

TYGIEL, JULES. *Extra Bases: Reflections on Jackie Robinson, Race, and Baseball History*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002. Pp xii+164. \$17.95 pb.

In the introduction to *Extra Bases: Reflections on Jackie Robinson, Race, and Baseball History*, Jules Tygiel stated I do not "consider myself a baseball historian" (p. x). His latest work, a collection of essays focused largely on race and baseball, demonstrates the extent to which his claim is both right and wrong at the same time. Anyone who follows baseball history knows that Tygiel is not only a baseball historian, but one of the foremost experts on the topic. *Baseball's Great Experiment*, his 1983 book on Jackie Robinson, remains one of the all-time classics, not only for its rendition of the Robinson case but also for what it revealed about race in baseball and in America. In 2000, his book *Past Time* provided a nuanced and interesting account of various aspects of baseball history, from the invention of the statistic to the rise of rotisserie leagues. Such a background makes it indisputable that Tygiel, whether he likes it or not, is not only a baseball historian but likely the pre-eminent one of his generation.

And yet, there is also truth to the author's claim. Despite his wealth of baseball knowledge and his obvious love for the game, Tygiel, a professor at San Francisco State University, remains first and foremost an historian of America. His work is not simply about baseball but about baseball as a window through which to better understand the nation. "As a fan," he writes, "I focus primarily on what is happening on the field. As a historian, however, I am more interested in the broader cultural milieu that surrounds the game—how developments in the game of baseball reflect American society and the ways in which our nation has changed over time" (p. xi). It is this ability to write about the sport while also writing about society that has earned him so many accolades. It is also an ability that is prominently displayed in his new book, *Extra Bases*.

*Extra Bases* is a collection of thirteen essays that the author wrote at different times for different publishers after the release of *Baseball's Great Experiment*. They are collected here and divided into three sections: "Reflections on Jackie Robinson," "Reflections on Race and Baseball," and "Reflections on Baseball History," and are largely unchanged, with a few minor exceptions. Anyone familiar with Tygiel's work will find little here that is surprising, as his musings on everything from Jackie Robinson's 1944 court martial to the post-baseball life of Roy Campanella offer little that challenges his earlier, and more well-known, works. And yet, as always, Tygiel provides clarity, detail, and thoughtfulness, making *Extra Bases* a valuable collection to historians and baseball aficionados alike.

Of the three sections, few will be surprised to find the first one, on Jackie Robinson, to be the best. The four essays here offer a wealth of information on everything from Robinson's background to his army career to his signing with the Montreal Royals in 1945, always in Tygiel's clear and lucid prose. The third essay, "Jackie Robinson's Signing: The Untold Story," stands out as particularly significant by adding new information about Branch Rickey's original intentions, unearthed after Tygiel's first book had been published. And yet, the essays offer not only a look at Jackie Robinson but also a look at race in

American society as well. So, for example, Robinson's career in the military serves not only to tell the reader about him but to better illustrate the racial problems in the military as a whole in this period. In Tygiel's skilled hands, Robinson is never merely Robinson, but instead is a means through which to better understand America's struggles over race and identity.

The second section, which examines race and baseball in general, remains true to the same themes. In "Black Ball," Tygiel offers a fairly straightforward synopsis of African Americans and baseball after the Civil War, from the Brooklyn Uniques of 1867 to the Robinson signing. Another essay looks at the successes and failures of the integration process post 1945, showing, for example, how the inclusion of African Americans helped open the door for dark-skinned Latinos such as Minnie Minoso, Vic Power, and Roberto Clemente. On balance, however, Tygiel finds more failures than successes, especially in the front office, which, he concludes, "remained only a frontier, rather than a stronghold, of equality" (p. 117). Again, the essays delve beyond the basics of baseball to tell the reader something about America by studying such topics as the public response to integrated teams, or the perpetuation of racial stereotypes through minstrel shows and teams with names like the Zulu Cannibals.

The final section is the weakest of the three, as it bounces from topic to topic without the same organizational clarity as the others. Still, the high quality of Tygiel's work remains. A few short book reviews, a good historiographical essay, and some other musings on the state of baseball might offer less thoughtful analysis than the other sections, but they remain interesting reading nevertheless. One essay in particular stands out, as Tygiel offers a thoughtful critique of Ken Burns's baseball documentary that finds America's leading documentary filmmaker guilty of "substantial liberties with [his] sequence, facts, and events" (p. 145).

A few minor quibbles should be noted. As a consequence of the essay format, the collection suffers from a bit of redundancy. At the same time, the central theme of race and baseball connects the first two-thirds of the book beautifully but is missing at the end. A concluding essay to tie everything together might have been helpful in that regard. Tygiel also may have too favorable a view of Depression-era race relations. His reference, for example, to "the liberalized racial attitudes that had emerged during the Great Depression and World War II," (p. 9) is at best an overgeneralization. Still, these are small details that are almost irrelevant in such an exceptional collection of writings. Dr. Tygiel may reject the mantle of "baseball historian," but there remains no one in America more deserving of that title.

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