

# Josh Gibson

by Guy Belleranti

Born in Georgia in 1911, Josh Gibson was often called the "black Babe Ruth". When he was 12, his family moved to Pittsburgh where his father found work in a steel mill. By the time Gibson was 16 he'd made quite a name for himself playing sandlot baseball for amateur teams in the city. A few years later in 1930, the Homestead Grays of Pittsburgh picked him up as a catcher.

Two years later he was traded to the Pittsburgh Crawfords. Over the next few years he became one of the great pitchers of his era.

Gibson then re-joined the Crawfords for a long run of Negro League success. He was one of the team called the Homestead Grays for four years of following.

Josh Gibson collected several Negro League batting titles.

He was known for his incredible power, producing tape-measure home runs (many over 500 feet) at an unbelievable rate. Gibson would often roll up his sleeves and make his biceps bulge to goad an opposing pitcher.

Records weren't the most carefully kept by the Negro League, but all place Gibson's career batting average in the high .300's. Everyone also agrees that he hit over .400 several times. As for his power hitting, Negro League history books credit him with



Pittsburgh Crawfords.

Among his teammates

mental in the team's owner and manager that we have seen in all

ing several Negro produced tape-

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recognized as the greatest player of all time.

As the 1930's turned into the 1940's Gibson began suffering from frequent headaches, his catcher's knees ached more and more and he started drinking heavily. In 1943, he was diagnosed with a brain tumor. Yet he played on, still winning batting and home run titles.

In January of 1947, Josh Gibson died of a stroke. It was probably brought on by the tumor, but some believe it was caused by drinking, painkillers and drugs. He was the first black player ever been allowed in the Major Leagues. In 1944, Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier was finally allowed to play for the Brooklyn Dodgers.

In 1972, Josh Gibson was inducted into the Major League Hall of Fame. In 1996, during black history month, General Mills put on a baseball game in Harlem, New York. And in 1996, Major League Baseball inducted several black athletes

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Name : \_\_\_\_\_

# Josh Gibson

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- 4) What in your opinion could be the most probable cause (of the causes mentioned) for Gibson's demise ? Why do you think so?

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- 5) Write a few lines to explain for what your favorite player and (support) player and similarities between your er.

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