
TYGIEL, JULES, ED. *The Jackie Robinson Reader: Perspectives on an American Hero*. New York: Plume, Penguin Putnam, Inc., 1997. Pp. 278. Appendix and Illustrations. \$13.95 pb.

Jules Tygiel has put together a collection of essays chronicling the life of Jackie Robinson, from his earliest days in Georgia through his final days as a political figure. Articles from such renowned sportswriters as Roger Kahn, Arthur Mann, Wendell Smith, and Sam Lacy are included. Jackie Robinson's own words on his career are also included to give a personal perspective in addition to the historical.

The purpose of this text is clear from the opening words of the introduction. Tygiel writes about the legendary career of Robinson, both on and off the field. His exploits on the diamond are well known, but he also played a key role in the civil rights movement throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Each article focuses on a specific aspect of Jackie's life, examining how this man managed to influence so many in a variety of ways. Robinson was more than just an athlete, he was a leader of his race.

Each chapter of this text tells a story, beginning with Jackie's early childhood as remembered by some of his family. The ending is particularly fitting, with a tribute to Jackie by Roger Kahn in a chapter titled "The Lion at Dusk." Between these two chapters are a series of articles chronicling Jackie's athletic prowess, his

stint in the military, his breaking of the color barrier in major league baseball, his trials in baseball, his family, and his life after the game.

Quite a few of the articles included are excerpts from larger works on Jackie Robinson. For example, Tygiel's article, "Il A Gagne Ses Epaulets," is taken from his book *Baseball's Great Experiment*. Wendell Smith's article, "It was a Great Day in Jersey," was originally published in the *Pittsburgh Courier*. Other chapters are new and informative, such as "Jackie Robinson's Signing: The Untold Story." This selection deals with photographs taken in 1945 by Maurice Terrell for Branch Rickey. These photos were part of a larger plan to integrate baseball with not just one player, but a number from the Negro Leagues. This, of course, did not happen, and Robinson debuted alone in 1947, followed a few weeks later by Larry Doby in the American League.

Particularly interesting for the reader is the inclusion of the report from the Major League Steering Committee in 1946. Tygiel includes the section of the report dealing with the issue of race, probably written by Larry MacPhail of the New York Yankees. This report, along with Branch Rickey's claim that the owners took a secret vote against his actions to integrate major league baseball in a less than flattering light regarding segregation. This report also comes out against any one club trying to take action on its own, which Branch Rickey and the Dodgers were already doing. The lack of information surrounding this report and its origins raises questions that are not examined since the report is simply presented with no critique.

Robinson's explanations for why he was thinking of quitting the game after the 1956 season are revealing. He states that the reasons were simple and straightforward: age, family, and security. For Robinson, nothing he did was ever that simple because he was always in the spotlight. In fact, many reporters immediately speculated that he was quitting because he had been traded to the Giants. According to Robinson, the two were not related except in time. This story reveals for the reader the constant scrutiny and vigilance that Jackie Robinson experienced during his life in baseball and after.

Anyone interested in knowing more about Jackie Robinson, the man and the athlete, needs to read this book. It is an in-depth look at various aspects of his life from a wide range of sources. Sportswriters during Robinson's career wrote some of the articles, while others are from historians reflecting on the significance of Robinson's life. There are literally thousands of articles and books written about Robinson, but most deal with him as a baseball player first and rarely examine other issues and concerns about his life. This text has a wider sweep and introduces the reader to many larger issues in the African American community. This book would be an excellent reader for a sport history class, an African American history class, or a general American history class.

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