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Davis, Richard and Gloria, Collection, 1889-2005

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Davis, Richard and Gloria, Collection, MS 287

Richard and Gloria Davis Collection

Collection Number	MS 287
Title	The Richard and Gloria Davis Collection
Repository	Pittsburg State University, Special Collections & University Archives, Pittsburg, Kansas 1701 S. Broadway Pittsburg, Kansas 66762 (620) 235-4883 speccoll@pittstate.edu
Dates	1889 – 2005
Collection Size	1 linear foot
Creator	Richard and Gloria Davis
Scope and Content	A collection of biographical information, photographs, and tribute information related to George Sweatt and Walter Johnson, baseball players from Humboldt, Kansas. Also included is correspondence between Randy Roberts and Richard Davis about the collection and research.
Access Restrictions	This collection is open for access. Researchers must use the collection in accordance with the policies of the Special Collections & University Archives, Leonard H. Axe Library, Pittsburg State University.
Languages	English

Biographical Note Born in 1893, George Sweatt grew up in Humboldt, Kansas. He studied at the Kansas State Normal School (now Emporia State University) on a sports scholarship where he played football for one season. Sweatt lost his scholarship for missing classes and found work in Iola, Kansas where he pitched for the local baseball team, and coached high school basketball. After service in World War I, serving with the 816th Pioneer Infantry Division in France, Sweatt enrolled in the 1920 spring semester at the State Manual Training Normal School (now Pittsburg State University) on a sports scholarship. Sweatt competed in track and field, football, and basketball. He was the first black athlete to letter in a sport at SMTN. On May 4, 1921, Sweatt married his sweetheart from Iola, Kansas, Evelyn Groomer. Sweatt graduated with a teaching certificate in 1922 and taught at Cleveland School in Coffeyville, Kansas with his wife until the end of the 1924 school year.

Sweatt tried out for the Kansas City Monarchs, of the Negro Baseball League, in the summer of 1921, reporting to the team on June 5th. In 1924, the Monarchs played in the first Negro League World Series against the Hillsdale Giants of Philadelphia, winning 5 to 0. In 1926,

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Sweatt was traded to the Chicago American Giants. Sweatt retired from the Leagues in 1928, having been the only player to have played in the first four Negro Leagues World Series. He moved on to work for the Post Office in Chicago, and managed the Giants until 1933. Sweatt passed away in 1983 at the age of 89.

Walter Johnson, also of Humboldt, Kansas, was one of the first five baseball players to be inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1936. Born in Humboldt in 1887, Johnson did not have many opportunities to play baseball until his family moved to California when he was 14. His baseball career began in 1907 when he signed on to the Washington Senators, a team he would play for his entire career. In 1924, the Senators won the American League pennant and played in the World Series. Overall, Johnson won a total of 417 games (more than anyone in the 20th century), and was voted best pitcher of all time in 1999 by *Sporting News*. Johnson retired from the Washington Senators in 1927, moving on to manage the Newark Bears, a minor league team, in 1928. The next year, he returned to manage the Washington Senators through the 1932 season. From 1933 to 1935, Johnson managed the Cleveland Indians.

Johnson married Hazel Lee Roberts, daughter of Nevada Representative Edwin Roberts, on June 24, 1914. They had six children, five of which lived to adulthood. Johnson retired to Germantown, Maryland where he was elected as Montgomery County commissioner in 1938. He ran for a congressional seat as a Republican in 1940 but lost to Democrat William D. Byron. Not only was Johnson's father-in-law a Nevada congressman, Johnson was a friend to President Calvin Coolidge. During World War II, Johnson and Babe Ruth held War Bond Games to raise money for the war effort. In Maryland, Idaho, and Kansas, Johnson has parks, baseball fields, and a school named after him. A small monument has been erected at his birthplace in Humboldt.

Humboldt, Kansas named two baseball fields after the Sweatt and Johnson and hosts an annual baseball game for young teens in their honor.

Processing Note

Collection processed in September 2020

Detailed Description of the Collection:

Box:

F.1 George Sweatt Memoir

F.2 Biographical Information/Writing for George Sweatt

F.3 Research Notes

F.4 Sources – Articles and Newspaper Clippings

F.5 Correspondence – Randy Roberts, Dick Davis, and more – 1973–2005

F.6 Tributes, Dedications, and Plaques for George Sweatt and Walter Johnson

F.7 Photographs, Postcards, and Cards

F.8 Miscellaneous

Humboldt Union – 2001-2005

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Kansas Traveler, Summer 2005

Walter Johnson Framed Portrait, 1924

Walter Johnson Stones (2)

George Sweatt T-Shirt

Cassette – KC Royals Baseball

Large Photographs and Posters:

Black Ball: The Negro Baseball Leagues

Photos of KC Monarchs (1924) and Chicago American Giants (1927) in the Negro World Series

Sweatt's childhood home and Cleveland School in Coffeyville, KS

Johnson's birthplace

2 portraits of Sweatt, one with bio

Family photo of Johnson, age 2, 1889

Photo of Gloria and Richard Davis