

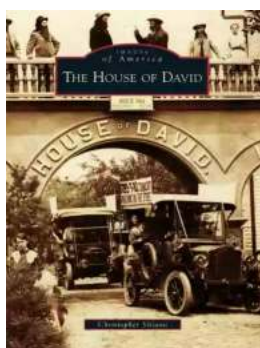
# The House Of David: Unveiling the Enigma of Religious Community and Baseball Legends

In the early 20th century, a unique religious community emerged in Benton Harbor, Michigan, known as the House of David. This community, founded by Benjamin Purnell, became famous not only for their doctrine but also for their involvement in professional baseball. The House of David left an indelible mark on American history, blending spirituality and sportsmanship in a way that captured the imagination of many.

## Uncovering the Origins

The House of David was established in 1903 by Benjamin and Mary Purnell. Inspired by a religious vision, Benjamin proclaimed himself the seventh messenger of God, bearing a message of salvation for mankind. Joined by a small group of followers, they laid the foundation for a religious community that would gain prominence in the decades to come.

The community's teachings revolved around celibacy, vegetarianism, and the rejection of modern technologies such as automobiles and electricity. They believed that by adhering to these principles, they would be able to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and achieve a higher state of enlightenment.



## The House of David (Images of America)

by Brad Schultz (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 53665 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 128 pages



## **A Unique Blend of Spirituality and Baseball**

While the House of David's religious teachings drew followers from all walks of life, it was their involvement in professional baseball that brought them to the national stage. In the 1910s, the community formed a baseball team, known as the House of David baseball team, which gained widespread recognition for its exceptional skills and distinctive appearance.

The members of the team, all bearded and long-haired, believed that their appearance reflected the biblical injunction against cutting one's hair or shaving. This unique visual aspect became the team's trademark, capturing the attention and curiosity of spectators across the country.

The House of David baseball team toured extensively, playing against professional teams and showcasing their impressive abilities. Alongside their athletic prowess, they also used these games as an opportunity to spread their religious message and attract new followers. This blending of sportsmanship and evangelism made the House of David baseball team truly one-of-a-kind.

## **Legends on the Field**

Over the years, the House of David baseball team included numerous talented players, some of whom became legends of the game. Perhaps the most notable among them was "Smokey" Joe Williams, a formidable pitcher who is now recognized as one of the greatest black baseball players of all time.

Williams' exceptional skills on the field earned him a place in the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1999, solidifying his status as a monumental figure in sports history. His time with the House of David baseball team allowed him to showcase his abilities to a wide audience, proving that remarkable talent exists in every corner of the sporting world.

## **Decline and Legacy**

As the years went by, the House of David faced numerous challenges. The death of Benjamin Purnell in 1927 marked the beginning of a decline for the community, which faced internal conflicts and external criticism. The rise of television and radio also led to a decrease in public interest in the team's religious message.

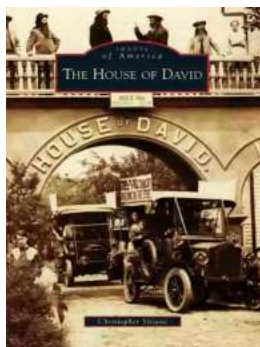
By the 1950s, the House of David community disbanded, and the baseball team ceased to exist. However, their legacy endured through the memories and photographs captured during their heyday. These images of America's religious and sporting history provide a fascinating glimpse into a community that was both ahead of its time and deeply rooted in tradition.

## **Preserving a Forgotten Era**

Thanks to the efforts of historians and enthusiasts, the legacy of the House of David has not been forgotten. The Images of America series provides an invaluable glimpse into the history of this unique community, allowing readers to explore the intersection of spirituality and sports through captivating photographs and meticulous research.

By preserving and sharing the stories of the House of David, we can continue to appreciate the ingenuity and resilience of those who dared to challenge societal norms and combine their passions for religion and baseball.

The House of David captivated audiences with its blend of spirituality and athleticism, leaving an intriguing mark on American history. From their unconventional beliefs to their memorable baseball team, the House of David challenged traditional norms and forged their unique path. Through the power of imagery and documentation, the legacy of this religious community and its remarkable baseball team lives on, ensuring that we never forget the spirit and determination of those who came before us.



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In 1903, Benjamin Purnell, a long-haired, bearded itinerant preacher, arrived in Benton Harbor. He and his wife, Mary, stepped out of their covered preacher's wagon, and gazing across a thriving summer resort, they saw their long-awaited paradise. Acquiring this paradise, they established a religious colony called the House of David, which grew to over 1,000 members from around the world, with phenomenal talents in music, sports, entertainment, and architecture. A pre-Disneyland-type amusement park was constructed, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors annually. As the colony's leader, the very charismatic and convincing Purnell called himself a brother to Jesus, and members flocked in, handing over their homes, wealth, and worldly possessions

for the promise of everlasting life, creating huge wealth. Soon they built exquisite mansions, hotels, restaurants, cruise ships, factories, and miniature railroads. Holdings included diamond and gold mines, an island in Lake Michigan, thousands of acres of farmland, an Australian resort, an art studio, orchestras, vaudeville acts, a famous bearded baseball team, and more. This book will take readers on the fascinating journey of the House of David.



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