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Methods of Historical Research
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San Antonio Black Aces

The first thoughts that come to mind when imagining the illustrious city of San Antonio, Texas, brings forth ideas of the Alamo, the Riverwalk, the San Antonio Spurs or the San Antonio Rampage. However, most people, whether from San Antonio or not, do not know that San Antonio has a long and notable history when it relates to baseball. Baseball has been in San Antonio since the 19th century, with the San Antonio Bronchos being the first team in any sport to bring the city a title in 1897. African Americans have been playing baseball for as long as there has been a sport of baseball. In 1908, the city's first black baseball team, the Black Bronchos, won another championship for the city. After the foundation was laid for African American baseball leagues by the Black Bronchos, the Black Aces made their first and only appearance in San Antonio in 1919. Through immense struggles and pressures due to Jim Crow laws and the aftermath of the Great War, a bright light during dark times was given to the San Antonio community. The San Antonio Black Aces brought a Texas Negro Baseball League championship to the city in the only year the team was in existence. Calling the Black Aces a team of hopefuls could be seen as a stretch since many of these players came from baseball obscurity and had jobs such as Pullman porters or warehouse workers prior to becoming ball players. Players included those who had started their careers on insignificant teams but found future fame. L.W. Moore gathered these misfits and created a team that gave San Antonio hope, despite the immense racism and segregation that was rampant through the city. Despite the obstacles being thrown at the players, they continued to use their championship win as source of

agency for themselves.¹ During a period of Jim Crow segregation, redlining communities and lynching of African Americans, this progressive team came out of nowhere to bring a divided community together.

As previously stated, African Americans have been playing the game of baseball as long as any other racial group in America. America's beloved national pastime has been a part of American culture since its inception in 1839 in Cooperstown, New York. There has been much written about the sport, and there is a deep historiography on baseball. You can find secondary sources discussing players, different teams, different leagues and even books on how the sport affected different cities. When historians look at the bigger picture of Negro League Baseball, there are many more secondary sources out there but none that are hyper focused on baseball in San Antonio as these next two books. When focusing on the Black Aces and baseball in San Antonio only two sources can be found, and they were both written in 2004. Nearly 90 years after the Black Aces won the city a championship, two different authors wrote books about sports in San Antonio while barely mentioning this team.

Chris Foltz's *Bronchos to Spurs: Sports in San Antonio since 1888* recognizes familiar sports figures that played for one of the many teams in San Antonio. In Foltz's one paragraph discussing the Black Aces, there is no mention of the championship or any actual players that played that season.² When flipping into the appendix portion of his book, the reader is left to wonder whether this team had any real season at all. Ballpark and manager are described as unknown and the post-season portion is missing the bolded championship caption that other

¹ In Chris Barker's *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*, he defines agency in social science as the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choice. Chris Barker, *Making Sense of Cultural Studies* (London: SAGE, 20020), 448.

² Chris Foltz, *Bronchos to Spurs* (San Antonio: Maverick Publishing Company, 2004), 18.

teams were given. David King's *San Antonio at Bat* focuses completely on the story of baseball in San Antonio starting with those Bronchos of 1897.³ King does a much better job of highlighting the achievements of the Black Aces by discussing players that helped propel the team to glory and the championship series itself. There are a few errors in King's write up of the club, but considering the small amount of primary sources for a Negro league club in 1919, that is to be expected.

The larger question I am trying to answer is what did baseball offer to these Black players? Both Foltz and King never truly touch on this subject. The "color line" in the major leagues was broken in 1947 by Jackie Robinson, but African Americans played the game of baseball before then. Baseball during these times was not paying the players what we see modern day players making, although a black player was making more than an average black worker,⁴ so to say it was a way out of their local situation would not be correct. One could argue that baseball gave African Americans a platform to show the rest of the country that they were as good as, or better than, their white counterparts. In an article titled "How Baseball's Negro Leagues Defied the Stereotypes of Segregation," writer Rob Ruck specifies that Negro Leagues gave black ballplayers a platform to disprove the notion that African Americans were inherently inferior.⁵ In the hope of shedding light onto a forgotten team, this paper will add to the conversation of black ball clubs before the inception of the Negro leagues.

³ David King, *San Antonio at Bat* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 48-53.

⁴ Rob Ruck, "How Baseball's Negro Leagues Defied the Stereotypes of Segregation," *Smithsonian Magazine*, The Conversation, Published February 13, 2020, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-baseballs-negro-leagues-defied-stereotypes-segregation-180974201/>.

⁵ *Ibid.*

The San Antonio Black Aces of 1919 played in a Negro Baseball league that historians of the sport called a “Regional” league or a Negro “Minor” league. The Center for Negro League Baseball Research has defined these types of leagues as “very competitive in their talent and just as organized as their Negro League counterparts in the bigger northern cities.”⁶ Some of the more prominently known Negro regional leagues in Texas were the South Texas Negro League and the Texas Negro League. Although the Black Aces brought the city of San Antonio a championship, they were not the first black team to do that. In 1907, the Black Bronchos, owned and operated by well-known San Antonio resident and businessman Charlie Bellinger, brought San Antonio a “State Championship of the South.” The Black Bronchos, won another State Championship in 1908, and continued to play through the 1910 season.

On April 12th, 1919, J. Alba Austin wrote an article in the *Dallas Express News*, titled “Base Ball,” indicating that the clubs in Texas were getting together to create a new all Negro Texas League.⁷ The first game would be played on the 20th of April with the Dallas Black Giants and the Waco Black Navigators starting the season off.⁸ When reading this article, one gets the sense that this league had to start off strong and include veterans that the locals recognized to be taken seriously as a league. There is no mention of other cities or teams that joined this new Negro League but a portable document of “teams and standings” can be found at the Center for Negro League Baseball Research. There were eight teams that played in the 1919 season of the Texas Negro League.⁹ Those teams were the San Antonio Black Aces, Dallas Black Marines (Black Panthers), Waco Black Navigators, (no team name given for these next

⁶ “Negro ‘Minor’ League Teams,” Center for Negro League Baseball Research, accessed March 31, 2020, <http://www.cnlbr.org/DefiningNegroLeagueBaseball/NegroMinorLeagueTeams/tabid/58/Default.aspx>

⁷ J. Alba Austin. “Base Ball,” *Dallas Express*, April 12, 1919.

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ *Texas Colored League*. PDF file. Accessed March 31, 2020. <http://www.cnlbr.org/Default.aspx>.

cities) Houston, Austin, Beaumont, Fort Worth and Galveston. The Black Aces are not mentioned in a San Antonio newspaper until nearly a month and a half later.

“Black Aces play Dark Panthers at League Park”¹⁰ was the title of a small paragraph in the May 24th edition in the sports section of the *San Antonio Evening News*. The paragraph is placed underneath the rest of the baseball news and notes of the day and right above the section explaining how a new drainage system was being planned for the baseball park. As progressive as it might seem that San Antonio created a Black team for the newly created Texas League during an era of Jim Crow and increased racism, the San Antonio newspapers were not giving the Black Aces as much recognition as their white counterparts. What we can take away from this rather small article, is that the team played at League Park on days when the white team was not in town. The Black Aces had just wrapped up a three game series against the Austin ball club in Austin, Texas. This new series against the “Dark” Panthers (actually named the Black Panthers and later on called the Black Marines) was the season opener in San Antonio, or rather their first games played at home.¹¹ In spite of local papers not giving much credence to the newest ball club in San Antonio at the beginning of the season, things looked much different by the end of the season. The San Antonio Black Aces were not mentioned again until five days later. The Evening News had an advertisement taking almost a third of the page of the sports section advertising “‘Baseball Tomorrow' The San Antonio Black Aces vs. The Waco Black Navigators.”¹² The advertisement does not specify where the teams played the game but League Park, formerly Block Stadium, was the location for Black Aces baseball.

¹⁰ “Black Aces to Play Dark Panthers at League Park,” *San Antonio Evening News*, May 24, 1919. <https://newspaperarchive.com/san-antonio-evening-news-may-24-1919-p-10/>

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² “Baseball Tomorrow.” Advertisement. *San Antonio Evening News*, May 31, 1919, 8.

Block Stadium, named after owner Morris Block, was built on the southern edge of downtown San Antonio in early 1913. The stadium was built off Garden Street (now known as Saint Mary's Street) and Carolina Street right in front of Westminster Presbyterian Church. In the Sunday morning, January 12, 1913 edition of the San Antonio Express, readers were greeted with drawings of the stadium and baseball diamond on the sports page.¹³ Designed by architect Clyde Williams and built by contractor L. Tyler, this new San Antonio stadium became the home of the newly formed Texas League baseball team. The stadium name was actually chosen through a drawing after fans were given the opportunity to choose the name they considered to be the best for the park.¹⁴ J. H. Lucas, chief clerk of the Gunter Hotel, received a season ticket for the Bronchos because the name Block Stadium was chosen, which was his entry (the team took a hiatus for two years before starting again).¹⁵ Two years later, in 1915, Block Stadium had its name changed to League Park, and it continued to host baseball games and other sporting events. The stadium hosted many Major League teams during spring training throughout its life span but sadly it was torn down in 1927 to build more homes in the residential district.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the stadium provided a home for the Aces and the Black Aces during their 1919 championship season.

The Black Aces again appeared in the sports page on Monday morning, June 2, 1919. Over the previous weekend, the Waco Black Navigators came into town and were able to score two victories over the San Antonio team. Reading this article carefully, sports fans and historians begin to see names mentioned that eventually played a major role in the Black Aces winning the

¹³ *Bird's-eye View of Bronchos' New Home as it Will Look Soon*. January 12, 1913. Drawing. *San Antonio Express*, sporting edition, January 12, 1913.

¹⁴ "Many fans have names for park," *San Antonio Express*, February 11, 1919.

¹⁵ "Block Stadium is name of park." *San Antonio Express*, February 16, 1913.

¹⁶ "Landmark is Supplanted by homes," *San Antonio Light*, December 4, 1927.

championship. In game one, San Antonio got its first look at William “Steel Arm” Davis, left arm pitching specialist, as he struck out ten Aces on his way to a 14 to 3 victory.¹⁷ Although it was a losing effort in both games, the newspaper article makes mention that over 2,000 fans were in attendance to “cheer and later console the Black Aces.”¹⁸ Seeing that these two games were so early on in the season, we can make a fair assumption that the fans in attendance were more than likely all African American. This assumption is based on the second portion of the same article. The article tells the reader that game two was a “real battle” and that the Black Aces had the game in hand until the “unlucky last inning of agony” caused East Commerce Street to go into deep mourning.¹⁹ Due to red lining and segregation, a number of African Americans lived on the east side of San Antonio off of or close to East Commerce Street in St. Paul Square. This comment leads me to believe that most fans in attendance this fateful day were not white, although the racial composition of the audience changed going forward as the Black Aces racked up victories against worthy opponents.

Sometime between June 2nd and June 10th, the Waco Black Navigators, who had just defeated the Black Aces in three games straight, began selling off their players to the highest bidding teams. David King writes, “[W]hen April and May produced abundant rains —and little baseball— Franks [owner of the Black Navigators] began looking to get out of a money-losing enterprise.”²⁰ In researching this period of time, there is no mention of Franks or how much money was transferred for these players in any newspaper from either San Antonio or Waco. An article in the Friday, August 15th edition of the *San Antonio Express*, states that manager S. J. Moore (other times written L.W. Moore) of the Black Aces bought out the contracts to six or

¹⁷ “Black Aces lose pair; Play today.” *San Antonio Express*, June 2, 1919.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ David King, *San Antonio at Bat* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 49.

seven of the best players from the Black Navigators adding them to his developing roster, including “Steel Arm” Davis, Robert “High Pockets” Hudspeth, Henry Blackmon, and James “Biz” Mackey.²¹ These players played a pivotal role in the Black Aces turning their fortunes around in the latter half of the season. Before this transaction, neither the Black Aces nor their white counterparts were doing much winning that season. “Steel Arm” Davis shored up the pitching rotation, making sure that the team had an ace pitcher that could defeat any team in the league. James “Biz” Mackey was the second half of that pitcher/catcher battery that was ever so important during the championship series; he could also pitch when needed. Robert “High Pockets” Hudspeth also played a central role in the team winning in the end.

Robert “High Pockets” Hudspeth, manned first base and was the lock-down first baseman the Black Aces needed. “HighPockets” Hudspeth, born in Luling, Texas on April 6th, 1894, had a twelve-year professional baseball career after this season with the Black Aces. High Pockets’ antics at first base were said to have added humor to the game, and because of his height, he could stretch every which way to catch the ball when thrown his way. The *San Antonio Evening News* described his sleight of hand antics at first base by calling him the “Hermann” of baseball, referring to a “Hermann Pass,” which is a sleight of hand card trick used to control cards.²² Before becoming a full-time professional baseball player, High Pockets worked as a Pullman Porter.²³ Pullman Porters were African American men hired to assist passengers on George M. Pullman’s luxury railroad sleeping cars. A former Pullman Porter, Greg Leroy explains that, “A Pullman Porter was really kind of a glorified hotel maid and bellhop in what Pullman called a

²¹ “Black Aces win opener from Waco Black Navs.” *San Antonio Express*, August 15, 1919.

²² “A Dozen Black Aces sure make a winning hand.” *San Antonio Evening News*, September 12, 1919.

²³ “World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918.” Database and images. ancestry.com.

hotel on wheels.”²⁴ Although Porters may not have been paid a “living wage,” this was a career that was sought after by many African Americans during this time. This was a job/career that did not consist of back-breaking labor, like those seen in factories or oil fields, and it gave opportunity to those men to see the country as they traveled the railways. With ESPEE Station being such a prominent fixture right off east Commerce Street and St. Paul Square, it is no wonder why so many African American men worked for the railroad company.

Robert Hudspeth continued his baseball career after this 1919 season by joining the newly formed National Negro Leagues, playing for the Indianapolis ABCs. He had continued success and truly made a name for himself by playing in New York for both the Lincoln Giants and the Black Yankees. Using a website called “Seamheads”, a Negro League statistical database, historians and baseball fans alike can see that High Pockets was an above average first baseman and truly great in other statistical categories. His career batting average (BA) was .309, and comparing to other first basemen of the time, he ranks seventh in the top 25. His career On-base plus Slugging percentage (OPS) was .825 which puts him above average. Ben Taylor, a baseball Hall of Fame inductee, who also played during the same time as High Pockets had a career OPS of .852. Robert Hudspeth, unfortunately, became ill with tuberculosis and saw his playing career shortened because of it. An article from 10 August of 1935 in *The New York Age*, a prominent black newspaper, titled “High Pocket Hudspeth Victim of Tuberculosis”, states that Hudspeth died on August 1st after fighting the illness for one year.²⁵ The article went on to say that he was a resident of New York for the past 15 years and was a leading first basemen in black baseball.²⁶ Joe Macklin, former president of the Black Aces baseball team had this to say about

²⁴ “Pullman Porters,” [history.com](https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/pullman-porters), A&E Television Networks, February 15, 2019, <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/pullman-porters>.

²⁵ “‘High Pocket’ Hudspeth Victim of Tuberculosis.” *New York Age*, August 10, 1935.

²⁶ *ibid.*

Robert, “High Pockets Hudspeth was the greatest ball player I have ever seen — barring none... I had season tickets and never missed a game.”²⁷ Albeit a shortened career, Robert Hudspeth asserted agency in creating a legacy for himself in baseball.

The Black Aces continued to rack up victories through June and became San Antonio’s premiere baseball team. Their white counterparts, San Antonio Aces, ended the season 66-87 but San Antonians flocked to Black Aces’ games to watch a winning team.²⁸ When the Aces started an 11 game road trip through Texas, the San Antonio Evening News was quick to remind fans that they “will not have to forego witnessing exhibitions of the National pastime.”²⁹ The San Antonio Aces were on a ten-game losing streak, but the Black Aces were here to rescue fans from witnessing anymore losing baseball games. In the June 26th edition of the *San Antonio Evening News*, the Black Aces were mentioned in an article stating that they had just finished 14 games on the road, during which they won 12 against Dallas, Fort Worth and Oklahoma City.³⁰ This team and players, with the help of manager S.J. Moore, were making a name for themselves in the city of San Antonio and continued to sell out League Park everyday they played, whether that be just one game or a double header. San Antonio fans, white and black alike, could not get enough of their new winning baseball team. One news article stated “There are hundreds of fans, both white and black, who get more genuine amusement out of watching the negro ball handlers play than they get even in some league games.”³¹ Whenever the Black Aces were written about in the local newspaper, the crowd size was always said to have been “large” or “sold-out.”

²⁷ “Action Line,” *San Antonio Light*, December 9, 1973.

²⁸ “1919 Texas League Standings,” Stats Crew, Chadwick Baseball Bureau, Accessed March 31, 2020, <https://www.statscrew.com/minorbaseball/standings/1-TL/y-1919>.

²⁹ “Black Aces play here on July 4th,” *San Antonio Evening News*, June 26, 1919.

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ “Lissen Heah Honey, Doan Yo’ all Fergit Dat Big Game Tomorrow,” *San Antonio Evening News*, July 11, 1919.

On July 4th of 1919, the Black Aces played a double header at League Park against what became their main adversary of the season, The Dallas Black Marines, after the Waco Black Navigators team folded.³² There was another very important sporting event happening on this date that had the more than 3,000 fans in attendance “shouting themselves hoarse.” A very young Jack Dempsey, who became a boxing legend, defeated World Heavyweight Champion Jess Willard in Toledo, Ohio in what has been deemed one of the most brutal fights in boxing history.³³ In this new age of technology and having access to practically anything we want through the internet, like watching a boxing fight or sporting event in Toledo, Ohio even though we live in San Antonio, Texas, is quite simple. In 1919, this was certainly not the case. Fans either listened over the radio for live updates of an event or waited until the following morning to read the newspaper to find out results. During the Black Aces and Black Marines ball game in San Antonio on July 4th, the game was interrupted with the results of the fight, sending the crowd into a roar. The Black Aces and Black Marines split that day’s double header but the article lets us know, “The Black Aces would give any negro club in the country a battle.”³⁴

During the middle of the season the Evening News began putting the score and outcomes of Black Aces’ games on the front of the sporting pages and the Aces on the second page. If these “Darkey” Aces (they were called many racially derogatory terms throughout the season) wanted to be recognized as San Antonio’s prominent team, continued success was the only thing they could do. Following the influx of the Waco players, San Antonio did not lose another series, although they played some very tough battles against other teams. On August 10th, the Express

³²“Black Aces and Marines Split Games.” *San Antonio Evening News*, 5 July 1919, p. 11.,

³³ Theodore Roosevelt. “Jack Dempsey Vs. Jess Willard 1919: The Most Brutal Fight In History,” History Things, Published March 14, 2020, <https://historythings.com/jack-dempsey-vs-jess-willard-1919-brutal-fight-history/>.

³⁴ “Black Aces and Marines Split Games.” *San Antonio Evening News*, 5 July 1919, p. 11.

News wrote an article about yet another victory for the Black Aces.³⁵ Undoubtedly, the reason for this victory fell on the shoulders of the man on the mound. With the powerhouse Black Aces line up only able to string together four hits and the final score ending one to zero, the pitcher being able to strike out 11 batters and hold the opposing team to no runs made a world of difference.³⁶ James Raleigh “Biz” Mackey (sometimes spelled Mackay in the papers) was the pitcher on the mound that day. Class of 2006 Baseball Hall of Fame inductee, Mackey made a name for himself on the baseball diamond not as a pitcher, although he racked up four shut out victories this season, but as a catcher.

Born in Caldwell County, Texas on July 27th, 1897, “Biz” Mackey began his baseball playing career in his hometown of Luling, Texas. Along with many of the players in these early days of Negro baseball, “Biz” Mackey supplemented his income by not only playing baseball but also working another job. Mackey’s World War I draft registration card gives us an insight into what other job he was performing before he played baseball for the Black Aces in 1919. Under “name of employer” Mackey wrote down “M.K.T. Ry Co <warehouse>”, which meant that he worked for the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railway company, a former class I railroad company in the United States from 1870 until 1989.³⁷ Similar to Robert Hudspeth, Mackey found employment working for a railroad company, but unlike “High Pockets” who worked in the sleeping cars as a Pullman Porter, he worked in a warehouse more than likely performing back breaking labor. “Biz” Mackey used this season as a Black Ace to catapult his baseball career moving forward. After the Black Aces disbanded in 1920, his contract was also sold to the

³⁵ “Black Aces make count two out of three with Beaumont Black Oilers,” *San Antonio Express*, August 10, 1919.

³⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷ Hugh Hemphill, “Missouri Kansas Texas,” Texas Transportation Museum, Institute of Texan Cultures, Accessed March 31, 2020, <https://www.txtransportationmuseum.org/history-rr-missouri-kansas-texas.php>.

Indianapolis ABCs, in the newly formed Negro National Baseball League. While Hudspeth's career was cut short due to illness, Mackey's career flourished, and he played and managed for another 27 years after this 1919 season. When discussed by other hall of famers, "Biz" Mackey is put on a very high pedestal amongst other well known catchers of the time. "Cool Papa" Bell, 1974 Baseball Hall of Fame inductee, said of Mackey, "Actually, as much as I admired [Roy] Campanella as a catcher, all-around, and [Josh] Gibson as a hitter...I believe Biz Mackey was the best catcher I ever saw."³⁸ The thought of a Baseball Hall of Famer playing for the Black Aces in their one championship season at the beginning of his run is hard to believe. When comparing Mackey's career stats to other well known ball players, he stacks up well. With .330 career batting average playing in over 1100 games (not including his 1919 Black Aces season), and an OPS of .865, it is no wonder why he became such a beloved player during his career.³⁹ Mackey joined the Hilldale Giants in 1923, and the *Baltimore Afro-American* wrote of him in 1931, "When he is catching, and if he is right, a weak club looks strong. He is one of the best in the business."⁴⁰ Mackey also used agency in helping develop young stars as manager of the Washington Elite Giants and the Newark Eagles, where he actually helped them win a Negro League World Series in 1946.⁴¹

With the Texas Negro League season ending at the beginning of September, a championship series was to be decided. These players had played too long and had traveled too

³⁸"Biz Mackey," Baseball Hall of Fame, Accessed March 31, 2020, <https://baseballhall.org/hall-of-famers/mackey-biz>.

³⁹"Biz Mackey." Biz Mackey - Seamheads Negro Leagues Database. Accessed February 15, 2020. <https://www.seamheads.com/NegroLgs/player.php?playerID=macke01biz>.

⁴⁰"Hilldales get Mackey," *Baltimore Afro American*, February 21, 1931. <https://newspaperarchive.com/baltimore-afro-american-feb-21-1931-p-14/>.

⁴¹"Hall of Fame Honorees," *Odessa American*, July 30, 2006. <https://newspaperarchive.com/odessa-american-jul-30-2006-p-31/>.

far for there not to be a champion crowned at the end of this season. On September 9th of 1919 the San Antonio Evening News declared that “the Black Aces will play Colored Marines [of Dallas] here [San Antonio] for State Ball Title.”⁴² This was also the first time in any newspaper that actual standings were given for the Texas Colored League. The Black Aces claimed a record of 45 wins and 10 losses, giving them a winning percentage of .818, and the Dallas Black Marines won 51 and lost 17, giving them a winning percentage of .750.⁴³ A long tradition in baseball is to have prominent members of society, whether that be Presidents, hall of famers, or city officials, throw out the first pitch in a baseball series. Important to note in this paper is the mention of Mayor Sam C. Bell, who more than likely threw out the first pitch in the series. On September 12, 1919 San Antonio baseball fans were greeted with a team picture of the Black Aces before the start of the championship series, and one of only three pictures found of the Black Aces.⁴⁴ All 11 members of the team plus the manager are front and center on the second page of the sports section under the heading “A Dozen Black Aces Sure Make Winning Hand.”⁴⁵ The team was lauded as being spectacular to watch and that sports fans from the city had never seen a national game be more entertaining than when the Black Aces played. Furthermore, there was a cash prize of \$1,000 to the winning team, giving even more incentive for both teams in the series. Additionally, fans from Luling, Lockhart and Austin did not have to miss the games because Special train rides were designated to bring those fans to San Antonio to attend the series.⁴⁶

⁴² “Black Aces will play Colored Marines here for State Ball Title,” *San Antonio Evening News*, September 9, 1919.

⁴³ *ibid.*

⁴⁴ “A Dozen Black Aces Sure Make Winning Hand,” 1919.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ “State Baseball bugs entrain for ‘Santone’ for Negro Title Tilt,” *San Antonio Evening News*, September 26, 1919.

The series started around the 25th of September, depending on whether the San Antonio Aces were in town, and the day of the big game the city held a parade. The parade included Mayor Sam C. Bell, Fire Chief Goetz, Police Chief Mussey and what the paper calls a platoon of San Antonio's finest, but there is no actual evidence in the article indicating the Black Aces took part in the parade.⁴⁷ In an age of blatant racism and Jim Crow laws, it is extraordinary to say the least that a team of black ballplayers could bring a city together to celebrate their season-long accomplishments. The series started on the 25th in San Antonio with Mayor Bell throwing out the first pitch in a game that the Black Aces won one to zero.⁴⁸ Game two ended two to one with the Black Marines scoring an impossible victory over the Black Aces who had their ace pitcher on the mound "Steel Arm" Davis.⁴⁹ On the mound for game three was McClure, with "Biz" Mackey as the second half of the battery, and as a result it was an easy victory for the Black Aces, winning with a score of eight to one. With the Black Aces up two to one in the series, all eyes were on Sunday's double header, where one victory for the San Antonio team clinched the series and the championship for them. Unfortunately, it took San Antonio two games on Sunday to assure themselves of that championship trophy. Game four of this thrilling series was won by the Black Marines but it was game five that had the stands roaring in celebration. With the series tied two games apiece, the Black Aces had to climb out of an early five-nothing hole they had put themselves into. The Black Aces scored three in the fifth and another two in the eighth inning to tie things up.⁵⁰ The championship came down to the ninth inning, with both teams tied at five

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁸ "Black Aces take first series game," *San Antonio Evening News*, September 26, 1919.

⁴⁹ "Mistah Steel Arm Davis Happy Son of Ham, Loses Pitching Duel to Ross," *San Antonio Evening News*, September 27, 1919.

⁵⁰ "Mistah Steelarm Davis Raps out Double Which Wins Negro Ball Title." *San Antonio Evening News*, September 29, 1919.

runs apiece, and fans went wild in the stands for their hometown team to win. “Biz” Mackey held the Black Marines scoreless in the top of the ninth. With two men on in the bottom of the ninth, “Steel Arm” Davis, more known as the pitching ace of the team, hit a double, “winning the title muslin for the San Antonio Black Aces of the Texas Negro League.”⁵¹

The 1919 season for the San Antonio Black Aces proved to be a magical and inspiring time. During a period of Jim Crow segregation, redlining communities and lynching of African Americans, this progressive team came out of nowhere to bring a divided community together through hope and change. Although the San Antonio Black Aces will never be the most celebrated or remembered San Antonio championship team, they should be remembered for being a team that contributed immensely to a crucial turning point in baseball history. The following year brought the establishment of the National Negro Leagues, which joined together many of these regional and barnstorming teams to form one cohesive baseball league. With the upcoming 100-year anniversary of the establishment of Negro Leagues, the Black Aces, without hesitation, should be celebrated with grandeur. Baseball Players with nicknames such as “Steel Arm”, “High Pockets”, and “Biz” should be revered and lauded within San Antonio’s sports museums.

⁵¹ *ibid.*



Figure 1. San Antonio Black Aces, 1919. *San Antonio Evening News*, September 12, 1919.

Yas, Indeedy, Let "Highpockets" Get It! He Does

The Main Drawing Card

THE picture shows Highpockets Hudspeth, the tall, angular first sacker of the San Antonio Black Aces, in action after a low throw to first base. It will be noted from the photograph how the lanky darkey holds the mitt just before snapping at the ball. The photograph was taken by *The Evening News* staff photographer during one of the games with the Austin Black Senators. Baseball fans go to the games just to see this "side show" in action.



Figure 2. Robert "High Pockets" Hudspeth. *San Antonio Evening News*, August 15, 1919.



Figure 3. Photo from 1919 championship series. *San Antonio Evening News*, September 26, 1919.

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