



NEW JERSEY: POP LLOYD BASEBALL STADIUM, ATLANTIC CITY.

Tukufu: The next investigation takes us to Atlantic City. Today it's the gambling capital of the East. A show town where anything goes. I'm Tukufu Zuberi, and Gwen Wright and I have come to Atlantic City to investigate a mystery surrounding a baseball stadium. Our story starts in 1949.....a time when America was a very different place. Racial segregation is still widespread, and in Atlantic City, African-Americans aren't even welcome on the city's beaches. Yet only a mile away, a stadium is built to honor an African-American baseball player named Pop Lloyd. Why was the stadium named after an African-American? Who paid for it? And why?

Lamont Fauntleroy: We still got to work on our throws.

Gwen: A local Little League coach wants some answers. Lamont Fauntleroy is Commissioner of Atlantic City's little league program, and a youth advocate for disadvantaged kids in the city.

Lamont: [coaching] First base. Come on, Jay, get in that hole.

Gwen: He grew up half a mile from Pop Lloyd stadium, and from the beginning, baseball was more than just a sport for him.

Lamont: Baseball was truly my safe haven, because I grew up in a neighborhood where, you know, low-income housing and there was some gang stuff going on. And for me, baseball was the out. [coaching] Right foot on the bag.

Gwen: After his playing days were over, Lamont became a coach and for the last 20 years, he's dedicated himself to helping the kids of Atlantic City stay off the streets. And through it all, Pop Lloyd field has been his "field of dreams."

Lamont: It was sort of like you were in a big league stadium, you know. Being able to tell your friends and your mom, you know, that I'm going to be playing here in a high school game was probably one of the biggest moments of my life, yeah, absolutely.

Tukufu: What in particular would you like to know about this place?

Lamont: I'm really curious to know as to how and why Pop Lloyd Stadium came about. Knowing that he was a Negro League baseball player, I grew up in the '70s and I know there was segregation then, so how did this African-American baseball player get his name put on a park in the heart of Atlantic City?

Tukufu: Lamont, you're right. It's 1949. This is Jim Crow America. Segregation rules the day. African-Americans are not integrated into the heart of the city. Yet there is a field being dedicated to an African-American for African-Americans to play on and this field happens to be very centrally located in the city.

What's going on? It's a great question. I need to find out more about John Henry "Pop" Lloyd. I need to find out more about the Negro Baseball League and its relationship to Atlantic City. So we're going to have to do a little more research to really answer this question. Well, you know, I'm interested in looking at the stadium itself. Who built it? How much did it cost? Why was it put right here? Then maybe we'll get some answers to the question you're asking. Let's get to work. That'd be great.

Tukufu: While Gwen heads off to City Hall, I want to find out more about Pop Lloyd. I know he played in the Negro leagues that were formed in 1920, when African-American baseball players were kicked out of the white-dominated professional league. They were a great financial success, but even the best Negro League players lived in relative obscurity. So how did an African-American player get a field named after him in a city where segregation was a part of everyday life? Max Manning was a pitcher in the Negro Leagues for almost 20 years. Known as "Dr. Cyclops," he pitched the Newark Eagles to victory in the 1946 Negro League World Series. And for a number of years, he was coached by Pop Lloyd. Now, you knew John Henry "Pop" Lloyd.

Max Manning: Yes, I did. He was a very unique kind of a guy, you know. He was kind of a people that you don't usually run into and especially in terms of baseball, you know, the baseball arena. Here was a guy who didn't -- who didn't drink, didn't smoke, didn't curse, didn't do anything, you know what I mean? There was something about him that was distinctive.

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Tukufu: Do you know why they built Pop Lloyd field?

Max: Because, as far as I'm concerned, because of Pop Lloyd, you know, really.

Tukufu: So Pop was clearly a man of character. But I'm a baseball fan, and I really want to know just how good he was as a player. Mike Everett is an amateur historian who's been researching Pop Lloyd's life and the Negro Leagues in general. How good a ballplayer was Pop Lloyd?

Mike Everett: Pop Lloyd was one of the greatest baseball players ever to play the game. Pop Lloyd was a scientific hitter. He had a lifetime batting average of .367, .368. Another great shortstop, Honus Wagner, said at one particular time, "it was an honor to be compared to John Henry 'Pop' Lloyd" and they called him "The Black Wagner".

Tukufu: In 1977, Pop took his rightful place in Baseball's Hall of Fame, one of only 18 Negro Leaguers to be inducted. Let me ask you a question. We know he's a great player. But why name a field after him? The city of Atlantic City knew he was a great ballplayer, and knew he was a great man. But in 1949, America is Jim Crow's America. Segregation runs the day. It's a bittersweet period of time. Why name a field after a Negro? I'm just not convinced the stadium was built simply because Pop was a good ballplayer. Mike has a collection of Negro League artifacts, including some photographs from the day the stadium was opened.

Mike: This is very interesting. It shows how the African-American community really came out for this event, with an all-African-American honor guard...

Tukufu: That's beautiful.

Mike: Great sense of the community's involvement in this event.

Tukufu: Wow, this is interesting. So here's the distinguished Pop Lloyd, very stately there, but he's standing next to who?

Mike: He's standing -- the person speaking on that day was Senator Hap Farley. And Hap Farley again.

Tukufu: Very interesting.

Mike: And Hap Farley in a tearful moment with Pop.

Tukufu: Farley again with his boys. Hmm. This is Senator Hap Farley at a Republican Fund-raising dinner. Hap Farley is giving a Republican Political party, and he has Pop Lloyd there. What is that all about? Why is a white Republican politician spending so much time with Atlantic City's African-American community? It's clear that Hap Farley was a big sports fan, but was he also some kind of pioneer for civil rights in Atlantic City?

Gwen: After an hour of searching through the city archives, I find the blueprints for Pop Lloyd field, and the first thing I discovered is that it was built by the local city government. This is just what I was looking for. Now I know it was a City project. I can find out how much it cost. And here it is. According to this, the stadium cost almost \$100,000. That's an awful lot of money in 1949. And most of it went to the construction firm, Massett Building Company. So I decided to look into Massett and I couldn't believe what I found. They were being investigated because of their connections with a state Senator, Hap Farley, who was their lawyer. He was not only a state Senator and the Treasurer of Atlantic County. He was, as his obituary said quite openly, "the Leader," for 33 years. Nothing happened in this town without his knowledge. He would have approved this project. Hap Farley could be the key to this investigation. So Farley had a sweet deal. He approved \$100,000 to build a stadium, and then, because this is Atlantic City, the building contract goes to Massett Construction, a firm he represents.

Tukufu: I need to find out what kind of man Hap really was. Was he just another corrupt Atlantic City politician trying to get a cut of the city budget? Or did he really want to promote the African-American community? Everyone says I have to talk to Pinky Kravitz. He's been a journalist in Atlantic City for over 30 years, and he really knows this town from the inside. What was it like in Atlantic City back in the 1940s?

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Pinky Kravitz: People came to Atlantic City for fun. They didn't come here and want to read the bible and sit on the beach. They came for booze, broads, and gambling. And that's exactly what Atlantic City offered.

Tukufu: Tell me a little bit more about Hap Farley and his relationship with the African-American community.

Hap: Yeah, hap was very close with the African-American community. Atlantic City could never have evolved without the African-Americans. They were looking for people to work in Atlantic City in its earliest days. They couldn't get the Whites to come in and do these jobs because they were working in Philadelphia. There were very few unemployed people at that particular time. The hotel operators were smart. They went down to Virginia, to North Carolina, to South Carolina, and they took the recently freed slaves -- they didn't take them -- they invited them to come to Atlantic City and offered them jobs right in their hotels.

Tukufu: According to Pinky, Farley did treat the African-American community well, but that was because he knew they were vital to the success of the Atlantic City hotels. They were the foundation on which all this glitz and glamour was built. And they could hold the answer to this investigation.

Tukufu: The local library has a number of reference sources documenting the African-American experience in Atlantic City. They have their own Board of Trade, Masonic Lodge, and even their own golf club. But they also showed that by 1949, the African-American population in Atlantic City had risen to almost 40%, among the highest for any city in the northeast. Not only did they have this strong community, but they had the vote. And let me tell you, I found a document which clinched the relationship between the African-American community and politicians wanting to be Elected in Atlantic City. Let me read you a passage from a book, which is about the case of Nucky Johnson. Nucky Johnson was the boss of Atlantic City, all the way up until 1943, when he was sentenced to go to jail. "Of the 66,000 People in Atlantic City, "approximately 30,000 are Negroes ... and Johnson and his Republican organization always completely controlled the Negro vote." Johnson knew that he needed to control the Negro vote in order to control Atlantic City. Hap Farley knew this, too.

Gwen: So Farley needed the African-American vote to stay in power, and he hoped that Pop Lloyd field would deliver it. As soon as you walk into the stands, you know what a smart move he'd made. Straightaway, you can see how the stadium connects with the neighboring houses. It really is the heart of the community. This was the place to come on Sunday afternoon to watch a game in which the stands would be packed, the players on the field were right there. You could see their faces. There was an intimacy that brought everyone together here. Hap Farley understood that he was giving the African-American community of Atlantic City that sense of pride.

Tukufu: So Pop Lloyd field was ultimately the product of an elaborate scheme to win political power. Atlantic City boss Hap Farley approved its construction in 1949 because he wanted to woo the African-American voters. He recognized their emerging power and wanted to provide a facility they could be proud of and grateful for. Naming it after an African-American ballplayer really sealed the deal. And now it's time to tell Lamont what we've learned.

Tukufu: You know, you asked us to go out and find out some things, and we've completed our investigation. And I'm excited to find out what you found out. Well, we can tell you first that you wanted to know why this stadium was built.

Lamont: Absolutely.

Tukufu: It was indeed to honor not just a good ballplayer, but one of the best baseball players in history. But just like we said, there had to be something else and there was. Lamont, meet Hap Farley. He's the man who signed the check to build this stadium.

Lamont: Okay.

Tukufu: Hap Farley was state Senator for Atlantic county and the political boss of Atlantic City. And that was very important. He wanted to maintain that political control. In order to do that, he had to deliver the African-American vote. Hap Farley built this stadium primarily because he wanted to win the African-American vote. And it worked for him, too. The man stayed in power as boss the next 23 years.

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Lamont: I should be angry that I didn't know all that, but I'm actually very happy now that I do know. I just wish that it could even be said even more how great a ballplayer he was, because I think that needs to outweigh and outshadow the corruption that was how this all got started.

Tukufu: We need to really highlight how great a ballplayer he really was.

Lamont: You've got it. That's great.

Gwen: Before we left, we wanted Lamont to meet someone who would give him a sense of what it was really like to play in the Negro Leagues. Lamont, I'd like to introduce you to Max Manning, one of the greatest pitchers to play baseball. He played for many years in the Negro Baseball League.

Lamont: Mr. Manning. It's a pleasure. This is awesome. This is probably the best gift that I could ever have. I'm just kind of like at awe right now because I have so many questions I'd like to ask. What was it like playing in the Negro Leagues, knowing that you guys probably was just as good or better than some of the -- what we call the National League baseball players?

Max: Once you convince yourself about something, and where you belong and who you are, then, it's a done deal. And because it's what you think of yourself, really, that really counts, that really matters. I mean, it was just a joyful time. It really was. And I know that you talk to a lot of Negro Leaguers, most of them will say the same thing.

Lamont: Would you want to do it again?

Max: Yes. Sure would.

Tukufu: Although Hap Farley may have used Pop's name to win votes, there was something in it for the African-American community, and Pop knew it. Not only did they get a monument to a great local hero, they also got a baseball field that every Sunday afternoon became a powerful expression of their strength as a community.

Lamont: [coaching] Crack of the bat. Oh, you got to hustle. Oh, Safe!

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