

# Black History Month: Gant — Sandusky's historic 3-sport superstar



Sandusky Library History Blog

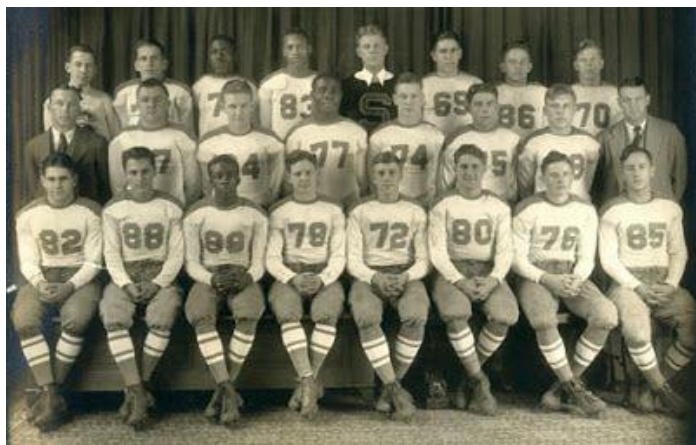
Editor's note: The following is an excerpt from an article about London Gant, a notable Black athlete in Sandusky's history. The article appeared in the Register's third of four commemorative bicentennial editions, publishing Sept. 27, 2018.

London Gant was born to Abe and Ida Sherman Gant in 1912 in South Carolina.

According to an article in the May

31, 1962, Register, London's grandparents, Lucas and Ida Gant, moved to Sandusky in 1917 after their family home was mysteriously burned one night. Ida had been born into slavery in Oconee County, South Carolina, and her age was given as 101 years old when she died in 1962 in Sandusky. Many of the men in the Gant family worked at Farrell Cheek, a company that recruited workers from the Southern U.S. states.

In 1933, London graduated from Sandusky High School. A charter member of the Sandusky High School Athletic Hall of Fame, London earned 12 letters, having lettered for four years in three different sports: football, basketball and track.



Charles "Butch" Wagner wrote in London Gant's hall of fame profile, which appeared in the April 14, 1990, Register that "Gant was a powerhouse fullback in football, an all-league guard on the basketball team and a record-setting field event performer on the track team."

One of London's teammates, John Weis, was quoted in the Register article, "London Gant was strictly power, and he ran the ball from long-punt formation quite a bit. When he

picked up steam, nobody was going to take him down unless it was around the ankles."

In the October 1929 football game between Findlay and Sandusky, the Blue Streaks won 19-7. London scored all three touchdowns.

The New York Times carried an article about London on Dec. 11, 1930. It seems that an opponent of the Sandusky Blue Streaks football team doubted whether London was young enough to be eligible to play high school football. While we do not know if an X-ray was actually taken, Dr. T. Wingate Todd of Western Reserve University suggested that an X-ray measuring bone density could confirm London's age.

An article in the Elyria Chronicle-Telegram on Sept. 18, 1931, stated that London was "easily one of the most feared backs on any scholastic team in the state."

London's name appears right above the name of Jesse Owens on a website that features Ohio high school athletic records from the Chicago National Interscholastic Championships. In 1932, London threw the javelin 186 feet, 6 inches, while Jesse Owens set records in 1933 for the 100-yard dash, 220-yard dash and the long jump.

Following graduation from Sandusky High School, London attended the University of Cincinnati, where he was only the second African-American athlete to compete at that school. An injury cut his football career short in Cincinnati.

On Dec. 19, 1964, London passed away following a battle with cancer. Wagner wrote in April 1990 about London, "His memories and feats continue to live on in the archives of Sandusky High School annals."