

Negro League Baseball: The Reid Factor; Charles Rogers “Iron Man” Reid-Part I

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I’ve decided to take a break from my ‘other’ writing to do some writing here at The Shadow Ball Express. I’m often reminded by friends, like **Bill Staples**, that discussions on the unknown history of baseball and using yesteryear’s comparative analysis, while applying Sabermetrics type analysis when looking at yesteryear’s ball players vs. today’s ball players can be confusing; or addressing certain subjects like ‘Deep Pitching Pools’ vs. “Shallow Pitching Pools”, and how difficult it can make be to find resolute answers, when it comes to asking questions like, “Who’s was the Greatest Home Run Hitter of All Time?”. In other words, there is no matrix for such things, especially when certain variables and unknowns still exist. Or how certain things may factor in one way or another, and how that can often makes it helpful with a modern day assessment of a player’s actual abilities and while addressing old vs. new performance standards. The subject on this day, “HR-PP = home runs per pitcher “,..and that was this morning’s discussion. Bill asked me my view point, and and to be quite honest, after I lifetime of crunching numbers, I can’t say I really know if their is a way of making an assessment based on any stylized comparative analysis. I know that box scores are important. I also know in the case of some unknown players, they are almost nonexistent. I’ve become possessed by a stronger appreciation for the history and the facts, just shy of those all important numbers where some history of baseball is concerned, because the number weren’t always reported, based on social construct. Therefore, I continue to dig.

Based on the lack of certain known variables, which should make research easy, and a lack of accessible information, I’m often left just pondering. Here is the reason ‘why’ I think deeply, as Bill Staples so aptly put it in his blog on, “[Every Baseball Era Deserves an Asterisk, Not Just the Steroid Era](#)“. Bill states, ... “**The way I see it, the career numbers of Babe Ruth and his peers were “artificially enhanced” because they never faced the most talented pitchers of the Negro Leagues ([Bullet Rogan](#), [Dick Redding](#), [Andy Cooper](#), etc.). Racism and the “color line” kept African-Americans out of MLB until 1947.**” Charles Rogers Reid was one of those great unknown pitchers of yesteryear.



Charlie Reid of the Athen Elks

[Charlie “Iron Man” Reid’s name is synonymous with greats like, Walter “The Great” Mails, Chick Hafey, Lefty Gomez, Buzz Artlett, Ernie Lombardi.](#) I’m sure most people have never heard of Charlie Reid, even though they’ve seen his face a thousand times. They’ve never knew who he played against or who he was, or who he played with...and they never looked at his skill sets, because we rarely look at Negro League players beyond St. Louis or Kansas City. In other words, those of Western origins. We rarely consider that they have something to offer in the overall scope of historical value, when it comes to determining who played the game of baseball, and played it well. This story is more about all pitchers who were required to step up to the plate, long before Rule 6.10 was adopted by the American League in 1973. Duster Mails played for both the American League and the National League. Charlie Reid would never be consider a prospect for either the National League or American League. It was a simpler time, except where skin color was concerned. This is one of those lost tales of integrated baseball. As Charlie put it, ***“One Sunday we played the Mails All-Stars at the First Street diamond in Richmond. Mails threw the fastest ball I ever saw—or didn’t see. No, I didn’t get any hits. We lost, 7-2”. or “I pitched the best game of my life in 1923 against the Healdsburg club, the best semi-pro team in the state. Pop Arlett handled the club. I threw a one-hitter—and still lost, 1-0.”***

Charlie Reid was the son of Thomas Reid Sr. and Virginia 'Parker' Reid, was born in 1898 in Angles Camp, California. Thomas Reid Sr. was the personal bodyguard of [Gentleman Jim Corbett](#), and a bouncer in many Barbary Coast saloons at the turn of the 20th Century. Thomas Reid Sr. was originally from Griffin, Georgia, who's family headed West just ahead of a Griffin lynch mob, and "Jennie" was the grand-daughter of California Pioneer, [William Henry Galt](#), who was originally a slave that moved West from Virginia to California, and was one of the founders of the **Sacramento Zouaves** of early California Militia movement, which kept California out of the hands of the Confederacy. This type of family legacy denotes that Charles would probably never consider playing baseball in the East or South, no matter how outstanding his baseball skills were.



Thomas Reid Sr.



Leila, Charlie, Thomas Jr. and Bert, Angles Camp, circa 1903

Charlie Reid was one of the 'original' [San Pablo Park Boys](#), who had a fruitful career in "semi-pro" baseball, as a player and an umpire. He played for any number of teams, including the **Athen Elks** of the **Berkeley Colored League**, but between 1921 and 1924, he was part of the pitching staff for the [Oakland Pierce Giants](#). He was even invited to play for the **Detroit Stars** by **Steve Pierce** in 1924, but Charles decided that his life was better suited on the West Coast, near his very large and well established Bay Area family.



Mother Virginia Reid and her son, Charlie Reid



Charlie Reid, Oakland Pierce Giants

Although names like Chick Hafey, Lefty Gomez, Buzz Arlett, Duster Mails and Ernie Lombardi are well known in the annals of baseball history, Charlie Reid is not as well known as he should be. I think this bears some similarity to what Bill Staples meant when he stated, **“because they never faced the most talented pitchers of the Negro Leagues”**. Here’s the real eye-opener. Even if some of them did face some of the **talented pitchers** of all time, as Charlie was one of those, very few people know anything about these African American men that did face them in pitching duels, and/or pitcher vs. batter duels.



Charlie Reid, Oakland Red Sox One of my favorite articles about Charile “Iron Man” Reid

The San Francisco Spokesman, The 1940 Census Record for Charles Reid has him located in Richmond, CA. It's where he made his home, and even though he's a Berkeley and Oakland original, Richmond claims him as their own. [Shields-Reid Park](#) is named after him, and it's not far from his 1940 Census home address near at 610 Duboce Avenue. He lived no more than a block away.

1940 U.S. Census for Charles Rogers Reid Baseball was Charlie's life. Besides playing the game, and playing it well, he also playing against some of the best players that baseball has ever produced, Charlie's main focus was teaching the game to those who might have went a different direction, had it not been for his dedication and perseverance. Charlie Reid's efforts, after his lengthy baseball career was to stem the tide of juvenile delinquency in the Bay Area by coaching sports, teaching sports, and umpiring sports, for less than fortunate kids,..but every one was welcomed to participate in park activities. In 1934, Charlie retired his playing for teaching and umpiring the game of baseball.

The image shows a 1940 U.S. Census form for Charles Rogers Reid. The form is titled "POPULATION SCHEDULE" and includes sections for "PERSONAL INFORMATION", "HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION", and "SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS".

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

- Name: Charles Rogers Reid
- Relationship: Head
- Sex: Male
- Age: 34
- Married: Yes
- Place of Birth: California
- Year of Birth: 1906
- Education: High School
- Occupation: Umpire

HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION:

- Household Number: 1000
- Street: 610 Duboce Avenue
- City: San Francisco
- County: San Francisco
- State: California

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS:

- Number of Children: 2
- Number of Siblings: 1
- Number of Parents: 2
- Number of Grandparents: 4
- Number of Great-Grandparents: 8
- Number of Nieces and Nephews: 1
- Number of Other Relatives: 0
- Number of Non-Relatives: 0
- Number of Boarders: 0
- Number of Servants: 0
- Number of Other Persons: 0

ATHEN ELKS WIN THE FIRST HALF CHAMPION TITLE

Reid Does 'Iron Man' Stunt by Hurling Two Victories

The Athen Elks, champions of the Berkeley Colored League for three years, won a leg on the 1933 crown when they captured the First Half Title by defeating the Bacarachs in a doubleheader at San Pablo Park Sunday.

The first game was given to the Elks via forfeit by Umpire Ed. Jackson in the sixth frame, but they were leading 11 to 0 at the time. The game was halted when the Bachs failed to get in playing position after a disputed play at third.

The second game, a playoff tie from the first half, went to the Elks by a 9 to 2 count as well as the First Half title. Incidentally, the veteran Charley Reid hurled both games, allowing but ten hits in the 15 innings, and walking nary a man. Edmondson and January got 2-4-3 in the initial battle, while Collins and Arthur hit homers. Bishop and King garnered circuit clouts in the second combat. Lane, McNeil and Freeman grabbed the Bachs lone trio of hits in the opening tilt.

| ATHEN ELKS | | AB | R | H | E |
|---------------|-------|----|---|---|---|
| January, lf | ..... | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Arthur, 3b | ..... | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Edmondson, 1b | ..... | 5 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Collins, cf | ..... | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Brown, 2b | ..... | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Bishop, rf | ..... | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Newton, ss | ..... | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| King, c | ..... | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Reid, p | ..... | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Hardeman, c | ..... | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | ..... | 36 | 9 | 8 | 0 |

| BACARACHS | | AB | R | H | E |
|----------------|-------|----|---|---|---|
| Crittendon, rf | ..... | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Gibson, 1b | ..... | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| W. Haywood, ss | ..... | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| McNeil, c | ..... | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Lane, 3b | ..... | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| B. Haywood, 2b | ..... | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Deating, cf | ..... | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Thomas, lf | ..... | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Ramus, p | ..... | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Clark, rf | ..... | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | ..... | 34 | 2 | 7 | 0 |

| | | | | | |
|------------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Athen Elks | ..... | 943 | 011 | 000 | - 9 |
| Hits | ..... | 033 | 110 | 000 | - 8 |
| Bacarachs | ..... | 010 | 100 | 000 | - 2 |
| Hits | ..... | 120 | 200 | 011 | - 7 |

Summary: Homeruns: King.
Bishop. Struckout by: Reid 7; Ramus 10. Walks by: Ramus 2. Left on bases: Bachs 5; Elks 2. Sacrifice hits: Gibson.

(First Game)

| | | | | |
|------------|-------|-----|-----|------|
| Athen Elks | ..... | 150 | 401 | - 11 |
| Hits | ..... | 030 | 502 | - 11 |
| Bacarachs | | 000 | 000 | - 0 |
| Hits | | 011 | 100 | - 3 |

Reid and King;
Crittendon, Clarke and Freeman

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