
ïI Never Want to Take Another Trip Like This Oneí: Jackie Robinsonís Journey to Integrate Baseball

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During the afternoon of Thursday, February 28, 1946, Jackie and Rachel Robinson waited to board an American Airlines plane at Lockheed Terminal in Los Angeles. As they waited, Jackieís mother arrived unexpectedly to say good-bye. She handed the couple a shoebox. ìWhatís this?í Jackie asked. ìItís full of fried chicken and hard-boiled eggs,í his mother said. ìAw, mamma, you shouldnít have brought this,í he protested. ìThey serve food on the plane.í ìI know,í she answered. ìBut I just thought something might happen, and I didnít want you starving to death and getting to that baseball camp too weak to hit the ball,í she said.

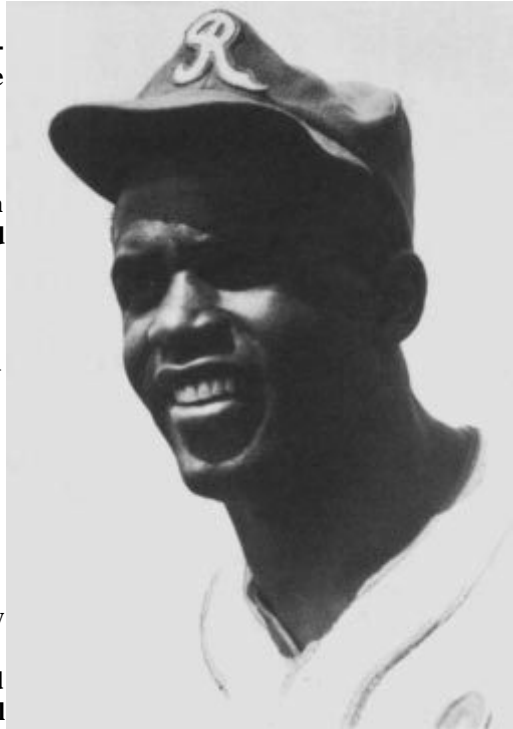
Jackie and Rachel did not want to take the shoebox. They were aware of the stereotype of blacks taking shoeboxes with food with them on trains and planes and having picnics. But they knew they would disappoint his mother if they did not take it. So they took the shoebox. In a few minutes they boarded the plane. By noon the next day, barred from eating in restaurants because of the segregation laws of the day, they would be glad they had the chicken and hard-boiled eggs.

The Robinsons were on their way to spring training in Daytona Beach, Florida, where Jackie would try out for the Montreal Royals, the Brooklyn Dodgersí top minor-league team. More importantly, he would attempt to become the first black in organized professional baseball in the twentieth century. But there were no guarantees that he would be able to play that spring in Florida, where segregation laws prohibited whites and blacks from sharing the same restaurants, hotels, schools, theaters, water fountains, and baseball fields.

ïBaseballís great experimentí, as Jules Tygiel called the integration of the sport, represented both an imminent racial challenge and a catalyst for social change.³ Baseball was one of the first institutions in the country to accept blacks on a relatively level playing field. The integration of the national pastime represented a challenge to segregation and decades of Jim Crow legislation in the South. By the mid-1940s, Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal wrote that segregation was ìbecoming so complete that the white Southerner practically

never sees a Negro except as his servant and in other standardized and formalized caste situations.⁵ The Richmond Times-Dispatch editorialized that if segregation laws were dismantled there would be an interracial conflict that would leave hundreds, if not thousands, killed.⁶

American society had made some progress toward integration in the 1930s and 1940s.⁷ The social reforms of the New Deal had included blacks, albeit incidentally.⁸ The Pittsburgh Courier organized the Double V campaign to coordinate a civil rights victory at home with a military victory abroad. Blacks had fought valiantly during World War II and considered social justice a reward for their sacrifice. The fact that the country



Courtesy of the National Baseball Library, Cooperstown, New York.

Jack Roosevelt Robinson

was fighting totalitarianism abroad while denying racial equality at home was more than simply ironic to blacks and some sympathetic whites.¹⁰ In New York, the legislature passed the Quinn-Ives Act that prohibited discrimination in hiring and created a five-person committee to investigate complaints.¹¹ Also in New York, an anti-Jim Crow in Baseball committee was established, and Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia publicized the efforts of his Committee on Baseball, which had been created to address integrating the sport.¹²

William Simons has called the integration of baseball the most widely commented on episode in American race relations of its time.¹³ The news coverage reflects a society in transition as equality on the baseball field became a metaphor for equality in civil rights. This perspective can be understood by comparing two different media approaches: the advocacy role of the black press and the support for the status quo by the mainstream press.¹⁴

By the early and middle 1940s, owners of black newspapers expressed a greater sense of urgency about integration and a greater faith that it would be realized. The black press unlike the white press made no attempt to be objective in its reporting; it was a fighting press, circulated largely outside white America.¹⁶ Most white people in America were not aware of the black press's relentless criticism of them and of almost everything having to do with white American civilization.¹⁷

Black sportswriters, such as Sam Lacy of the *Afro-American* newspaper chain, Wendell Smith of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, Joe Bostic of *The People's Voice*, Fay Young of the *Chicago Defender*, and others actively campaigned for the integration of baseball by appealing to sympathetic whites, pressuring owners of baseball teams, and sometimes organizing public protests to voice their dissatisfaction with organized baseball's unwritten law that prohibited blacks since the 1880s. Once Montreal announced it had signed Robinson, black sportswriters reported the story with more emotion. They realized the significance of the spring training better than their white colleagues, and were more likely to quote Robinson directly and tell their readers how he was coping with the press¹⁹.

Robinson's first spring training began when he left Los Angeles for Daytona Beach. Over the next 48 hours, Robinson and his wife would twice be bumped from planes and replaced by white passengers. They would be prohibited from whites-only restaurants and hotels. They had to find comfort in a dilapidated, blacks-only hotel. And finally, they would suffer the additional indignity of being forced to sit in the back of a bus during a 16-hour trip across Florida. Yet very little of this story—the beginning of integration in baseball—would find its way into the country's newspapers at the time.

This article examines Robinson's journey through the South on his way to spring training. This odyssey foreshadowed what the ballplayer faced by being the first to confront baseball's racial dilemma—both during that spring training and during his career with Brooklyn. The story provides a sense of the humiliation that blacks suffered in the South during segregation as the civil rights movement began to transform the country. In addition, it reflects how Brooklyn Dodgers president Branch Rickey, the man who signed Robinson, worked methodically behind the scenes for the integration of the sport. Finally, this story represents an exception to Simon's assessment of the publicity given baseball's integration story—especially in the white, mainstream press; there was relatively little coverage on Robinson's trip.²⁰

This article contributes to a growing body of literature on the press coverage of Jackie Robinson. An analysis of press coverage of the signing of Robinson suggests that most of white America knew little of the breadth and severity of racism in the country's social fabric.²¹ Another content analysis of newspaper coverage of the signing of Robinson concluded that black newspapers reported the news as historically significant, while metropolitan newspapers treated it as less important.²² This was affirmed in a study of press coverage of Robinson's first spring training in 1946.²³ Another study found that three New York City newspapers provided relatively fair coverage of Robinson during his first season in the major leagues in 1947, though there were some instances of subtle bias.

One writer observed that the black press understood that it had a responsibility in the years after World War II to move society toward racial equality. One way it did this was by confronting baseball's color barrier.²⁴ Wendell Smith, of the *Pittsburgh Courier*—the most widely circulated black newspaper of its time, has been identified as the one who most doggedly fought for the inclusion of blacks in organized baseball.²⁵ Sam Lacy said that black sportswriters recognized



Courtesy of the National Baseball Library, Cooperstown, New York.

Robinson shakes hands with Brooklyn manager Leo Durocher. Robinson played his first game during the spring training of 1946 against Brooklyn. He would later play for Durocher as a member of the Brooklyn Dodgers.

the significance of the Robinson story better than their white counterparts did. "For us," he said, "it was going to have a great impact on the social consciousness and racial attitudes."²⁷

White sportswriters kept silent on the issue of integrating baseball. They were not sure how their readers or editors would react. However, a few white sportswriters echoed the arguments of black sportswriters²⁸ Jimmy Powers, Hugh Bradley, Dave Egan, Shirley Povich, and others openly questioned the merits of segregation during the 1930s and early 1940s.²⁹ But the overwhelming majority of white sportswriters, like the public they wrote for, either ignored the issue completely or, as the *Sporting News* did in 1942, simply said that no good would come from raising the race issue.³⁰ "I'm afraid sportswriters thought like the club owners—that separate was better," Povich said.³¹

A study of press coverage of Robinson's fateful trip to spring training underscores the conclusions of the 1947 Hutchins Report, which heavily criticized the media of the day for failing to provide a flow of information and interpretation that would help their readers understand the day's events.³² While the signing of Robinson attracted national publicity, sportswriters and other commentators inferred that it was a sports story and not a news story by publishing the articles in the sports section. In other words, it was a story about sports, not a story about society. The conclusions of the Hutchins Report are supported by the relatively little attention paid to Robinson as he struggled across the country to integrate baseball.

Several months earlier, on August 27, Rickey quietly signed Robinson to a contract with Montreal after receiving his assurances that the ballplayer would have the guts not to fight back against racist epithets, spikings, and worse. Rickey told Robinson that if he lost his temper, it could set off race riots in stadiums or simply prove that blacks emotionally did not belong in organized baseball.³³ The Brooklyn executive had created a subterfuge to scout prospective black players by announcing the formation of a new Negro League. He hid his intentions from even his closest advisers and waited until the time was right to make the announcement.³⁴ His ability to work behind the scenes, manage the press, and work with politicians and other influential people would ultimately further his cause as much as anything that happened on the field.³⁵

On October 23, Montreal announced that it had signed Robinson. The Sporting News editorialized that the news touched off a powder keg in the South, unstinted praise in Negro circles; and a northern conviction that the racial problem in baseball is as far from a satisfactory solution as ever.³⁶ The Sporting News considered the bible of baseball downplayed the story's importance and said it had received far more attention than it was worth.³⁷

Black sportswriters, on the other hand, saw the signing of Robinson as an important national story. Ludlow Werner of the New York Age said Robinson would be haunted by the expectations of his race. To millions of blacks, he would symbolize not only their prowess in baseball, but their ability to rise to an opportunity.³⁸ Wendell Smith wrote that the signing of Robinson was the most American and democratic step baseball has made in 25 years.³⁹ Eddie Burdette of the California Eagle wrote that Robinson was the best all-around athlete ever developed in Southern California.⁴⁰ In contrast, the Los Angeles Times, a white-owned newspaper, classified Robinson as the best all-around prospect of his race.⁴¹

At the press conference, Robinson referred to himself as a guinea pig in this noble experiment.⁴² Intelligent and pragmatic, he surely understood the dangers inherent in challenging segregation in the South. The racial climate in the South was tense, unpredictable, and violent. In 1946, nine blacks were lynched and more than twenty others had to be rescued from angry mobs.⁴³ In February 1946, a black war veteran wearing his Army uniform was dragged from a bus, beaten, and blinded by a police chief in Batesburg, South Carolina.⁴⁴

On February 25 and 26, just a few days before the Robinsons left California, more than 100 blacks were arrested and two killed during a race riot in Madison, Tennessee.⁴⁵ The story received banner headlines in black weeklies throughout the country, such as the Pittsburgh Courier, Chicago Defender, Baltimore Afro-American, Norfolk Journal and Guide, and Atlanta Daily World. It was considered less newsworthy for mainstream dailies, especially in the South, which typically considered racial issues less troublesome and racial progress less necessary than did black newspapers.

As the Robinsons flew over the Western deserts, they anxiously wondered what awaited them in Daytona Beach.⁴⁶ Jackie remembered the promise he had made to Rickey during their meeting in August: No matter what people said to him and no matter what they did to him, he would not fight back. He could be

fiercely stubborn and temperamental. At Fort Hood, Texas, in August 1944, he was court-martialed for refusing to go to the back of a bus. After he was exonerated, he was discharged and began playing for the Kansas City Monarchs in the Negro Leagues, where his skills were recognized by one of Rickey's scouts. If Robinson had not been court-martialed for challenging Jim Crow laws, he would have stayed in the Army, where he would have been when Rickey was scouting the Negro Leagues for a black player to integrate baseball. Now, ironically, because of his discharge from the Army, he was going to Florida to challenge baseball's policy of segregation.

The fact that blacks, who had fought alongside whites to win World War II, had remained second-class citizens when they returned stateside was not lost on some journalists. As one sportswriter put it: If a black is good enough to stop a bullet in France, he is good enough to stop a line drive in a major-league ballpark.⁴⁷ Dave Egan, a white sportswriter in Boston, wrote that the country was fighting for underprivileged people, adding: "Do we, by any chance, feel disgust at the thought that Negro players, solely because of their color, are barred from playing baseball?"⁴⁸ Hector Racine, the president of the Montreal team, was quoted as saying: "Negroes fought alongside whites and shared the foxhole dangers, and they should get a fair trial in baseball."⁴⁹ It was not an accident that Robinson had been signed by Montreal. Rickey and the Montreal team believed probably rightly so that the ballplayer would face less racism in Canada than he would in the United States.⁵⁰

Having flown through the night from California, Jackie and Rachel arrived at the New Orleans airport at about 7 a.m. on Friday, March 1. There was a scheduled four-hour layover, and then they would fly to Pensacola in the Florida Panhandle for another stop before going on to Daytona Beach. Shortly before 11 a.m., they were told that the military had taken priority over the flight, but that there would soon be another flight. When the Robinsons asked where they could find something to eat, they were told that the airport's restaurant would sell them sandwiches, but they would have to eat them elsewhere. The Robinsons bristled at the suggestion. Fortunately, they still had the shoebox with the chicken and hard-boiled eggs. They now understood why blacks had taken food with them on trains and planes. Dining cars and airport restaurants refused to serve⁵¹ them.

The brief delay turned into several hours. The Robinsons decided to find a hotel room to relax while waiting for the airline to call. There was a nearby hotel, but it was for whites only. A cab driver found them a blacks-only hotel. The room left a lasting impression on Rachel. "It was almost nauseating. It was a dirty, dreadful place, and they had plastic mattress papers. Lying on the bed was like trying to sleep on newspapers," she remembered.⁵² Finally, the airline called, and they went back to the airport. But it would be several more hours before they boarded a plane. It had been nearly 12 hours since they had landed in New Orleans.⁵³

When the American Airlines plane landed to refuel in Pensacola, a flight attendant asked the Robinsons and a Mexican to exit the plane. They were replaced by white passengers. An airline employee explained that because a storm was

expected, three passengers had to be removed so more fuel could be added to the plane. "I just saw two white passengers get on and take our seats," Jackie replied.⁵⁴ The Robinsons were told that there would be another plane to Daytona Beach the next day but that they could not be guaranteed seats. Frustrated, Robinson began to lose his temper, but he knew such an incident would mean newspaper stories about an ugly racial incident and possible arrest, so he choked back his anger.⁵⁵ He could not wait another day. He was already a day late for spring training. After checking in with Rickey, he decided to take a Greyhound bus. It would take the Robinsons another 16 hours to get to Daytona Beach.⁵⁶

Robinson's late arrival at spring training caused a public relations problem for Rickey, who had carefully and quietly worked to integrate baseball for the preceding three years. First, he had announced the creation of a Negro League. Then he had signed Robinson secretly and waited. Meanwhile, he had worked with members of the Committee on Baseball in New York City and had made an arrangement with city officials in Daytona Beach. The Brooklyn organization had agreed to train in Daytona Beach, which meant an economic boon to the local economy, and the city, in turn, agreed to ease its segregation laws prohibiting black and white ballplayers from using its ballpark at the same time. Rickey also signed Johnny Wright, a 27-year-old pitcher formerly of the Negro Leagues, to a contract with Montreal so that Robinson would not be the only black ballplayer on the team. And finally, he hired Wendell Smith and Billy Rowe, a photographer with the Pittsburgh Courier for the jobs of chauffeur, confidante, and father confessor for the black ballplayers.⁵⁷

Rickey also controlled the news as best as he could. This was easy enough when it came to most white sportswriters, who were either indifferent or uncomfortable with the story, and black sportswriters, who may have been wary of Rickey but were supportive of integration. Rickey, however, had his critics. Jimmy Powers of the New York Daily News, one of the most widely circulated newspapers in the country, had been feuding with Rickey and regularly criticized the penurious executive by calling him "El Cheapo." Powers had been an early advocate of the integration of baseball, but when it happened, he criticized Rickey's motives as opportunistic. During spring training, Powers called the signing of Robinson a publicity stunt and said he doubted if Robinson would ever play in the major leagues.⁵⁸

Shortly before the beginning of spring training, in order to accommodate the surplus of ballplayers returning from the war, Rickey moved the organization's triple-A teams to Montreal and Indianapolis to Sanford, 40 miles to the west of Daytona Beach.⁵⁹ The press corps in the celery-growing city included sportswriters from New York newspapers, including The Times, Daily News, Daily Mirror, and Brooklyn Eagle; black weeklies, such as the Pittsburgh Courier, Chicago Defender, Norfolk Journal and Guide, and the Afro-American; and wire services, such as the Associated Press, United Press, and American Negro Press Association.⁶⁰ While some of the black weeklies sent their top sportswriters, such as Smith and Lacy, the dailies sent stringers, leaving their beat reporters in Daytona Beach to cover the Brooklyn Dodgers.

Most of the country's dailies, including those throughout Florida, relied exclusively on wire service accounts to inform their readers about Robinson's arrival in camp and also about the whole story of the most important spring training in baseball history. The Robinson story received less coverage than other baseball stories that spring, such as the players returning from the war, the recruiting of players for the Mexican Leagues, and the usual progress reports. The black weeklies, on the other hand, played up the Robinson story with long articles and photographs.

Newspapers throughout the country reported that Robinson was expected to be in camp for the first time on Friday, March 1. The Associated Press reported that Rickey had lectured the Montreal team to treat Robinson and Wright as if they were any other ballplayers. Rickey also denied that he signed Robinson and Wright because of political pressures: "I signed them because of my interest in winning a pennant. If an elephant could play center field better than any man I have, I would play the elephant," he said. This wire service account appeared throughout the country, including Daytona Beach.

The Brooklyn Eagle called Robinson, a former second lieutenant that the newspaper erroneously identified as a captain, "the first boy of his race in 50 years to enter professional baseball."⁶² A headline in *The New York Times* said: "Robinson, Negro Shortstop, Is Due at Montreal Baseball Camp Today." *The Los Angeles Times*, published in the city where Robinson lived and gained fame as a four-star athlete at UCLA, published nothing. The Associated Press included a statement from Rickey explaining that the ballplayer's flight had been delayed by weather. This report appeared throughout the country, including Daytona Beach. This quote by Rickey appeared in sports pages: "I heard by phone that Robinson has been delayed by bad weather in the vicinity of New Orleans. It is my expectation that he will arrive here tomorrow noon, possibly in time for the morning workout."⁶⁴ *The New York Daily News*, however, questioned the team's reasons for Robinson's lateness: "There was considerable mystery about his traveling difficulties since he apparently has twice been 'bumped' off his plane . . . at a time when travel priorities have been so relaxed as to preclude such 'bumping'."⁶⁵

Black newspapers were more forthcoming. *The Chicago Defender*, for example, said that Robinson had been bumped from an airplane in Pensacola with two other passengers "because the plane could not refuel with the weight of three people aboard. That was the Dodgers' explanation."⁶⁶ Smith wrote sarcastically in the *Pittsburgh Courier* that the Robinsons had twice been bumped on their way from California to Florida. When the Robinsons could not find a train to Daytona Beach, "they reluctantly made the rest of the journey riding 'comfortably' on the back seat in accordance with the jim-crow laws in Dear Ole Dixie."⁶⁷

While Robinson's story warranted little attention in daily newspapers, his teammate Johnny Wright was virtually ignored. When Wright was mentioned, and that was rarely, he was either identified incorrectly or characterized as little more than an appendage. For instance, the United Press identified him as "John White."⁶⁸ Harold Burr of the *Brooklyn Eagle* wrote that Montreal had signed Wright primarily to keep Robinson from becoming homesick with none of his

race around.⁶⁹ Burr repeated this indignity in the *Sporting News*, where he wrote that Wright was signed to keep Robinson from becoming too lonely and homesick.⁷⁰

The *Pittsburgh Courier*, *Baltimore Afro-American*, *Chicago Defender*, and *Norfolk Journal and Guide* told their readers of Wright's pitching credentials and included details of his trip from his home in New Orleans. Wright, for instance, also had problems getting to Daytona Beach. The *Chicago Defender* reported that his car broke down and he had to take a train.⁷¹ On the train to Daytona Beach, Wright, who Smith called a "brilliant right-hand pitcher" who was expected to become a valuable member of the Montreal Royals' pitching corps, met the team's manager, Clay Hopper, a Mississippian, who also was riding on the same train. "He seemed pleased to meet me and said he was heading for our Sanford camp," the *Courier* quoted Wright as saying.⁷²

Wright showed up at the camp in Sanford on Saturday. But Rickey did not want him to start practicing until Robinson arrived. He also did not want Wright talking to reporters. "No sooner had Wright arrived in Sanford than he was hustled away from the newspaper reporters and taken to Bethune-Cookman College. He was to have remained at the school until joined by Robinson on Monday," the *Chicago Defender* reported.⁷³ The *New York Times* also reported that Robinson and Wright were to be secluded from the press until Monday. The article also said that the players would not stay in the same hotel as the rest of the team.⁷⁴

The *Defender* published an article without a byline, perhaps written by sports editor Fay Young, with the headline, "Fans Must Not Expect Too Much of Jackie Robinson and Wright." As Sam Lacy did in the *Afro-American* newspapers and Wendell Smith did in the *Courier*, the article praised the black ballplayers for their bid for sports immortality but cautioned readers not to expect too much from them. "In the meantime, everybody will watch both Robinson and Wright & those wanting to see both men make good will do a lot of praying and hoping."⁷⁵

Meanwhile, the troubles continued for the Robinsons as they made their way toward Daytona Beach. When Jackie and Rachel boarded the Greyhound bus in Pensacola late Friday night, it was nearly empty. The Robinsons relaxed in reclining seats toward the front of the bus and fell asleep. When additional passengers boarded at the first stop, the driver walked back to Rachel and Jackie and motioned to the rear of the bus.⁷⁶ Jackie had been court-martialed in the Army for refusing to go to the back of a bus. But this time, he begrudgingly obeyed the driver's wishes. "Rae and I had said to each other during the months we had tried to prepare ourselves for exactly this kind of ordeal. We had agreed that I had no right to lose my temper and jeopardize the chances of all the blacks who would follow me if I could break down the barriers. So we moved," he said later.⁷⁷ Only Wendell Smith of the *Pittsburgh Courier* would include any reference to this at the time. He later admitted to withholding some information for fear of creating additional problems.⁷⁸

For the next 16 hours, the Robinsons would bounce around in uncomfortable seats in the back of the bus, trying to ignore the nauseating engine fumes that wafted through the window. At daybreak, working men in dirty overalls going

off to fields and rock quarries filled the back of the bus, though several seats remained empty up front.⁷⁹ Inside the bus station in Jacksonville, the waiting area for blacks was small and the flies were plentiful. Rachel later called it a wretched hell hole.⁸⁰

Ninety miles away in Daytona Beach, Pittsburgh Courier sports editor Wendell Smith and photographer Billy Rowe anxiously waited for Robinson. Smith, who had campaigned for integration for almost 10 years, and Rowe had been in Daytona Beach for several days and now waited at the city's bus station for Jackie and Rachel. Rickey, who had openly challenged baseball's unwritten law, had met with city officials over the winter, and had sent an assistant to find accommodations in private homes for Robinson and Wright. Daytona Beach was perhaps better suited for this racial experiment than any other city in the South. It was the home of civil rights leader Mary McLeod Bethune, president of Bethune-Cookman College. It also had a strong black middle class and political base.

Robinson's arrival in Daytona Beach late Saturday afternoon, March 2, drew little interest from the press. The New York press, for instance, stayed in a hotel just a few miles away. Smith and Rowe, however, were the only reporters at the bus station when the Robinsons finally made it to Daytona Beach. This was not lost on Smith, who wrote: "Although his arrival by bus lacked the usual glamour and sensationalism tendered outstanding sports personalities, Robinson's presence at the station was soon discovered." Word quickly spread throughout the bus station. A white man noticed the large crowd and asked a black porter what all the excitement was about. "Don't you know? Jackie Robinson is coming in!" the porter said excitedly.⁸³

The Robinsons were hungry, tired, and angry. They had twice been bumped from planes, had been prohibited from restaurants and hotels, and had been forced to withstand the humiliation of having to sit in the back of a bus. They had had only the chicken and hard-boiled eggs to eat in the 48 hours since boarding the plane in Los Angeles. "Well, I finally made it, but I never want another trip like this one," Jackie said.⁸⁴

This was only the beginning of Jackie Robinson's ordeal that spring. By the time he reached the bus station in Daytona Beach, "he was very annoyed and hurt," Rowe remembered. Robinson complained bitterly to Rowe and Smith about what had happened to Rachel and himself. He did not think he could get a fair tryout in Florida and briefly considered returning to the Negro League.⁸⁵ Smith and Rowe, however, talked with him through the night, explaining that it was important for him to suffer certain indignities so it would be possible for other blacks to follow him into baseball.⁸⁶ It would not be the only time Robinson would consider quitting during that arduous spring training.⁸⁷

Robinson would be prohibited from staying in the same hotels as his teammates and from eating in the same restaurants. He would be prohibited from taking the field with whites in several Florida cities; only Daytona Beach would permit him to play. Most of the country—especially in the white mainstream press—would read about Robinson's progress on the field but little or nothing about the racism he faced on and off the field. The mainstream press would fail

to capture the story of a changing America for its readers.

Robinson led the International League in hitting with Montreal during the 1946 season. The Brooklyn Dodgers signed him in early 1947. In April, he played his first game with Brooklyn, ending segregation in major league baseball. Robinson's campaign against baseball's color barrier captivated millions of white Americans who had thus far ignored the country's racial dilemma⁸⁸. It also inspired millions of black Americans. It was, as historian Cornel West has put it, a human attempt to hold on to dreams deferred and hopes dashed, owing mainly to slavery and Jim Crow America.⁸⁹

The story of the integration of baseball has been called a microcosm of the civil rights movement and the integration of society in the 1950s and 1960s. Both involved militant confrontation, economic pressure, and moral suasion.⁹⁰ With the support of a few sympathetic and influential whites, a number of blacks shouldered the physical risks inherent in a policy of direct confrontation with the institutions of Jim Crow,⁹¹ Tygiel wrote. Integration meant different things to the country's blacks than it did to its whites. It also obviously meant different things to the journalists black and white who covered the story.

This year is the fiftieth anniversary of the integration of major league baseball. Jackie Robinson's first game with the Brooklyn Dodgers received a tremendous amount of newspaper coverage. It is worth remembering and celebrating a half-century later. Yet it also is instructive to remember that the game did not just happen. Other things made it possible. Robinson wore a Brooklyn uniform in April 1947 because he played so well the year before with the Montreal Royals, Brooklyn's AAA team. He played for Montreal during the 1946 season because he had proved at spring training that he had the talent and temperament to succeed as a black man in a white man's game. While the fiftieth anniversary of baseball's integration is important, it is also instructive to remember Robinson's journey to spring training, this story has received relatively little attention.

Baseball's great experiment began, in practice, on February 28, 1946, when Robinson left his home in California to attend spring training with the Montreal Royals in Daytona Beach, Florida. Over the next two days, he would confront the segregation of the Jim Crow South over and over. Despite racism, humiliation, and hunger, he kept going until he got to spring training. The mainstream press paid little attention. It should have. We know now that Robinson's journey would change baseball and, ultimately, society.

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1. Carl Rowan and Jackie Robinson *Wait Till Next Year* (New York: Random House, 1960), pp. 130-131.
 2. Organized baseball was the term used to describe the white minor and major leagues.
 3. Jules Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 9.
 4. Tygiel, p. 9.
 5. Quoted in C. Vann Woodward *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 118.

6. Thomas Brooks, *Walls Come Tumbling Down* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975), pp. 24-25.
7. Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishing, 1944), p. 74.
8. Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* 74. Myrdal cited the involvement of blacks in legislation and programs involving housing, nutrition, relief and social security, wages and hours, working conditions, child and women labor, and the armed forces. Woodward wrote that the Franklin Roosevelt Administration moved circumspectly on racial injustice and civil rights. In 1941, Roosevelt signed an executive order that established a Fair Employment Practices Committee to supervise defense contract industries. See Woodward *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 135.
9. See, Patrick Washburn, *The Pittsburgh Courier and the Double V Campaign in 1942*, *American Journalism* (1986): 73-86.
10. Oscar T. Barck, Jr. and Nelson M. Black, *Since 1900* (New York: Macmillan, 1976), p. 749.
11. Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment* p. 38. See also *Sporting News* 8 November 1945.
12. Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment* p. 69; Rowan *Wait Till Next Year* p. 119-120.
13. William Simons, *Jackie Robinson and the American Mind: Journalistic Perceptions of the Reintegration of Baseball*, *Journal of Sport History* 12 (Spring 1985): 40.
14. Chris Lamb and Glen Bleske, *A Different Story: How the Press Covered Baseball's First Integrated Spring Training*, *paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Anaheim, Calif., August 1996*, p. 3.
15. Roland Wolesey, *The Black Press, U.S.A.* (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1971), p. 56.
16. Arnold Rose, *The Negro in America* condensed version of Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma* (New York: Harper and Row, 1948), p. 289.
17. Rose, *The Negro in America* p. 289.
18. Donald L. Deardoff, *The Black Press Played a Key Role in Integrating Baseball*, *Louis Journalism Review* (July/August 1994): 12-14. Prohibited from organized baseball, black ballplayers played in what was known as the *Negro Leagues*. For a history of the Negro Leagues, see Robert Peterson *Only the Ball Was White* (New York McGraw-Hill, 1984).
19. Bill L. Weaver, *The Black Press and the Assault on Professional Baseball's "Color Line"*, *October 1945-April 1947*, *Phylon* 40 (Winter 1979): 303-317; William Kelly, *Jackie Robinson and the Press*, *Journalism Quarterly* 53 (Spring 1976): 137-139.
20. The newspapers included in this analysis were: *Sporting News*, a national sports weekly; the following black weeklies, *The Pittsburgh Courier*, *Chicago Defender*, *Baltimore Afro-American*, *Washington Afro-American*, *Atlanta Daily World*, *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, *Amsterdam News*, *The Peoples Voice*, and *California Eagle*, the following New York City dailies, *The New York Times*, *New York Daily News*, *New York Journal-American*, *New York Daily Mirror*, and *Brooklyn Eagle*, the following Florida dailies *Daytona Beach Morning Journal*, *Daytona Beach Evening News*, *Tampa Tribune*, *Jacksonville Times-Union* and *Miami News*, and the following newspapers *Los Angeles Times*, *Philadelphia Record*, *Cleveland Plain-Dealer*, *Toledo Blade*, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, *Montreal Daily Star* and *Montreal Gazette*.
21. Simons, *Jackie Robinson and the American Mind: Journalistic Perceptions of the Reintegration of Baseball*, p. 6.
22. Kelley, *Jackie Robinson and the Press*, p. 139.
23. See, Lamb and Bleske, *A Different Story: How the Press Covered Baseball's First Integrated Spring Training*.

24. Patrick Washburn, *New York Newspapers and Robinson's First Season*, *Journalism Quarterly* 58 (Winter 1981): 644.
25. See, Weaver, *The Black Press and the Assault on Professional Baseball's "Color Line,"* October 1945–April 1947, p. 303.
26. David K. Wiggins, *Wendell Smith, The Pittsburgh Courier-Journal and the Campaign to Include Blacks in Organized Baseball*, *Journal of Sport History* 10 (Summer 1983): 6.
27. Telephone interview with Sam Lacy.
28. Donald L. Deardorff, *The Black Press Played a Key Role in Integrating Baseball*, p. 12.
29. Deardorff, *The Black Press Played a Key Role in Integrating Baseball*, p. 14; Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, pp. 34–35; telephone interview with Sam Lacy.
30. *Sporting News*, 6 August 1942.
31. Telephone interview with Shirley Povich.
32. See, Commission on Freedom of the Press *A Free and Responsible Press: A General Report on Mass Communication* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947).
33. Harvey Frommer, *Rickey and Robinson* (New York: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 11–13.
34. See, Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, pp. 56–57.
35. See, Chris Lamb and Marc Bona, *October 23, 1945: The Beginning of Integration in Baseball*, Paper presented at *Breaking Baseball's Color Line: Jackie Robinson and Fifty Years of Integration* conference, Daytona Beach, Fla., March 1996.
36. *Sporting News*, 1 November 1945.
37. *Sporting News*, 1 November 1945. Author Mark Ribowsky wrote that J.G. Taylor Spink, the influential editor of *the Sporting News*, reflected the voice of conservative reactionaries who wanted to keep the sport segregated. According to Ribowsky, Spink was a spokesman for white big league resistance. The editor constructed the platform for the big league reactionaries of both colors to rest their case at least as long as they could get away with it. See, Mark Ribowsky, *A Complete History of the Negro League* (New York: Birch Lane Press, 1995), p. 253.
38. *Sporting News*, 1 November 1945. In its November 1 edition *Sporting News* included reactions from white and black sportswriters and baseball officials.
39. *Sporting News*, 1 November 1945.
40. *California Eagle*, 25 October 1945.
41. *Los Angeles Times*, 24 October 1945.
42. *Sporting News*, 1 November 1945.
43. Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, p. 8.
44. David Falkner, *Great Time Coming* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), p. 126.
45. For an account of the Columbia race riot, see, *Brook Walls Come Tumbling Down*, pp. 55–58.
46. Jackie Robinson and Wendell Smith *My Own Story* (New York: Greenburg Publishers, 1948), p. 65.
47. Robinson, *My Own Story*, p. 61.
48. Undated newspaper clipping, Baseball Hall of Fame.
49. *Montreal La Presse*, 27 October 1945. Quoted in Simons, *Jackie Robinson and the American Mind: Journalistic Perceptions of the Reintegration of Baseball*, p. 43.
50. Telephone interview with Mel Jones, general manager of the Montreal Royals.
51. Carl Rowan and Jackie Robinson *Wait Till Next Year* (New York: Random House, 1960), p. 132; Jackie Robinson and Alfred Duckett *Never Had It Made* (New York: G. P. Putnam and Sons, 1972), p. 52.

52. Rowan, *Wait Till Next Year*. 132; Robinson, *I Never Had It Made*. 52.
53. Rowan, *Wait Till Next Year*. 132; Robinson, *I Never Had It Made*. 52.
54. Rowan, *Wait Till Next Year*, 133. A week earlier, the *Chicago Defender* reported that American Airlines had publicly apologized for the clumsy and unusually stupid distribution of a public relations brochure that had included a black messenger carrying a tray and speaking in dialect. See *Chicago Defender*, 23 February 1946.
55. Robinson, *I Never Had It Made*. 41.
56. Rowan, *Wait Till Next Year*. 134; Robinson, *I Never Had It Made*. 54.
57. Telephone interview with Billy Rowe.
58. *New York Daily News*, 12 March 1946.
59. During the spring training of 1946, Brooklyn had two triple-A teams, Montreal and Indianapolis.
60. Sam Lacy covered the spring training of 1946 for the Afro-American newspaper, a chain of black weeklies concentrated in the East.
61. *Daytona Beach Evening News*, 1 March 1946.
62. *Brooklyn Eagle*, 1 March 1946.
63. *New York Times*, 1 March 1946.
64. *Montreal Gazette*, 2 March 1946.
65. *New York Daily News*, 3 March 1946.
66. *Chicago Defender*, 9 March 1946.
67. *Pittsburgh Courier*, 9 March 1946.
68. *Los Angeles Times*, 5 March 1946.
69. *Brooklyn Eagle*, 1 March 1946.
70. *Sporting News*, 7 March 1946.
71. *Chicago Defender*, 9 March 1946.
72. *Pittsburgh Courier*, 9 March 1946.
73. *Chicago Defender*, 9 March 1946.
74. *The New York Times*, 3 March 1946.
75. *Chicago Defender*, 9 March 1946.
76. Rowan, *Wait Till Next Year*. 134.
77. Robinson, *I Never Had It Made*. 42.
78. *Pittsburgh Courier*, 13 April 1946.
79. Rowan, *Wait Till Next Year*. pp. 134-135; personal interview with Rachel Robinson. See, Lamb and Bleske, *A Different Story: How the Press Covered Baseball's First Integrated Spring Training*, p. 10.
80. Rowan, *Wait Till Next Year*. 136.
81. Telephone interview with Billy Rowe; telephone interview with Sam Lacy. For details on meetings between Rickey and Daytona Beach city officials, see Chris Lamb and Glen Bleske, *A Different Story: How the Press Covered Baseball's First Integrated Spring Training*, pp. 8-9.
82. *Pittsburgh Courier*, 9 March 1946.
83. *Daytona Beach Sunday News-Journal*, 3 November 1988.
84. *Pittsburgh Courier*, 9 March 1946.
85. Telephone interview with Billy Rowe.
86. Telephone interview with Billy Rowe.

87. After the second day of practice in Sanford, a delegation of Sanford citizens told the Montreal team that they would not permit Robinson and Wright to take the field with whites. Montreal then moved back to Daytona Beach. When Robinson learned that he had been banned, he later wrote that he considered ending the tryout. See, Robinson, *My Own Story*, p. 73.
88. Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, p. 9.
89. See, Jackie Robinson and Alfred Duckett, *I Never Had It Made* (New York: The Ecco Press, 1995), introduction.
90. Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, p. 9.
91. Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, pp. 9, 119.