

There is no citation for this information, as if it is common knowledge for everyone. It is very well known by sport historians, and many others, that African-American and white baseball organizations participated against and with one another occasionally during the "color-line" period of white professional baseball. What is not readily known are the specifics that Bready supplies. Citations offering corroboration of his findings would make this work even more valuable to scholars. For information on the Baltimore Black Sox, Bready did offer the following explanation:

Without surviving players to interview, without business records to examine, the best hope for recovering box scores and game-by-games highlights is probably the nation's array of African-American periodicals. Good fortune to anyone who takes up the cause (p. 171).

*The First 100 Years Of Baseball In Baltimore* should bring every Baltimore area baseball fan, as well as sport scholars, to its covers. The highlights of teams, their stars, their characters, and the ballparks where they played all grace this work by Bready. The book closes with the onset of the stadium that many of us knew as the home of Baltimore baseball since 1954, the home on 33rd Street, Memorial Stadium. This park was dedicated to the veterans of World War II. Summer in Baltimore, hot weather, crabs, hot dogs, baseball and a cold one. "Play ball!"

—JAMES R. COATES, JR.

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ROBINSON, FRAZIER WITH PAUL BAUER. With a foreword by John "Buck" O'Neil and an introduction by Gerald Early. *Catching Dreams: My Life in the Negro Baseball Leagues*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1999. Pp. 230. 30 Photographs, index. \$27.95 cb.

Talk about revisionist history! You've found the granddaddy of them all with *Catching Dreams*. If you forgot or never knew who taught Satchel Paige how to pitch a baseball, or who taught Josh Gibson how to hit and catch a baseball, or better still, who won the battle of the Pacific during World War II, then you will find this work a must read. On the other hand, if you are seeking factual, well-documented information, this is not your ideal resource material.

Paul Bauer openly tells the reader that he has not changed the language or the grammar of Frazier Robinson's oral remembrances in order that the true essence of Robinson's experiences are related in the homey flavor in which they were stated. This is fine and wonderful for those of us who grew up with the older relatives or community friends who daily related how good or bad it was for African Americans during the legalized segregationist era of this country. We understood that transition from the poorly educated, the noneducated, and the highly educated individuals disseminating these folktales and folklore. In this generation of underachieving, poor reading black youth and those with poor verbal communication skills who might read this book, the language and grammar of Robinson should have been corrected. The work of Bauer and Robinson will not only be

read by scholars. More and more urban school districts are utilizing alternative reading topics to teach reading, grammar, writing, and history. Many youth, not totally understanding that the language and grammar is incorrect, will point out to one another, and in some instances to their teachers, that their improper use of grammar was indeed correct because it was used in a book the same way. The works in sport history are no longer being used in a vacuum.

With all that said, the insights that are provided by Frazier Robinson into the “Negro Leagues” are extremely useful for scholars and researchers. While many questionable stories of heroics by Robinson filter this work, the information given on the places, time periods, locations and personnel involved provide wonderful reference sources. Because of the obvious flare for the sensational engulfing this work, the given data should be triple-checked at every turn.

If one was not present at a particular event and someone else, who was present, is relating their memories, it is hard to refute their claims. The very fact that Robinson’s recollections are not previously recorded gives military and social historians, as well as sport historians new data to synthesize, verify and/or refute. After such analysis, this work will be lauded as precedent setting in the world of Negro League Baseball, and African Americans’ involvement in the war in the Pacific; or it will be viewed as the babblings of an old man fantasizing about his athletic and military glory.

Besides the Negro Leagues, Robinson’s recantations give some wonderful tidbits and insights into Cuban and Mexican Baseball Leagues and talents. This is great for historical purposes only, because believe it or not, he actually admits on page 186 that he was asked to do a professional scouting assessment by Buck O’Neil, then of the Chicago Cubs scouting department. The person he recommended turned out to be a flop. Robinson attested to the fact that that was the beginning and end of his scouting career. With how he changed so many other notable greats of the Negro Leagues, he probably should have thought about a position as director of player development instead of scouting.

As a big fan of sports in the Baltimore region, including the “Elite Giants,” it would have been great to see more pictures of Frazier in that team’s uniform and more details of his years there, especially since he spent most of his professional playing days with that organization. Pictures of entertainers, from the way they are presented, were not paramount to the telling of his story. These pictures would have been better left out in favor of pictures of Frazier the athlete.

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