EVERYBODY WANTS TO BE A CAT: BASEBALL AND COMMUNITY IDENTITY IN INTERWAR FORT WORTH

By

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EVERYBODY WANTS TO BE A CAT: BASEBALL AND COMMUNITY IDENTITY IN INTERWAR FORT WORTH

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ABSTRACT:

During the 1920s and 1930s, the city of Fort Worth was in the process of changing its identity from the hub of the cattle trade to an industrial city. It was growing in geographic size, population, and influence in the state of Texas, and was vying for recognition as one of the state's major cities alongside Dallas, Houston, Austin, and San Antonio. During this time, Fort Worth was also experiencing the beginning stages of urban minority growth, and the white population in the city embraced racist social norms and segregation to combat the emergence of larger black and Hispanic populations that developed alongside the growth of economic opportunities in the city. Thus, in the 1920s and 1930s, there were three different Fort Worths – one black, one white, and one Hispanic – where people belonging to these communities lived their lived different lives within the same city. At the center of each of these separate Fort Worths was baseball. Baseball reflected the city's evolving identity. The success and popularity of the Fort Worth Panthers baseball team attracted regional and national attention that was essential for the city's emerging identity as a major Texas city. However, baseball also reflected the negative side of the city's past that divided communities within the city. In many ways, baseball reinforced segregation and racism in the city, requiring members of the black and Hispanic communities to form their own teams and play their own game. In Fort Worth, baseball was a tool that could build, unite, and divide communities within the city. It was a game that the black, white, and Hispanic communities all played and had in common. Yet, baseball also reinforced racist social standards and encouraged division. This thesis seeks to discuss the ways in which baseball contributed to the growth of Fort Worth's civic identity on a regional and national scale, while simultaneously strengthening the racial divisions that existed between subcommunities in the city during the Interwar Period.

In the 1989 baseball film, *Field of Dreams*, fictional author Terence Mann delivers a tear-jerking monologue about America's love for baseball when speaking to Iowa farmer, Ray Kinsella.

> People will come Ray. The one constant through all the years, Ray, has been baseball. America has rolled by like an army of steamrollers. It has been erased like a blackboard, rebuilt and erased again. But baseball has marked the time. This field, this game: it's a part of our past, Ray. It reminds of us of all that once was good, and it could be again.[1]

This soliloquy, while enough to bring even the toughest baseball fan to tears, contains two falsehoods. The first is that the game of baseball has remained constant over time, while the world around it has changed. On the contrary, the game has undergone a multitude of changes throughout its lengthy 160-plus year history, not just in its rules, strategy, and organization, but also in its popularity, accessibility, and inclusivity.

The second falsehood is that "baseball reminds us of all that was once good." Scandal and controversy have been a part of baseball from the beginning. Cheating scandals have rocked the sport from the Black Sox gambling scandal in 1919, to the consistent use of performance enhancing drugs in baseball's steroid era in the 1980s and 1990s, to the Houston Astros sign-stealing scandal in 2017. Baseball has also reflected America's troubled relationship with race, especially in the South. Fort Worth, for example, fielded two separate black and white teams in segregated leagues during the 1920s and 1930s. This serves as a reminder that America's pastime was not always a game that all Americans could play together. Racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination have worked to exclude black Americans, women, and other minority groups from playing America's game, forcing them to create their own separate leagues

[1] *Field of Dreams*, directed by Phil Robinson (1989; USA: Universal Pictures, 1989).

and teams if they wanted to play ball. Baseball might remind some of us of all that is good, but it also represents a large portion of the darker side of American history.

Despite the shortcomings of Terence Mann's monologue in *Field of Dreams*, there is a reason why it is so powerful. As the national pastime, baseball reflects the good in the nation; but it also reflects the nation's original sin of slavery and racism and the struggles to overcome it. For many years, historians have identified the strong link between American culture, community, and sports. It may not seem like it today, but for over one hundred years, baseball was as important to American culture as hot dogs, apple pie, and Chevrolet.[2] The literature on baseball and its impact on American culture in black, white, and Hispanic communities mostly focuses on an analysis of how the game represents American culture as a whole, how professional black baseball institutions like the Negro National League have impacted the larger black community in the United States, or how the introduction of baseball to the Caribbean and Central America lead to the modern domination of the Major Leagues by Latin American players. Few historians have narrowed their scope to analyze the role baseball has played in black, white, and Hispanic communities at the regional and state level, and even fewer have dedicated their writing to concentrate on the significance of baseball in these communities at the municipal level. Currently, there is no literature that compares the role of baseball in the black, white, and Hispanic communities of Fort Worth.

During the Interwar Period, Fort Worth was in the process of changing its identity from cattle trail hub to an industrial city. It was growing in population, geographic size, and influence in the state of Texas; it was experiencing the beginning stages of urban minority growth; and it

[2] Sally Rummel, "As American As 'Baseball, Hot Dogs, Apple Pie, and Chevrolet,'" The website of the *Tri-County Times*, accessed March 17, 2021, https://www.tctimes.com/as-american-as-baseball-hot-dogs-apple-pie-and-chevrolet/article_dd7083ea-3efe-11e6-8531-43492d385b75.html.

embraced racial segregation through Jim Crow laws. This paper considers the idea that in the 1920s and 1930s, there were three different Fort Worths – one black, one white, and one Hispanic – in which the people belonging to these communities lived different lives within the same city. At the center of each of these separate Fort Worths was baseball. Baseball was a tool that contributed to the enforcement of social values in Fort Worth, and was a mechanism that could build, unite, and divide communities in the city. This paper argues that the increases in success and popularity of baseball in Fort Worth during the Interwar Period contributed to the growth of Fort Worth's civic identity on a regional and national scale while also strengthening the racial divisions between subcommunities that existed in the city at the time.

One of the earliest works to analyze the connection between baseball and American culture include David Voigt's influential efforts to connect baseball to American culture and national identity through discussion of the link between the America's pastime and the concept of nationalism and its effect on internationalist efforts to "make the world like us," as well as its impact on American perception of national heroes and celebrities.[3]

By the late 20th and early 21st century, historians more widely acknowledged that the American Dream and the American cultural experience was not the same for every group of people. Neil Lanctot and Michael Lomax discuss how black entrepreneurs responded to segregation by working through adversity to establish successful race enterprises like black baseball teams and leagues within the confines of the national white economy. Lanctot argues that the rise and fall of black professional baseball provides a window into several major themes in modern African American history, the initial response to segregation, the struggle to establish

[3] David Voigt, "Reflections on Diamonds: American Baseball and American Culture," *Journal of Sports History* 1, no.1 (Spring 1974): 3-25.

successful enterprises, and the later movement towards integration. He forms his argument by focusing on black professional baseball on a national scale.[4] Michael Lomax narrows his scope to focus on semiprofessional baseball in black communities in Chicago. His work illustrates how many African American businessmen faced adversity when trying to operate a segregated endeavor within the framework of the economy of white semiprofessional baseball.[5]

The authors mentioned above recharacterize baseball as not just a national pastime that upholds universal American values, but also as a game that reinforces the cultural values of urban black communities and serves as a symbol of racial pride in a segregated United States. Their work contributes to an understanding of the importance of baseball to black communities across America, as well as the challenges of organizing black baseball leagues. However, they all focus on black baseball in the Northeast and Midwest and fail to consider how much stronger the challenges of operating black baseball leagues would be in the Jim Crow South. Rob Fink's book, *Playing in Shadows: Texas and Negro League Baseball*, addresses this issue directly. Fink argues that to get a complete picture of African American baseball during the period of segregation, we must examine the role of Texas and black Texans. Black baseball in Texas played a significant part in shaping the history of the Negro Leagues and the game of baseball as a whole. In return, baseball was a major force in defining the African American cultural experience in Texas.[6]

As the scope narrows down to the city of Fort Worth, there are three essential historical contributions to consider when discussing the environment in which black and Hispanic

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[4] Neil Lanctot, *Negro League Baseball: The Rise and Ruin of a Black Institution*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).
[5] Michael Lomax, "Black Entrepreneurship in the National Pastime: The Rise of Semiprofessional Baseball in Black Chicago, 1890-1915," *Journal of Sports History* 25 no. 1 (Spring 1998): 43-64.
[6] Rob Fink, *Playing in Shadows: Texas and Negro League Baseball*, (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2010).

communities coexisted with the white community. The first is the work of Harold Rich which gives us an in-depth look at Fort Worth in the time between the world wars. Rich explores the political and social challenges of Fort Worth, including discussion of tense race relations and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, in a time when the city was growing into a major Texas city alongside Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio.[7] The work of Richard Selcer analyzes 165 years of African American life in Fort Worth. Selcer argues that there have always been two Fort Worths living side-by-side, one black and one white, and that the black community has existed in the shadow of the white community, ignored and unequal.[8] Carlos E. Cuéllar tells the stories of Mexican life in Fort Worth. Cuéllar discusses how Mexicanos in Fort Worth built lives and communities and argues that the contributions of Mexicanos in Fort Worth are incalculable, making them an integral part of the city's history.[9]

Lastly, Jeff Guinn and Bobby Bragan tell the history of the Fort Worth Panthers, a white semiprofessional and minor league team that has a history of success and a reputation worthy of national recognition. While the authors fail to discuss the contributions of black and Hispanic teams in the city, their work captures the excitement the city of Fort Worth had for baseball and the pride that the citizens had for their team, showing just how important baseball can be for the culture of a community.[10]

The contributions of the authors listed above unite to create a historical perspective of the role baseball plays in building and linking communities and reinforcing social values that exist to keep communities apart. This paper will build on these ideas by exploring the history of three

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[7] Harold Rich, *Fort Worth Between the World Wars*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2020).
[8] Richard Selcer, *A History of Fort Worth in Black and White: 165 Years of African American Life*, (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2015).
[9] Carlos E. Cuéllar, *Stories from the Barrio: A History of Mexican Fort Worth*, (Fort Worth, TCU Press, 2003).
[10] Jeff Guinn and Bobby Bragan, *When Panthers Roared: The Fort Worth Cats and Minor League Baseball*, (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1999).

different Fort Worths during the 1920s and 1930s – one black, one Hispanic, and one white – and analyzing the role that baseball played in contributing to the growth of each community individually, while also exploring how the game was a tool that kept them separate from one another.

At the beginning of baseball's golden age in 1920, there were a lot of good things to focus on. World War I had ended just a few years earlier, the United States was experiencing an economic boom that ushered in the "Roaring Twenties," and the Yankees just received some kid named Babe Ruth from a trade with the rival Boston Red Sox. Things were going well on the banks of the west fork of the Trinity River in Fort Worth, Texas, too. World War I brought a military presence back to the city as the US Army established Camp Bowie, which trained 100,000 soldiers, and the US Air Force utilized the open area in and around Fort Worth by converting three airfields into centers for aviation training. Furthermore, the discovery of oil in Texas led refinery and pipeline companies like Sinclair, Texaco, and Humble Oil and Refinery Company to converge on Fort Worth.[11] As a result, the identity of the city was beginning to change from that of a traditional center for the cattle trade to a rapidly growing metropolis with a more diverse economic base that attracted newcomers and stimulated population growth.

In 1920, the US Census Bureau reported the population of Fort Worth as 106,482, an increase of over 30,000 people the decade prior. By 1930, this number increased by almost another 60,000, reaching 163,447.[12] This spike in population was due in part to Fort Worth's changing identity as a modern city of commerce, but it was also part of the city's strategy to annex more territory from the surrounding area to acquire more land, resources, and population

[11] Janet Schmelzer, "Fort Worth, TX," Texas State Historical Association, accessed October 18, 2020, https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/fort-worth-tx.
[12] "Fort Worth," Texas Almanac, accessed October 26, 2020, https://texasalmanac.com/texas-towns/fort-worth.

to compete with other major cities in Texas, including Dallas, Houston, Austin and San Antonio. From 1891 to 1909, Fort Worth annexed 9.63 square miles of land, and the total area of the city was only 16.83 square miles compared to 23 for Dallas and 36 for both Houston and San Antonio.[13] After 1909, annexation became a priority and by 1922, the city annexed 35.02 square miles of land and increased its total area to 51.85 square miles.[14] Despite expansion efforts, Fort Worth would always lag behind its eastern neighbor, Dallas, in both population and total land area, but these drastic changes made Fort Worth a more desirable location for business and shook up the traditional small-town atmosphere of Cowtown.

Another way Fort Worth was developing into a modern city was by embracing the growth of competitive sports, especially baseball. Baseball was quickly earning the label of "America's Pastime," and Fort Worth was the home of the Panthers baseball team starting in the late 19th century. At the time, Major League Baseball only extended as far west as St. Louis in the National League and Kansas City in the American League. However, professional baseball had existed in Texas since 1888 in the form of the Texas League, a minor league organization that featured teams from the cities across Texas and occasionally Louisiana and Oklahoma. With the exception of 1890, when the league restricted membership to the Gulf Coast, Fort Worth was a member of the Texas League every season from 1888 to 1958, sharing that honor only with Dallas. This shows that baseball was valuable to the city of Fort Worth, and the city's commitment to consistently fielding a team helped establish Fort Worth's identity as a baseball city. Such a commitment produced positive results for the team and the city.

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[13] Rich, *Fort Worth Between the World Wars*, 15.

[14] "Growth by Annexation, City of Fort Worth, 1873-1957," Public Works Department – City of Fort Worth, *Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce Papers*, Special Collections, Mary Couts Burnett Library, Texas Christian University.

During the early years of Texas League competition from 1888-1919, Fort Worth established itself as a capable baseball city, leading the league in wins in 1896, 1904, 1905, 1906, and 1919 and winning pennants in 1895 and 1905.[15] Fort Worth also began forming a bitter rivalry with neighboring Dallas that continued to grow as Fort Worth began to increase in size and population and compete with Dallas economically and culturally. By showing commitment to participation in the Texas League and displaying the capability to have competitive success in baseball, the Fort Worth Panthers built a foundation that would propel them and the city of Fort Worth into the regional and national spotlight as baseball entered its golden age and increased in national popularity during 1920s.

From 1920-1925, the Fort Worth Panthers were the most successful franchise in Texas League history, something that helped shape Fort Worth's new big-city identity and got Fort Worth citizens excited about baseball. The success of the historic Fort Worth Panthers teams of the 1920s really begins in 1917 when W.K. Stripling and Paul LaGrave purchased the team. Stripling took over as club president, LaGrave assumed the position of business manager, and Jake Atz took full control of the field manager position.[16] In 1919, the Panthers fell just short of winning the league championship, losing to the Shreveport Gassers on the last play of the last game in a 7-game series.[17] However, beginning the following year, the Fort Worth Panthers would not lose a league championship to anyone as they won six straight pennants, a Texas League record, from 1920-1925. At its core, baseball is a business, and under the Stripling, LaGrave, and Atz triumvirate, the Panthers were one of the most successful businesses in a city

[15] William B. Ruggles, *The History of the Texas League of Professional Baseball Clubs, 1888-1951*, (n.p.: Texas Baseball League, 1951), 211.
[16] Bill O'Neal, *1888-1987, A Century of Baseball*, (Austin: Eakin Press, 1987), 245.
[17] O'Neal, 245.

with a rapidly growing economy. Success increased team popularity, sold tickets, and brought regional and national publicity to Fort Worth.

The success of the Panthers made the team easier and more desirable to cover in the newspaper. Sports, and baseball in particular, skyrocketed in popularity at the start of the 1920s. Along with that spike in popularity came more coverage of baseball in local and national newspapers. Prior to 1920, it was not uncommon for newspapers to give more attention to track and field results than the scores of baseball games. By 1920, however, baseball became everyday news and it was what everyone was talking about. Much of the focus was on the major National and American Leagues in the eastern part of the country, but in the 1920s, these leagues only extended as far West as Missouri. Therefore, the Texas League was the center of attention for people living in Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma, despite the fact that it was only a minor league and few of the players continued on to play at the Major League level.

At the center of attention of the Texas League were the successful Fort Worth Panthers. The *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* was dedicated to providing the people of Fort Worth and the surrounding area with daily information regarding the Panthers' season. Talk of the start of the Panthers' season opener against Shreveport in 1920 began as early as January in the paper, even though the game would not be played until April 14th.[18] Such coverage shows how excited writers and fans were to get the upcoming season started and how much the team's identity had been woven into the social fabric of the city's identity. Having a successful team also contributed to the buzz, especially when Major League clubs came through Fort Worth on their way back from spring training to play a few exhibition games against Atz's Cats. On one such occasion, Fort Worth pitcher, Jimmy Walkup, struck out Yankees' slugger, Babe Ruth, three times.[19] Feats

[18] Billy Bee, "Shreveport to Open Here; Club Limit is Raised," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Jan. 12, 1920, Readex.
[19] Guinn and Bragan, *When Panthers Roared*, 41.

like these tempted Panther fans to wonder how their team might fare against the Yankees in a seven-game series, or if they could hold their own in the Major Leagues. Such talk was purely speculative, but one thing was clear. The Panthers were the best the Texas League had to offer from 1920-1925, something they proved by winning over 100 games in each season during that span except for in 1923 when they won 95 games. When Major League teams came to Fort Worth, they could expect some stiff competition and some excited fans in the crowd. This contributed to the idea that the Cats developed a reputation that extended beyond the city limits, or even the sphere of influence in the South. Fort Worth, its baseball team, and its people developed an identity of success and loyalty that was recognizable to those who visited from out of town.

After the season began in April, the *Star-Telegram* covered the Panthers like they were a Major League team. Every day, Fort Worth's premier newspaper opened the sports page with news of the Panthers' latest contest from the previous day, complete with a play-by-play review of the game, interviews with manager, Jake Atz, and any important information regarding the teams' future schedule or about the players. Although the sports page generally included articles that kept Fort Worth citizens up to date on Major League Baseball and other national sports news, the headline generally focused on Fort Worth's team, especially when they pulled off a heroic victory or when they were coming back to play games at home.[20] Daily coverage of the Panthers in the *Star-Telegram* reflects the buzz and excitement that citizens had surrounding the team. When people picked up the paper, they were genuinely interested to see how their Cats were doing. This shows that the team was becoming an important part of the city's identity.

[20] "Panthers Return Home for Long Stay," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, May 5, 1921, Readex.

Occasionally, national papers like *The New York Times* featured stories on the Cats, especially when they played in the Dixie Series against the league winners from the Southern Association, the only other "Class A" minor league in the South. The efforts of Paul LaGrave and the success of the Panthers were major factors in establishing the annual meeting between the champions of the Texas League and Southern Association. When the Texas League started play in 1888, it was classified as a "Class D" minor league. By 1920, the Texas League had earned a "Class B" tag, one classification below the "Class A" Southern Association league. "Class AA" contained the leagues with the highest minor league affiliates. Class A was one step down from AA, and B was one step down from A. After the Panthers won the Texas League pennant in 1920, Paul LaGrave coordinated a series with the Southern Association champions, the Little Rock Travelers. The Southern Association did not have much to gain by playing the champion of a lower classification league like the Texas League. In fact, they risked their own prestige by doing so. However, President R.G. Allen of the Little Rock club was interested in playing against LaGrave's Panthers.[21] The Panthers defeated the Travelers, and the Texas League was promoted to "Class A" for the 1921 season. After that, the Texas League and Southern Association played an official Dixie Series Championship after each season. The success of the Panthers increased the popularity and prestige of not just the Fort Worth baseball club, but also the image of the entire Texas League. The fact that Fort Worth represented the entire state of Texas in these series only generated more pride for the city. Playing in the Dixie Series was an excellent opportunity for Fort Worth to receive regional publicity in the South and establish the city's identity on a national scale.

[21] Ruggles, 56.

When the Panthers played the Atlanta Crackers of the Southern Association in the 1925 Dixie Series, *The New York Times* included summaries of each game of the series on the sports page, and in the October 1st issue, the *Times* praised Fort Worth for winning their fifth Dixie Series title in six years.[22] While it was certainly a special occasion to receive national recognition, something the Cats were used to by the time they won the Dixie Series in 1925, Dixie Series games were worthy of a front page headline in the *Star-Telegram* back home, an indicator of how important the team's success was to the local Fort Worth fan base.[23]

Largest Circulation in the South

FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM
A Texas Owned Newspaper

HOME EDITION

VOLUME XLV. NUMBER 304. FORT WORTH, TEXAS * * * Where the West Begins * * * WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1925. TWENTY PAGES PRICE 5 CENTS

PATE AND M'LAUGHLIN ON MOUND

FUGITIVE SLAYER OF FORT WORTH MAN IS UNDER ARREST

CHIEF OF POLICE IS SECURE IN POSITION, SAYS CARR

NO REMOVAL IS PLANNED SAYS CITY MANAGER

ILL-FATED SUBMARINE, TRIO SAVED AND SHIP CAPTAIN

JENSEN TO BE TAKEN BACK TO PRISON

Rural Teachers to Aid Drive on Fires in Texas

CRACKERS' PILOT IS OUT OF GAME

BIRMINGHAM MAN HEADS BANKERS

LUBBOCK HOST AS TECH AND FAIR OPEN

Road Overseer Is Given Term in Prison; Jury Asks for Pardon

PRINCESS TEXAS IS WELCOMED IN TULSA

DIXIE SERIES SIDELIGHTS

Play by Play in Sixth Game

ATTERBURY NEW HEAD PENNSYLVANIA ROAD

MORE THREAT NOTES FOUND IN CLEBURNE

FRENCH START GREAT DRIVE AGAINST RIFFS

$5,000,000 COLLECTED IN 29,620 WET CASES

SHARP EARTHQUAKE SHOCK IN MONTANA

THINK IT OVER

SPANISH WAR VETS TO MEET IN DES MOINES

THE WEATHER

Figure 1. **Front page of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Sep. 30, 1925.**

As Figure 1 shows, the front-page headline of the *Star-Telegram* on September 30th, 1925 read "Pate and M'Laughlin On Mound," accompanied by a preview of game seven of the Dixie Series

[22] "Fort Worth Wins the Dixie Series," *New York Times*, Oct. 1, 1925, Proquest.
[23] "Pate and M'Laughlin On Mound," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Sep. 30, 1925, Readex.

and a recap of game six on the right side of the front page. Anyone who picked up the newspaper that day knew about the Panther's quest to win a fifth Dixie Series title. This type of front-page attention shows that the success of the Panthers was important to the city of Fort Worth.

The Panthers quickly became a source of pride for Fort Worth and a representation of the city itself. Nobody understood the significance of the Panthers more than Amon G. Carter, the owner of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* and Fort Worth business icon. Carter capitalized on the team's success and popularity as he made strides to promote the city and grow its identity. One way that Carter showed his investment and support for the team was by chartering a train known as the "Dixie Special" to transport the team, Texas League officials, and plenty of Fort Worth fans to the away games of the Dixie Series. Fans had to make a paid reservation to board the "Dixie Special," which provided luxuries like dining and sleeping carts and was sent off to

Figure 2. **From Left to Right: Frank Anderson, Hubb Diggs, Amon G. Carter, Coco Cola Brown, Amon G. Carter, jr., Chas. Wheeler, and Chief Maddox. Sep. 27, 1923.**

Mobile in 1922 to the sound of the Fort Worth police band and the yelling of hundreds of

Panther fans.[24] Carter ensured this noise and excitement continued at the road games by supplying Cats fans with cowbells and other noise making devices.

Figure 2 shows Amon G. Carter on board the Dixie Express, which was headed to New Orleans in September of 1923 to watch the Panthers play in the Dixie Series for the fourth consecutive season.[25] Amon G. Carter was dedicated to doing everything within his power to promote Fort Worth's image on a regional and national scale, especially if he could make the city appear better than Dallas. By chartering the Dixie Express and transporting Fort Worth fans to away games for the Dixie Series, Carter ensured that other Southern cities saw the support that Fort Worthians had for their team, and he made sure that these fans arrived in style. Carter also made arrangements to have a live telegraph transmit play-by-play updates to the *Star-Telegram* scoreboard at the corner of Seventh and Taylor streets for fans that could not reserve or afford to pay for a spot on the sold-out Dixie Special.[26] The fact that Amon Carter invested so heavily in endeavors that gave Fort Worth citizens opportunities to support the Panthers showed how important the team was to the city. Carter saw the team as a worthwhile investment that represented the city of Fort Worth well on a regional and national scale. The fact that enough fans were willing to dedicate their own time and money to sell out the Dixie Express and gather to receive live updates from the games shows that the people of Fort Worth did not hesitate to show their pride for a successful team.

Another indicator of support from Fort Worth citizens was the sizes of the crowds. In the 1920-1925 period, the Panthers recorded a season-long attendance of somewhere between

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[24] "Police Band Plays 'Mobile Blues' as Dixie Special Speeds on Way," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Sep. 21, 1922, Readex.
[25] "Dixie Special, 1923," *Amon G. Carter Papers*, Special Collections, Mary Couts Burnett Library, Texas Christian University.
[26] "Dixie Special Completely Sold Out," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Sep. 23, 1924, Readex.

140,000 and 160,000 each year.[27] While these numbers do not come close to Major League attendance figures for teams like the New York Yankees, they are respectable considering Fort Worth had a population slightly above 100,000 at the start of the 1920s. Texas League president, Doak Roberts, incentivized teams to try to get as many fans out to the ballpark on opening day as they could by awarding the team with the highest opening day attendance the league loving cup, something Panthers' owner Paul LaGrave made an effort for at the start of the 1921 season.[28] When opening day rolled around in April of 1921, the Panthers played in front of a home crowd of 4,545 fans.[29] It is uncertain whether this turnout at Panther Park was enough to earn Fort Worth Roberts' cup, but it is a significantly higher attendance than the average attendance of above 2000 fans that the team recorded each year. Supporting crowds were not just present at the ballpark.

Figure 3. **Crowd at the Texas and Pacific Station awaiting the return of the Championship Panthers from New Orleans, Oct. 3, 1923.**

[27] Vern Luse, "The 1920-1925 Fort Worth Panthers," Society for American Baseball Research, accessed November 2, 2020, http://research.sabr.org/journals/1920-1925-fort-worth-panthers.
[28] "Opening Call for Panthers Due Tuesday," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Feb. 27, 1921, Readex.
[29] "Atz Satisfied with Showing Cats Made in Opening Game," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Apr. 16, 1921, Readex.

As Figure 3 shows, after the Panthers won the Dixie Championship in 1923 against New Orleans, a large crowd waited at T&P station to welcome back their hometown champions.[30] Such a gathering further shows how much the Panthers had won over the hearts of the people of Fort Worth and become part of the city's identity. Large crowds at home games, Dixie Series away games, live-update scoreboard lots, and at the train station exhibit the pride and support the citizens of Fort Worth showed for their Panthers.

Newspaper was still the primary media outlet for following baseball in Texas at the start of the 1920s, but improvements in radio broadcasting during the decade gave baseball fans a new way to follow their favorite teams. WBAP, the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram's* official radio station broadcast the first live play-by-play baseball coverage in Texas when it covered a game between the Fort Worth Panthers and the Wichita Falls Spudders on August 30, 1922.[31] A few days later, the *Star-Telegram* featured an article reporting the success and praise that the radio broadcasts of the series received from people from various cities and towns across Texas.[32] The radio broadcasts were historic because they were some of the first live radio broadcasts of baseball games in the country. They also increased the popularity and recognition of the Fort Worth Panthers by reaching a larger audience outside the city of Fort Worth. Even though radio was a new and emerging technology, it did not take long for Fort Worth fans to request coverage of the Panthers on the airwaves. Fort Worth was the first team in Texas to have their games broadcast on the radio, and this reflects the desire of fans to keep up with the Panthers in the newest ways

[30] "Crowd at T&P Station, 1923," *Amon G. Carter Papers*, Special Collections, Mary Couts Burnett Library, Texas Christian University.
[31] "WBAP to Send Panther-Spudder Series by Plays," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Aug. 30, 1922, Readex.
[32] "WBAP Baseball Feature of Play in Detail Appreciated by Fans All Over State," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Sep. 2, 1922, Readex.

possible, as well as the fact that the team was economically significant and part of the city's social fabric and identity.

The historic success of the Fort Worth Panthers from 1920-1925 warranted construction of a brand-new Panther Park in 1926 despite the fact that the previous park was built only fifteen years earlier and was still in fair condition.[33] Perhaps Paul LaGrave felt that his team required a new home that was as glamorous as his team's legendary reputation. Unbeknownst to LaGrave and Panther fans, when the team returned from Atlanta in 1925 with their fifth Dixie Series title and moved out of the old Panther Park at the end of the 1925 season, it would be the last time the Cats won the Texas League for the rest of the decade. Regardless, in the first half of the 1920s, the Panthers became an iconic cultural symbol for the city of Fort Worth. In a time when baseball was entering its golden age, the Panthers experienced a degree of success that few other teams have been able to compete with in the history of the game. As the Cats won six straight Texas League Championships and five out of six Dixie Series Championships, the team not only earned themselves national recognition and respect, but also repeatedly put the rapidly growing city of Fort Worth at the center of national attention and the heart of the people of Fort Worth. When Paul LaGrave passed away unexpectedly in 1929, the team renamed the 1926 ballpark after him. LaGrave field still stands in the same spot today in recognition of one of the men that helped make the Panthers and baseball part of Fort Worth's identity during the 1920s.

While Fort Worth was transforming its identity from a small Texas cattle town into a booming metropolis with a diverse economy and new business opportunities, it cannot be forgotten that these opportunities did not exist for all people. Fort Worth might have been a city of new opportunities for white citizens, but in the shadows, a completely different Fort Worth

[33] "Work on New Home of Cats Progresses Rapidly as Possible," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Feb. 1, 1926, Readex.

presented the city's black community with few signs of change. Jim Crow laws ensured that African American residents and other minorities went about their business separate from Fort Worth's white residents. The black population of Fort Worth grew as part of the city's population boom between 1910 and 1930, but African Americans made up a smaller percentage of the total population as the years went on. In 1910, the black population was 13,280 (18.1% of the total population. By 1920, that number was 15,896 (14.9%) and by 1930 it totaled 22,234 (13.6%). By comparison, the African American population of Fort Worth was smaller by 1930 than other Texas urban centers like Dallas (14.9% black) and Houston (21.7%).[34] This was a comparison that the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce were interested in bringing to the attention of the public as they championed Fort Worth as a virtually all-white community suitable for the growth of business. In the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, the Chamber of Commerce boasted in an advertisement that Fort Worth was a desirable location for business since it contained a "less than 6 per cent negro population" and a "less than 3 per cent foreign population."[35] The fact that these figures are wildly out of line with the official Census numbers shows that the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce was either in denial about the growth of the city's black population, or perhaps trying to erase it, or it was content enough to ignore it and continue to sell the city as a sort of "white paradise" that was free from competition or interference from a smaller black community.

Although the percentage of the total population that was black was decreasing, the overall number of African Americans in Fort Worth continued to rise in the 1920s, something that white

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[34] U.S. Census Bureau, "Population – Texas, Table 11, Composition and Characteristics of the Population for Cities of 25,000 or More, 1910."; "Population – Texas, Table 10, Composition and Characteristics of the Population, for Cities of 10,000 or More, 1920."; "Population – Texas, Composition of the Population, for Cities of 10,000 or More, 1930."

[35] "Fort Worth's Preferential Trade Territory," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, May 29, 1921, Readex Early American Newspapers.

residents certainly noticed as they saw more black faces in the city. During the 1920s, the Ku Klux Klan maintained a dominant presence in the South, not just in the size of its membership, but also in the strength of its political influence. In 1915, Fort Worth Police Department officers resurrected the KKK after it had not been active in Fort Worth for almost 40 years. Law enforcement became a bastion for the Klan, and membership was practically a prerequisite to serve in the police or sheriff's department.[36] In 1922, members from the KKK won every political office in Fort Worth from constable to state senator.[37] Establishing this type of legal and political dominance often meant that the KKK and other racist terrorist groups could challenge or ignore law enforcement at the local level or higher, partly because law enforcement was a manifestation of Klan membership. Thus, racial violence and fearmongering was a common occurrence in Fort Worth, though at a seemingly lower rate than in other Texas cities. Whenever racial violence occurred in other parts of the state, like in Slocum in 1910, the *Star-Telegram* reassured its white readers that "[Fort Worth] negroes are all quiet and threaten no disturbance."[38] Despite local media's apparent attempts to avoid events concerning racial violence, a race riot erupted in Fort Worth in 1911 after a struggling white theater offered a "For Colored Only" event and again in 1913 when a black resident named Tom Lee Young went on a killing spree in "Hell's Half Acre" with a shotgun.[39] Fort Worth's only reported lynching occurred when Fred Rouse, a black man who came from East Texas to work in the meat packing plants, got into a fight with two white men and killed them in 1921. An angry white mob caught

[36] Selcer, 193.
[37] Rich, 64.
[38] "16 Negroes, 4 Whites Killed in Texas Race Riots Near Palestine," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Jul. 30, 1910, Readex.
[39] "Police Ordered Not to Fire on Mob Says Mulkey," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Feb. 28, 1911 and "2 Killed in Fight with Negro; Slayer Pursued by Mob, Shoots Self," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, May 15, 1913, Readex.

Rouse and hung him from a tree.[40] Although Rouse was the victim of the only reported lynching in Fort Worth, it is likely that more lynchings and race riots like those in 1911 and 1913 could have occurred in the city given the KKK's presence in the police department and local political offices, despite Fort Worth's claims to have been a relatively peaceful city when it comes to race relations in the Jim Crow era. Peaceful or not, Fort Worth was two cities separated into two cities – black and white. Nowhere was this more evident than on the baseball field.

Black baseball in Texas prior to 1920 has not received as much attention as white baseball and was much more difficult to organize due to racial inequalities and segregation. However, that did not stop black Texans from forming teams and playing ball. Prior to 1905, Fort Worth was home to an independent black team called the Fort Worth Yellow Jackets and featured a young star named Rube Foster who played on the team when he was in eighth grade. Foster went on to establish the Negro National League in Kansas City in 1920 and become one of the most influential figures in black baseball history. The Yellow Jackets changed their name to the Fort Worth Wonders in 1905 and featured some of the best talent in baseball history, including George "Dibo" Johnson and future Hall-of-Famer Louis "Big Bertha" Santop.[41] In 1916, Fort Worth led the charge in attempting to form a black professional league called the Colored Texas League. Fort Worth native, Hiram McGar, served as the league president and manager of the Fort Worth Black Panthers, but it is unknown if the league finished its first season.[42] The *Star-Telegram* occasionally featured articles advertising games and posting scores for both the Fort Worth Wonders and Black Panthers, including a section that mentioned that

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[40] "Unionists Cease Picketing Pending Appeal Decision," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Dec. 7, 1921, Readex.
[41] "The Fort Worth Cats," Fort Worth Historical, accessed November 1, 2020, https://www.fwhistorical.com/fortworthhistorycats.
[42] Mark Presswood, "Black Professional Baseball in Texas," Texas Almanac, accessed November 1, 2020, https://texasalmanac.com/topics/history/black-professional-baseball-texas.

seating would be reserved for "white people who wish to attend the game."[43] This shows that there was some support for black baseball as a form of entertainment from both black and white community members. Even though publicity for Fort Worth's black baseball teams was scarce, the legacy of the Fort Worth Wonders and Black Panthers prior to 1920 ensured that baseball was sewn into the identity of Fort Worth's black community, something that the Black Panthers team would look to continue in the 1920s.

While the white Fort Worth Panthers baseball team was establishing themselves as one of the best minor league teams to ever play the game, the Fort Worth Black Panthers were silently building on the city's rich tradition of black baseball history in the shadow of their white counterparts. The history of the Black Panthers is more difficult to track due to a multitude of reasons including the suppression of black media in the Jim Crow era and the fact that black baseball teams had fewer financial resources and often played a sporadic season schedule. Regardless, accounts of the successes and failures of the Black Panthers and the short-lived Texas Colored League exist due to the few remaining archives of articles of black and white newspapers and the efforts of those to pass on the stories of their family and friends who witnessed the spectacle of black baseball in Texas during the 1920s. Despite receiving less attention, fewer financial resources, and operating under the constant racist suppression of the Jim Crow era, the continued existence of the Fort Worth Black Panthers during the 1920s reflects the strength of the Fort Worth black community and its desire to maintain the opportunity to watch and play baseball. It also shows how baseball played a role in organizing Fort Worth's black community and, in a way, connected it to the larger city identity.

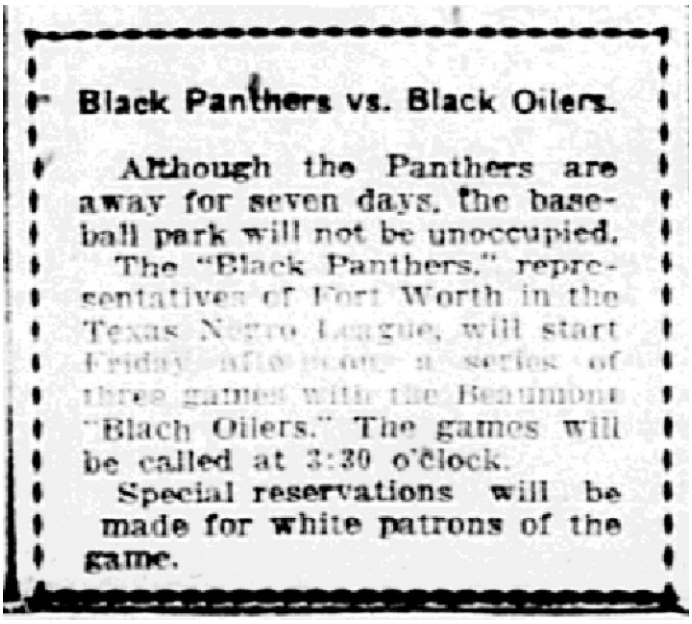
[43] "Black Panthers to Play Cleburne," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Apr. 23, 1916, Readex.

This persistence was on full display when another attempt to form an organized Texas Colored League took place in March of 1920. This second attempt came after Fort Worth Black Panthers' president and manager, Hiram McGar, and other black team owners in Texas organized the Texas Colored League for one season in 1916. Once again, Hiram McGar, was at the center of the league's creation.[44] This time, the efforts to form an organized black baseball league in Texas succeeded, but not without challenges. Black teams could only play at the white baseball stadiums on days when the local white stadium was not playing or was out of town. One series between the Beaumont Black Oilers and the San Antonio Black Aces was cancelled because the white teams decided to play their series in Beaumont instead of Galveston.[45] If a local black team did not play at their local white field, they played at substandard fields available in black neighborhoods like Gardner Park in Dallas. Fortunately for the Black Panthers, they had access to Panther Park in Fort Worth to play their games. Yet, this still served as a constant reminder that there was a clear pecking order in the racial hierarchy. The Black Panthers never had the opportunity to construct their own ballpark, while the white team played in three different ballparks in the span of less than 20 years.

Another recurring issue for the first season of the Texas Colored League in 1920 was that it was difficult for the league to get the word out to black baseball fans when games were happening. According to a summary of the inaugural game between rivals Fort Worth and Dallas in *The Dallas Express*, "Poor advertising knocked the owners out of more than five hundred dollars," a comment made regarding the game's poor attendance.[46] Perhaps Hiram McGar was able to lobby for some publicity after losing money in the 1920 season opener because the *Star-*

[44] *The Dallas Express*, Mar. 27, 1920, Library of Congress.
[45] *The Dallas Express*, Aug. 30, 1919, Library of Congress.
[46] *The Dallas Express*, Apr. 17, 1920, Library of Congress

Telegram regularly advertised Black Panther games on the sports pages. These content was always dominated by headlines of the white team at the top of the page and only received an inch or two of space at the bottom of the page, but the Black Panthers were in the paper, nonetheless.



Black Panthers vs. Black Oilers.

Although the Panthers are away for seven days, the baseball park will not be unoccupied. The "Black Panthers," representatives of Fort Worth in the Texas Negro League, will start Friday afternoon a series of three games with the Beaumont "Blach Oilers." The games will be called at 3:30 o'clock.

Special reservations will be made for white patrons of the game.

Figure 4. **Advertisement in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Apr. 30, 1920**

As Figure 4 shows, the *Star-Telegram* placed a small piece of content at the bottom of the sports page informing readers of an upcoming series between the Black Panthers and Beaumont Black Oilers that would be played when the white team was out of town. It is difficult to tell, but this content could be a paid advertisement, paid for by black business owners like McGar, trying to draw larger crowds to games in an effort to make more money. Or this piece could be editorial content published by the writers of the *Star-Telegram*, reflecting the interest of the paper's readership in the Black Panther's schedule. Whether this type of content was an advertisement or an editorial piece, the text makes sure to point out that "special reservations will be made for white patrons of the game," emphasizing that the content was not meant just for what few black readers the *Star-Telegram* had, but for the white audience that made up a majority of the paper's readership.

Despite all its hardships during the first season, the Texas Colored League accomplished what it had failed to do in 1916 – record a complete season. The Fort Worth Black Panthers joined their white counterparts as league champions, something the *Star-Telegram* took a small space to recognize in the September 15th issue.

BLACK PANTHERS ALSO ARE PENNANT WINNERS

The Fort Worth Black Panthers closed the season in the Negro Texas League Monday, defeating the Dallas Black Giants in the final game, 2 to 1, and winning the flag by a single game.

"Steel Arm" Johnnie Harris took the mound for the locals and held the Black Giants well in hand throughout the struggle.

The past season has been the most successful ever known in the Black circuit, and officials of the clubs are expecting next year to be even brighter, according to Hiram McGar, owner of the Black Panthers.

Figure 5. **Small article on the sports page of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Sep. 15, 1920.**

As shown in Figure 5, the writers noted that the Black Panthers defeated the rival Dallas Black Giants 2-1 and even credited "Steel Arm" Johnnie Harris with the pitching win.[47] The fact that the *Star-Telegram*, a newspaper with a predominately white target audience took the time and space to acknowledge the success of the Black Panthers team is a reflection of how important baseball was becoming to the city of Fort Worth at the start of the 1920s. Still, this accomplishment for the white Panthers team was worthy of a large headline at the top of the sports page, or even at the top of the front page. Furthermore, it is unknown whether the

[47] "Black Panthers Are Also Pennant Winners," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Sep. 15, 1920, Readex

advertisements and articles featuring the Black Panthers' triumphs were intended for the *Star-Telegram*'s predominately white audience, the occasional black reader, or some combination of both. Regardless, the *Star-Telegram* did not provide the same type of coverage of the Black Panthers after the 1920 season. The differences in newspaper coverage of the white and black teams in the *Star-Telegram* reflects the social order established by racism and Jim Crow laws in Fort Worth.

After a rocky start in 1920, the Texas Colored League and its member cities made a stronger effort to publicize the league in 1921. Before the opening game of the season between rivals Fort Worth and Dallas, the TCL held a parade to commemorate the start of the new season that featured a full brass band, club officials, local businessmen, and the players riding in automobiles.[48] This parade not only celebrated the start of a second consecutive season in the Texas Colored League, something certainly worthy of celebration given the league's rough start and lack of financial resources, but also proved that baseball in North Texas was a significant cultural event capable of drawing and entertaining crowds of black and white spectators. Black newspapers in major cities like the *Dallas Express*, the *Houston Informer*, and the *San Antonio Register* typically provided a weekly summary of the league games played in the previous week and acknowledged significant plays that took place.[49] Following a similar trend to white minor league baseball in Texas, fan interest in following black baseball in the newspaper increased dramatically. The growing popularity of baseball across the country made its way into the black communities of Texas. In May of 1921, a series between the Houston Black Buffaloes and the Fort Worth Black Panthers included a game that "drew the largest crowd to witness a colored

[48] *The Dallas Express*, Apr. 23, 1921, Library of Congress
[49] Fink, *Playing in Shadows*, 23.

game all season."[50] Despite the growing popularity and newspaper following of black baseball in Texas, black newspapers often lacked the financial resources needed to publish multiple issues in a week. The result was that papers like the *Dallas Express* and *Houston Informer* published one weekly paper, usually on Saturdays. This was helpful for advertising games that were played at the originally scheduled time and place, but it could also cause problems if schedule changes occurred due to weather, the local white team taking the field, or any other possible roadblocks. Because of this, sporadic attendance at games was a common occurrence. Compared to the record-setting crowd that attended the Houston and Fort Worth Series at the end of May, a game between the Houston Black Buffaloes and the Shreveport Black Gassers only a few weeks later was played in front of a crowd that contained "barely enough people at the game to start a fuss with the peanut vendor."[51] Lower attendance numbers could have also been the result of a team's lack of success.

In Fort Worth, the *Star-Telegram* continued to occasionally advertise games that the Black Panthers played at home, but coverage was not as regular as it was during the 1920 season. At the start of the 1921 season, the *Star-Telegram* advertised the Black Panthers opening home series against the Houston Black Buffaloes on April 23rd, and again for the series against Dallas the following week, but did not pass along any more information about games for the rest of the season.[52] It is unclear why the paper advertised some but not all games that the Black Panthers played at Panther Park, but the sporadic nature of the advertisements could not have done the team any favors for drawing large crowds at home on a consistent basis. Maybe the *Star-Telegram* was receiving complaints about how the Fort Worth's premier newspaper was

[50] *Houston Informer*, May 21, 1921, Portal to Texas History.
[51] *Houston Informer*, Jun. 4, 1921, Portal to Texas History.
[52] "Negro League to Begin Play Today," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Apr. 23, 1921 and "Black Cats Play Giants Tomorrow," *Fort Worth Star*-Telegram, Apr. 30, 1921, Readex.

spending too much space covering a black baseball team, or the Black Panthers were no longer desirable to cover in the newspaper because they weren't as successful as they had been during the 1920 season. Furthermore, the *Star-Telegram* provided equally sparse coverage of game results, only reporting the scores of a handful of Black Panther home games each season, and only publishing scores when the team was victorious.[53] Perhaps only reporting victories was a way to bolster Fort Worth's reputation as a successful baseball town, but this is purely speculative and does not account for the scores of many other Black Panther wins that went unreported in the paper.

Ultimately, the Texas Colored League dissolved again at the end of the 1923 season, but its former members continued to schedule games against one another and teams from smaller towns for the years to come.[54] Unorganized play once again became harder to follow and plenty of games went unreported and unnoticed by black and white newspapers alike. Loyal fans continued to find ways to attend games, but attendance numbers were even more inconsistent than they were under organized play and were rarely recorded. Ultimately, this pieced-together style of play fit the culture and financial needs of black baseball in Texas well. Because teams did not have to pay league dues, rent out large stadiums, or pay for official league uniforms, it was easier for teams to stay afloat and continue to play baseball.[55] The Black Panthers remained Fort Worth's representation of black baseball and continued to play despite not having association with any organized league. The fact that the Black Panthers continued to play when many other black Texas teams had quit showed how important baseball was to the black

[53] "Black Cats Win Over Buffaloes," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Apr. 24, 1921 and "Black Cats Beat Black Buffs 8 to 4," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Jun. 5, 1921, Readex.
[54] Fink, 26.
[55] Ibid., 26.

community in Fort Worth. The Black Panthers were a source of racial pride and ensured that the black community could still play and watch baseball.

Finally, in 1929, black professional baseball expanded west from Kansas City into Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana when Quincy J. Gilmore, a secretary from the Negro National League and president of the Kansas City Monarchs, announced he had interest in forming a black professional baseball league in the American Southwest.[56] Once again, Fort Worth was one of the founding members of the Texas-Oklahoma-Louisiana league, showing its pride commitment to bringing organized baseball to the city. The excitement for black professional baseball in Fort Worth was on full display when the Black Panthers played the Wichita Black Spudders in the opening game. The Fort Worth Boosters Club decorated all of the shops in the African American business district with signs and banners. At LaGrave Field, a brass band played between innings for the fans' enjoyment, and W.M. McDonald, a black Fort Worth political leader and civil rights activist, threw out the first pitch.[57] The spectacle and involvement of black business owners and political leaders in demonstrating support for the Black Panthers and the TOL League showed once again that baseball was an integral source of pride and connection for Fort Worth's black community. The champions of the TOL league earned the chance to play the winner of Rube Foster's Negro National League, but unfortunately the Black Panthers were not successful enough to take advantage of that opportunity. Ultimately, the Great Depression prevented the TOL League from growing and establishing a solid foundation for black professional baseball in Texas, but the league played three seasons before disbanding in 1931. The Black Panthers were once again forced to play unorganized schedules throughout the Great Depression, but as always,

[56] Fink, 75.
[57] Ibid., 81.

the team persisted on and continued to play and uphold the connection between baseball and Fort Worth's black community.

Compared to the nationally recognized white Fort Worth Panthers team, the Black Panthers team was much less successful, although it would have been difficult to maintain a level of success anywhere near that of the legendary Panthers teams from 1920-1925. During its short, organized stint, Dallas and Houston dominated the Texas Colored League. Aside from the first season of play of the TCL when the Black Panthers won their first pennant the same season the white Panthers team won their first of six consecutive pennants, the two teams did not share the same level of success. Regardless, the Black Panthers still played a significant role in maintaining the strong connection between baseball and Fort Worth's black community. Perhaps this connection is best supported by the fact that the Texas Rangers wore the Black Panther's uniforms in 2014 as part of Major League Baseball's Negro League celebration.

Figure 6. **Image from Twitter user, Evan Grant (@Evan_P_Grant), showing the Texas Ranger's uniforms that pay tribute to the Fort Worth Black Panthers.**

As seen in Figure 6, the Texas Rangers wore uniforms that were modeled after the uniforms worn by the Fort Worth Black Panthers during the 1920s when they played in the Texas Colored League.[58] The fact that the Rangers chose to wear the uniforms of the Black Panthers instead of a team like the Dallas Black Giants, who won a Texas Colored League Pennant and a Texas-Oklahoma-Louisiana League Championship, shows that the legacy of the Fort Worth Black Panthers extends beyond the success, or lack thereof, that the team had on the field. Instead, the Black Panthers represent the efforts of men like Hiram McGar, whose efforts maintained a strong link between baseball and the black communities of Fort Worth and North Texas.

While the black and white populations in Fort Worth continued to grow at a rapid rate throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the Hispanic population in Fort Worth experienced a much slower pace of growth, and in many ways, the community was just beginning to establish strong roots in the city.[59] Many of the older Fort Worth neighborhoods that are now dominated by Hispanic influence and culture, like North Side and areas located southeast of downtown, were once home to much of the city's African American and European population. The foundation for this shift began to take shape in the Interwar years before becoming solidified in the years following World War II.

Historically, the patterns of Hispanic immigration to the United States developed in three distinct phases. The first wave of immigration lasted over a century until the start of World War I, as immigrants from Mexico gradually moved into Texas, Arizona, and California and settled in

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[58] Evan Grant (@Evan_P_Grant), "These are Rangers unis today to honor Fort Worth Black Panthers, part of Negro League celebration," Twitter photo, May 24, 2014, https://twitter.com/Evan_P_Grant/status/470272236847648768/photo/1.

[59] When referring to the Hispanic population and community, I am mostly talking about people that trace their origin to Latin American countries in the Western Hemisphere. This will mostly refer to Mexico, but can also include other countries like Cuba, Puerto Rico, etc. The term Hispanic usually means anyone who speaks Spanish, but I thought the term 'Latino' would no longer be appropriate out of respect to the Latinx movement. If I make any references to Spain, I will clearly distinguish between Spanish and Hispanic.

close to the border.[60] A major event that contributed to this early migration was the beginning of the Mexican Revolution in 1910, leading many people to flee the country as it entered a period of civil unrest that resulted in transformations in Mexican government and culture. Demand for labor during World War I and the economic prosperity generated by the post-war roaring twenties triggered the second wave of immigration to the United States. This period lasted from 1918 to the 1930s, before immigration slowed during the Great Depression.[61] The third, much larger phase of Mexican immigration took place during World War II as the demand for immigrant labor was at an all-time high and there were no quotas on Mexican immigration.[62] The people that made their way to Fort Worth during the first two phases of immigration established the foundation for the Mexican communities in the city that grew larger following World War II.

Like most cities, economic opportunities had the largest impact on settlement patterns in Fort Worth. At the end of the 19th century, the first concentration of Hispanic residents, called *barrios*, started to form. The initial cluster of Mexican residents in the 1800s was in the southern part of Hell's Half Acre in downtown, bound by 12th and 17th streets. Gradually, the core neighborhood shifted a few blocks southeast onto 17th street, and became popularly known as *La Diecisiete*, the first barrio.[63] Residents in this area held a variety of occupations. The *Fort Worth City Directories* from 1886-1887 list men that worked in the original stockyards located southeast of downtown, men that sold tamales downtown, men that were neighborhood grocers, and men that were performers at a few different downtown theaters.[64] Another popular barrio was *La Corte*. It was located on a bluff of the Trinity River southwest of the courthouse and got

[60] J'Nell Pate, *North of the River: A Brief History of North Fort Worth*, (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1994), 137.
[61] Ibid., 138.
[62] Ibid., 138.
[63] Cuéllar, 7.
[64] Ibid., 9.

its name from its proximity to the heart of the downtown district. It was an attractive location for Mexican immigrants that could work primarily as busboys, cooks, dishwashers, maids, and laundry workers at downtown hotels, restaurants, and shops. *La Corte* became a residential haven, not just for Mexican residents, but to other minorities as well due to few Anglos inhabiting the area. In the 1920s, the neighborhood was also home to five African American families and one Chinese family that had five children.[65] Residents living in *La Diecesiete* and *La Corte* took advantage of the density of commerce in the downtown area, as well as the work available in the old stockyards. These neighborhoods were built around the opportunities that were connected to the "Cowtown" identity associated with old Fort Worth. However, starting in the early 1900s and the years following World War I, the new industrial identity of Fort Worth provided immigrants with new opportunities for work and to establish new barrios.

One of the largest and most recognizable Hispanic barrios today is North Side. North Side's history starts with the industrialization of Fort Worth at the turn of the 20th century. Fort Worth was home to six major railroads by the start of the 1900s, an attractive development for industries looking to move into town. When the Swift Company and the Armour Packing Company, both modern meat packing plants, set up shop north of downtown near the location of the new stockyards in 1902, immigrants from Spain, Italy, Poland, and Russia flooded into Fort Worth and established residences within walking distance to the plants.[66] Over time, as immigration from Europe declined and immigrant from Mexico came in larger numbers, North Side became a distinctively Mexican barrio over the 1910s, 20s, and 30s. One of the most famous Mexican immigrants from this time period was a man named Joe T. Garcia. Garcia was only sixteen when he came to Fort Worth in 1914, and he immediately began working at the

[65] Cuéllar, 10.
[66] Ibid., 11.

Armour and Company packing plant.[67] After working there for twenty years, Garcia started a new venture in a white frame house on 2201 North Commerce St., a restaurant that would eventually become known as the famous "Joe T. Garcia's." It became a popular location where Amon G. Carter entertained out of town guests. Today, it takes up half of the 2200 block of North Commerce and is a significant representation of Fort Worth Hispanic culture.

The arrival of new industry in the 20th century, along with the natural barrier of the Trinity River to the north of downtown, and the stench of the stockyards, drove the expansion of Fort Worth to the south. The barrio known as South Side or *La Fundición*, grew in response to the arrival of the Texas Rolling Mills in 1908, later renamed Texas Steel.[68] Many Mexican residents in Fort Worth that didn't settle in North Side or in the downtown area, settled in the area immediately surrounding the steel mills. The 1910 city directory lists five Mexicanos who worked for the plant, but the directory doesn't list any addresses as these people probably lived in company housing conveniently located adjacent to the plant to the Texas Steel plant.[69] Ultimately, these early barrios established the foundation for the growth of Fort Worth's Hispanic population. While the initial surge of immigrants settled in these areas due to the proximity of economic opportunities, later immigrants began to settle in the same areas because that is where their relatives or cultural community was established. Furthermore, during the early 1900s, non-white sentiment was strong and Hispanic communities were often bound by where residences were already established, and white neighborhoods and commerce limited expansion of these communities.

[67] Pate, 138.
[68] Cuéllar, 15.
[69] Ibid., 16.

The total population of the Hispanic community in Fort Worth during the early part of the 20th century is somewhat difficult to interpret. One explanation for this is the fact that the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo established that Mexican people in the new American territory after the Mexican American war could choose whether they wanted Mexican or American citizenship. Those that chose American citizenship could retain their property rights and were considered white for American citizenship purposes. The consequences of this can be seen in the Census reports of Mexican populations in Texas cities like Fort Worth. In 1920, Mexican citizens were listed under the "foreign-born" white category that also included immigrants from Europe. Of the 7,359 foreign-born white residents in Fort Worth, the 1920 Census reported that 3,785 of these people were born in Mexico.[70] It is unknown whether this is a generalization that all Mexican residents were born in Mexico, but it is likely that there were a significant number of people that were born in the United States to Mexican parents. The 1930 Census does report the Mexican population of Fort Worth at 3,955, alongside the populations of Native Americans, Chinese, and Japanese citizens.[71] However, the reports that follow fail to add any clarity to the question of how many people of Mexican descent were actually living in Fort Worth during the time period. The 1930 Census reports that only 52 people considered to be foreign-born white were born in Mexico.[72] It also reports that only 67 people in Fort Worth were native-born white that had one or both parents that were born in Mexico.[73] These tables could suggest that most of the 3,955 reported Mexicans living in Fort Worth by 1930 were people of Mexican descent

[70] U.S. Census Bureau, "Population – Texas, Table 12, Country of Birth of the Foreign-born White, For Counties and Cities of 10,000 or More, 1920."
[71] U.S. Census Bureau, "Texas Composition and Characteristics, Table 17, Indians, Chinese, and Japanese, 1910 to 1930, and Mexicans, 1930, For Counties and Cities of 25,000 or More, 1930."
[72] U.S. Census Bureau, "Texas Composition and Characteristics, Table 18, Foreign-born White by Country of Birth, For Counties and For Cities of 10,000 or More, 1930."
[73] U.S. Census Bureau, "Texas Composition and Characteristics, Table 19, Native White of Foreign or Mixed Parentage, By Country of Birth of Parents, For Counties and For Cities of 10,000 or More, 1930."

whose parents were also born in the United States, but this seems unlikely for the time period. It is probable that these reported numbers are inaccurate and the total number of native- and foreign-born people of Mexican descent in Fort Worth was significantly more than the reported numbers.

The fact that the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the U.S. Census reports established Mexican Americans as white American citizens is a misleading one. Mexican Americans faced prejudice and racism similar to that of African Americans, especially in South Texas near the border. Anti-Mexican sentiment grew stronger among Anglo Texans, and the Texas Rangers law enforcement group, supported by the Texas Legislature, carried out violent acts against Mexican Americans. People of Mexican descent were often the targets of lynching mobs as tensions surrounding the Mexican Revolution intensified near the Texas border. The *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* reported on one lynching of a Mexican boy that took place in Thorndale, Texas (near Austin) in 1911. The headline read "Mexican Lynched for Killing Texan," showing that the "us vs. them" mentality existed in the state. Antonio Gómez was only 14 years old, although the *Star-Telegram* reported he was 18, and it was said that he stabbed a German shopkeeper, leading mobs to capture him from jail custody and hang him in the middle of town.[74] While no lynchings of Hispanic citizens have been reported during this time period in Fort Worth, the attitudes of the Anglo population towards Mexican citizens hardened as the Mexican population grew and filled jobs in the expanding industries. The Hispanic population in Texas faced discriminatory patterns like Jim Crow for the black population, though less formal the further north from the border you were.

[74] "Mexican Lynched for Killing Texan," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Jun. 20, 1911, Readex.

This system, known as Juan Crow, seemed to be stronger in South Texas, where mobs were more likely to attack Mexican citizens and refuse to offer them work or service at restaurants. However, it is not unlikely than aspects of Juan Crow occurred in Fort Worth as well. Anti-Hispanic sentiment among Anglos generally seemed to keep Mexican commercial activity limited to the neighborhoods in the barrios, and it was probably not uncommon to see restaurants and other places refuse service to Hispanic citizens, especially among the more elite Fort Worth white population. At the very least, efforts were made to encourage citizens to interact with their own race, even if segregation for the Hispanic community was not formally enforced. In 1923, Fort Worth police officers lectured a white couple from New Jersey found in a Mexican dance hall, telling them "that people in the South associate with their own race."[75] In many ways, the Hispanic community in Fort Worth was forced into a social position in the racial hierarchy somewhere between the white and black communities. They were considered white under official documentation, yet they faced discrimination and stereotyping in a way similar to the black community. The Hispanic population was often valued for its ability to provide industries with cheap labor. As a result, the expectation for Hispanic immigrants was to settle, Americanize, and work. Any integration into white society was likely dependent on factors like social status, the ability to speak fluent English, and skin color. Nowhere is the Hispanic position between the black and white communities in Fort Worth more evident than on the baseball diamond.

Since Hispanic immigration to Fort Worth was a relatively new phenomenon that only began to grow at a faster rate after the 1910s, there is little to no Hispanic baseball history in Fort Worth prior to World War II. There are not any records of Hispanic city teams that played for

[75] Rich, 56.

Fort Worth like the Panthers and Black Panthers did until the Aztecs began playing in the early 1940s. However, the story of Hispanic baseball in Fort Worth reflects the pattern of the growth of the Hispanic community in the city, meaning that the roots for the growth of Hispanic baseball were planted in the 1920s and 1930s.

Perhaps the individual that represents the social position of the Hispanic community in Interwar Fort Worth the most was a Cuban baseball player named Jacinto 'Jack' Del Calvo Gonzáles. It is important to note that Jack Calvo was not of Mexican descent like most Hispanic immigrants that came to Fort Worth. Instead, he was Cuban and had already spent a considerable amount of time in the United States before making his way to Fort Worth. Calvo's "Baseball-Reference" page (a website that provides statistics for every player in Major League history) shows that he began playing in the Cuban league in 1912, but it is likely that he started before that.[76] His story in the United States starts when he played 17 games for the Washington Senators in the Major Leagues in 1913. Calvo hit .242 in those games for the Senators, but he was released from the team. After that, Calvo played back in Cuba and also for the integrated Long Branch Cubans in a New Jersey Negro League. After showing some success, he got the opportunity to play for the Washington Senators again in 1920, but he was released again after hitting .043 in 17 games.[77] It was then that Calvo made his way south to play for the Little Rock Travelers in the Southern Association. It was here where the Fort Worth Panthers likely saw him for the first time, since they played Little Rock in the first Dixie League series in 1920.

Rumblings of Calvo's move to Fort Worth started in December of 1921, when the popular *Star-Telegram* sports column, "Buzzin' Round with Billy Bee," mentioned that the

[76] Jack Calvo," Baseball-Reference, https://www.baseball-reference.com/register/player.fcgi?id=calvo-001jac.
[77] Nick C. Wilson, *Early Latino Baseball Players in the United States*, (Jefferson: McFarland and Co., 2005), 54.

Panthers could be getting a new face in the "Cuban copper," Jack Calvo.[78] The *Star-Telegram* writers often made reference to the fact that Calvo was a policeman in Havana when he was at home in Cuba. It is difficult to determine whether the writers at the *Star-Telegram* emphasized Calvo's association to law enforcement or Cuba for a positive or negative effect, but for most of Calvo's time in Fort Worth from 1922-1926, Calvo's Cuban origins were mentioned when referencing the ballplayer. The same Billy Bee column also made sure to point out that he was "a big favorite" during his time in Little Rock. Perhaps this reinforcement was needed to try to "sell" Jack Calvo to the Fort Worth fans since he was Cuban.

The *Star-Telegram* made another interesting point about Calvo in an article after he made his debut with the Panthers in 1922. In an article by Billy Bee after a Panther's game in March, an interview with another baseball writer, Bill Phelon, points out that Jack Calvo "is a nobleman by birth whose ancestors built castles in Spain long before King Alfonso's ancestors were known to the general public."[79] Again, this connection could have been emphasized to try to sell Calvo to Fort Worth citizens as not just someone from Cuba, but someone who was mostly European and a nobleman whose family was from Spain. These words could likely be true, as a quick search of the name 'Calvo' yields evidence that the name has elite ties to Spain. All the references to Calvo as a Castilian nobleman and a police officer in Havana are accompanied by the fact that Calvo appeared to have a lighter skin tone.

[78] "Buzzin' Round with Billy Bee," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, December 18, 1921, Readex.
[79] "Reception to Champ Cats Assures Hearty Support," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, March 12, 1922, Readex.

Figure 7. **Colorized image of Jack Calvo from findagrave.com**

Figure 7 shows a colorized image of one of Calvo's baseball photos where it is apparent that he has lighter skin than other people from Cuba and Mexico might have had at the time. Perhaps all of these factors made it possible for Calvo to join the Panthers in the first place. Homer Peel, a player for Houston in the Texas League and a future manager of the Panthers, noted that because of his Cuban background, Jack was susceptible to prejudice, but his excellent play quickly put any thought of discrimination down.[80] Calvo had a batting average above .300 in three out of four seasons with the Panthers, and was praised for his speed and arm strength as an outfielder. The *Star-Telegram* covered him like a fan favorite in his time in Fort Worth, and usually emphasized his Cuban and Castilian origins.

Jacinto Calvo was the only player for Panthers in the 1920s and 1930s that had openly Hispanic origins. There is no evidence in lineup cards or rosters that show any players of

[80] Clayton Odom, "The Cats Are King in Texas: A History of the Fort Worth Cats Baseball Club 1888-1964," Master's Thesis, (Texas Christian University, 1990), 49.

Hispanic origin played for any of the Black Panther teams in the 1920s or 1930s. However, it is possible that if there was a Hispanic player playing on the black team, that their name has been lost to time. Jacinto Calvo does not represent the Hispanic community in Fort Worth during the Interwar Period. He was Cuban, light-skinned, had noble Spanish family ties, spoke English well, and went by 'Jack.' However, while Fort Worth's Hispanic community probably did not see Calvo as one of their own, he best represents the social position of the Hispanic community in Fort Worth between the black and the white communities. He represented what the "ideal Hispanic" looked like to white Fort Worth society. He was white passing, he worked hard at his job, which just happened to be baseball, he was a policeman in Cuba – the enforcer of social order, he had impeccable social status, and he showed signs that he was an Americanized Hispanic. It was a combination of all these things that most likely got Jacinto Calvo, a Hispanic citizen, a spot on a white baseball team in a time when non-white discrimination was at an all-time high.

One way that new Hispanic residents developed a sense of community was by establishing churches and schools in the barrios. It was often the case that these institutions were in the same building. Churches and schools did more than simply providing spiritual and educational services to the Hispanic community. They also helped new residents to adapt to a new land and culture and molded the next generation of Hispanic Texans to become well acquainted with American society and values. Mexican American folklorist, Jovita Gonzales, stated in the late 1920s that:

> Young Texas Mexicans are being trained in American schools. Behind them lies a store of traditions of another race, customs of past ages, an innate inherited love and reverence for another country. Ahead of them lies a struggle in which they are to be the champions. It is a struggle for equality and justice before the law, for their full rights as American citizens. They bring with them a broader view, a clearer understanding of the good and

> bad qualities of both races. They are the converging element of two antagonistic civilizations; they have the blood of one and have acquired the ideals of the other.[81]

This statement describes the environment that the Hispanic community in Fort Worth grew into. Hispanic immigrants and their children that were born American citizens were expected to continue portraying elements of their culture that was seen as desirable by the white community, like food and work ethic, but they were also expected to learn and embrace the white American values that surrounded them. Institutions like the Roman Catholic Mission of San José, the Methodist Church's Wesley Community Center, and the Presbyterian Mexican Mission provided support services like food and clothing distribution, health clinics, kindergarten, and English classes. They also offered Americanization programs, organized sports, and children's programs.[82] The place where community building and American values intersected in the 1920s and 1930s was on the baseball field.

The introduction of baseball to Fort Worth's Hispanic youth came from sports programs offered by community church and school organizations. The Wesley Community House played a major role in establishing the roots of organized baseball among the Fort Worth Mexican community. One of the missions of the Wesley House was to provide children with opportunities to exercise and play. A recreation area on the north side of the Wesley House building doubled as a basketball court and a baseball diamond where older children could learn, practice play those sports.[83]

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[81] Arnoldo de León, *Mexican Americans in Texas: A Brief History*, (Arlington Heights, Ill: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1993), 84.
[82] Cuéllar, 99.
[83] Ibid., 139.

Wesley House also sponsored teams to play in organized city leagues. During the spring and summer, Wesley House boys played in a city sandlot league on Saturday mornings at Sycamore Park. Since the team was almost all Hispanic, elements of racism and discrimination often came into play when the team had games. One community member recalled that the Mexican team does not always get a fair deal with the Anglo-Americans. While the Mexican team often has to wait on an Anglo team to play, but if the Mexican team is late, they have to forfeit the games. In the early 1930s, the Wesley team had to forfeit a game because the deaconess in charge of boys' activities was away on vacation, and the team was not given the opportunity to make up the game. Even though the Mexican team had beaten the team that eventually won the championship, the boys said they were not surprised that they did not win the championship. They told the deaconess early in the summer that they did not have a chance to win the championship against an Anglo-American team.[84] Wesley House also gave girls the opportunity to learn baseball. However, while the boys got to go play in an organized city league, the girls played unorganized games on the playgrounds near Wesley House in North Side.[85]

Hispanic adults also had some opportunities to organize and join teams and play ball. A variety of church and city leagues featured teams that likely had Mexican players among their ranks. The *Star-Telegram* typically dedicated some space on the sports page to talk about results from these leagues.

In April of 1925, an article in the *Star-Telegram* showed the opening week schedule for three different city leagues. Among the matchups, a team named "Texas Steel No. 3" was set to

[84] Cuéllar, 140.
[85] Ibid., 140.

play their first game in the Major City League.[86] While there were no lineup cards for this game, and it is impossible to say for certain, it is possible that some Hispanic men played for Texas Steel in some of these city leagues. Texas Steel was one of the most popular destinations for immigrant workers in Fort Worth, and the *La Fundición* barrio emerged due to the need for Hispanic workers to live within walking distance of the foundries. Something else that is important to note is that the team name was listed as "Texas Steel No. 3," implying that there were multiple organized teams to come from Texas Steel. It is possible that Hispanic workers could have played for a few of these teams, or perhaps one team was made up of a majority of Hispanic workers. It is also likely that Hispanic workers could have played for other industrial teams like Texas and Pacific, Swift and Co., and Armour Packing Company in the North and South Side neighborhoods.

Churches were an essential part of building the Hispanic community in Fort Worth. They could also serve as an organization that people could build baseball teams from. Evidence of church teams playing in city leagues or dedicated church leagues exists throughout the *Star-Telegram* in the 20s and 30s. One article in May of 1925 mentions that the Magnolia Avenue Christians defeated the North Side Presbyterians in the "Men's A League."[87] While the Magnolia Christians might not have had any Hispanic players, the North Side Presbyterians might have. Many Mexican immigrants that were not Catholic became members at Presbyterian churches in North Side. Again, no lineup cards or box scores exist for this local game, but it the article does mention that both teams played "error free baseball," which could be an indicator that any

[86] "Three Leagues in Amateur Baseball Association to Start Season This Week-End," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, April 15, 1925, Readex.
[87] "Church Baseball League Results," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, May 1, 1925, Readex.

Hispanic players that played for the North Side Presbyterians could play the game at a decent level of performance, despite losing the game 5-1.

The beauty of baseball is that it does not take an organized league to teach and grow the game. For every organized game reported in the newspaper or elsewhere, there are many more unorganized pickup games played. Perhaps this is the way that the game grew the most among the Hispanic community. The story of Fort Worth native Ciquio Vásquez demonstrates this occurrence well. Born in 1927, Vásquez recalls that his childhood in the 1930s involved playing impromptu games of baseball with his siblings and friends in Fort Worth. Isidro Hernández, the owner of a neighborhood grocery store in South Side, coached a team of neighborhood Mexican boys and take them to play friendly games against boys from North Side. If they won, Vasquez said that they would get free *raspas* from Hernández's store.[88] Vasquez went on to coach local teams throughout the 40s, 50s, and 60s without playing any level of organized baseball. Ciquio's brother went on to coach a city-wide team made up of Mexican Americans in the 1950s, known as *Los Indios*.

Baseball played an important role in the history of Hispanic Fort Worth because the game was a representation of something that could Americanize the Mexican community, much like English-speaking schools. Through baseball, Fort Worth Mexicanos could organize their own community by learning to play the game with their friends and family in community institutions like Wesley House, and then take what they learned to play the game among the larger Fort Worth community. Because of racial discrimination, the Hispanic community was separated

[88] Cuéllar, 141.

from the white community, but baseball provided a way for the lines between white and Hispanic to become blurred.

Baseball in Fort Worth during the 1920s and 1930s reflected the city's evolving identity. The success and growing popularity of the white Fort Worth Panthers throughout this period mirrored Fort Worth's transformation into a major city that was vying for regional and national attention. The growth and success of the Panthers on the baseball field was a vessel for Fort Worth to achieve the attention and outreach that its emerging identity as a big city required. However, baseball in Fort Worth also served as a reflection of the negative side of the city's past that it had yet to break free from. Racial division in the Jim Crow South created a Fort Worth that was split into three different Fort Worths – one black, one white, and one Hispanic. In many ways, this division crossed over to the baseball diamond, requiring the black and Hispanic communities to form their own teams and play their own games. However, even though baseball was a tool that upheld social standards of racial division, it was also a symbol of something that the black, white, and Hispanic communities in Fort Worth had in common. Terence Mann said, "The one constant through all the years has been baseball," and "It reminds us of all that was once good." Baseball has been far from constant and timeless. The lack of information available about the Black Panthers and Hispanic players and teams reflects that. Furthermore, baseball has not always been a reminder of all things good. In fact, in many ways, it has reinforced the worst parts of American history, including racism and segregation. Yet, what makes baseball America's pastime is that it has constantly reflected the constant change in American identity. The same can be said about Fort Worth. Baseball serves as a constant reminder of all that was good and bad about the past, but it has continuously adapted to reflect the communities of all

who play the game. Because of this, baseball can be a shining beacon of hope for what can be good now and in the future.