity—a press-generating addition to his baseball team. In 1953 he hired her, making her the first woman to play professional baseball on a men’s team. She entered the Clowns rotation at second base, filling Aaron’s vacated spot.

Bringing women into baseball to generate profit was not a new endeavor. As historian Susan K. Cahn notes, the AAGPBL deliberately contrasted “masculine” baseball skills with “feminine” appearance and qualities to create a spectacle of “gender contrast.”²¹ AAGPBL officials believed that the public would flood the stadium gates to see the “amazing spectacle of beskirted girls throwing, catching, hitting and running like men.”²² The initial spectacle proved to be as popular as the official predicted. The AAGPBL was widely popular, and the league, which was

initially thought to be a wartime placeholder for men's professional baseball, lasted for more than a decade. Perhaps the AAGPBL's business success inspired Pollock. Instead of a girls' baseball league, however, he would bring in one woman to play baseball with men.

"This is no publicity stunt," Pollock proclaimed in his press release announcing the signing of Stone. "Toni will be the first to admit her diamond foes show her no mercy because of her sex."²³ Nonetheless, Pollock was known for both his sensational headlines and promotional tactics. His barnstorming Miami Ethiopian Clowns of the 1930s and 1940s were known for their "clowning" both on and off the field. Pollock, like his good friend Abe Saperstein, owner of the Harlem Globetrotters, believed that the best way to fill stadium seats was through showmanship and comedy. The Ethiopian Clowns were known to wear face paint, grass skirts, and clown suits on the field. Additionally, the teams specialized in slapstick comedy and "pepper ball," which Pollock described as a "deft manipulation of the spheroid in the now-you-see-it, now-you-don't performance."²⁴ Despite the popularity of the Clowns, prominent black sportswriters such as Cumberland "Cum" Posey, who was also a former baseball player, took issue with "clowning," lambasting it as "demeaning to Blacks."²⁵ The *Pittsburgh Courier's* Wendell Smith found clowning to be "the kind of nonsense which many white people like to believe is . . . typical of Negroes." Smith's larger gripe was with white owners, agents, and promoters, such as Pollock, who wielded influence in the Negro Leagues.²⁶ By the time Stone joined the Clowns they had relocated to Indianapolis, toned down their slapstick antics, and just won their third NAL championship. Yet when it came to writing headlines, Pollock was still as dramatic as ever. "The latest masculine enterprise to fall before the advance of wearers of skirts and panties is the baseball diamond," he declared at the signing of Stone.²⁷

In the mid-twentieth century, when even the most prominent black sportswriters could rarely expect to travel to out-of-town sporting events, the black press relied on news, updates, and box scores mailed directly from each respective team.²⁸ Pollock, who appreciated the utility of a press release as a promotional tool, often employed sensationalized speech to garner interest in his product. Nicknaming Stone the "Gal Guardian of Second Base," Pollock widely distributed press releases that advertised her lucrative contract, her athletic ability, and, tellingly, her feminine qualities. The press releases painted Stone as a young lady who played second base like a female Aaron but retained her "feminine wiles."²⁹ In reality, Stone, having played for years in obscurity, was approaching thirty-three years old; she had natural athleticism, to be sure, but only average baseball statistics. Moreover, while the actual amount Stone earned is unclear, we can be fairly certain that it was not the twelve thousand dollars Pollock advertised. Even reports of a more modest contract of five thousand dollars were met with skepticism. In an open letter to Stone, sportswriter Sam Lacy complimented her on making money, before adding, "At least that's

what your bosses say and that's what they tell you to say when you're asked the question."³⁰ Lacy also notes how peculiar it was that owners would release such financial information since "they've always made a point of keeping secret what they pay their ball players." Stone has stated that she made a "lousy \$300 a month," while noting that much of her pay, along with her teammates', went to maintaining the team bus so that they could make it to games.³¹ The emphasis on how much Stone was making also diverted questions from how much Pollock would be profiting from her. In terms of her personal sensibilities, and counter, yet again, to Pollock's portrayal, Stone was still that "tomboy" from Minnesota who preferred pants to skirts and baseball to cooking. Even with Stone making no secret of her age, her pay, or her personal preferences, Pollock's hyperbolic statements would largely determine the few representations Stone enjoyed in the black press during her career.

The news that a female ballplayer would take the field on the NAL's opening day quickly made its way around the black community. Press releases were sent out well in advance of the game scheduled in early June. Preseason exhibition games generated additional curiosity about the "gal on second base."³² Yet as Stone and the Clowns packed up and departed Beaumont, Texas, after their last exhibition game, the future of the NAL still appeared dim. The usual excitement and community celebrations to mark the league's opening day had declined in recent years. The NAL was "on its last leg," and there was little optimism that the league could be salvaged.³³

In that knowledge, the spectacle that awaited the Clowns in Kansas City was startling. Thousands congregated to cook out and gather around Blues Stadium, the crowd swelling with excitement and anticipation. Right before the game there was a "picturesque parade" that Pollock claimed, perhaps with his trademark overstatement, was unrivaled in "all [his] years in baseball."³⁴ That evening a reported 18,205 fans packed the stadium to witness the Monarchs defeat the Clowns in a game in which Stone played three innings. Stone's debut was not a particularly convincing one, as she went 0-for-2 and did not make any plays in the field. Yet observers were so taken with the suddenly revived interest in the NAL that Stone's limited night received secondary coverage. "Who Said the Negro American League Is Dead," read one headline above pictures of the stadium crowd. The other half of the page featured a picture of Stone at bat under a subtitle that read: "Healthy Signs."³⁵ The opening-day turnout exemplified the renewed interest that Stone's presence brought to the NAL.

Regarded by reporters as "box-office magic," Stone became the promotional face of the NAL. Pollock featured her on the Clowns' scorecards and flyers. Brief game announcements in black newspapers consistently included a note on the "gal infielder."³⁶ Game attendance remained high in the coming months, and gate receipts and profits came in amounts that the Negro League teams had not seen since the late 1940s.³⁷ Delighted by the success of his female drawing card, Pollock

set out to find insurance in case Stone were injured or unavailable, telling her that he could not “risk letting the public down” if she were unable to play.³⁸ More realistically, Pollock was protecting his financial interests. To make sure that he could continue to capitalize on the publicity his “lady ballplayer” brought his team, he went in search of another girl.

As the 1953 season continued, letters began pouring in from women interested in playing baseball as well as from male coaches and promoters who had “discovered” potential female players. In letters sometimes addressed to Stone specifically, women from all over were asking for tips and requesting tryouts. Reportedly, Pollock kept a “girl players” folder with all the received letters, and Stone recalled that “old Syd always had a gang of [women] standing up and trying . . . out.”³⁹ The letters from black women interested in playing professional baseball contradicted the representations of Stone as an anomaly. Yet Pollock had little interest in employing many women or creating a black women’s professional league. The presence of too many women would lessen the spectacle of a female athlete playing among men. Instead, he sought a few marketable women who could continue to drive up attendance to the games.

In July, Pollock brought in Doris Jackson, a sixteen-year-old from Philadelphia who had written Stone personally about getting a tryout. Jackson shadowed the team and participated in pregame warm-ups. Pollock regarded her as a “good prospect,” with Stone adding that “all she needs is a little experience and practice hitting.” When asked by reporters why she wanted to try out for the Clowns, Jackson responded that she was “thrilled with the novelty of being a big-time player” and wanted to build on her current career at Overbrook High School.⁴⁰ Similar to Stone, Jackson excelled on her school-sponsored teams as well as on her all-male teams from the local recreation clubs. She also, like Stone, honed her experience playing sandlot ball with boys. It is unclear how long Jackson stayed on with the team or why she returned home before ever playing in a game. Yet Pollock made his intentions very clear; the Clowns would soon be bringing in another girl player.

Toward the end of the 1953 season, Bish Tyson, a promoter and recruiter with ties to the Clowns, observed Johnson playing baseball with a recreational team in Washington, DC, known as the St. Cyprians. After he informed the Clowns’ business manager, Buster Downs, a tryout was arranged, after which Johnson, a five-foot-four, 120-pound pitcher, was invited to join the Clowns in the postseason as well as in their off-season exhibition games.⁴¹ Johnson joined without hesitation, recalling that “Mr. Downs told me to get on the bus and I did and I was gone.”⁴² Despite acquiring Johnson, Pollock continued to hold occasional tryouts for women. After receiving a letter of interest from a nineteen-year-old Philadelphia woman, Morgan, the Clowns invited her down to Baltimore for a tryout. Morgan’s appeal was apparent. Upon arriving in Baltimore, Morgan impressed the Clowns’ management with her “good arm” as well as her appearance.⁴³ Morgan’s lighter skin, curvy figure, and

curled hair also stood in stark contrast to the muscular build of the darker Stone. Taken with Morgan's "feminine appearance," Pollock requested that she try on a Clowns uniform.⁴⁴ Morgan's femininity enhanced her appeal, and Pollock likely saw Morgan as more marketable than Stone. In fact, he rushed to capitalize on Morgan's physical appearance. The Clowns, who were in Baltimore to play Robinson's All Star Team, seized the opportunity to stage some shots of Morgan with Robinson, Luke Easter, Pee Wee Reese, and Gil Hodges. A picture of Robinson holding a bat and chatting with Morgan would soon be widely distributed with the caption "Learning Tips from a Pro" (fig. 1). The image served to capitalize on Robinson's wide appeal while legitimizing Morgan as a worthy baseball disciple and showcasing her feminine image. Pollock never invited Stone to take part in the photo shoot.



Figure 1. Jackie Robinson gives batting tips to Connie Morgan, 1954. Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, Kansas City, Missouri.

Frustrated by the inevitable loss of playing time with the addition of Morgan at second base, Stone began to reevaluate her position on the team and in the Negro Leagues in general. Voicing her discontent when Pollock officially signed both Morgan and Johnson, Stone inquired about playing for another team, having heard that other teams were looking to add girl players. Pollock reminded Stone that he owned the rights to her contract and that she could play for him or leave the league. Yet with Morgan, Johnson, and the prospect of acquiring other, younger women, Pollock would eventually relent. Seeing an opportunity to capitalize on other owners' desire to replicate his success, Pollock sold Stone's contract to the rival Kansas City Monarchs before the start of the 1954 season.⁴⁵

The sensationalized press releases announcing the sale of Stone's contract (for an undisclosed sum) and the acquisition of his two new "lady ballplayers" reminded fans that Pollock was "always good for something novel each season."⁴⁶ Attempting to generate the same level of interest that was created by Stone, he signed Morgan and Johnson for a reported ten thousand dollars and five thousand dollars, respectively. And he framed his new players as must-see upgrades over the older and recently released Stone. Introducing Morgan as "the most sensational girl player ever seen," Pollock asserted that she was "on par with many major leaguers."⁴⁷ Pollock confirmed that Morgan was "slated to get regular female assignment in the starting lineup." The picture of Robinson with Morgan became the Clowns' official scorecard image. The presence of three women in the league quickly became the



Figure 2.
Flyer, *Philadelphia Courier*, 1954. National Baseball Hall of Fame Library, Cooperstown, New York.

promotional ticket for the NAL. Advertisements urging fans to come “see the feminine stars” were released when Morgan’s Clowns and Stone’s Monarchs played each other (fig. 2).⁴⁸ Additionally, pictures and profiles of each woman appeared regularly in *The Laff Book*, a program book with jokes, cartoons, articles, and pictures handed out at the Clowns’ games.⁴⁹ The women’s inclusion in *The Laff Book* served to associate them with the other “sideshows” or entertainment acts. They may have been “stars,” but Stone, Morgan, and Johnson continued to fight to be recognized as athletes.

The Diamond as Contested Terrain: Representations and Reactions to Black Women in Baseball

While fans flocked to the NAL to see its “feminine stars,” some from within the league as well as prominent sportswriters disapproved. The reactions to the women reveal the way *professional* sports were considered the exclusive domain of black men. The sportswriters, players, and coaches who objected to the presence of women in the NAL often lamented their choice of profession but not their athleticism. Yet those who invested in the financial life of the NAL and endeavored to promote the women as “nice girls” continued to emphasize their femininity and their novelty. Stone, Johnson, and Morgan animated critics of the league who thought it should have folded after the integration of the MLB. Many prominent black sportswriters, who were integral in fighting the MLB’s color line, also used the spectacle of women baseball players to bolster their representations of an effeminate and washed-up Negro League.

When Clowns' manager and former catcher Buster Haywood heard news that Pollock planned to sign a girl to the team, his response was straightforward; she may have had some prior experience, but "playing with men was a whole different story."⁵⁰ Feeling that Stone's presence would devalue the game, Haywood was vehemently opposed to her hiring. Moreover, Haywood did not believe women should be in baseball, regardless of their physical ability. Manager Bunny Downs joked that "Buster wouldn't want Lena Horne if Lena Horne could play second like [Ray] Neil, hit like Josh [Gibson], run like [Speed] Merchant, talk like J. B. Martin and dance like Bojangles."⁵¹

The historical record barely registers male players' feelings toward Stone, Johnson, and Morgan. Some men may have chosen to keep their disapproval silent because they understood the women to be instrumental in helping them get paid. The men were well aware of the women's utility as drawing cards. Harold Hair, a former member of the Birmingham Black Barons, recalls pitchers limiting the pitches they threw to her to fastballs. Lacy observed this practice and made note of it in his open letter to Stone. "They aren't curving you," Lacy wrote. "They aren't throwing any softer, they're not doing that but they are not curving you either."⁵² Hair notes that the players observed these types of "unwritten rules" because they knew that "people came to see her [Stone] play. . . . She was a drawing card."⁵³ Players who forgot that fact would have been quickly reminded. Once Willie Brown intentionally delivered the ball late from third base, causing Stone to be spiked by the base runner. Immediately after the game, manager Buster Downs reproached his team: "This lady is putting money in our pockets. We don't want her hurt turning double plays." With candor about Stone's value to the team, Downs ranted, "You men [are] all expendable. She ain't."⁵⁴

Despite recriminations, some players physically and verbally humiliated Stone, Johnson, and likely Morgan as well, though Morgan never mentioned any specific incidents. Behind the men's calculated silences were the catcalls, the snide jokes, and occasional physical harassment, much of which was sexual in nature. For instance, there was a "go home and make your husband some biscuits" comment that was flung in from the outfield or the catcher who termed a ball thrown inside Stone's strike zone "pussy high."⁵⁵ On the field, the women endured intentionally hard throws (one ball was thrown with such velocity that it knocked Stone unconscious) and wandering, groping gloves when tagged out on base. Off the field, they were subject to ridicule, sexual advances, and isolation.

The women did not take this treatment lying down, however. Johnson recalls exacting revenge on loudmouthed players by beaming them with a fastball, telling one reporter, "Sometimes, honey, you just get mad."⁵⁶ Stone was also known to fight back. When a teammate told her, "Shit, woman. You can't play no ball. You ought to be home washing dishes," Haywood said that she "swore right back" at him.⁵⁷ Recalling a play in which a second baseman ran his glove between Stone's legs and

across her chest when tagging her out, Hair notes that Stone “started fighting him, hitting and swinging at that guy.”⁵⁸ Similarly, when a teammate was sexually harassing her on the bus, management told her to take care of it herself. The next time the player approached her, Stone started swing a baseball bat at his head. “I didn’t have no problems after that,” she said.⁵⁹ Mostly, though, women consistently downplayed any issues they had with their teammates. Engaging in a “culture of dissemblance,” the women, instead classified any incidents as “hazing” or the process of “earning respect” or just didn’t address it at all.⁶⁰ They were constantly reminded that there was “no crying in baseball,” and appearing “tough” and having the ability to “take it” was paramount to their continuation in the league.⁶¹ Publicly decrying sexual advances and emphasizing the familial nature of the team helped the women demonstrate their respectability, as well. “Once you make it clear there ain’t gonna be no monkey business . . . they give you your respect,” Stone told a reporter her first year in the NAL.⁶² Johnson told newspapers that she “made it clear”: she was “here to play ball and nothing else.”⁶³ The line Stone, Johnson, and Morgan walked was a fine one, however. On the one hand, they could not be too athletic and “tomboyish” for fear of being labeled homosexual, and therefore they also could not decry their teammates’ sexual advances too vehemently. On the other hand, appearing too eager to be surrounded by a bunch of men could lead people to label Stone, Morgan, and Johnson as indecent women.

Indeed, traveling on a bus full of men did not help the image of black female baseball players as moral women. Stone, in particular, was met with skepticism when the team would try to find lodging in various cities. Hotel proprietors would often assume she was a prostitute and refuse her entrance, directing her to the nearest brothel instead. Both management and players on the team were unable or chose not to defend her presence, so Stone frequently lodged in brothels. She found some relief in the situation, however, when the women in the brothels took interest in her. “They took me in,” Stone recalled. “They were wrong women . . . but they were good girls.”⁶⁴ The women would leave her money and extra food and occasionally wash and iron her uniform. When Stone was having problems supporting and protecting her chest during games, it was the women in one of the brothels who helped her sew in padding. By the time Stone left the league, she had built a network of “sporting gals” who not only helped her out but were fierce supporters as well. Urging Stone to “represent” black women, they often attended her games and saved clippings about her. The support of the “sporting girls” for the girl in sports highlights an informal network of women who supported nontraditional and controversial means of labor. Perhaps the way Stone “represented” was by providing black women with a symbol of professional autonomy and embodying a modern black womanhood that was imbedded with physicality and pushed the boundaries of respectability. Indeed, other black women also seemed feverishly to support the women in the league.

“Women really came out to watch,” former player and Monarchs manager Buck O’Neil recalled.⁶⁵ The *Philadelphia Tribune* reported on the crowds of women “hugging and kissing” Morgan after a Clowns game, similar to a scene Stone described to *Ebony* in 1953.⁶⁶ “I think I brought more women to the game,” said Stone, noting how old women wanted to shake her hand and little girls wanted her autograph.⁶⁷ Indeed, Pollock’s son later recalled the “joyous laughter” and “tears of pride” from women in the stands who would scream and cheer for Stone “with arms extended . . . in adoration.”⁶⁸ Despite the support received by many women, black men were less receptive to a woman’s presence on the diamond.

“Although the ladies appear a surefire hit at the box office, I am not going to be one of their enthusiasts,” wrote Luix Virgil Overbea for the *Philadelphia Tribune*. Expressing skepticism toward the athletic abilities of Stone, Morgan, and Johnson, Overbea was specifically put off by their presence as drawing cards. Recommending the formation of professional women teams, he wrote: “I don’t want to see women in baseball togs on the basis of curiosity. I do want to see them as excellent athletes.”⁶⁹ Lacy, accepting the fact that Stone was “not just a gag in this business,” was still not persuaded that professional sports were a place for women. “You passed up a better job in kids work . . . for this baseball stuff,” lamented Lacy.⁷⁰ Lacy had penned a series the year before titled “Girls behind the Guys,” which examined the wives of well-known athletes. In the spotlight on Ruthe Campanella, the wife of black baseball star Roy Campanella, Lacy emphasized that Ruthe “knows her sports” and was once a “star in both softball and basketball.” However, Lacy takes care to underscore the point that Campanella has “no time for that [sports] now” in order to focus on being a wife and mother. “The kids keep me too busy to think about that sort of career,” Lacy quotes Campanella as saying. Taken together, Lacy’s articles demonstrate the way athletics were considered permissible and even integral to the positive development of black womanhood during youth, yet black women athletes were not supposed to forgo their traditional responsibilities as wives and mothers who had decent careers as teachers, social workers, or nurses.⁷¹

Other writers such as Smith also echoed negative sentiments about professional women ballplayers. “She is a lady making a living in a profession designed strictly for men,” he penned in reaction to the signing of Stone. Describing her as a “hunk of femininity,” Smith argued that Stone’s presence in the NAL exemplified the “undisputed statement” that “women’s place is in the home.”⁷² Doc Young of the *Chicago Defender* expressed the same sentiment a year later when he wrote that “girls should be run out of men’s baseball on a softly-padded rail, for their own good and for the good of the game.”⁷³

The presence of women within male arenas, many black journalists contended, devalued the “manliness” of the baseball diamond and emasculated Negro men. Editorial responses to Stone, Johnson, and Morgan as baseball players often degenerated into the rhetoric of humiliation. “It is, indeed, unfortunate that Negro

baseball has collapsed to the extent it must tie itself to a woman's apron strings in order to survive," wrote Smith. Stone's presence in the NAL indicated to him that the league had become "soft." After begrudgingly admitting that Stone's batting average was "not bad for a dame," Smith went on to chide the players with lower averages, declaring that "any guy who can't out-hit a frauline shouldn't be permitted to play in the Little League, which is an organization for tykes and midgets."⁷⁴ The imagined husbands of the lady ballplayers drew the most mockery. Young painted a picture of a "muscle-bound baseball-playing wife" coming home to her husband, who has dinner waiting. Upset about her day, the wife ultimately "slugs him one." Young then asks what the man could do but cry, "What did I say wrong this time baaaaaabeeeeeee."⁷⁵ Likewise, Smith invented a whole conversation between "Mrs. Stone" and her husband, which included lines like "I hope you have a good day at the plate tomorrow, honey," to which the fictional Mrs. Stone responds, "I hope you'll have something on a plate when I come home after the game."⁷⁶ Despite depicting the women as masculine, writers also accused them of using their femininity to manipulate men. A writer for the *Philadelphia Tribune* argued that such attempted manipulation was apparent "as soon as we saw Toni Stone's head in Buster Haywood's lap," before adding that "womanly wiles are okay everywhere but trying to get in the starting lineup."⁷⁷ While other African American women in the sporting world were not framed as masculine, they were still accused of using their femininity as a tool of manipulation.

Despite many sportswriters' vocal admonishment of Stone, Johnson, and Morgan, the NAL, especially the Clowns and the Monarchs, leaned on the black press to present positive images of the women. In promoting the "feminine stars" of baseball, the black press played up their femininity. The more feminine Stone, Johnson, and Morgan appeared, the greater the contrast their athleticism offered, increasing the spectacle of their play. The women were not oblivious to the calculated crafting of their image, and they tried to control the ways they were represented. When Stone learned that Pollock wanted her to wear a skirt-and-shorts set modeled after the AAGPBL's uniforms, Stone flat out refused. "I wasn't going to wear no shorts," she reflected. "This is Professional Baseball."⁷⁸ Pollock eventually relented, and Stone was able to don a full uniform like her teammates'. Stone soon found that even a regular uniform could not spare her from comments about her body, with one article reporting that she wore "an oversized shirt . . . to accommodate her size 36 bust."⁷⁹ While she felt like a "goldfish" that was being viewed and judged from all angles, Stone was not the type to back away from the spotlight. She agreed to do interviews and photo shoots in an attempt to "set them straight."⁸⁰

Despite Stone's attempt to present herself on her own terms as a ballplayer, the promotional newspaper articles and photo spreads perpetuated the image of her as a unique sideshow and feminine wonder. Her promotional pictures for the Monarchs staged her in uniform applying powder at a mirror, while *Ebony* insisted

that she don a dress for a photo shoot. The pictures produced in *Ebony* emphasized Stone's femininity. One caption read: "Stone is an attractive young lady who could be somebody's secretary." Yet another featured her topless on a bed with the description "getting an after-workout rubdown."⁸¹ Assertive quotations from Stone, such as "I am out here to play the game" and "I can take knocks as well as anyone else. Don't worry I can take care of myself," were featured alongside pictures of her in dresses or in feminine poses.⁸² A photograph of her washing windows was accompanied by the caption "Washing windows while her husband enjoys the sun, . . . Toni Stone is an excellent housewife and cook."⁸³ Stone also agreed to do interviews and sign autographs for the same reason that Morgan did not object to posing with Robinson. Understanding themselves as drawing cards allowed the women to equate correctly their popularity with their value. They were a large reason the league remained viable, and their symbolic labor kept them employed and the institution of black baseball intact.

Despite their constant negotiations with the black press, their commodification by the NAL, and the sometimes abusive treatment from fellow players, Stone, Johnson, and Morgan still reaped some economic and personal benefits of being professional athletes. For all three women, playing professional baseball presented an opportunity to earn money playing a sport they enjoyed as well as a career choice in a time when black women's career options were greatly constrained. Playing baseball also afforded them the opportunity to travel. "It was a tremendous thing to wake up and look out the [bus] window and be five hundred miles from where you were before," recalled Johnson.⁸⁴ Sightseeing in "nice towns" and trips to places like Canada gave her, as well as the other women, a mobility that was not necessarily available to them as working-class black women. Stone used the traveling opportunities to learn about African American history. Visiting local museums, churches, and schools allowed her to move beyond the stories of "Pocahontas and John Smith" to locate the history "that wasn't taught."⁸⁵

Despite the opportunities professional baseball provided, Stone grew disillusioned with the business of "peddling flesh" and no longer desired to be anyone's drawing card. At the end of the 1954 season, she left the league, remarking in a letter to her husband: "My years in negro baseball has not meant anything. The owner has capitalized on me . . . that's all." She acknowledged at the end: "Baseball is a business . . . and now I need to capitalize for myself."⁸⁶ With attendance numbers once again dwindling and the NAL on the verge of disbanding, Morgan decided to return to business school in Philadelphia. Pollock announced her departure in a press release, saying that her decision to "pursue a secretary position in a business office" was her "true calling."⁸⁷ Johnson stayed on the Clowns for a few months, barnstorming independently, until 1955, when she too left the league. Aside from Pollock's press release about Morgan, the departure of the three biggest drawing cards in the NAL registered barely any response in the black press. The Negro

League was on its last leg, the women were no longer novelties, the tickets stopped selling, and the newspapers were silent.

“Second-Class Immortals”: Black Women Baseball Players Remembered

In the years following their professional baseball careers, Morgan and Johnson returned to their respective education programs. Morgan completed business school and worked for the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) in Philadelphia, while Johnson obtained her nursing degree and began a long career as a nurse at Sibley Memorial Hospital in Washington, DC. Stone spent her post-baseball days caring for her husband and working as personal care assistant in San Francisco. Yet she had been playing baseball since she left Rondo, Minnesota, as a teenager and had little desire to do anything else. Falling into depression after her exit from the league, Stone turned to the Catholic Church for solace. St. Francis Cathedral was able to offer her a position organizing and coaching a Little League team. While coaching the Isabella Hard Heads, Stone also began playing pickup games with men’s teams as well as emerging lesbian teams in the Bay Area. Often angry and disappointed that her career had been forgotten by the general public, Stone was determined to remember. “Don’t forget who you are,” she told herself.⁸⁸

A decade later the careers of Stone, Morgan, and Johnson, and the very existence of the Negro Leagues, had faded from the public eye. Yet Ted Williams’s 1966 Hall of Fame speech brought renewed attention to the Negro Leagues and its former players. “I hope some day Satchel Paige and Josh Gibson will be voted into the Hall of Fame as symbols of the great Negro players who are not here only because they weren’t given the chance,” stated Williams.⁸⁹ The release of Robert Peterson’s *Only the Ball Was White* in 1970 was a pivotal movement in the renewed interest in the Negro Leagues as it sparked new baseball research and brought fame to former players. In 1971 the National Baseball Hall of Fame unveiled a Negro League wing, coinciding with former Negro League pitching star Paige’s induction into the Hall of Fame.⁹⁰ Within this emerging narrative about black baseball, Stone, Morgan, and Johnson appeared only as footnotes. “The Indianapolis Clowns reached the height of ingenuity in 1953,” wrote Peterson, “when they had a girl named Toni Stone as their second baseman.”⁹¹

In the 1970s and 1980s, Stone was interviewed one time about her participation in professional baseball. The article, “To This Ms., Diamond Is Made of Dirt,” linked Stone to emerging representations of women in sport.⁹² Johnson and Morgan were not recognized at all. The increased interest in all three women came in the 1990s. Compared to the two articles written about her in the previous decades, Stone was the feature of over twenty articles from 1990 to 1996.⁹³ Morgan and Johnson were also rediscovered as they began fielding interview requests as well. Envisioned as trailblazers who resisted racism and sexism to follow their dreams

to play baseball, the women became romanticized symbols of multiculturalism. Hailed as “heroines,” each enjoyed a surge of publicity and recognition. Stone was elected to the Women’s Sports Hall of Fame in 1993, and a baseball field in Minnesota was named after her.⁹⁴ Saint Paul also declared March 6 “Toni Stone Day.” Similarly, April 3 was proclaimed “Johnson Day” in Indianapolis, because she represented what “hard work and determination can achieve.”⁹⁵ Morgan was elected to the Pennsylvania Sports Hall of Fame in 1995.⁹⁶ The athletes were also memorialized in children’s books.⁹⁷ Biographies on Stone and Johnson were written in the early 2000s.⁹⁸ The biographies present stories of young girls who dreamed of playing baseball and whose hard work and bravery enabled them to transcend racism and sexism and live their dream. The women are portrayed as unique in their love for sports and their participation in athletics.

The narratives that were used to recall the history of Stone, Morgan, and Johnson were similar to the ones that sanitized Rosa Parks and wove inspirational tales about Rudolph.⁹⁹ The use of dream rhetoric, which obscured the structural roots of racism and sexism and focused instead on personal desire and responsibility, had political mirrors in the color-blind and value-based politics of the late twentieth century. The rise of multiculturalism in the late 1980s and 1990s seemingly employed contrasting language to that of color blindness. Yet multiculturalism’s superficial celebration of all differences also worked to depoliticize identity and obscure the very real way inequality persisted in the last years of the twentieth century. To this end, Stone, Johnson, and Morgan became ideal cultural icons of a modern capitalist democracy that was attempting to distance itself from its “racist past.”¹⁰⁰

Johnson would directly find out the way the rhetoric of inclusion and celebration can work to silence structural racism. When the mayor of Washington, DC, had a ceremony to dedicate a baseball field to her, it seemed like a moment to celebrate. However, Johnson soon found out that the baseball diamond was instead a football field with artificial turf. It was not the annoyance of being a “ballplayer” who was given a football field that caused her to feel “hurt.” Rather, it was the disproportionate amount of resources allocated to building baseball fields in more affluent parts of the city. Meanwhile, the predominantly black area in which she coached Little League lacked a baseball diamond altogether. Johnson said that she had “never been so disappointed.”¹⁰¹

As the women grew in popularity, they tried once again to influence the way they were represented. Morgan tried to downplay the importance of her career, viewing it simply as “a good time with good fellas” and adding, “They were like family to me.”¹⁰² An interviewer, Donna DeVore, recalled how hard it was to convince Morgan that her story was important, noting, “I tried to give Connie her props.”¹⁰³ In contrast, Johnson and Stone were eager to tell their stories. One reporter recalls Stone coming to the interview with stacks of old newspaper clippings and parapher-

naliam.¹⁰⁴ Yet both women seemingly grew tired of once again being “capitalized on.” A frustrated Johnson remarked that the “media writes what it see and some that they don’t see,” going on to say that “they blow it out of proportion” and “better if they got all the facts before they started writing.”¹⁰⁵ Perhaps Stone agreed when stating that she disliked all the “ad-libbing” done in articles about her.¹⁰⁶ For Morgan and Stone, the opportunity to craft their own image was a short one. Both women passed away in 1996. Their deaths only reinforced their symbolization. Stone’s eternal silence was met with a headline that read, “First Female Negro Leaguer Dead,” coupled with a note encouraging readers to see a play about her life titled “Tomboy Stone” coming out the next year.¹⁰⁷ Morgan’s funeral card displayed the picture of her with Robinson. She was buried in an unmarked grave in Philadelphia.

Consequently, the deaths of Morgan and Stone elevated the celebrity of Johnson. Taking up a job running a Negro League memorabilia store, Johnson began marketing herself. This time, however, she would make sure that she got paid for any appearances, interviews, or pictures. She was tired of people making a “pile of money” from her story.¹⁰⁸ When asked for an interview by a researcher writing about women and baseball, Johnson refused, stating, “I’ve been advised that I should be paid.” Despite attempts by Stone, Johnson, and Morgan to influence the way their story was told, a simplified narrative of their athletic careers endures.

Conclusion

The varied—and often hostile—historical representations of Stone, Morgan, and Johnson displayed by the black press seem very different from the celebratory representations of these women in the 1990s. Yet, in each case, the women became reflections of a moment. Laboring symbolically as cultural commodities, Stone, Johnson, and Morgan sustained the NAL while simultaneously embodying the death of a masculine black institution. Their stories, sanitized snapshots of their lives and playing days, continue to be etched into public memory.

Whether they are presented as a historical footnote or as heroic individual actors, the context of Stone’s, Johnson’s, and Morgan’s participation and the politics of their representation—both historically and today—are obscured. Placing Stone, Morgan, and Johnson back into historical context and tracing the layered realities of their athletic careers in the NAL, as well as understanding the ways they have been remembered and remember themselves, complicates the narrative of these African American women of the mid-twentieth century. The benefits of playing professionally—travel, working at a chosen job, and love of the game—as well as the positive recognition in the late twentieth century should not be discounted. However, underscoring the ways in which individuals and institutions have used black women’s athletic bodies to advance their own financial and political interests offers a fuller picture of black women’s physical and symbolic labor in the postwar era.

Notes

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1. *A League of Their Own*, dir. Penny Marshall (1992; Culver City, CA: Sony Pictures Entertainment, 1997), DVD; Vincent Canby, review of *A League of Their Own*, *New York Times*, July 1, 1992.
2. There are conflicting interpretations of this silent character. Toni Stone, who saw the movie and called it "a wonderful film," never claimed to be the inspiration. Subsequent commentators on Stone have attributed the character to her. Mamie "Peanut" Johnson firmly believes that the character is based on her, saying, "I had made a statement when the movie came out that forced them to add that part."
3. On black athletes in the civil rights era, see Damion L. Thomas, *Globetrotting: African American Athletes and Cold War Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012); and Amy Bass, *Not the Triumph but the Struggle: The 1968 Olympics and the Making of the Black Athlete* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).
4. See Jennifer H. Lansbury, *A Spectacular Leap: Black Women Athletes in Twentieth-Century America* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2014), esp. chaps. 3–5.
5. Marion E. Jackson, "Sports of the World," *Atlanta Daily World*, March 15, 1958.
6. Sam Wineburg and Chauncey Monte-Sano, "'Famous Americans': The Changing Pantheon of American Heroes," *Journal of American History* 94, no. 4 (2008): 1186–1202.
7. See David W. Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory, and the American Civil War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002); and Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (2005): 1233–63.
8. Hall, "Long Civil Rights Movement," 1; Tiya Miles, *The House on Diamond Hill: A Cherokee Plantation Story* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Micki McElya, *Clinging to Mammy: The Faithful Slave in Twentieth-Century America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007). A vital source for understanding historical silences and the way public memorials and built environments shape understandings and narratives of history remains the classic work by Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon, 1995).
9. Within this project I use *popular narrative* to describe overarching themes and a replicated template used to frame the presentation, memory, and history of individuals or groups, in this case black female athletes. See Marcel van der Linden, "Gaining Ground," *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (2003): 69–75; Dorothy Ross, "Grand Narrative in American Historical Writing: From Romance to Uncertainty," *American Historical Review* 100, no. 3 (1995): 651–77; and Nell Irvin Painter, "Bias and Synthesis in History," *Journal of American History* 74, no. 1 (1987): 109–12.
10. "Girl Athlete," *Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder*, June 25, 1937.
11. Martha Ackmann, *Curveball: The Remarkable Story of Toni Stone, the First Woman to Play Professional Baseball in the Negro League* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2010), 160.
12. The Dolly Vardens are considered by some to be the first paid baseball team—white or black, male or female. They formed one year after the first organized women's baseball team formed at Vassar College and two years before the Cincinnati Red Stockings (widely regarded as the first professional baseball team) formed.
13. Leslie A. Heaphy, "More Than a Man's Game: Pennsylvania's Women Play Ball," *Pennsylvania Legacies* 7 (2007): 22–27.

14. "Honeydrippers' Torrid Pace Scares off Opposition in North Softball Division," *Philadelphia Tribune*, August 26, 1952.
15. "Baseball among the Fairer Sex Coming into Prominence," *Indianapolis Freeman*, December 26, 1908.
16. Quoted in Elizabeth Dunham, "Physical Education of Women at Hampton Institute," *Southern Workman* 53 (1924): 167.
17. Sam Lacy, "First Woman in Pro Baseball," *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 2, 1953.
18. Neil Lanctot, *Negro League Baseball: The Rise and Ruin of a Black Institution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).
19. Toni Stone, interview with Bill Kruissink, March, 26, 1996, National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, Cooperstown, NY. A thorough biography of Stone is Ackmann, *Curveball*.
20. Marion E. Jackson, Sports of the World, *Atlanta Daily World*, May 11, 1950.
21. Susan K. Cahn, *Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Women's Sport* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 140–41.
22. "Girls' Baseball as a Show," in *AAGPBL Handbook* (Chicago: Management Corporation, ca. 1945), AAGPBL records, Pennsylvania State University Libraries, as quoted in Cahn, *Coming on Strong*, 318.
23. *Los Angeles Weekly*, February 28, 1953.
24. *Indianapolis Recorder*, June 7, 1941.
25. *Indianapolis Recorder*, October 5, 1940.
26. *Pittsburgh Courier*, March 28 1942. For more on the Clowns and the debates about their antics, see Raymond A. Mohl, "Clowning Around: The Miami Ethiopian Clowns and Cultural Conflict in Black Baseball," *Tequesta: The Journal of the Historical Association of Southern Florida*, no. 62 (2002): 40–67. For more on Pollock and white owners in the Negro Leagues, see Alan Pollock, *Barnstorming to Heaven: Syd Pollock and His Great Black Teams*, ed. James Riley (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006).
27. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, February 26, 1953.
28. A notice in the *Chicago Defender* exemplifies this practice. "Notice to Baseball Men" reviews instructions for submitting game reports, including how to take score and how to list the home and away teams, and the strict submission deadlines. It also cautions teams against "withholding games because they do not win." *Chicago Defender*, May 18, 1929.
29. *Atlanta Daily News*, February 22, 1953. Similar versions of Pollock's press releases appeared in the *Chicago Defender*, *Pittsburgh Courier*, *Baltimore Afro-American*, *Kansas City Call*, and *Indianapolis Freeman*. The press releases appear with different headings, but the text is the same.
30. Sam Lacy, "A to Z," *Baltimore Afro-American*, July 25, 1953.
31. Bill Kruissink, "First Woman in Pro Baseball Remembers," *Alameda Journal*, April 2, 1996.
32. *Indianapolis Freeman*, May 23, 1953.
33. *Pittsburgh Courier*, June 20, 1953.
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Pittsburgh Courier*, June 6, 1953.
36. Indianapolis Clowns scorecard, Indianapolis Clowns vs. Memphis Red Sox, Griffith Stadium, September 1, 1953, National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. For game announcements, see *Pittsburgh Courier*, June 6, 1953, August 1, 1953; *Chicago Defender*, July 4, 1953; *Kansas City Call*, June 20, 1953; *Washington Post*, July 12, 1953; and *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 13, 1953.

37. Gate receipts, budget sheets, and financial statements from the Thomas Baird Collection, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, Lawrence, as compiled and presented in Lanctot, *Negro League Baseball*, 380–82.
38. Letter from Syd Pollock to Toni Stone, January 2, 1954, Stone family private archive, as quoted in Ackmann, *Curveball*, 164.
39. Pollock, *Barnstorming to Heaven*, 255; Toni Stone, interview with Larry Lester, January 3, 1991; Lester private archive, as quoted in Ackmann, *Curveball*, 237.
40. “Philly Girl Gets Tryout with Clowns,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, July 21, 1953.
41. Jean Hastings Ardell, “Mamie ‘Peanut’ Johnson: The Last Female Voice of the Negro Leagues,” *Nine: A Journal of Baseball History and Culture* 10, no. 1 (2001): 181–92.
42. Mamie “Peanut” Johnson, interview with Reba Goldman, 1998, Negro League Oral History Collection, Special Collections, Langsdale Library, University of Baltimore.
43. Pollock, *Barnstorming to Heaven*, 255–56; Lynn Ford, “Send in the Clowns, er, Indians,” *Indianapolis Star*, June 3, 1995.
44. Pollock, *Barnstorming to Heaven*, 255; Ackmann, *Curveball*, 164.
45. Ackmann, *Curveball*, 165; “Clowns Sell Toni Stone to KC Nine,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, March 13, 1954.
46. “Connie Morgan to Join Clowns,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, March 27, 1954; “Hometown Miss to Replace Toni Stone at Second Base,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, March 9, 1954.
47. “Hometown Miss.”
48. Flyer, July 13, 1954, National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.
49. *The Laff Book*, Indianapolis Clowns program book, National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.
50. Quoted in D. L. Stanley, “Women in Negro Baseball League,” *Atlanta Inquirer*, April 28, 2001.
51. Quoted in Pollock, *Barnstorming to Heaven*, 256.
52. Lacy, “A to Z.”
53. Harold Hair, interviewed in *Toni Stone: Pioneer Player, Outside the Lines*, ESPN, February 28, 2012.
54. Pollock, *Barnstorming to Heaven*, 244.
55. Stone, interview with Kruissink.
56. Quoted in Candus Thomson, “Making Pitch for Women,” *Baltimore Sun*, June 22, 1999.
57. Pollock, *Barnstorming to Heaven*, 244.
58. Hair, interviewed in *Toni Stone: Pioneer Player*.
59. Toni Stone, taped oral history, 1991, Archive and Collection, National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.
60. On the “culture of dissemblance” among black women, see Darlene Clark Hine, “Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women in the Middle West,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 14, no. 4 (1989): 912–20.
61. Stone, interview with Kruissink; Mamie “Peanut” Johnson, Oral History Archives, National Visionary Leadership Project (NVLN), www.visionaryproject.org/johnsonmamie (accessed February 1, 2011); Connie Morgan, interview with Donna DeVore, March 1, 1993, tapes and transcripts available in African American History Museum, Philadelphia; Ardell, “Mamie ‘Peanut’ Johnson,” 185.
62. Quoted in “Lady Ball Player,” *Ebony*, July 1953.
63. Johnson, NVLP; *Philadelphia Tribune*, August 3, 1954.
64. Toni Stone, interview with Jean Hastings Ardell, quoted in Ackmann, *Curveball*, 168.

65. Buck O'Neil, *I Was Right on Time: My Journey from the Negro Leagues to the Majors*, with Steve Wulf and David Conrads (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010), 195.
66. "Clowns, Monarchs Meet," *Philadelphia Tribune*, July 13, 1954; "Lady Ball Player"; "Schoolmates Greet Star," *Philadelphia Tribune*, July 24, 1954.
67. "Lady Ball Player."
68. Pollock, *Barnstorming to Heaven*, 248.
69. Luix Virgil Overbea, "Beating the Gun," *Philadelphia Tribune*, March 27, 1954.
70. Lacy, "A to Z."
71. Sam Lacy, "Girls behind the Guys," *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 10, 1952. For more articles reflecting similar sentiments, see Dan Burley, "What's Wrong with Women?," *Daily Defender*, September 1, 1959; Lacy, "First Woman in Pro Baseball"; and "Clowns, Monarchs Play Here Monday in Connie Mack Stadium Double Bill," *Philadelphia Tribune*, July 10, 1954.
72. Wendell Smith, "The Lady's Playing a Man's Game," *Pittsburgh Courier*, June 20, 1953.
73. Doc Young, "Should Girls Play Ball; No, Says Doc," *Chicago Defender*, August 28, 1954.
74. Smith, "Lady's Playing a Man's Game."
75. Young, "Should Girls Play Ball."
76. Smith, "Lady's Playing a Man's Game."
77. Malcolm Poindexter, "Sports View," *Philadelphia Tribune*, May 11, 1954.
78. Stone, interview with Kruissink.
79. "The Gal on Second Base," *Our World* 8, no. 7 (1953): 8–11.
80. *Ibid.*, 8.
81. Promotional Materials, Kansas City Monarchs, 1954, Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, Kansas City, MO; "Lady Ball Player," *Ebony*, July 1953, 47–50, 52–53.
82. "Lady Ball Player."
83. *Ibid.*
84. Ackmann, *Curveball*, 209; Johnson, interview with Goldman.
85. Stone, interview with Kruissink.
86. Letter from Toni Stone to Aurelious Alberga, August 11, 1954, Stone family private archive, quoted in Ackmann, *Curveball*, 194.
87. *Philadelphia Tribune*, October 19, 1954; *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, October 30, 1954.
88. Stone, interview with Kruissink.
89. Ted Williams, Hall of Fame inductee speech, July 25, 1966, National Baseball Hall of Fame, Cooperstown, NY.
90. Paige was less than impressed with the gesture by the Hall of Fame, saying that all his selection accomplished was turning him from a "second-class citizen to a second-class immortal." They Said It, *Sports Illustrated*, February 22, 1971.
91. Robert Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 204.
92. Bob Hayes, "To This Ms., Diamond Is Made of Dirt," *San Francisco Examiner*, May 4, 1976.
93. Articles include Miki Turner, "And Still She Rose," *Oakland Tribune*, August 28, 1992; Steven Goode, "She Was a Pioneer, Playing Baseball with the Great Ones," *Hartford Courant*, September 30, 1999; and Doug Grow, "Baseball Pioneer Never Listened to Naysayers," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, January 31, 1997.
94. Sandy Keegan, "Stone Had a Ball," *Newsday*, October 5, 1993; Doug Grow, "She Wasn't Afraid to Swing for the Fences," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, March 6, 1990. Toni Stone Stadium and Toni Stone Field are located in the Dunning Sports Complex, Griggs Street and Marshall Avenue, Saint Paul, MN.

95. City of Indianapolis, Mayor's Office, "Proclamation: Mamie 'Peanut' Johnson Day," April 3, 1998.
96. "Connie Morgan in the Hall," *Silhouettes: The Official Newsletter of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum* 5 (1996)
97. Jennifer H. Lansbury, "Champions Indeed: The Emergence of African American Women Athletes in American Society, 1930–1960" (PhD diss., George Mason University, 2008), 212–29; Nancy Larrick, "The All-White World of Children's Books," *Saturday Review*, September 11, 1965, 63–85; David Gast, "The Dawning Age of Aquarius for Multi-Ethnic Children's Literature," *Elementary English* 47 (1970): 661–65; Jeanne Chall et al., "Blacks in the World of Children's Books," *Reading Teacher* 32, no. 5 (1979): 527–33.
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106. Stone, interview with Kruissink.
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