

The Sunday Tribune

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MINNESOTA DEFEATS CHICAGO 4 TO 2; REGAINS CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE WEST

HILL
President of Great Northern
Speaks on Canadian Reciprocity in Chicago.
CAR SHORTAGE NOT SERIOUS QUESTION
Speaker Says Lack of Track and Terminals Is the Vital Question.

STEVEN R. HOFFBECK

BOBBY

PIONEERING AFRICAN AMERICAN ATHLETE MARSHALL

"Bob" Marshall Saves Day By Place-Kicking Goal

WARM RECEPTION IN STORE FOR GOPHERS

A warm reception awaits the return of the Minnesotans. The great victory of Dr. Williams' was now received with great cheer at the university and no time was lost in planning a banquet reception for the team on its return. Tomorrow, morning the university students, who attended in large numbers at a ball at the Minneapolis and St. Louis club last night, will meet the players from the field.

GOPHERS OUTPLAY AND OUTSCORE MAROONS



THERE WAS A TIME WHEN just about everyone in Minnesota knew the name and fame of Bobby Marshall, the greatest athlete who ever grew up in Minneapolis. From 1903 to 1924 Marshall made headlines in the Upper Midwest sports world. After that he was a sports legend. Folks in Fargo looked at him as the University of Minnesota's "famous football player"; people in Long Prairie knew him the "star slugger" of baseball's St. Paul Colored Gophers. The *St. Paul Pioneer Press* called him an "all around athletic star" in 1910, and sportswriter George A. Barton dubbed him "one of America's greatest all-around athletes." Marshall was unforgettable in his lifetime, but after his death, sportswriters came to suffer from what one called a "very strange lapse of memory" regarding him.¹

In 1999 the *Star Tribune* of Minneapolis rated Marshall as number 51 among the "Top 100 Sports Figures" of the twentieth century and the tenth greatest football

player in state history. But most modern-day experts know only a summary of his accomplishments. He should have been in the nationwide top ten.²

The multifaceted story of Bobby Marshall was hidden away in hundreds of local newspaper articles that preserved some of the magical moments and statistics of a man who was part of the struggle for black achievement in Minnesota. The African American community was aware of Marshall's accomplishments, his family preserved his scrapbook, and he had gained some recognition in college-football annals, but it has taken extraordinary effort to document his biography, which still contains some gaps.

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BOBBY MARSHALL'S GRANDFATHER and great-grandfather had been slaves in Richmond, Virginia. His father, Richard Marshall, eventually moved north to Wisconsin. There he met and wed Symantha Gillespie in the late 1870s. She was the daughter of Ezekiel Gillespie, an ex-slave and railroad porter reputed to have assisted the Underground Railway. Gillespie became a civil rights pioneer when he was not allowed to vote in 1865 but the Wisconsin Supreme Court upheld his right to do so.³

Richard and Symantha Marshall's first child, Robert Wells Marshall, was born on March 12, 1880. Within two years, the family moved to Minneapolis, where Richard worked in a lunchroom. Bobby Marshall grew up in Minneapolis on East Eighteenth Street, on a block with several other black families—one of a railway porter, another of a policeman. He learned to play football just two blocks away on East Sixteenth Street with a neighbor

named Sigmund Harris. Sig was the son of Marks Harris, a partner in Harris Brothers, junk dealers, and Harris Machinery Company. This African American kid, this Jewish boy, and the other neighborhood lads “grew up together, played, camped and fought” their way through Madison Grammar School, a friend remembered. They grew skilled at baseball in their “Sand Lot days at Park Avenue and Franklin.” They learned boxing, holding their own tournaments in an old barn on Sixteenth Street. Harris, Marshall, and Roger Gray organized the Madison grade-school football and baseball teams.⁴

Marshall and the neighborhood kids went on to excel in sports at Minneapolis Central High School. In their years on varsity, with Sig Harris at quarterback and Bobby Marshall at end, the football team suffered only one loss. The 1900 football squad opened its season against the University of Minnesota varsity. The uni-



Marshall (second row, left) and teammates on Central High School's baseball squad.

FACING PAGE: *Front-page news, November 11, 1906, and an earlier portrait of the hero from the university's Minnesota Daily.*

versity linemen, averaging 180 pounds, were handled capably by the “light but quick” Central line, its players averaging only 160 pounds. Central “easily had the best of the [first] half,” playing to a 0–0 tie. Frustrated, the “varsity boys” played “dirty ball” in the second half, according to a Minneapolis sportswriter.⁵

“HE COULD PLAY ALL SPORTS, AND PLAY THEM WELL.”

The talent of Harris and Marshall caught the eye of Dr. Henry L. Williams, who was starting his first year coaching the university team. The Central football squad went on to an undefeated season, beating the best teams from Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois. Sportswriters crowned the Central players “High School Champions of the West.” Even though Sig Harris graduated and joined the U of M squad, the following season was just as great

for Marshall and his team. Bobby was a star at left half-back, and Central won the state championship for the third year in succession.⁶

By high school Marshall was already known as an all-around athlete. As a contemporary noted, “He could play all sports, and play them well.” In his prime, he stood six-foot-one-inch tall, weighing 180 pounds. His long arms could hold off blockers in football and snag high throws to his first-base position. He played football, baseball, tennis, and hockey as mainstays and indulged in track, basketball, wrestling, boxing, and bicycling. High schools held regular bicycling meets, and Bobby was said to be “some punkins as a bike racer.”⁷

Yet even as he won adulation, Marshall had to face the realities of life for African Americans at the dawn of the twentieth century. His father had worked his way up to being a janitor by 1900. In February of that year, Bobby’s mother passed away at age 49. Still in high school, Bobby worked to hold the family together, taking a job as a janitor to help support siblings Sarah, Alice, and Lewis.⁸

Bike racer Marshall, standing at far left





Delirious coverage of the Minnesota-Michigan game, Minneapolis Tribune, November 1, 1903. Among the players flanking coach Williams in the top collage are Sig Harris (near bottom left) and Usher Burdick (near bottom right), not his last-minute replacement, Bobby Marshall.

Football was the premier game at U.S. colleges in 1900, and University of Minnesota football was the most important sport in the state. Baseball was popular, but the Minneapolis Millers and St. Paul Saints were not in the major leagues and did not make front-page news like the university football team. High-school sports were in their infancies.⁹

Bobby Marshall graduated from Central High in 1901 and followed Sig Harris to the University of Minnesota in the fall of 1903, taking up the study of law. It is likely that Coach Williams allowed Marshall to play on the team that year on Harris's recommendation. Marshall began as a reserve, but his chance to play against major college teams came when starting end Usher Burdick, the powerful man and future U.S. senator from North Dakota, injured his kneecap the day before the big game against the University of Michigan on October 31. To break into the Gophers' starting lineup in his freshman year was the greatest thrill in his sports career, Marshall later said. Michigan had been unbeaten for the prior two seasons as Champions of the West, and had a "fear-inspiring team" again.¹⁰

This Michigan game that launched the Little Brown Jug rivalry also catapulted Marshall into the realm of sports legends in Minnesota. He was part of the defense that was "absolutely like a stone wall," allowing Michigan

IT WAS THE 1906 SEASON THAT MADE MARSHALL TRULY LEGENDARY IN GOPHER FOOTBALL ANNALS.

just two first downs in the first half. In the second half, after Michigan grabbed the lead, 6–0, on a touchdown, Marshall came through. He tackled Willie Heston, the All-American back, for a four-yard loss, forcing Michigan to punt. This set up the Gophers' touchdown, in which Marshall opened a hole for fullback Egil Boeckman, who plunged for a three-yard touchdown. It was a "wonderful rally" when the Gophers "fought the ball back" for the game-tying score. The Gophers had outplayed Michigan and gained a "virtual victory" through the tie, thus winning its second Big Ten title. (The first was in 1900.) Coach Williams said, "Marshall played a very strong defensive game," while a *Minneapolis Tribune* writer went farther, asserting that Marshall had been "invincible on the defense." Bobby said that "never giving up for an instant during the hardest kind of work was what gave us the touchdown."¹¹

It was the start of a magnificent college career for Marshall. The 1904 Gophers went unbeaten in 13 games, again winning the Big Ten title and running up remarkably high scores. They also set a new world's record for points in one game in collegiate football, beating Grinnell College 146 to 0, with Marshall scoring four touchdowns and kicking 12 extra points after touchdowns. Some newspapers crowned them Champions of the West.¹²

But it was the 1906 season that made Marshall truly legendary in Gopher football annals. Coach Williams assembled a “powerful team,” and he set out to recapture the Western championship they had lost in 1905. On November 10 the Gophers played the “greatest gridiron battle of the West” against the much-heralded University of Chicago team coached by the immortal Amos Alonzo Stagg.¹³

The day was cold in Chicago, and the game, played in a drizzling rain, became a defensive showdown on a muddy gridiron. Chicago depended on the speed and ability of quarterback Walter Eckersall against the so-called “Giants of the North.” Newspapers circulated stories of what the talented Eckersall was “going to do to Minnesota.”¹⁴



Leather football helmet, 1916

THE TRUE GLORY CAME WHEN MARSHALL LINED UP IN THE MUD TO KICK A FIELD GOAL IN THE FIRST HALF

But the best player on the field that day was Bobby Marshall. On defense, he was again “invincible,” and his “tackling in the open field was one of the marvels of the day.” Eckersall tried dodging Marshall but “could not outwit” the Minnesota end. Coach Williams later stated: “Marshall played one of the best defensive games I have ever seen.”¹⁵

The true glory came when Marshall lined up in the mud to kick a field goal in the first half. It was a long place kick, with the line of scrimmage at the 40, making it a 48-yard attempt. Quarterback Arthur Larkin had asked Marshall whether he could kick a field goal that long under such poor conditions, and Marshall said, “If we can get past the center of the field I think I’ll try it.” After they crossed midfield, Bobby dropped back “on a wet slippery field and everything was against me,” as he said later. The Gopher line held strong and “gave me a little time.” With Larkin holding, Marshall put the ball squarely through the uprights for a four-point field goal, giving the Gophers the lead. Eckersall “threw up his hands in despair.” The kick was “truly remarkable,” with the field muddy and the ball soaking wet, leading a Minneapolis reporter to write, “No Minnesota football player ever performed more beautifully for the Gopher institution than did Bob Marshall when he made his place kick.” The front-page headline in the *Minneapolis Tribune* read: “Bob Marshall Saves Day By Place-Kicking Goal.”¹⁶

Chicago scored late in the game on a safety but Minnesota won, 4–2. Fans carried Marshall, Larkin, and the other “Gopher heroes” off the field.¹⁷

Marshall was a Minnesota hero, but it appeared that his color made him a target of the Chicago team after the game. Players claimed that Bobby had played “rough ball,” and one of the referees reportedly told the other officials during the game that Marshall “should be removed from the field” for “using rough tactics repeatedly.” The other officials, however, had objected to this charge. Coach Stagg made no protests, saying, “It was Minnesota’s game fairly and squarely.”¹⁸

So it was that Bobby Marshall established himself as a football legend. During his college career he gained sev-

eral honors: In 1906 he was a unanimous selection on the All-Western team, as picked by Chicago writers. A Minneapolis sportswriter named him “the fastest end on the gridiron” for 1905 and 1906. Walter Camp selected Marshall as a second-team All-American end in both 1905 and 1906, making him the second African American ever to gain such an honor. Even so, in 1905 the *Minnesota Daily* called Camp’s list a “farce” and a “travesty” because Marshall was not on the first team.¹⁹

Those who witnessed Marshall in action were impressed by his style. Bobby played in the “bone grinding” mass-formation era, called “old style” football. He was the master of the “flying tackle,” in which he would “sail through the air, as though gravity had not been invented” into the mass formation of the opponent, causing the interference to crumble. He would skid along on his chest “with his heels still in the air as gracefully as an airplane coming to earth.” Those who knew the era best judged Marshall the “most gifted Minnesota football player” in the early days of Gopher football.²⁰

The all-around athlete was also a member of the 1907 championship University of Minnesota baseball team, playing first base the year it won a conference title, defeated the University of Chicago twice, and beat the University of Notre Dame. In addition, he won a letter in track (probably in 1907). When talk had circulated about starting a university hockey team in 1905, Marshall was listed as a prime candidate.²¹

The talented Marshall apparently got much the same treatment as other players on the football team. In 1905, when all the “M” men attended a play, Bobby was there. When the team was photographed and lampooned in the *Minnesota Daily*, Bobby was kidded like the rest. He fit well into the University of Minnesota partly because he was “so fair” [skinned] that he could get by in white society. Yet he faced discrimination on and off the field. He was kicked out of a game against Carlisle Indian School in 1906. Marshall said that his opponents “went after me several times when I was either out of bounds or down.” In the play before he was ejected, he claimed that the left

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA BALL TEAM OF 1907



Marshall (standing, second from left) and teammates, *Minneapolis Journal*, June 16, 1907

end “jumped on me and slugged me, and I pushed him away.” The other player was also ejected.²²

The “outstanding athlete” was also known as an “outstanding student,” but graduation in the spring of 1907 presented a major crossroad in his life. Although he had chosen law as his profession, other opportunities beckoned. Hints of this tension appeared at a testimonial dinner for Marshall after his last football season. The leading lights of the Twin Cities black community—including all of the lawyers—had attended. Attorney Fredrick L. McGhee, a leader in the Afro-American Council and a founder of the Niagara Movement and the N.A.A.C.P., addressed the topic “What Next?” Attorney William R. Morris spoke about “Afro-American Athletes.” The problem for Marshall was that there was a limited amount of business available to African American lawyers in Minnesota. Black clients were few, and whites mostly preferred white attorneys. Nevertheless, the 1908 Minneapolis city directory listed him as a lawyer with an office in the city’s Metropolitan Life Building.²³

Sport, on the other hand, offered several options and apparently led Marshall to divide his time between law and athletics. Beginning in 1907, he played baseball in summer, football in fall, and hockey in winter. That autumn he joined Sig Harris and two others as third assistant coach for the U of M team. This was a first for an African American and for the university. He also coached the freshmen, supervised by Williams. In addition, he coached and quarterbacked the Deans, Minne-

apolis’s semi-professional football team, to the independent pro championship in Minnesota.²⁴

At the same time, Marshall also became the first black high-school coach in Minnesota at his alma mater, Minneapolis Central. After Minneapolis North High School won the city championship in 1907, however, Central hired George “Punk” Webster, an ex-tackle at the U of M, as head coach for 1908. Marshall nevertheless helped prepare the 1908 Central team before the “big games of the year.”²⁵

The 1909 season brought a breakthrough, when Parker College in Winnebago, Minnesota, hired Marshall as its head football coach, making him the first African American head coach in college history. Founded by the Free Baptist denomination, Parker had high hopes that Marshall would give the team the “best coaching our boys have ever had.” He worked the young men—all white—into shape, and the “football enthusiasm and loyalty were never better.” The highlight of the season came when Parker played St. Thomas College to a 6–6 tie.²⁶ Although he had some success, Marshall’s college coaching ended after that season, probably because he chose to devote himself to playing and to developing a law career.



Sig Harris, Marshall's friend, teammate, and colleague

Parker College in Winnebago, about 1910



THE PLAYERS BECAME BASEBALL'S VAGABONDS, BOUND BY LOVE OF THE GAME AND BY RACIAL SEGREGATION.

Immediately after graduating, Marshall also got a taste of professional—albeit segregated—baseball. In May 1907 he filled in during one game for the regular catcher on a newly formed black team, the St. Paul Colored Gophers. The team went on to win 92 games that year, losing only 14 and capturing the state championship “by a wide margin.” The Colored Gophers quickly became “one of the important Afro-American enterprises” in St. Paul—a point of racial pride, according to *The Appeal*, the city’s black newspaper. Achieving success in baseball against white teams could help fight the “negative images of black inferiority.”²⁷

Professional baseball had become segregated by 1898, forcing black athletes to play wherever they could. From 1899 to 1920, a period known as the independent era, those positions were on black professional teams in cities across the northern tier of the U.S. Teams frequently folded, and the players became baseball’s vagabonds, bound by love of the game and by racial segregation. The teams played each other on occasion and for championship titles but depended mainly upon touring the countryside, taking on any white semi-pro town team that dared face them. There were rare games against barnstorming white major- and minor-league teams that hoped to get large ticket sales from fans curious about black-and-white contests. The Colored Gophers were typical of this era in their quick rise to prominence and their premature dissolution.²⁸

In 1908 the Minneapolis black community responded to the success of the Colored Gophers by fielding its own baseball team. Kidd F. Mitchell, the black proprietor of a saloon in the Keystone Hotel, recruited top talent from other cities to fill the roster of his Minneapolis Keystones. He lured pitchers George Walter Ball and Charles Jessup to the Mill City from the Chicago Leland Giants, third baseman William Binga from the Philadelphia Giants, and local hero Bobby Marshall. The Keystones were said to be the best team that “money could secure.” Marshall played right field, helped with catching and first base, and pitched 11 games, winning 10.²⁹

The Keystones had great year in 1908, reportedly winning 88 games and losing 19, with two ties. But the Colored Gophers had an even better season, winning 116 games and losing just 21. The two teams competed head-to-head in five games that summer to decide the “championship of the Twin Cities,” and—since the black teams had defeated the best of the area’s white teams—the semi-professional championship of Minnesota. All the major Twin Cities newspapers publicized the contests and thus helped draw a mixed crowd to the games. Serious betting in both cities intensified interest.³⁰

It took all five games before the Gophers claimed the championship and supremacy over the Keystones with a 6–0 victory.³¹ The tone had been set for the rivalry, with the Gophers dominant on the field and in the public eye for the coming three years.

The next season, the Colored Gophers’ management raided the roster of the Minneapolis team, signing Bobby Marshall as their major publicity coup. Marshall became the most popular Gopher because he always seemed to propel his team to triumph. He was a tremendous first baseman, noted for his long “reach, fielding ability, and fearlessness”; “nothing but a locomotive” could hurt him in a collision near the bag. He was greatly admired, too, for his “wonderful fielding stunts.” He was called “the Idol of the Gridiron, the Star of the Diamond, the Pet of the Lady Fans.” The Gophers had their best year in 1909. Part of their glory came in a five-game match-up against the Chicago Leland Giants, played for “the championship of the country.” All the games took place at Downtown Park in St. Paul, giving the Gophers a home-field advantage.³²

Baseball glove, about 1910





The champion St. Paul Colored Gophers, posed after beating a Hibbing team, 1909. Marshall stands at far right.

The St. Paul team needed every advantage it could get against the Leland Giants, which had one of the best pitching staffs in black baseball. The first game went into extra innings after the Giants tied the score in the ninth. It looked bad for the Gophers when Chicago got a run in the top of the eleventh inning, and even worse when Gopher Eugene Milliner grounded out to lead off the bottom of the eleventh. But William Binga singled, Rat Johnson doubled, and then Bobby Marshall came to the plate. The tall first baseman swung at the first pitch and sent the ball high into the air in center field. It soared over the wall, over the cigar sign, and into the “lots on the other side of the street.” Marshall got only one hit that day, but it won the game. The mammoth homerun, in the “dead ball” period, became another part of the Marshall legend. The Gophers went on to win the cliffhanger series, clinching the championship of black baseball for 1909.³³

Marshall ascended to the pinnacle of black baseball in 1909 and 1910. Rube Foster, who later founded the Negro Leagues, liked the first baseman’s talent and competitiveness and asked Marshall and teammate Felix Wallace to join his Chicago Leland Giants in 1909 after the Gophers’ season had ended. In Chicago, Marshall played in the

first of a three-game black-versus-white series against the Chicago Cubs. It was the best pay he ever got for playing baseball—\$50 per game (nonpitchers typically got \$20 per game in 1909). The Cubs, winners of 100 games and runners-up in the National League that year, had already beaten the Chicago White Sox for the championship of the Windy City and had a strong line-up featuring the double-play combination of Joe Tinker to Johnny Evers to Frank Chance. Unfortunately, Marshall dropped the ball twice for two errors to give the Cubs a big inning, and the Cubs won the first game, 4–1. The Minnesotan sat out the final two games. Had he not committed those two errors, he might have remained in the very top echelon of that era’s black baseball.³⁴

Marshall then witnessed the ruthlessness of the color line in baseball as game two played out. The Cubs faced the masterful hurling of Rube Foster and were losing, 5–2, entering the ninth inning. Foster began to tire, and the Cubs tied the game. With runners on first and third and two outs, Foster went to the dugout for a relief pitcher. He asked the umpire for the official score, and the umpire objected to this delay. The Cubs also objected, and a group of Leland Giants and Cubs gathered around

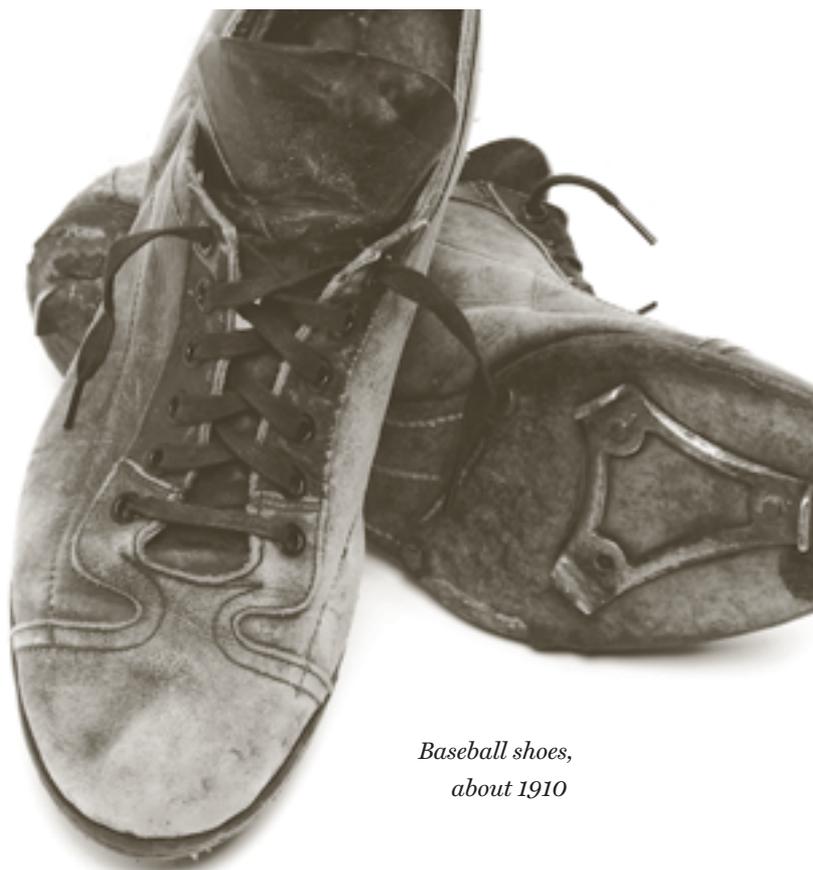
the umpire in “conversation.” At that time, the runner on third stole home, with Cubs players on the field in the way of a possible throw home. The umpire ruled that time had not been called and the runner was safe. The Cubs left the field with a 6–5 victory. Foster objected vociferously, but the umpire let the run stand. The Cubs won the last game, 1–0. Burned by the thought that the white team had to cheat to defeat him, Foster wanted a rematch, but the Cubs refused, having too much to lose and nothing to gain.³⁵

Marshall began the 1910 season with a new team, the Chicago Giants, a rival to the Leland Giants. The Colored Gophers were in deep financial difficulty, making it unclear whether they could continue to operate. Marshall went on the Giants’ road trip in April and May, traveling through the Deep South to the Gulf of Mexico and back to Chicago. His pay was \$40 a week, plus expenses. He then rejoined the Colored Gophers in early June, returning, one could speculate, to cultivate his law practice. But the team proved to be weaker than in earlier years. It could still beat local white teams, but the Chicago Giants dominated the Colored Gophers in their series, four games to one.³⁶

**MARSHALL WAS,
UNDOUBTEDLY, THE FIRST
BLACK QUARTERBACK
AT THE SEMI-PROFESSIONAL
LEVEL IN THE U.S.**

Winning or losing, Marshall had established a pattern in his life, playing professional baseball in the summer, and, beginning in 1907, playing as the only black man in Minnesota’s semi-professional football scene each fall. He helped organize the Sunday Football League of Minnesota, made up of six of the state’s strongest semi-pro teams: St. Paul’s National Guards, the Stillwater Football Team, the Deephaven Beavers, the Ramblers and the Deans from Minneapolis, and the New Prague Seals. The Deans were known as “Bob Marshall’s team,” since he coached and quarterbacked it. The league promised to promote “clean football” and furnished “expert” referees for the games, which culminated in a Thanksgiving Day championship match. The teams shared ticket revenues, money that went to each club and then to the individual players after expenses had been paid.³⁷

Playing for the Deans, Marshall was, undoubtedly,



*Baseball shoes,
about 1910*

the first black quarterback at the semi-professional level (probably at *any* level) in the U.S. Because of this, the New Prague team at first refused to play the Deans, but the team stood up for Marshall. New Prague relented—and lost, 6–5. Marshall was the dominant running, kicking, punting, and passing force on a team made up of several former University of Minnesota players, a couple of St. Thomas men, and “a bunch of the best [former] High School players in Minneapolis.”³⁸ In Marshall’s three seasons with the Deans, 1907 to 1909, the team became Champions of Minnesota, beating all local rivals.

In 1908, two years after Minnesota had defeated the University of Chicago on a soggy field, Marshall arranged a meeting of the Deans, by now made up mostly of ex-University of Minnesota players, with an all-star semi-professional team, the Chicago Eckersalls, assistant coached and quarterbacked by the great Walter Eckersall. Originally just a tryout, the game became a rematch of the 1906 contest, only this time Eckersall was facing a black quarterback. Held on Thanksgiving Day, it started a traditional Turkey Day match-up against out-of-state semi-pro teams. The Eckersalls managed only to tie the game, 4–4, in the last few minutes. Even though a wet, cold day limited chances for forward passes, the Minneapolis team had been “individually and collectively superior to the visitors,” according to Minneapolis sportswriter W. F. Allen. (Marshall kicked a 35-yard 4-point field goal; Eckersall kicked one of 20 yards). Much of the Deans’ success was

attributed to Bobby Marshall, who could throw the football “for greater distances and with better precision than any man” in Minnesota in that era.³⁹

In winter, Marshall played semi-pro hockey with several of the best teams in Minneapolis, beginning in 1907. The next year when his team, the Wanderers, won the Burton Cup as the hockey champions of Minneapolis, a local newspaper rated Marshall as “one of the best players in the city.” He played a position called cover point, and his “sweeping stroke and long reach” made him “very effective in defense work.” Although well regarded for his goal-scoring talents, he was sometimes cited for his “rough playing.” Marshall became the first African American semi-professional hockey player in the United States, but gave it up after 1909 after suffering the only major injury of his whole sports career—a badly sprained ankle.⁴⁰

By 1910 Marshall, now 30 years old, again had to decide which road to take. He could build bridges between the worlds of white and black Minnesotans through his popularity and athletic prowess or he could be a professional attorney. Either way, in the parlance of his era, he might serve to “uplift the race.” Clearly, his success as an athlete and coach was hindering his chances for success as an attorney. In 1908 he had had his own law office next door to attorney William H. H. Franklin, another black Class of ’07 graduate from the University of Minnesota. By early 1910 Marshall had no office and carried on any legal work from his father’s house. This part-time status changed by September 1910, when he turned away from coaching and joined with Otto A. Pitzke and Franklin in Franklin, Pitzke, and Marshall. The firm dealt in the general practice of law and also collections, real estate, insurance, and personal-injury cases. Later, perhaps early in 1911, he did some legal work with Nash and Armstrong, a firm of well-known white attorneys.⁴¹

He did not forsake sports, however. In 1911, when the St. Paul Colored Gophers failed to field a team, Marshall reorganized the outfit, renaming it the Twin City Gophers



Marshall, standing at right, with the Eagles hockey team managed by Carl F. Struck, 1907

and arranging its schedule from his law office. He went to Chicago to sign players from the roster of the Leland Giants, garnering the services of some good, but not great, athletes. Still plagued by financial problems, the Gophers continued to struggle. After the Alexandria team swept a four-game series, a local sportswriter commented, “The Colored Gophers are not playing as classy ball as they did two or three years ago.”⁴²

The year 1911 was the last for the team. It was also the last year that Bobby Marshall attempted to practice law. By then, it was clear that attorney Franklin had a firm hold on the position of black lawyer in the Twin Cities. Marshall’s chance had passed him by, supplanted by the “call of the pigskin and the lure of the diamond,” as *The Appeal* put it. Marshall himself said, “I love games of all kinds from tennis to football. Anything to be fighting to

win a game. It's what I live on." For more tangible sustenance, he accepted a permanent, stable (if unglamorous) position as a grain inspector for the State of Minnesota in September 1911. A civil-service position was a good job, especially in the days when African Americans were not very welcome in any occupation and most black men worked as laborers, railway porters, barbers, or janitors. As his job allowed time off only on the weekends and holidays, his days of long-distance touring ended. Still, he played baseball every summer, albeit for teams of variable quality, football in the fall, and, to stay fit, pick-up hockey games in winter.⁴³

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OF STRENGTH AND
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UPON LEVERAGE AND
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ACROSS THE LINE.**

When the 1912 baseball season began, captain Bobby Marshall led a new team onto the Twin Cities ball diamonds: the Hennepin Clothing Company's "colored team," known as the Hennepins. Even though the team was not as good as the Colored Gophers, it was outfitted in "first class style."⁴⁴

In football, Marshall became "the shining light," as the *Minneapolis Journal* proclaimed, for the Minneapolis Marines from 1910 to 1917, the best semi-professional team in the Twin Cities. No longer young enough to quarterback, he excelled at the end position, his old U of M spot. He played with a rare combination of strength and craftiness, depending upon leverage and experience to handle his opponents across the line.⁴⁵

Marshall's strong play and reputation got him a place on the Rock Island Independent pro football team, along with several other Marines players, for the 1917, 1918, and 1919 seasons. Journeying by train to the weekend games, Marshall believed that these were "his three toughest seasons," partly because of the travel and partly because of the quality of the opponents. In 1919 he gained a place on the All-American Professional team as an end.⁴⁶

Marshall played for a succession of teams through the 1920s. He joined either the Hibbing or the Iron-

wood, Michigan, team—perhaps both—in 1920. The next year he played for a new professional team, the Minneapolis Liberties, then in its second season. He was a pioneering force again, serving as an assistant coach as well as playing end. Even at age 41, opponents hailed him as a man who still played "a heap of classy football." In 1923 and 1924 he returned to the Minneapolis Marines, now a member of the American Professional Football Association (forerunner of the National Football League). In 1925 Marshall played left end for the Duluth Kelleys of the National Football League. In its last year of operation, the team did not do well against other NFL squads yet won the professional championship of Minnesota.⁴⁷

Playing end required a great deal of endurance and strength. Sportswriter Ed Shave, who officiated at many of the early professional grid battles, said that most of the games were "rugged physical battles" and that Marshall "had to take a great deal of physical punishment." Those who knew Marshall said that he always gave twice the punishment he absorbed, and the fact that he was an experienced boxer gave opponents second thoughts about jumping on him. Shave testified, "Never once in any of those games did he ever protest, never complained, never retaliated" because he was "one of the great gentleman athletes of all time." His experience allowed him to play a smarter game as he got older. As he said in 1924, "I am as tough as I ever was. . . . Maybe I can't run as fast as I could, but I know where I am going better and I get to the same places I used to." He was famed for being able to draw opponents into trap plays. According to veteran Minneapolis sportswriter Dick Cullum, Marshall was still "one of the most respected ends" in the professional game as he neared his fiftieth birthday.⁴⁸

The old professional was wise. His game preparations from 1919 onward included wrapping a padded metal washboard around his midsection to protect his ribs and inflict pain on the opponent who hit him there (an early, legal version of the "flak" jackets that now protect a quarterback's ribs). It took about an hour for the innovative veteran to get his "washboard armor" and other equipment in place.⁴⁹

As Marshall grew older, his strengths remained impressive enough to allow him to play for teams in need of a veteran. He eventually moved to the tackle position, which required less speed, playing in about 1926 or 1927 for Ironwood. Around 1930, according to his friend Anthony B. Cassius, Marshall played for a team in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. Finally, he joined Kenneth Haycraft's

All-Stars in 1934 and 1936. As he said, he “could still run with them,” noting that “after 35 years I should know how to handle the job.” At the age of 56, he put his spikes on the shelf in 1936 after helping the All-Stars defeat an Ironwood team 36–0.⁵⁰

Marshall had continued to play baseball, as well, usually with a Twin Cities black semi-pro team. Occasionally, he joined a team elsewhere in Minnesota or North Dakota that was willing to pay him 20 or 30 dollars a game. He was at second base and centerfield for the semi-pro St. Cloud Pretzels in 1913 and 1914. The next year, Cokato engaged him to help fill the grandstand at their little Westside ballpark. Marshall rode his motorcycle to Cokato to play with paid pros such as “Rube” Ursella (pro football player and ex-Gopher who had often played with and against Marshall). In 1919 he was on the Mott and Regent teams in North Dakota. In 1921 he played a number of games with the Estevan, Saskatchewan, team with a .450 batting average. Evidently, Marshall had arranged for some time off from his government job.⁵¹

In 1922 Marshall was the captain and a leading player of the Askin and Marine Colored Red Sox team, which existed from about 1921 to 1923 in Minneapolis. Rube Foster wanted to bring the Twin Cities into his Negro

Leagues, founded in 1920, and sought out Marshall and the Colored Red Sox. Negotiations were not fruitful, however, mainly for financial reasons—transportation costs were too high—and partly because the team was backed by a white businessman, W. R. McKinnon, owner of the Askin and Marine clothing company. Hence, Marshall and his team played far from the national spotlight of the Negro Leagues.⁵²

In 1923, alternating among first base, catching, and second base for the St. Paul Uptown Sanitary semi-professional team, Marshall became a teammate of catcher Lee Davis, another main cog of black baseball in the Twin Cities. The team would get together at Davis’s house in Minneapolis and carpool to games in outlying towns. In 1925 Marshall was the first sacker for Potts Motor Company. By 1932 he was called the “grand old man” at first base for the St. Paul Monarchs, still going strong. As late as 1940, when he was 60 years old, he was the catcher on a grain-commission baseball team, playing just for enjoyment.⁵³

Bobby earned some pay on the weekends, but he often said, “We didn’t make a lot of money, but we sure had a lot of fun.” Occasionally former teammates Sig Harris and Fred Chicken would gather at Marshall’s house. They would sing old songs—not very well. He played plenty of poker with his buddies, too.⁵⁴

Askin and Marine Colored Red Sox at Dassel, early 1920s; Captain Marshall sits in back row, third from right.



THE LIFE-LONG ATHELETE ALWAYS PLAYED TO WIN.

Not much is known about Marshall's personal life.

In 1918, at age 38, he married Irene Knott, a beautiful 18-year-old. Her family had originated in the South but had migrated to Montana, where she and Bobby met. His extensive touring had, earlier, hindered his ability to develop a family life but eventually helped him find his wife and settle down in Minneapolis. The couple had four children—Robert Jr., William, Donald, and Bette.⁵⁵

Perhaps more important than his on-the-field accomplishments were his contributions to the people of the Twin Cities. Marshall's character and concern for those around him inspired great devotion. An old Central High teammate, Walter C. Robb, wrote that Marshall was "really [like] one of my older brothers." Sig Harris called Marshall a "true friend."⁵⁶

Those who knew him well lauded his contributions to local life. James S. Griffin, St. Paul's deputy police chief, called him "the outstanding man of the Minneapolis African American community." Civil rights pioneer Harry Davis said he was the "image, the mentor, and the star" of Minnesota's African American community. Sportswriter Bill Hengen believed Marshall was a "great man because he spent so much of his time sharing his knowledge with younger people." In the 1930s Marshall helped coach youngsters in football and boxing at the Phyllis Wheatley House in Minneapolis and was involved with the Golden Gloves boxing program. He also officiated at youth football games.⁵⁷

Marshall believed in being a good role model. For example, he delivered a speech to the track club at the Phyllis Wheatley House in 1926 on "good sportsmanship and clean living." In 1933 and 1935 he gave inspirational talks to Twin Cities high-school football players for the Sterling Club, an African American group, and he was honored at a Big Brothers banquet in 1936. Marshall also showed a religious side as a longstanding member of St. Peter's AME Church in Minneapolis.⁵⁸

The life-long athlete always played to win, even when playing against the children he coached. This once caused his daughter Bette to ask: "Daddy, why don't you let them win sometimes?" He replied: "I can't let them. It would get me out of practice."⁵⁹

When Marshall retired from his state job in 1950, after 39 years of service, the local union gave him a

testimonial dinner. Among the list of 600 friends that attended were some impressive people, a tribute to Marshall's sports career, including the main speaker, Governor Luther W. Youngdahl, Gopher coaching great Bernie Bierman, and old friend Sig Harris.⁶⁰

In his last years of his life, Marshall began to suffer from Alzheimer's disease. His excellent health deteriorated, and he was hospitalized for two weeks before he passed away in 1958, at the age of 78. The newspaper tributes by then were short, devoid of the recognition due to one of the state's greatest athletes, as if the new generation of writers had lost some of the collective Minnesota memory.⁶¹

In 1950 long-time Minneapolis sportswriter Ed Shave declared that Marshall "made a very definite lasting contribution to athletics for the entire nation." Yet only the accomplishments of his college football career gained him national recognition. Sportswriter Dick Cullum selected him as an end on his "All-Time Gophers" team in 1949, and another sportswriter, Dick Gordon, believed that Marshall "may well have been the best end in Gopher history." In 1971, long after he died, he was honored with membership in the National Football Foundation's Hall of Fame for his outstanding college career. A full 20 years after that, the University of Minnesota included Marshall in its M Club Hall of Fame as a member of the "pioneer group," alongside Bronko Nagurski. Had Marshall been white, he would have been remembered in the same terms as Nagurski.⁶²



Pioneer Marshall (first row, right) and the University of Minnesota 1904 football team

Interest in the history of black baseball in America began to flourish in the 1970s when players such as Satchel Paige were finally inducted into Baseball's Hall of Fame; the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) was founded; and Robert Peterson published his groundbreaking book about the Negro Leagues, *Only the Ball Was White*. The establishment of a Negro Leagues Museum in Kansas City in 1991 furthered public awareness, as did Ken Burns's classic 1994 documentary, *Baseball*, with its emphasis on "Shadow Ball" played by African Americans. The commemoration in 1997 of the fiftieth anniversary of Jackie Robinson's breaking of the color line in major-league baseball served to stimulate even greater interest. SABR members in Minnesota became more aware of Bobby Marshall through the efforts of Minnesotans Fred P. Buckland and Stew Thornley.

Marshall's career coincided with the rise of sports in the 1890s as a way for city men to prove their manhood. Whites strove to live the "strenuous life" as advocated by Theodore Roosevelt. African Americans like Marshall could show that they, too, were manly and truly American by mastering the national pastime—baseball. Marshall faced the "life of strife," as Roosevelt preached, and did his "duty well and manfully" on the field, at home, and in his state.⁶³

But Marshall's story was largely lost in the sweep of history. He received little mention in the annals of black baseball in America, despite playing for two of the best teams of his era: the Chicago Leland Giants and the St. Paul Colored Gophers. Although unable to bring a Negro

League franchise to Minnesota, Marshall had struggled as hard as any other to gain recognition for black baseball in his region. He helped integrate the sport in Minnesota by playing on a number of the state's white teams.⁶⁴

Newspaper coverage of his career was extremely uneven. From 1907 to 1909 the Twin Cities white press, particularly sportswriters I. J. Hentschell and Frank E. Force of the *Minneapolis Tribune*, actively promoted black teams as a part of independent baseball. But in 1910 the coverage diminished, and it soon fell away to little or nothing. The African American press lacked resources to cover sports events and published only brief listings. Major newspapers turned to stories about national figures, especially in the 1920s with the rise of a sports culture and such colorful heroes as Babe Ruth. Black athletes in Minnesota played in obscurity outside of formal leagues.

In reflecting upon the life of Bobby Marshall, it might be useful to compare him to his favorite bat. Marshall used a very heavy bat, which he kept into his seventies, long after his playing career was over. He preserved it by painting it after every season of use, making it as hard as iron after many years. Marshall no doubt developed a hard exterior to protect himself from hostile stares, gestures, and words at various times in his life, but underneath it all was the fine-grained wood of the gentleman, father, and sportsman who became an institution in Minnesota's African American community.⁶⁵ □

Notes

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1. *Fargo Forum*, June 21, 1909, p. 3; *Long Prairie Leader*, June 29, 1909, p. 1; *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, July 24, 1910, sec. 4, p. 5; George A. Barton to W. K. Jennings, Mar. 14, 1950, p. 1, and unidentified article by a Twin Cities sportswriter, both in Bobby Marshall Scrapbook, in possession of Bette Session (Marshall's daughter), Southfield, MI.

2. *Star-Tribune*, Dec. 25, 1999, p. S7, S12.

3. John O. Holzhueter, "Ezekiel Gillespie, Lost and Found," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 60 (Spring 1977): 179, 180, 183.

4. "If Bobby Marshall Took a Notion to Be King," *Minneapolis Journal*, Jan. 1924, Walter C. Robb to W. K. Jennings, Mar. 1950, p. 1, J. M. Howe to Bobby Marshall, Mar. 29, 1950, p. 1, Harris speech, in "Marshall Testimonial Dinner, Mar. 31, 1950," transcript, p. 10, and "Bob Marshall a Football Star for 17 Years," *Minneapolis Daily News*, Apr. 1920—all in Marshall scrapbook; *Minneapolis City Directory, 1890–91*, p. 842, 1900, p. 926; United States, *Census, 1900, Population*, Minneapolis, enumeration district 61, sheet 13B, microfilm, Minnesota Historical Society Library.

5. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Sept. 16, 1900, p. 8. Marshall may not have started high school immediately after grade 8 and thus

was still in school at age 19 or 20.

6. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 25, 1900, p. 2, Nov. 30, 1900, p. 9, Nov. 2, 1901, p. 3; *Minneapolis Journal*, Oct. 19, 1901, p. 8.

7. "Football Star for 17 Years," and Bill Hengen, "Marshall Now Grid Immortal," *Minneapolis Star*, 1971, both in Marshall scrapbook.

8. Obituary, *The Appeal* (St. Paul), Mar. 3, 1900, p. 3; *Minneapolis City Directory, 1890–91*, p. 842, 1900, p. 926, and 1905, p. 1178, 1179.

9. *Minnesota Daily*, Dec. 20, 1905, p. 8.

10. Marshall must have worked for a year after high-school graduation. *Minnesota Daily*, Sept. 8, 1903, p. 4; "Football Star for 17 Years," "My Greatest Thrill in Football," *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 1, 1932, and Joe Hendrickson, "Bobby's Day of Memory," ca. 1950—all in Marshall scrapbook. Marshall had played earlier in 1903

against lesser teams; *Minnesota Daily*, Sept. 22, Sept. 29, 1903, both p. 1; *Minneapolis Tribune*, Oct. 25, 1903, p. 18.

11. "Marshall Now Grid Immortal," Marshall scrapbook; *The History of Minnesota Football* (Minneapolis: General Alumni Association of the University of Minnesota, 1928), 87–90; *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 1, 1903, p. 18, 26.

After the game, a custodian, Oscar Munson, discovered that Michigan coach Fielding Yost had forgotten the team's brown water jug, and he brought it to Dr. Louis J. Cooke of the athletic staff, saying in his Swedish accent, "Look, Doc, Jost left his Yug." When Coach Yost asked for the jug's return, Cooke told everyone his reply: "Well, if he wants it back, let him come and win it." And ever after, the winner of the game kept the Little Brown Jug. See *Minneapolis Tribune*, Oct. 18, 1971, p. 3C; "Mr. Minnesota Dies," *Alumni News* (University of Minnesota), Dec. 1964, p. 21.

12. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Oct. 23, 1904, p. 33, 36; *History of Minnesota Football*, 92–98.

13. *History of Minnesota Football*, 98–102; *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 8, 1906, p. 10.

14. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 8, 1906, p. 10, Nov. 11, 1906, p. 1; *History of Minnesota Football*, 102–06.

15. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 11, 1906, p. 12.

16. Marshall speech, "Marshall Testimonial Dinner," Mar. 31, 1950, transcript, p. 28, Marshall scrapbook; *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 11, 1906, p. 1, 2.

17. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 11, 1906, p. 26.

18. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 11, 1906, p. 12, Nov. 12, 1906, p. 3.

19. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 4, sports sec., p. 4, Nov. 25, sports sec., p. 39, Nov. 26, p. 3—all 1906; Ocania Chalk, *Black College Sport* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1976), 153; *Minnesota Daily*, Jan. 6, 1905, p. 1. The first black All-American was William Henry Lewis of Harvard in 1892; Chalk, *Black College Sport*, 147.

20. "Bob Marshall is Perennial Star of the Gridiron," *Minneapolis Journal*, Dec. 19, 1920, Marshall scrapbook; *Minneapolis Tribune*, Aug. 28, 1949, p. 5S.

21. *Minneapolis Journal*, May 25, p. 3, May 31, p. 14, June 1, p. 5—all 1907; *Minnesota Daily*, Dec. 13, 1905, p. 1; "Football Star for 17 Years" and "Marshall Now Grid Immortal," Marshall scrapbook. Marshall also played some baseball in 1906; there was no team in 1905. *Minnesota Daily*, Dec. 20, 1905, p. 9, Apr. 25, 1906, p. 1.

22. *Minnesota Daily*, Jan. 6, 1905, p. 1, Dec. 20, 1905, p. 6; Harry Davis, interview by author, Minneapolis, Aug. 2, 1999, notes in author's possession ("fair"); *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 18, 1906, sports sec., p. 2.

23. *Minnesota Daily*, Sept. 18, 1906,

p. 1, Nov. 27, 1906, p. 1; *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 25, 1906, sports sec., p. 38; Davis interview ("outstanding"); *Appeal*, Jan. 19, 1907, p. 3. On opportunities for lawyers, see Steven R. Hoffbeck, "Victories Yet To Win: Charles W. Scrutchin, Bemidji's Black Activist Attorney," *Minnesota History* 55 (Summer 1996): 61. University of Minnesota records do not clearly show that a degree was granted, but the newspapers cited above reported a Spring 1907 graduation date. An obituary stated that Marshall graduated with a law degree; unidentified Twin Cities African American newspaper clipping, Marshall scrapbook.

24. *Minneapolis Journal*, May 16, 1907, p. 10; *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, Sept. 22, 1907, sec. 4, p. 1; *Minnesota Daily*, May 22, p. 1, Sept. 21, p. 2, Oct. 22, p. 1—all 1907; *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 4, p. 3, Nov. 18, p. 3, Nov. 27, p. 10—all 1907.

25. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 10, 1907, sports sec., p. 4, Sept. 6, 1908, sports sec., p. 3. Marshall also served as a roller-skating instructor at a new rink in South Minneapolis in Fall 1908; *Appeal*, Oct. 10, 1908, p. 3.

26. *Winnebago City Press-News*, Sept. 25, 1909, p. 1, Nov. 20, 1909, p. 8; *Minneapolis Tribune*, Sept. 24, 1909, p. 11; *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, Nov. 14, 1909, sports sec., p. 1. Parker College closed in 1924; *Ten Decades of Endeavor* (Winnebago, MN: Centennial Souvenir, 1956), 29–30.

27. *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, May 20, 1907, p. 3; *Fargo Forum & Daily Republican*, June 19, 1909, p. 15; *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, June 25, 1909, p. 1; *Long Prairie Leader*, June 16, 1909, p. 1; *Appeal*, May 30, 1908, p. 3. On fighting stereotypes, see David K. Wiggins, *Glory Bound: Black Athletes in a White World* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 200.

28. Bruce Chadwick, *When the Game Was Black and White: The Illustrated History of the Negro Leagues* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1992), 9, 23; *Minneapolis Tribune*, Apr. 26, 1908, sports sec., p. 4.

29. *Minneapolis City Directory*, 1908, p. 1093; *Minneapolis Tribune*, sports sec.: Apr. 12, p. 3, May 3, p. 4, June 7, p. 4—all 1908; "Football Star for 17 Years," Marshall scrapbook. On Binga, see Jerry Malloy, ed., *Sol White's History of Colored Baseball, With Other Documents On The Early Black Game, 1886–1936* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 120, 121; Dick Clark and Larry Lester, eds., *The Negro Leagues Book* (Cleveland: Society of American Baseball Research, 1994), 172.

30. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Oct. 4, 1908, sports sec., p. 4, Oct. 5, 1908, p. 3 (reporting another loss), Aug. 30, 1909, sports sec., p. 4. Colored Gophers record listed in numerous newspapers as the team traveled; see, for example, *Fargo Forum & Daily Republican*, June 19, 1909, p. 15.

31. *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, Sept. 23, 1908, p. 6.



Baseball players, Phyllis Wheatley House, about 1925

32. *Twin City Star* (Minneapolis), July 21, 1910, p. 1, 4; *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 11, 1909, p. 22, July 18, 1909, sports sec., p. 3.

33. *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 22, 1909, p. 12. *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 27, 1909, p. 8, says the homerun was over the centerfield fence; a better account is in *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, July 27, 1909, p. 7. Some historians refer to the Gophers as the Western Champions, but the team had beaten the best in the nation by defeating the Leland Giants.

34. *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 18, 1909, p. 11, Oct. 19, 1909, p. 8; Joe Hendrickson, "Sports Opinions," *Minneapolis Tribune*, Mar. 31, 1950, Marshall scrapbook; *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, Apr. 23, 1909, p. 1. One source noted that the pitcher's throw to Marshall was an error on the pitcher; *Chicago American*, Oct. 18, 1909, p. 1. Tinker played in the series against the Leland Giants, but Evers and Chance did not.

35. *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 22, 1909, p. 12, Oct. 23, 1909, p. 14.

36. "Sports Opinions," "Football Star for 17 Years," and *Chicago Defender*, Apr. 16, 1910—all in Marshall scrapbook; *St. Paul Dispatch*, Apr. 8, 1910, p. 18; *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, June 4, p. 8, 9, July 25, p. 6, July 26, p. 7, July 27, p. 7, July 28, p. 7, July 29, p. 8, Sept. 4, sec. 4, p. 2—all 1910.

37. *New Prague Times*, Oct. 10, 1907, p. 1, Nov. 26, 1908, p. 1; Frank E. Force, "Sporting Gossip of the Day," *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 26, 1908, p. 5.

38. *New Prague Times*, Nov. 7, 1907, p. 1; *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 4, p. 3, Nov. 18, p. 3, Nov. 27, p. 10, Nov. 29, p. 8—all 1907.

39. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 21, p. 17, Nov. 22, sports sec., p. 4, Nov. 27, p. 6—all 1908; I. J. Hentschell, "Doings of Independent Football," *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 1, 1908, sports sec., p. 4; Force, "Sporting Gossip," *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 26, 1908, p. 5.

40. *Minneapolis Journal*, Jan. 26, 1907, p. 5, Jan. 6, 1908, p. 13, Feb. 2, 1908, sports sec., p. 2, Mar. 15, 1908, sports sec., p. 2, Jan. 24, 1909, sports sec., p. 1. There is evidence that Marshall made an attempt at playing professional hockey in 1909, allegedly signing with the Hillsdale, Pennsylvania, club; "Football Star for 17 Years," Marshall scrapbook. This would make him the first African American professional hockey player in the U.S.

41. "Robert W. Marshall," and "William H. H. Franklin," *Appeal*, Oct. 25, 1913, p. 10; *Minneapolis City Directory, 1908*, p. 573, 1045; *1910*, p. 1158, 1994; *Twin City Star*, Sept. 16, 1910, p. 1.

42. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Apr. 12, 1911, p. 15, Apr. 16, 1911, sports sec., p. 3. A new president, Glover Shull, head of the Porters and Waiters Club in Minneapolis, gained control of the team, while Marshall served as manager. *St. Paul City Directory, 1911*, p. 1404, 1769, 2027; *Minneapolis City Directory, 1910*, p. 1416, 1574; *Twin City Star*, May 29, 1911, p. 1; *Alexandria Post-News*, June 29, 1911, p. 1.

43. *Appeal*, Oct. 25, 1913, p. 10; "If Bobby Marshall Took a Notion To Be King," Marshall scrapbook; *Twin City Star*, Sept. 9, 1911, p. 1; James Griffin, conversation with author, St. Paul, July 30, 1999, notes in author's possession; *St. Cloud Daily Times*, July 24, 1913, p. 4.

44. *Minneapolis Tribune*, sports sec.: Apr. 7, p. 2, Apr. 21, p. 3, June 2, p. 2—all 1912.

45. *Gopher Goalpost*, Oct. 30, 1971, p. 22; "Coburn's Column," *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 30, 1916, "Football Star for 17 Years," and "Notion To Be King"—all in Marshall scrapbook.

46. "Notion To Be King" and "Football Star for 17 Years," Marshall scrapbook. Sources do not agree on the years Marshall played for Rock Island but do concur that not much was happening in pro football in 1918, due to World War I. Keith McClellan, *The Sunday Game: At the Dawn of Profes-*

sional Football (Akron, OH: University of Akron Press, 1998), 281–82. "35 Years Not Enough, Marshall Thinks of Comeback," *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 14, 1936, Marshall scrapbook, says he was with Rock Island from 1919 to 1921, quoting a secondary source, and reports him saying that he played for Rock Island in 1916, 1917, and 1918.

47. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Oct. 9, sports sec., p. 3, Oct. 13, p. 13, Oct. 17, p. 10—all 1921; *Duluth Herald*, Oct. 17, 1921, p. 12 (quote), Sept. 28, 1925, p. 18, Oct. 19, 1925, p. 18; McClellan, *Sunday Game*, 282; "Notion To Be King," Marshall scrapbook.

48. Ed Shave to Bill Jennings, Mar. 28, 1950, p. 1, and "Notion To Be King," Marshall scrapbook; *Minneapolis Tribune*, Aug. 28, 1949, p. 5S.

49. Orin H. Mason, Marines and Ironwood teammate, to Bobby Marshall, Mar. 28, 1950, p. 1, and "Football Star for 17 years," both in Marshall scrapbook.

50. *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 14, 1936, "Marshall Now Grid Immortal," and "Sports Opinions"—all in Marshall scrapbook.

51. *St. Cloud Daily Times*, July 24, 1913, p. 4, Sept. 15, 1913, p. 4, June 22, 1914, p. 8; *Cokato Enterprise*, Mar. 16, 1950, and "Football Star for 17 Years," Marshall scrapbook; *Minneapolis Messenger*, July 2, p. 2, July 16, p. 2, Oct. 1, p. 2—all 1921.

52. *Minnesota Messenger* (Minneapolis), Sept. 30, 1922, p. 1, Mar. 10, 1923, p. 1. Listings in Brendan Henahan, comp., *Minnesota Black Newspaper Index*, show that the *National Advocate* (Minneapolis), June 23, 1922, p. 1, called the Red Sox the "best Black team in state." On McKinnon, see *Northwestern Bulletin* (St. Paul), June 16, 1923, p. 3.

53. *Northwestern Bulletin*, May 19, 1923, p. 4, May 26, 1923, p. 4, May 23, 1925, p. 3; *Minnesota Messenger*, Mar. 10, 1923, p. 1; Harry Davis (son of Lee Davis) interview; *Twin City Herald*, July 23, 1932, p. 4, Apr. 20, 1940, p. 1.

54. Bette Session, conversations with the author, Aug. 10, 1999, May 31, 2000, notes in author's possession; Session to the author, Sept. 3, 1999, p. 1.

55. Obituary clipping, Marshall scrapbook; Donald Marshall and Helen Marshall, telephone interview by author, Aug. 22, 2000, notes in author's possession; U.S., *Census, 1920, Population*, Minneapolis, enumeration district 102, sheet 12.

56. Robb to Jennings, Mar. 1950, p. 1,

and Sig Harris to Bobby Marshall, ca. Mar. 1950, p. 1, both Marshall scrapbook.

57. Griffin conversation; Davis interview; Session to author; clipping, *Minneapolis Star* or *Minneapolis Tribune*, 1940s, and "Marshall Now Grid Immortal," Marshall scrapbook; *Gopher Goalpost*, Oct. 30, 1971, p. 22; *Minneapolis Spokesman*, Nov. 20, 1936, p. 1.

58. *St. Paul Echo*, June 26, 1926, p. 3; *Twin City Herald*, Dec. 30, 1933, p. 1; *Minneapolis Spokesman*, Dec. 6, 1935, p. 1, Dec. 25, 1936, p. 1; Donald Marshall and Helen Marshall interview.

59. Session to author.

60. *Minnesota Public Employee*, Apr. 1950, Marshall scrapbook; "Robert Wells Marshall," in *Dictionary of American Negro Biography*, ed. Rayford W. Logan and Michael R. Winston (New York: Norton, 1982), 427.

61. Session conversation, Aug. 10, 1999; Davis interview; Donald Marshall and Helen Marshall interview; *Minneapolis Spokesman*, Aug. 29, 1958, p. 1; *Minneapolis Star*, Aug. 28, 1958, p. 1D; Aug. 29, 1958, p. 11B.

62. Shave to Jennings, Mar. 28, 1950, p. 1, and "Marshall Now Grid Immortal," Marshall scrapbook; *Minneapolis Tribune*, Aug. 28, 1949, p. 5S; *Minneapolis Star*, Sept. 4, 1957, p. 1F; *Minnesota Daily*, Nov. 8, 1991, p. 14.

63. Theodore Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life*, in *The Works of Theodore Roosevelt*, vol. 12 (New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1900), 21; Arnaldo Testi, "The Gender of Reform Politics: Theodore Roosevelt and the Culture of Masculinity," *Journal of American History* 81 (Mar. 1995): 1513; John Higham, *Writing American History: Essays on Modern Scholarship* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), 78, 80, 87; Glenda E. Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 76–79; Melissa Dabakis, "Douglas Tilden's Mechanics Fountain: Labor and the 'Crisis of Masculinity' in the 1890s," *American Quarterly* 47 (June 1995): 221.

64. "35 Years Not Enough," Marshall scrapbook; Jerry Malloy, "Rube Foster and Black Baseball in Chicago," in *Baseball in Chicago*, ed. Emil H. Rothe (Cooperstown, NY: Society for American Baseball Research, 1986), 25.

65. "Sports Opinions," Marshall scrapbook.

The pictures on p. 159 and 160 are courtesy Hennepin History Museum, Minneapolis; p. 166 is from the Baseball Hall of Fame Library, Cooperstown, NY; p. 170 is from the Brian Larson Collection, Eden Prairie. All other images are in the Minnesota Historical Society collections, including the glove, shoes, and helmet, photographed by Eric Mortenson/MHS.



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