

Holway, John B. *Josh and Satch, the Life and Times of Josh Gibson and Satchel Paige*. Westport, CT: Meckler, 1991. Photographs. \$35.00.

In this volume, John Holway delves deeply into the lives of Josh Gibson and Satchel Paige, two great ball players who spent the majority of their careers outside the public eye. Using his skill as a journalist, Holway has interviewed hundreds of players to gain a greater understanding of baseball before integration. In his previous books, like *Voices From the Great Black Baseball Leagues*, Holway examined many players, but in his latest work he manages to bring to life the careers of two black stars. This book adds to Holway's reputation as one of the foremost authorities on the Negro Leagues and reminds us that historians still have much to learn about black baseball.

Holway interweaves data from his extensive collection of interviews with statistics compiled from newspapers to recreate the playing days of Gibson and Paige. Holway discusses specific achievements and provides general impressions of these players. For example, Gibson has the fourth highest homerun total in the Negro Leagues with 141, and he put together a career .426 average against major leaguers, proving he possessed the tools to play at that level. Gibson is best known for the homeruns he socked past the fences in many parks across the nation while Paige developed a reputation as a strikeout king. Paige possessed great talent and charisma. Fans came to see him pitch and to see what tricks he might pull on opponents. His career total of 122 victories in scheduled games placed Paige second in Negro League history. Adding to this number his major league and Latin American victories, Paige won a grand total of 215 victories. Both players excelled against white players in tournaments such as the annual Denver Post Tournament, popular in the 1930s.

Holway begins with the earliest baseball experiences of Paige and Gibson on local semi-pro clubs, but centers most of his attention on their years with professional teams like the Homestead Grays and Pittsburgh Crawfords. Gibson started early with the semi-pro Crawfords at age fifteen after migrating with his family to Pittsburgh, where his father found work in steel. Paige's early career

found him pitching for the Chattanooga Black Lockouts, where he quickly established his reputation before moving on to Birmingham and Pittsburgh. Holway recreates both their championship seasons at Pittsburgh and Homestead and their winters spent in Mexico and the Dominican Republic. Gibson played inconsistently in Latin America, possibly due to his heavy drinking, but he became a favorite with the fans because of his incredible homeruns and his obvious enjoyment of the game. For financial reasons mainly, Paige was as highly sought after in Latin America as he was in the United States because his presence drew large crowds. Paige also needed to make a lot of money for himself, given his spending habits on cars and clothes. Playing South of the border, where skin color was not as important, had certain advantages for the two stars, but language differences frequently presented problems.

Holway relates stories about these two players and the men they competed with and against, like Ray Brown, Ted Trent and James 'Cool Papa' Bell. Some of the stories are well-known tales, like the times Paige called in his outfield and then struck out the opposition, while other memories reveal new aspects of life as a Negro Leaguer. For example, Gibson received the nickname "Trucutu" in Puerto Rico because fans thought he resembled a comic strip character of the same name who carried a giant club.

Holway uses a chronological rather than topical approach to establish a brief historical context outside the sporting world. Each chapter begins with a listing of major domestic and international events to create a frame of reference for those more familiar with traditional political and economic history. Photographs and a statistical appendix that highlight the career achievements of Gibson and Paige are included. In addition, Holway concludes with a short list of Negro League record holders. Baseball fans will enjoy these records and others that are interspersed throughout the text. Records compiled against white major leaguers illustrate the high quality of play in the Negro Leagues.

There are hundreds of books written about white major and minor leaguers but few on the Negro Leagues. *Josh and Satch* addresses this imbalance and raises our awareness of the Negro Leagues' role in American social and sport history.

University of Toledo

Leslie Heaphy