

The Donaldson Network



It's that time again when the Donaldson Network would like to update you on the latest news in the quest to uncover the lost career of John Wesley Donaldson. We were hard at work in 2010 and anxiously await the discoveries in 2011, which marks one hundred years since John Donaldson stepped away from his hometown of Glasgow, Missouri on a journey that would change baseball history. In this

issue we will focus on the 1913 All Nations team that continues to provide astounding information. That season the All Nations were sponsored by P. Goldsmith's Sons, a sporting-goods supplier from Cincinnati, Ohio. This issue includes breakthrough research on images surrounding this historically significant ball club.

Also within this issue an update to johndonaldson.bravehost.com, as well as our research update and a photo of a musical group that traveled with the All Nations. The Donaldson Network continues to uncover information on John Donaldson that once was thought to be lost forever.



Photo of Dode Fisk Orchestra Found!



The Dode Fisk Orchestra traveled with the All Nations providing music for local dances in 1913. The two groups played the Mouse River Chautauqua on July 13, 1913 in Sherwood, North Dakota.

Accounts went as far as to say that members of the orchestra actually played ball with the All Nations. We continue to seek information to

verify this claim. When the All Nations came to town it was a celebration. Spectators by the thousands were drawn into these events to take in the most modern “attractions” of the day. The All Nations brought their cosmopolitan group of ballplayers, most notably John Donaldson to town giving the locals a chance to see “big league” caliber base ball. Donaldson was known as “The Greatest Colored Hurler in the World.” In 1913 reports say the All Nations won 126 games and lost only 17 over the entire season. The Donaldson Network has uncovered 24 victories credited to John Donaldson. We believe there could be dozens of missing games we have yet to find.




At Sherwood
Sun., July 13

Sherwood will Play at
 Mouse River Loop Chautauqua, The

ALL NATIONS
 Base Ball Club
July 11-12

The “All Nations” team consists of players of all nations Cubans, Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiians, Brazilians, Norwegians, Swedes, and Indians.

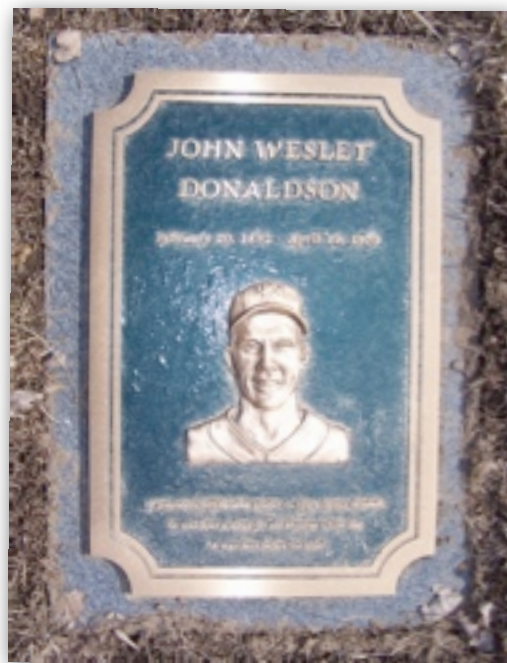
They will play Sherwood for \$100.00 a side and 75 percent of the gate receipts both days. Mendez, the Cuban who defeated the Philadelphia Athletics; and John Donaldson, the famous colored pitcher, will be seen in action. This club is a great attraction and **YOUR ONLY CHANCE** to see them is NOW, as they are going East.



Network Research Updates:

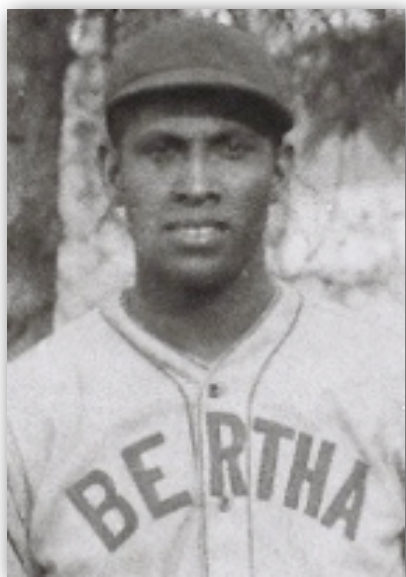
KROCK ON ESPN SPECIAL REPORT

Mark your calendars for February 20, and set your DVR/VCR! Jeremy Krock and his Negro Leagues Baseball Grave Marker Project will be featured on an episode of "[Outside the Lines](#)." Mr. Krock kick-started the Donaldson Network in 2004 when his group spearheaded a campaign to purchase a headstone for the unmarked grave of John Donaldson. Including Donaldson, the group has purchased headstones for another 21 former Negro League and other black ball players. The non-profit organization was recently featured in the New York times for their latest marker placement of "Big Bill" Gatewood. They collaborated to help discover the final resting place of Hall of Fame outfielder Pete Hill, after years of searching for the star. Krock and his group have long inspired members of the Donaldson Network to continue the difficult work. Every marker that is placed has a wonderful, nearly untold story. Many legacies remain to be discovered.



BERTHA SHORT FILM

A short film about John Donaldson's time in Bertha, Minnesota was produced. It can be viewed [HERE](#). The film shows rare photographs of Donaldson's time in central Minnesota. Donaldson played in the Gopher State, full time, from 1924 through 1930. He left the fledgling Negro National league when J. L. Wilkinson insisted he retool the All Nations for another summer of barnstorming following the spring training of the Kansas City Monarchs in 1924. Donaldson refused and signed a contract with the Bertha Fishermen to play semi-pro baseball. His salary was higher in the sticks than in the segregated "leagues." John Donaldson showed the world that he was able to excel on the only integrated stage available. Special thanks to Rick and Justin for their contributions.





TARGET FIELD OFFERS DONALDSON NETWORK BOOST

In previous issues of the Donaldson Network Newsletter a call went out to South Dakota. Help was needed in finding games that were referenced from previously discovered games and articles. We asked and asked without much success. Since the last publication a concerted effort has been undertaken based out of the Minneapolis Central Library. The Hennepin County Ballpark Fund, which helped to fund the new home of the Minnesota Twins offered patrons of the Central Library (and 13 additional branches) extended hours. Along with the improved hours of operation, Inter-Library Loan with the South Dakota Archives repealed the over \$8-per-reel previously charged by the Pierre institution. Now Donaldson Network members are scouring reels and filling in the record for John Donaldson in the Mount Rushmore State! At least ten documented victories have been added to Donaldson's totals, a great success!

NEWEST DONALDSON NETWORK MEMBER!



Welcome Robert Tracy Peterson,
born November 27, 2010.

Son of Todd and Ellen Peterson!

Now put down the bottle and get
researching!

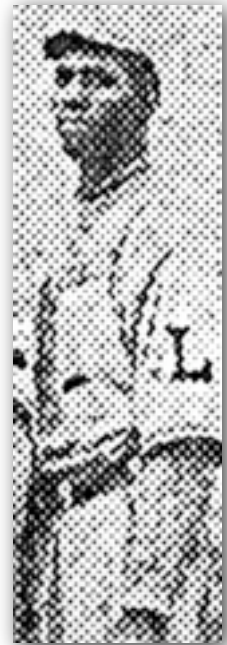


1913 Goldsmith's All Nations

This recently-discovered photograph of the All Nations team has provided historians and members of the Donaldson Network with a new challenge. Until recently these players' names were virtually unknown. This section of the newsletter will attempt to name the players shown here by providing a sampling of each player from photographs believed to have been taken on the same day as the one featured above. The first known instance of these photos being used in a newspaper came in July of 1913. Only today are we able put the pieces of the puzzle together. This breakthrough only became possible with contributions from Donaldson Network members. We now can attempt to put more names with the faces.



John Donaldson



Here are the compared photographs of John Donaldson. The two pictures on the right are assumed to be from the same negative. The series is presumed to be prior to July of 1913 when the first known appearance was discovered in a newspaper. The All Nations team continued to use this pose well into the 1920's... in fact other clubs not affiliated with Wilkinson's All Nations reproduced this photo, even though none of the players on their teams was in it. The drawing power of the All Nations guaranteed a substantial crowd. Below is a photo from 1928, more than 15 years after the image was snapped, it still heralded the coming of the All Nations.



Castanier



This is a player with a currently-unknown first name. We know that he played several positions for the All Nations, but was used primarily at first base. Network members have suggested that he was known as the “French” player on the club, but his exact lineage remains unknown.



McBride

We know little about Mr. McBride, we are not even sure if he is the gentleman pictured. If anyone recognizes this player please let us know.



Frank Blattner

Mr. Blattner was an original member of the All Nations. He played for the club nearly its entire existence. He was an African American known to have been raised in the coal mining town of Oskoloosa, Iowa. With the All Nations he was known as “Bluecoy the Giant Hawaiian”. Newspapers often described him as an exotic attraction, such as this: “the Hawaiian, with the All Nations is from the Hawaiian Islands and speaks five different languages – one of which is base ball. He is in a class by himself,” and “Bluecoy is the sensation of the infield. This fellow is over 6 feet in height.”

Blattner mostly played second base and occasionally toed the rubber.

Frank Blattner ended up playing in the Negro National League with the Kansas City Monarchs in 1921. He played in 65 games for the Monarchs with his former All Nations teammates John Donaldson and Jose Mendez.

Recent sleuthing has uncovered more information about Blattner that we hope to share in future updates.

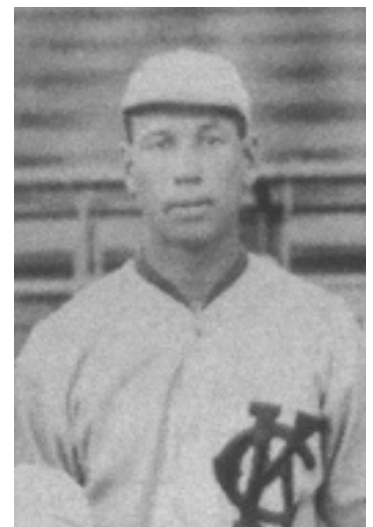
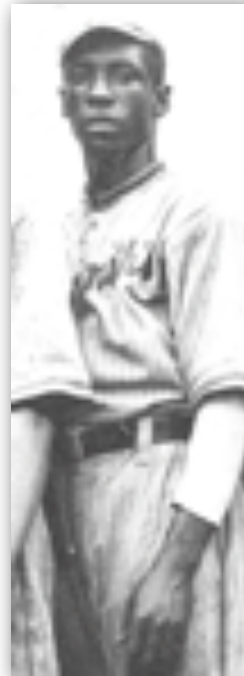


Photo provided by NoirTech Research



Art Dunbar

The inspiration for this photo essay originally came from Donaldson Network and SABR Photo Committee member, Mark Fimoff, who contacted us looking to verify a photo that was sold at auction. One might wonder why a photo of Art Dunbar would be auctioned at all... well, the photo was reported to be J. L. Wilkinson, the Hall of Fame owner and promoter for the All Nations. We told Mark that we knew the photo was not Wilkinson, and in fact thought it was someone else entirely. After several attempts to locate relatives we took another look at all of the All Nations players on file. After elimination of several other possibilities it became obvious that this was Art Dunbar. Dunbar was an original member of the All Nations and was used as a pitcher, first baseman and outfielder. Reports state that he was a Cherokee Indian from Des Moines, Iowa. During a game in the 1913 season he was struck in the head by a pitched ball and suffered what was referred to as a "skull fracture," and it was thought he would perish from the injury. However, to stay employed with a barnstorming club, players often played through injury. Art Dunbar was no exception. Not ten days after the "fracture," Dunbar was back in the lineup.



Jose Mendez

Jose Mendez was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 2006. He is probably the most famous of the All Nations, based on this honor alone. He was known as the “Black Diamond” from his baseball success on the island of Cuba. He was known to have defeated major league teams who toured his homeland and, like others on the All Nations, “would have been in the major leagues if not for the color of his skin.” Mendez actually joined the All Nations in 1913, after several advertisements in 1912 erroneously proclaimed he was with the club. Along with John Donaldson, Mendez formed a daunting one-two punch for the cosmopolitan club. Pitching almost every third day was the order that came down from Wilkinson, and Mendez responded taking his regular turn. Jose Mendez once called J. L. Wilkinson the “best American living,” and the two had a relationship that lasted until Mendez’s untimely death in 1926. In fact, Mendez was selected by Wilkinson to be the first Manager of the Kansas City Monarchs during the inaugural season of the Negro National League in 1920. Modern historians have surmised that John Donaldson was originally in line for the Monarchs job over Mendez. They believe the reason Mendez was finally selected was that Donaldson’s drawing power had yet to show any sign of diminishing on the barnstorming circuit. If the Monarchs faltered financially, Donaldson was better suited to continue his bankable dominance in the hinterlands of the west. A more extensive look at Mendez is available on our website called [Nat C. Strong, Jose Mendez and the Cuban Stars Ballclub in the U.S. 1908-1912](#) by Steven Hoffbeck.

George Walla



Mr. George “Chief” Walla was a mainstay of the All Nations roster well before these photos were snapped. Walla played third base and was known as a “heavy” hitter. Reports of his blasting the horsehide into cornfields across the midwest were rampant. During the 1913 season it was reported that Walla was signed by a club in the American Association, a major league at the time. Members of the All Nations were ballplayers good enough to play in the big leagues.



Cabinas



The player shown here is known only by his last name. Reports of his exploits on the field say he was a pitcher and outfielder. A key to rounding out a barnstorming roster was to have versatile players. Most every player could play a number of positions.

On the right is an advertisement for a contest in southern Minnesota. Local clubs looked forward to having the All Nations on their schedules. Often teams would “load-up” with the best talent available in the region, as long as the cost of such players could be contained. Advertising men traveled ahead of the All Nations to “post” their hand bills to nearly every surface of nearby towns, a practice perfected by traveling circus troops.

Ball Game
— at —
SLAYTON - TO-DAY
All Nations vs Slayton
The All Nation Organization are men from all over the world, and are considered one of the greatest Baseball aggregations of the times.
The local boys have the best material they have had this season.
Game called at 2:30, at the FAIR GROUNDS
Come, you Booster, and Boost Slayton.

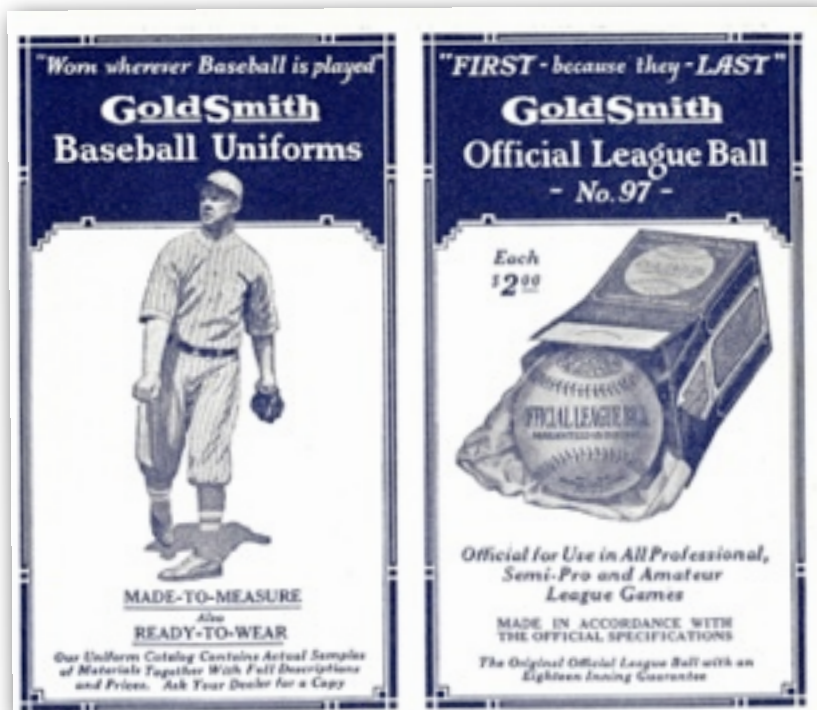
Naito



Naito was an outfielder for the All Nations in 1913. We continue to seek information about his career. There were a couple of Asian Americans who played with the All Nations throughout its existence. The player called Naito played primarily right field. More study about the significance of these players is being done by Donaldson Network members. Look for future updates.



The Donaldson Network is unaware of the identity of the player pictured above.



sold as yet another revenue source. Imagine the discovery of a typical Donaldson appearance scratched out in a local scorer's handwriting.



Goldsmith Scorecards

It was very profitable for barnstorming teams to sell their own branded scorecards at the games. The cards were used to advertise the Goldsmith's uniforms and baseballs that could be mail-ordered for local clubs. This card was discovered recently and dates to nearly the time of the All Nations. These cards could command another five cents for the organizers, and were

[illegible]

Chief Seymour



Chief Seymour played every position for the All Nations. He was a right-handed pitcher and took his regular turn on the rubber opposite Donaldson, Mendez and Dunbar. He was known as being very superstitious. In one game reported to have been played on a Friday the 13th, he left the game part way through after a couple of players were injured, fearing his own safety.



The Donaldson Network is unaware of the identity of the player pictured above.

Web Site Update

Our web site johndonaldson.bravehost.com continues to be updated with incredible new content. Recently we've added to the site our All Nations 1914 day-by-day accounts. The known newspaper accounts for 1914 are located [Here](#). Follow

John Wesley Donaldson
Newspaper Clippings about Southpaw Pitcher John Donaldson

Saturday, September 10, 2010 Last Update: 12:33 PM ET

[Main Page](#) | [Videos](#) | [Games](#) | [Researchers](#) | [Box Scores](#) | [Selected Stories and Essays](#) | [Line Scores](#) | [Teams](#) | [Missing Dates](#) | [Unanswered Questions](#)

1911 John Donaldson Games	1913 John Donaldson Games	1914 John Donaldson Games
<p><i>Stories are placed in order of the date they appeared.</i></p> <p>April 15, 1911 Novinger, MO "We are in receipt of a letter from John Wesley Donaldson, Glasgow's crack amateur ball pitcher..."</p> <p>April 29 & 30, 1911 Centerville, IA "The base ball games Saturday and Sunday between the Tennessee Rats and Centerville resulted in an even break..."</p> <p>May 2, 1911 Derby, IA "The Tennessee Rats defeated Derby, 10 to 1, in a fast game of ball at Derby yesterday."</p>	<p><i>Stories are placed in order of the date they appeared.</i></p> <p>April 26, 1913 Waterloo, IA "Donaldson, the big colored pitcher for the All-Nations team, had plenty of speed in Saturday's game..."</p> <p>April 27, 1913 Waterloo, IA "Sunday's game was a sweatfest so far as Andrews' men were concerned, a total of sixteen hits being garnered off the All-Nations' pitchers."</p> <p>May 12, 1913 Onaka, NE "Donaldson and Mender divided the honors as the chief trouble-makers in the second game."</p>	<p><i>Stories are placed in order of the date they appeared.</i></p> <p>May 9, 1914 Grimes, IA "The All-Nations team defeated Grimes 12 to 3 Saturday with Donaldson pitching..."</p> <p>May 10, 1914 Grimes, IA "The All Nation baseball club won a clean cut victory over Grimes yesterday afternoon..."</p> <p>May 14, 1914 Centerville, IA "Jackson and Donaldson exchanged places in the sixth inning."</p>

John Donaldson and his teams starting with the 1911 season. See what was reported about the World's Greatest Black ballplayer. This project is designed to show the incredible number of games we as a group have collected and how many games Donaldson played in.

john donaldson

BASEBALL GAMES NEEDED LIST

More work has gone into the [Missing Games](#) page. We've added and subtracted from the known references to John Donaldson games. Remember to check in prior to embarking on a search as these references frequently are updated by the many members of the Donaldson Network.