

Jonah Weiss Honors Larry Doby's New Jersey Roots at Society for American Baseball Research's 54th Annual Convention

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In baseball history, Larry Doby's name is often placed beside Jackie Robinson's as one of the men who broke Major League Baseball's color barrier. But Jonah Weiss saw another part of Doby's story that might get overlooked from time to time, one rooted not only in the moment he arrived to the Cleveland Indians in 1947 and became the first African-American player in the American League, but in the New Jersey communities that shaped him long before that historic debut. Before Doby became a seven-time All-Star, a World Series champion, and a National Baseball Hall of Famer, his path was shaped by Paterson classrooms, Eastside High School fields, Hinchliffe Stadium games, the Newark Eagles,

where he began developing as a professional second baseman, and the Black baseball culture of Northern New Jersey that helped shape Doby as not just an athlete, but the barrier-breaker he would become.

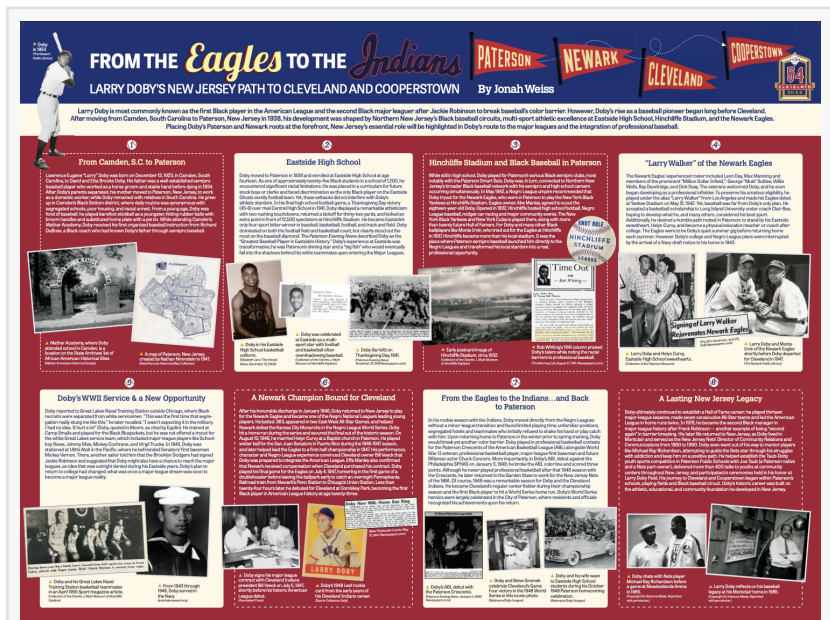


Jonah Weiss

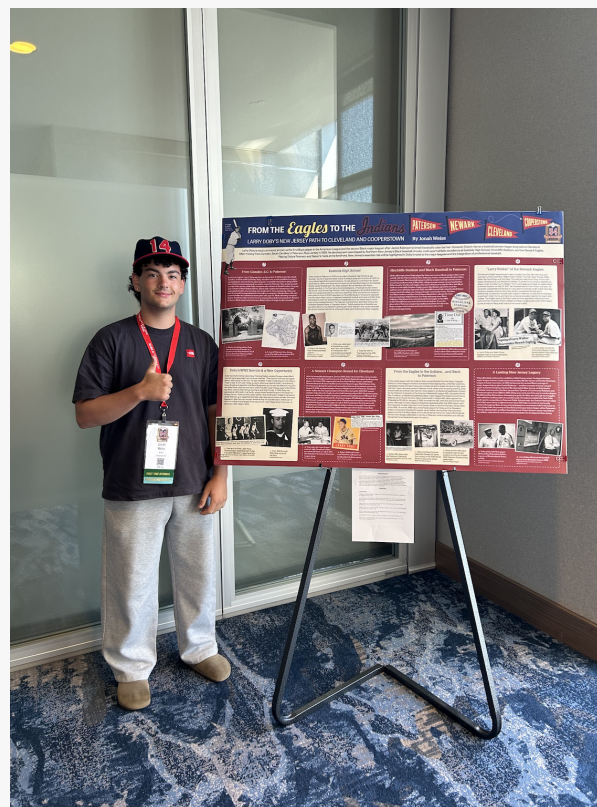
As an intern at the [Charles J. Muth Museum of Hinchliffe Stadium](#) in Paterson, Weiss is constantly surrounded by the rich African-American baseball history he hoped to bring to a national stage. The museum is located at one of the few remaining Negro League ballparks in the country, and home to the preservation of stories from Black baseball pioneers who helped shape the sport and country around it, including Paterson's own hometown hero Larry Doby. For Weiss, being from and working in a place so directly tied to Doby's New Jersey roots made the Hall of Famer's story feel personal and worth telling beyond the walls of the museum.

For Weiss, baseball has always been more than a game. Drawn to the stories behind the sport, he discovered the [Society for American Baseball Research](#) and became involved with its Elysian Fields Chapter of Northern New Jersey, where he attended local events with authors, historians, and baseball researchers. Those experiences showed him that baseball history was not only something to study, but something he could help preserve and contribute to. When he learned that SABR's 54th Annual Convention would be held in Cleveland, where Doby made his historic American League debut, Weiss saw a crystal clear opportunity to honor the connection between the city and Doby's barrier-breaking career back to the New Jersey communities that helped shape him first. That idea became Weiss's poster presentation, "From the Eagles to the Indians: Larry Doby's New Jersey Path to Cleveland and Cooperstown".

To complete the project, Weiss spent five months researching Doby's life and career through archival materials, contemporary newspaper accounts, museum collections, and local history resources. With guidance from staff at the Charles J. Muth Museum of Hinchliffe Stadium, the Paterson Museum, and the Newark Public Library, Weiss examined photographs, newspaper clippings, institutional records, and regional baseball history to trace how Doby's athletic, educational, and community roots in New Jersey shaped the player who would help integrate the American League and later be inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame. He also received permission from NJ Advance Media to use archival photographs from the Newark Public Library collection, allowing the poster to visually connect Doby's New Jersey story to the people and places that shaped it.



From the Eagles to the Indians: Larry Doby's New Jersey Path to Cleveland and Cooperstown

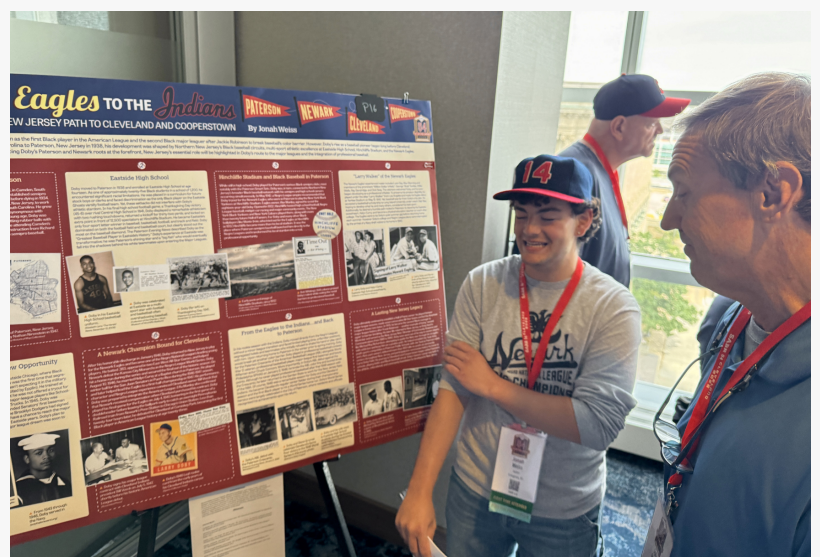


Weiss and his poster presentation at SABR's 54th Annual Convention

Greg Guderian, Library Associate at the Charles F. Cummings New Jersey Information Center at the Newark Public Library, is one of the several local research professionals who helped guide Weiss's research and support the creation of the final poster presentation. When asked about Weiss's presentation, Guderian recognized the depth and care behind the final product, stating, "Jonah's poster is stunning: the product of tremendous planning, research and care, and a worthy tribute to a true New Jersey pioneer. He gives due credit to those informal networks that helped make Larry Doby's achievements possible, and he doesn't stop with Doby's career as an active player but shows how he continued to serve the sport and give back to the wider community."

Weiss's research traced Doby's path from Camden, South Carolina, where he was born in 1923, to Paterson, where he moved in 1938 and enrolled at Eastside High School. At Eastside, Doby was one of approximately 25 Black students in a school of 1,200, yet he became one of the school's most accomplished athletes, earning varsity recognition in baseball, basketball, football, and track and field. Weiss additionally showcased Doby's connection to Paterson's Black semipro baseball scene and the Newark Eagles, where he began developing as a professional second baseman before his path eventually led to Cleveland.

One of the greatest challenges Weiss faced was condensing Doby's life, athletic achievements, and historical importance into a clear poster presentation. Weiss aimed to highlight Doby's story stretching from high school stardom and Negro League baseball to World War II service, joining



Weiss presenting his research to a SABR convention attendee



Weiss with a plaque dedicated to Larry Doby at Cleveland's Progressive Field

the American League, World Series success, and his later community work in New Jersey. Knowing he couldn't include every detail, Weiss focused on the chapters that created the most complete picture of Doby's New Jersey beginnings. His presentation shows that Doby's legacy can't be understood solely through his arrival in Cleveland, but through the Paterson schools, playing fields, Black baseball circuits, and community institutions that helped prepare him for Cleveland, Cooperstown, and baseball history.

Selected as one of 16 poster presenters at SABR's 54th Annual Convention, Weiss brought Doby's New Jersey story to a national audience of more than 500 baseball enthusiasts, historians, researchers, and longtime SABR members. As the youngest poster presenter at the convention, Weiss found that many attendees were interested not only in his research on Doby, but also in his own path as a young historian and baseball researcher. For Weiss, sharing his research was about more than presenting a poster. It was a chance to bring a New Jersey story into a national conversation about one of baseball's most important figures. "I am proud to be able to share Larry Doby's story and represent my home state of New Jersey at a national level," Weiss shared.

Looking forward, Weiss intends to keep researching and writing about baseball stories of the past. He hopes to bring the poster to more local audiences, with plans to display it at local libraries and community or senior centers before it is eventually archived in the Charles F. Cummings New Jersey Information Center's collection at the Newark Public Library. Readers can learn more about his research by viewing the attached poster, "From the Eagles to the Indians: Larry Doby's New Jersey Path to Cleveland and Cooperstown," or [visiting SABR's 54th Annual Convention poster page](#). For questions about the presentation, please contact jonahw6@icloud.com.

About Jonah Weiss

Jonah Weiss is a student at Livingston High School in Livingston, New Jersey. He is a chapter officer of the English Honor Society as well as a member of the National Honor Society, Spanish National Honor Society, and Rho Kappa National Social Studies Honor Society. Weiss is also a 2026 Brown University Book Award recipient, co-director of the Film Circle club, a volunteer with the Livingston High School Semiquincentennial Club and contributor to The Lance, Livingston High School's student newspaper. Outside of school, he serves as a research assistant intern for Innovators at the Intersection, where he researches story ideas for a magazine linking culture and STEAM, and spends his summers as a camp counselor for the Township of Livingston. Weiss hopes to study history in college and to one day work at the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York.

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