

SPECIAL LESSON 8

TEXAS ALMANAC TEACHERS GUIDE

The Minor League in Texas Black Professional Baseball

- *From the Texas Almanac 2008–2009*

SOCIAL STUDIES TEKS

4 - 7, 8, 12, 17, 19

7 - 7, 19

8 - 23

STAAR

4, 7 - Writing - 1, 2, 3

4, 7, 8 - Reading - 1, 2, 3

8 - Social Studies - 2

INSTRUCTIONAL SUGGESTIONS

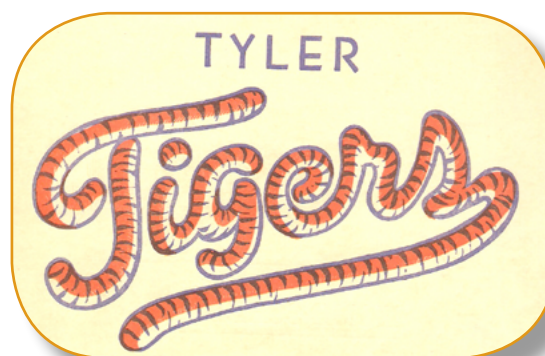
1. **BECOME COMMISSIONER:** Read the article “Professional Baseball Had an Early Start in Small Towns” on pages 180–188 of the *Texas Almanac 2008–2009* or the online article:

<http://www.texasalmanac.com/topics/history/minor-leagues-texas>

- Create your own baseball league (or leagues) in Texas with a number of teams determined by your teacher. Try to cover as much of the state as possible with the number of teams you have, but keep in mind travel and limited financial considerations.
- Give each team in the league a name, remembering that minor league teams often use local history as an influence on their names. The **Student Activity Sheet** on the next page can be used.
- Create a reasonable schedule for the league, with your teacher determining the number of games per team and per league.
- Create a poster advertisement for the league with the teams and logos displayed on a map or graphic of Texas (see Appendix).
- Finally, create a program cover (similar to those on page 185 or on the **Poster** in this lesson) for one of the teams in each league.

For each part of this activity, you **may not** use any names mentioned in the article or any teams that actively exist. **Be creative!** Teachers may choose to use all or only certain parts of this activity, as appropriate for their students. **NOTE:** *This is a great end-of-the-year activity to which students can apply their year of knowledge!*

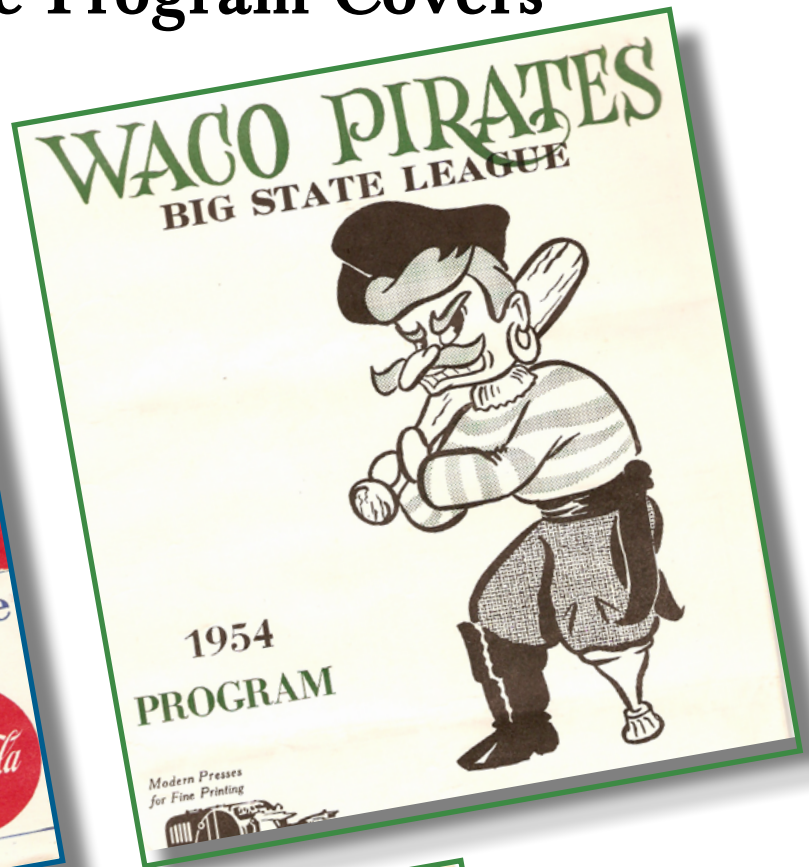
At right are a few logos for some of the minor league teams in Texas during the 1950s. Courtesy of The Presswood Collection.



My Minor League Baseball Teams



Minor League Program Covers



Here are just three programs for minor league teams that played in the Big State League during the 1950s. Courtesy of The Presswood Collection.



Special Lesson 8 – Baseball in Texas

STUDENT ACTIVITY

Black Professional Baseball in Texas

- 2. BARNSTORMING:** Read the article “Black Professional Baseball in Texas” on pages 192–195 of the *Texas Almanac 2008–2009* or online at:

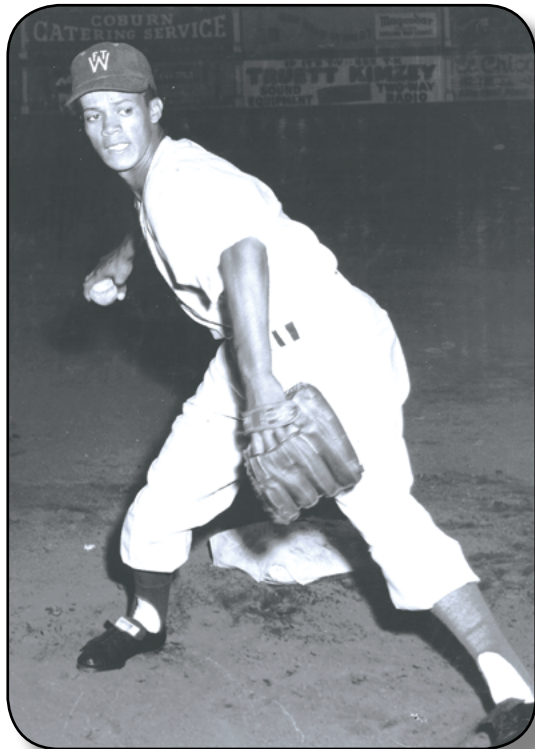
<http://www.texasalmanac.com/topics/history/black-professional-baseball-texas>.

The article mentions “barnstorming” as semi-professional baseball teams traveling around the country challenging other professional major and minor league teams, similar to what the famous Harlem Globetrotters did in basketball. In a **one-page narrative**, discuss why barnstorming was popular for black athletes in the early years of organized sports. Discuss the **advantages and disadvantages** of being on one of the teams. Also, **explain why** you think barnstorming is no longer a common practice.



The Fort Worth Wonders were a barnstorming team that formed in 1905. This team photo was taken in the 1930s.

- 3. BIOGRAPHY:** The article mentions a number of people who were part of black professional baseball, both players and others, such as league organizers. Students will **research one person** and **write a one-page biography**, which they will present to the class.



- 4. INTEGRATION:** Write an essay or create a poster that explains how the integration of Major League Baseball in 1947 was achieved and what effects it had on the black baseball leagues, the teams, and the players.



Rube Foster was born and raised in Calvert, Texas. He is credited with the formation of the Negro National League in 1920. Photo courtesy of the National Baseball Hall of Fame Library.

Maury Wills, left, signed in 1955 as the first black player with the Fort Worth Cats. He broke into the majors in 1959, where he played for the Los Angeles Dodgers, the Pittsburgh Pirates, and the Montreal Expos. In 2005, the Cats retired Wills' jersey number 6. Courtesy of The Presswood Collection.