BOLDEN, ED

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Scope Note

The papers of Edward Bolden (1878 - 1946), entrepreneur and Federal employee cover the period from 1910 to the 1980s and is contained in two boxes of approximately one linear foot. The collection was donated by Hilda Bolden Shorter, the daughter of Edward Bolden, in 1984. The collection primarily traces Bolden's career in Negro baseball from 1910 until the 1940s; however, the majority of the papers span the period from 1920 to 1940.

For thirty-six years Bolden owned and/or managed two professional baseball teams in Pennsylvania. He was one of the pioneers in his sport and served as one of the links between the old Negro baseball leagues and modern day major league baseball. The collection provides a flashback to the time of segregation in American baseball when players of African descent could not play on the same team as white players.

Bolden, along with other postal workers, founded the Hilldale baseball club, thereby becoming one of the first baseball groups to be entirely controlled and financed by African Americans. In addition to being a part owner, Bolden was also the manager of the Hilldale team. The team was made up of teenage boys who played together for a period of years and formed the nucleus for the professional baseball team that came later. The collection has limited information on the Hilldale team between 1910 and 1920; however, in the 1920s, the team took off and became a major force in Negro professional baseball. The collection provides information on the first Negro World Series in 1924, between Hilldale
and the Kansas City Monarchs. In addition, it includes various news articles, printed materials, scrapbooks and other artifacts from the 1920s, including names of players and their batting averages. Bolden continued his ownership of the Hilldale team until the late 1920s, when internal bickering caused him and the other owners of the team to cease operating the team.

In 1933, Bolden organized the Philadelphia Stars and entered them into the Negro baseball league. This team, like Hilldale, also flourished under the leadership of Bolden. The collection contains printed materials about the Stars such as the Colored Baseball and Sports Monthly which was published in 1934. In addition, many news articles, photographs, and other memorabilia about the Philadelphia team from the 1930s to the 1940s are included. There are photographs of the East-West All Star Classic which was held at Comisky Park in Chicago in 1941 where 50,485 people were in attendance.

During Bolden's long career, he was called the "Chief" and was recognized as a shrewd promoter and businessman who produced outstanding baseball teams. Concurrent with his tenure as a baseball owner, Bolden continued his employment as a postal clerk at the U. S. Post Office, finally retiring after 42 years.
Edward Bolden

1882 January 17 Born in Concordville, Pa., to Perry and Hannah Bolden

Attended Public Schools in Delaware County, Pa.

? September 23 Married Nellie Anderson


1910 One of the organizers of Hilldale baseball team in Darby, Pa.

1928 Ended relationship with Hilldale baseball team

1933 Organized Philadelphia Stars baseball team

1946 March 28 Retired from U. S. Post Office

1950 September 28 Died of stroke at Fitzgerald Mercy Hospital, Darby, Pa.
Series Description

Series A  Personal Papers
Box 186-1  Includes biographical data, Pennsylvania motor vehicle registration card, writings by Bolden, U. S. Postal Service papers, obituary, order of service at funeral, condolences, press clippings regarding funeral, and program.

Series B  Correspondence
Box 186-1  Consists of both personal and professional correspondence between Bolden, friends, family and business associates.

Series C  Hilldale Baseball Team
Box 186-1  Includes 1920 and 1929 team schedule, and Darby Borough, Tri-Centennial Celebration papers.

Series D  Philadelphia Stars Baseball Team

Series E  Photographs

Series F  News Articles
Box 186-1  Includes articles dating from 1940s through the 1980s about baseball.
Series G  Scrapbooks (1920, 1924, 1925, 1925)

Box 186-2   Photocopies of four scrapbooks with various news articles, photographs, box scores, and other baseball information.

Series H  Oversized Photographs

Item 186-3   Consists of five photographs, including First Colored World Series, 1924.

Series I  Restricted

Box 196-4   Contains four original scrapbooks that are closed to research because of preservation concerns due to fragile condition.
Container List

Box Folder

A Personal Papers

186-1 1 In memoriam
  2 Writings by Bolden
  3 Employment information of Bolden
  4 Program Philadelphia Service Bureau of Professional
Basketball Umpires
  5 Motor Vehicle Registration
  6 Business Card

B Correspondence

  7 A - G
  8 Alexander, Raymond Pace
  9 Forbes, E. E.
 10 Gay, Eustace

 11 H - M
 12 Jackson, Kent
 13 Lee, J. Artie
 14 Montgomery, George

 15 P - Z
 16 Pierce, Townsend
 17 Other Correspondents, Hilda Bolden

C Hilldale Baseball Team, 1920-1929, 1982
D Philadelphia Stars, 1934-1950

21 Colored Baseball Sports Monthly, October, 1934
22 Press Releases, about 1940
23 Opening Day Program, May 9, 1942
24 1947 Schedule
25 Uniform Player's Contract, April 17, 1947
26 Financial Papers, 1950
27 Negro American League Scorecard, about 1940

Box Folder

D Philadelphia Stars, continued

186-1 28 List of Players, undated
29 Season Pass, 1941
30 Negro American League Program, 1952
31 "Flash" publication, East West Classic, September, 1942
32 Blank Stationary

E Photographs, 1924-1927, undated

33 Bolden portraits
34 Bolden with automobile

Baseball Photographs

35 First Colored World Series Opening Game; October 11, 1924, Kansas City, Mo. (For original, see oversize).
36 First Colored World Series, Opening Game, October 3, 1924 (For original, see oversize)
37 Philadelphia Stars
38 Philadelphia Stars, East-West Game
39 Opening Game - Eastern League, May 9, 1927.
40 Shorter, Hilda Bolden
F  News Articles, 1940-1980

  41  Undated
  42  1940s - 1950s
  43  1970s
  44  1980s

G  Scrapbooks, 1920-1925

186-2  1  1920
       2  1920
       3  1924
       4  1925

186-3  H  Oversize Photographs

  First Colored World Series, October 3, 1924;
  Edward Bolden, owner,  Charleston, manager
  Philadelphia Stars, Baseball Club;
  Opening Game, Eastern Colored League, May 9,
  1927;
  East - West Baseball Classic, Comisky Park,  July 27,
  1941;
  First Colored World Series, Opening Game,  October 11,
  1924.

186-4  I  Restricted