

CHALBERG, JOHN C. *Rickey and Robinson, The Preacher, the Player and America's Game*. Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 2000. Pp. 248. Bibliography, index. \$16.95 pb.

Author John Chalberg presents an interesting comparison and contrast between Branch Rickey and his new star of the 1940s, Jackie Robinson. Robinson, the player, is presented as passionate, outspoken, and skilled while Rickey, the preacher, is equally passionate but in a different way. Rickey's passion for the game stems from his playing days, but also from his desire to make money and do something good at the same time. Robinson just wants to play the game. The two are brought together by the game and their meeting changes the face of baseball.

The story that Chalberg tells is not a new one. Readers can find much of the same detail and facts in a number of books about the integration of baseball. Jules Tygiel's work on this subject is more detailed, and encompasses more than just these two central characters. If you wish to focus on just the roles of Rickey and Robinson, then this book will serve you well. Chalberg recounts the commonly told story of Rickey's encounter with Charles Thomas and the subsequent desire to not have his players suffer. The author also walks the reader through the first meeting between Rickey and Robinson. We are told all about the requests Rickey made of his new player and Robinson's responses to Rickey's actions and comments.

Chalberg explains Rickey's early career and how he came to be so involved in the game of baseball. He follows that with a discussion of Robinson's early athletic career and the influence of Robinson's brothers on him. Chapters alternate between Rickey and Robinson. For example, chapter three details Rickey's desire to make changes in the game such as the development of a minor league system. The next chapter focuses on Robinson and his stint in the U.S., army followed by his coaching career and his beginning in the Negro Leagues. Again, a commonly known story is retold, the day Robinson refused to move to the back of an army bus. In the final chapter, "The Ninth Inning," Chalberg describes Rickey's final days in baseball right up until his death on December 9, 1965. Then he switches gears and follows Robinson through the days after his playing career ended. We learn about Robinson's involvement with a variety of ventures, beginning with the Freedom National Bank, and work in politics.

Chalberg tells the story of Rickey and Robinson in a straightforward, easy-to-follow fashion. The decision to move back and forth between their parallel lives helps isolate them and highlight the differences in their experiences. The text is well-written and would serve as a good beginning for anyone interested in learning more about this significant change in baseball history. The bibliography will help a serious researcher find other sources to learn more about who was involved in the integration of baseball. Chalberg leaves the reader with the idea that it was a two-man show but that is only a part of the story. Reading other books on the subject, such as David Falkner's *Great Time Coming* or Jules Tygiel's *Baseball's Great Experiment*, will complete the picture. The bibliography also introduces the reader to a wide range of sources on the Negro Leagues in general and not just integration.

—LESLIE HEAPHY
Kent State University