
DREIFORT, JOHN E., ED. *Baseball History From Outside the Lines: A Reader*. Lincoln: Bison Books, University of Nebraska Press, 2001. Pp. xvii+345. \$24.95 pb.

Dreifort, professor of history at Wichita State University and father of major league pitcher Darren Dreifort of the Los Angeles Dodgers, pitches a two-hit shutout with this outstanding reader. Designed to coordinate with Ben Rader's one-volume history of the game, Dreifort brings to the student of baseball an outstanding collection of work that deals with nearly every aspect of the game. Not being a big fan of "readers," I came away from this volume with an extremely positive attitude.

Dreifort adroitly borrows essays by some of the luminaries in the study of baseball. David Voigt reviews the Black Sox scandal and gambling in early professional baseball. Steve Riess uses statistical means to assess the role of baseball and social mobility. Warren Goldstein looks at the origins of baseball and the baseball fraternity that created the game. Jules Tygiel reviews the Jackie Robinson integration of the game and its larger meaning for the United States. Sam Regalado charms us with his passionate coverage of Latin influence in baseball in post-World War II years. Their work is presented, in the context of this reader, as the seminal work on those topics. Any reader without them would be lacking in quality.

But perhaps the most poignant aspect of this reader is that it focuses our attention on the thoughtful, well-researched essays of lesser known authors. I was particularly struck with an essay entitled "Jim Crow Strikes Out: Interracial Baseball in Wichita, Kansas, 1920-1935," by Jason Pendleton. This microcosmic study looks at baseball and

its role in defying the Jim Crow rules in the 1920s and 1930s. Black baseball teams in Wichita, though not allowed in the city league, were competitive with white-dominated teams and played them frequently in front of significant-sized integrated crowds.

There appeared to be a strong set of Jim Crow de facto social customs in Wichita, yet baseball games between the Wichita Monroviens and the Cudahy Rex (a black industrial team) in the 1920s against white only teams were common and well attended. Pendleton did note that when the black teams won these games, there was minimal coverage by the white dominated press. By the early 1930s, however, many semi-pro teams, composed of either white or black teams, played against each other without question. And by 1935 integrated teams played in the state tournament held annually in Wichita.

Perhaps the most perplexing event occurred as early as 1925 when the Ku Klux Klan Number 6 baseball team played the Wichita Monroviens before a large mixed audience. The Monroviens won 10-8, and city papers reported no violence or racial confrontation before, during or after the game. Pendleton concludes that though racial segregation was still prevalent by the 1930s that baseball had provided one arena where social interaction could occur on an equal basis.

Another thought-provoking article was by William M. Simons: "The Athletes as Jewish Standard Bearer: Media Images of Hank Greenberg." Though not the first Jewish player, Greenberg became a regional hero in the Midwest and a national hero to the Jewish population with his prodigious power displays in the 1930s. Simons particularly dissects Greenberg's agonizing decision to play for the Tigers in 1934 on Rosh Hashanah in the midst of a pennant drive. Pressure from the popular press swayed Greenberg towards playing, while the Jewish community saw his decision as a measure of his commitment to his religion and traditions. Simons does an excellent job of assessing the commitment of Greenberg to his ethnic heritage, to his team and to the American context of where he lived. This provided an excellent microcosmic view of the larger issues of ethnicity as a factor in mid-twentieth-century America. The identification of people had much to do with their ethnic heritage whether they were Jewish, Irish, German, Slovakian, or any other identifiable group.

Baseball History From Outside the Lines is a volume not only for the student in baseball history classes but also for the scholar and for the general reading public. The variety of articles assess class, race, ethnicity, styles of play, management, social mobility, the meaning of the game for communities, and the origins of baseball for women. There is something for just about everybody in this game winning volume. My only complaint is the paucity of illustrations and pictures. Baseball after all is a visual event.

—HARRY JEBSEN, JR.
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