



## JACKIE ROBINSON

More than just the first African American in the Major League Baseball

Jirri FG Eijssink  
[J.F.G.Eijssink@umail.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:J.F.G.Eijssink@umail.leidenuniv.nl)  
S1578774  
History, Political Culture &  
National Identities

Dr. Dario Fazzi  
[D.Fazzi@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:D.Fazzi@hum.leidenuniv.nl)  
MA Thesis  
2016/2017

## Table of contents

Introduction .....	2
Chapter 1: “Let’s keep his name out of the box scores” .....	11
Chapter 2: Only on the field it was just Jackie Robinson .....	17
Chapter 3: The guinea pig .....	24
Chapter 4: The loneliest man in baseball .....	32
Chapter 5: From the loneliest man to the troublemaker .....	38
Chapter 6: From baseball to politics .....	47
Chapter 7: The emergence of a civil rights activist.....	55
Chapter 8: The President, friend or foe of civil rights?.....	65
Chapter 9: Action .....	71
Chapter 10: What went on in the Southern states .....	76
Chapter 11: Robinson and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. ....	82
Chapter 12: Jesse Owens, Cassius Clay, Malcom X and the 1968 Olympics.....	86
Conclusion.....	94
Bibliography: Primary Sources .....	100
Bibliography: Secondary Sources .....	107

## Introduction

In American culture, few individuals loom as large as Jackie Robinson (1919-1972). Robinson is the subject of “poetry and library shelves of books, Hollywood films and Broadway musicals, sermons and short stories, term papers and dramatic plays, comic books and children’s books.”<sup>1</sup> While Robinson was not the best baseball player who ever played, he certainly is the most celebrated baseball player.

On April 15, 1947, Jackie Robinson became the first African American to play in the Major League Baseball (MLB). Fifty years later his number, forty-two, was retired. Seven years later, the first annual Jackie Robinson Day was celebrated around all professional baseball parks in the United States. MLB officials argued that they wanted to ensure that the “incredible contributions and sacrifices” Robinson made for baseball and society should not be forgotten.<sup>2</sup> Since 2009 everyone in baseball; from the batboy to the manager wears the number forty-two on April 15 to honor Jackie Robinson. By 2013 the motion picture *42* was released; the story how Jackie signed with the Brooklyn organization and became the first African American in the MLB. What resonates in the popular culture is Robinson’s journey full of heroism and courage. Chris Lamb described that Robinson became the “the unflappable calm in the face of incredible adversity, including racism, irrational hatred and even death threats.”<sup>3</sup> Robinson is celebrated as a black man who had to battle racism on and off the field. He is celebrated as a baseball pioneer, as the one who made it possible for other African American to play in the MLB. Like Detroit Tigers outfielder, Justin Upton: “you know that you would never have the opportunity to do that without Jackie’s sacrifices.”<sup>4</sup>

Lamb argued that the civil rights movement was often described in terms of boycotts, student sit-ins, marches, “freedom riders and racist Southern demagogues.” It was told in relation

---

<sup>1</sup> B. Carroll, “‘This is it!’ The PR campaign by Wendell Smith and Jackie Robinson,” *Journalism History*, No. 3, (Fall 2011): 151-162.

<sup>2</sup> Wire Reports, “MLB: Every April 15 to be Jackie Robinson Day,” [http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/sports/baseball/2004-03-03-april-15\\_x.htm](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/sports/baseball/2004-03-03-april-15_x.htm), modified Mar. 4, 2005, accessed July 22, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> C. Lamb ed., *From Jack Johnson to LeBron James; Sports, Media and the Color Line* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 2016) 237.

<sup>4</sup> A. Simon, “No. 42 to return as baseball celebrates Jackie,” <http://m.mlb.com/news/article/172418440/mlb-brings-back-no-42-for-jackie-robinson-day/>, published Apr. 15, 2016, accessed July 22, 2017.

to Supreme Court decisions, congressional legislature and “emotional speeches outside the Lincoln Memorial.”<sup>5</sup> According to Lamb sports also influenced racial attitudes of the Americans. The integration in sports made white people believe that African Americans should not only be treated as equals within the context of sports but also in the rest of society; like housing, jobs and education. When Jackie Robinson was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. argued that Robinson could talk about social injustice, racism and politics. He had that right “because back in the days when integration wasn’t fashionable, he underwent the trauma and the humiliation and the loneliness which comes with being a pilgrim that walks in the lonesome byways toward the high road of freedom. He was a sit-inner before sit-ins, a freedom rider before freedom riders.”<sup>6</sup> Thus Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. comprehended that the fight for equality in the United States “was often inspired and foreshadowed by the campaign for racial equality in sports.”<sup>7</sup> For that reason the Los Angeles Dodgers unveiled a new statue, on April 15, 2017, honoring Jackie’s legacy. A famous quote by Jackie Robinson, written at the bottom of the statue says: “A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives.” According to the Dodger organization, this quote enables “future generations to learn about Robinson when firsthand accounts are no longer available.”<sup>8</sup> This thesis draws on these intentions. It aims to uncover how did Jackie Robinson use his public prominence, mostly derived from sport, to become an influential public intellectual and a civil rights activist in the United States. It wants to explore the roots of his views on racial equality and social justice. It explores the motivations for his reformative agenda. Accordingly, the first half of this thesis will look at how Robinson gained public prominence by succeeding in professional baseball. This will provide a solid base for the second half of the thesis where the focus will be on Jackie’s career as a public intellectual, a civil rights activist and a point of reference for many young African Americans.

In the afterword of the paperback edition (2008) of Jules Tygiel’s book. Tygiel stated that “the Jackie Robinson story is to Americans what the Passover story is to Jews: it must be told to every generation so that we never forget.”<sup>9</sup> Tygiel’s book has often been described as the landmark

---

<sup>5</sup> C. Lamb, ed., *From Jack Johnson to LeBron James*, 6.

<sup>6</sup> M.L. King Jr., “People in Action Hall of Famer,” *New York Amsterdam News*, Aug. 4, 1962.

<sup>7</sup> C. Lamb, Ed., *From Jack Johnson to LeBron James*, 6.

<sup>8</sup> B. Shaikin & M. DiGiovanna, “Statue of Jackie Robinson unveiled at Dodger Stadium,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 15, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> J. Tygiel, *Baseball’s Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and his Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 1983; revised paperback edition 2008) Afterword.

book about the integration of baseball in America. It presents both Robinson's struggle to integrate the MLB and its larger context. Tygiel argued that baseball reflected American society as it moved from segregation to integration, a slow and painful process. Tygiel created a link between African American history, baseball and the modern civil rights movement. One of the great aspects of Tygiel's book is that he showed how Robinson's success led to hiring other African American players, like Larry Doby, Roy Campanella, Don Newcombe and Satchel Paige. It showed that over time more teams began to challenge Jim Crow policies in the South. During spring training baseball organizations tried to integrate the hotels, restaurants and other public places they used. Tygiel describes how Southern entrepreneurs changed from opposing integration to accepting it. According to Tygiel the Southerners did not want to lose their lucrative agreements. Thus, economic factors played an important role in the desegregation of professional baseball.

George Bleske and Chris Lamb (1998) argued that the reporting of Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier in professional baseball in 1947, was "limited both in content and context" in the white newspapers. White newspapers did not see the historical significance while for African American sportswriters it "symbolized the hopes and dreams of integration, not merely on a ballfield but in society."<sup>10</sup> William Simons argued that the announcement of Robinson playing in the MLB "generated extensive public discussion about consensus, conflict, equality, liberty, opportunity, prejudice, democracy, and national character" in African American newspapers.<sup>11</sup> In another book Lamb argued that the role of Jackie Robinson played in the integration of baseball has been well documented, but that the most important part; Jackie's first spring training in Florida (1946) had not yet been told.<sup>12</sup> Lamb excels in placing the spring training within the larger social context of the South in 1946.

In 1997, Joseph Dorinson and Joram Warmund argued that baseball was a "microcosm of America" and that baseball was at the vanguard of the "reforming and transforming" of Postwar America.<sup>13</sup> They used part of the speech President Clinton held on April 15, 1997. Dorinson and

---

<sup>10</sup> G. Bleske and C. Lamb, "Democracy on the Field: The Black Press Takes on White Baseball," *Journalism History*, vol. 24, no. 2 (Summer 1998)

<sup>11</sup> W. Simons, "Jackie Robinson and the American Mind: Journalistic perceptions on the Reintegration of Baseball," *Journal of Sport History*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (1985)

<sup>12</sup> C. Lamb, *Blackout the Untold Story of Jackie Robinson's First Spring Training*, (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 2004)

<sup>13</sup> J. Dorinson and J. Warmund, *Jackie Robinson Race Sports and the American Dream* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1998)

Warmund agreed with Clinton that Robinson's debut fifty years earlier was a "defining moment" in American history. According to Dorinson and Warmund that day "a single individual" shaped America for the generations that came after him. They argued that "Robinson was the man who made the difference."<sup>14</sup> Dorinson and Warmund examined the roles of the black press and the Communist Party in the integration of baseball. Dorinson and Warmund focused on Robinson's legacy. They wondered what impact Robinson had on American society, but like all other scholars until that time, the focus had been confined to his baseball years. Until 1997 there was no real authoritative biography on Jackie Robinson until Arnold Rampersad wrote one.<sup>15</sup> With his biography Rampersad wanted to show the man behind the myth. He argued that Robinson's drive to do good in the eyes of God came from his mom. The most impressive were the chapters about Jackie's activities after he retired from baseball. Rampersad focused on how Robinson tried to improve the position of African Americans.

In 2017 two new books were published about the role faith played in Robinson's life. While both books depicted Robinson as a Protestant who was taught that smoking, drinking and premarital sex were bad. Ed Henry's book mainly focused on how God helped Jackie through difficult times during his baseball career and how a Methodist white man, Branch Rickey, helped Robinson break the color barrier.<sup>16</sup> Whereas the book by Michael Long and Chris Lamb went beyond that.<sup>17</sup> they focused on the role Robinson's beliefs played after his retirement. How Robinson believed that because of his Christianity he had a responsibility to fight racism in American society. They analyzed Jackie's "religious beliefs in relation to Martin Luther King Jr., Malcom X, and Muhammad Ali."<sup>18</sup> Long and Lamb explained how his mother, Mallie Robinson, taught Robinson to be proud of his blackness as she told that Adam and Eva were black and only turned white because they sinned.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> J. Dorinson and J. Warmund, *Jackie Robinson Race Sports and the American Dream*, Introduction XXI.

<sup>15</sup> A. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson, a Biography* (New York: The Random House Publishing Group, 1997)

<sup>16</sup> E. Henry, *42 Faith: The Rest of the Jackie Robinson Story* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2017)

<sup>17</sup> C. Lamb and M. Long, *Jackie Robinson: A Spiritual Biography: The Faith of a Boundary-Breaking Hero* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2017)

<sup>18</sup> P. Putz, "Finally Jackie Robinson's Faith is Getting the Attention It Deserves, *Christianity Today*," <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2017/june-web-only/jackie-robinsons-faith-attention-deserves.html?start=3>, published June 29, 2017, accessed July 20, 2017.

<sup>19</sup> P. Putz, Finally Jackie Robinson's Faith is Getting the Attention It Deserves, *Christianity Today*.

That Michael Long focused on Jackie's religious life after his retirement was no coincidence. Before 2017 he had already written two books that focused on his post baseball career. In 2007 Long focused on the correspondence between Jackie Robinson and influential political leaders including, Dwight Eisenhower, Richard Nixon, John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr.<sup>20</sup> In 2013 Long offered a compilation of Robinson's Columns that he wrote for the *New York Post* and the *New York Amsterdam News*. In these columns Robinson showed his convictions about political decisions, the civil rights movement and many other aspects of life like family and sports. Long introduced each column with a brief contextualization.<sup>21</sup> Long's books are a very good addition to the extensive historiography, because they show Jackie Robinson from a different perspective, but where other historians focused on his baseball career, Long focused on his religious beliefs, letters and columns. Both approaches, depicting him just as a baseball player or just as a public intellectual, only partially depict Jackie Robinson and therefore present a static a simplistic view of a complex person. This thesis is focused on his contribution towards the civil rights movement and the emancipation of African Americans during and after his baseball career. This thesis will draw on the useful and important work of earlier scholars. Some aspects that were analyzed in the works of other scholars like Robinson's religious beliefs and the role other individuals played in the integration of baseball like African American journalist Wendell Smith and Branch Rickey will play a small part in this thesis. This thesis will show that Jackie Robinson was one of the first politicized African American athletes that spoke out against racism and influenced generations after him, during and after his baseball career.

In 1997 David Wiggins argued that 1968 was the year the black athlete woke up. Wiggins named the chapter about that year, "The Year of Awakening."<sup>22</sup> 1968 was a turbulent year within American society as it saw the assassination of Dr. King, a proposed boycott of the Summer Olympics in Mexico City by African American athletes and subsequently the black gloved protest during the medal ceremony by African American sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos. The latter in particular became a defining moment with President Obama referring to the protest as "legendary." Obama stated that their protest was controversial but that it "woke folks up and

---

<sup>20</sup> M. Long, *First Class Citizenship: The Civil Rights Letters of Jackie Robinson* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2007)

<sup>21</sup> M. Long Ed., *Beyond Home Plate Jackie Robinson on Life After Baseball* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2013)

<sup>22</sup> D. Wiggins, *Glory Bound: Black Athletes in a White America* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997) Chapter 6.

created greater opportunity for those that followed.”<sup>23</sup> In 2006 Russel Wigginton agreed with Wiggins that 1968 was a “memorable year in understanding the connections among race, sports, and American culture” but he argued that 1968 was a “culmination of many years of struggling at what now seems like a snail’s pace to earn any recognition rather than the time that they “woke up” in the world of athletics.”<sup>24</sup>

Wigginton argued that black athletes became more “strategic and outspoken” from the 1956’s and on. Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr. “and a host of other black Montgomerians” inspired African Americans throughout the country with their “readiness to fight the institutionalized racism of the South.”<sup>25</sup> Among those inspired were “three black pioneers in American sports, Bill Russel, Jim Brown, and Cassius Clay.”<sup>26</sup> According to Wigginton it was the actions of these three African American athletes that inspired other African Americans “to remain strong in their quest for equality.”<sup>27</sup> Wigginton argued that “the situations these three men faced and the actions they took set important guides for how African American athletes would respond in the next 30 years.”<sup>28</sup> What was even more important according to Wigginton was how “their actions influenced how society might respond to the powerful personalities of the black athletes to come.”<sup>29</sup> Wigginton saw these three athletes as the “catalysts” that inspired African American athletes in the late 1960’s. He argued that only these three had the “national charisma and athletic accomplishments to command an audience for their every move.”<sup>30</sup> It was their outspokenness and “principled demeanor on issues related to civil rights” that had helped changed the status quo in “overall athletics.”<sup>31</sup>

This thesis asserts that Jackie Robinson was a pioneer. The term pioneer is not only applicable to Robinson because he was the first African American in the MLB. It is also applicable because his integration into professional baseball foreshadowed the broader integration of

---

<sup>23</sup> D. Boyer, “Obama praises ex-Olympians Tommie Smith and John Carlos for ’68 ‘black power’ salute,” *Washington times*, <http://m.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/sep/29/obama-praises-ex-olympians-smith-carlos-68-black-p/>, published Sept. 29, 2016, accessed March 1, 2017.

<sup>24</sup> R. Wigginton, *The Strange Career of the Black Athlete* (Westport: Praeger, 2006) 51.

<sup>25</sup> R. Wigginton, *The Strange Career of the Black Athlete*, 51.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.



American society and Robinson was aware of this. Robinson was aware that he represented millions of African Americans with everything he did off and on the field. Robinson could be described as a pioneer because he was the first African American athlete that used his national charisma and athletic accomplishments to influence American society. His fame opened doors that were closed for normal Americans and Robinson used his fame to inspire and strive for social justice wherever he could. Jackie Robinson was the catalyst that provided later generations of African American athletes with a platform to challenge racial inequality inside and outside the world of sports. Because Robinson was a public figure and baseball has been the national pastime, Robinson's breakthrough has been well documented. Newspapers all over the country, regardless of their geographical location or political alliance reported about Robinson. Thanks to the Arthur Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, I had access to many sources that would have been locked behind a price tag or simply proved inaccessible otherwise. Their online catalogue consisted of all the major newspapers around the United States, black and white. This thesis is based on a variety of newspapers because while newspapers reported on Robinson, how they did it was different. In African American newspapers Jackie's integration meant hope, but also generated discussion on the social status of African Americans, something that has been done outside the context of sports since the *Freedom's Journal* was published in 1827. On the other hand none of those discussion found its way in the white newspapers and thus not into mainstream society. To provide a more objective view articles from both black and white newspapers are analyzed in the first seven chapters.

The first six chapters are organized chronologically. The first chapter starts with explaining the historical context of baseball and American society and how these were intertwined from the end of the Civil War until the 1930's. The second chapter focuses on how Robinson grew up and how he handled Jim Crow policies during his high school, university and army days. With special focus on the incident that led to Jackie's court martial. The primary sources on the court martial were published on the website of the national archive. Chapters three to five focus on the development of Robinson during his baseball career. How he developed from a player that turned his other cheek (1947-1949) to the award winning All-Star player that spoke his mind (1949-1956). While chapter six focuses on the politicization of Robinson and how he used his fame and relevance to speak out against social injustice in the United States, as well Robinson's testimony in front of

the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) in 1949. it will focus on the development of the civil rights movement during Jackie's baseball career.

From chapter seven onwards the focus is on his post baseball career and again the Arthur Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture proved to be of utmost importance for this thesis. Because of the research center I had access to the NAACP collections that kept records of Robinson's activities for the NAACP and the online collection of the Library of Congress. the National Archives published various letters online that Robinson had written to Presidents like Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson. The last five chapters are not chronologically ordered but they are arranged by theme as because they mainly concentrate on the columns Robinson wrote for the *New York Post* and the *New York Amsterdam News*. While the research center gave me access to the archives of the *New York Amsterdam News*. It did not provide me with access to the archives of the *New York Post* and I relied on Michael Long's book, *Beyond Home Plate* (2013). I based the selection of columns on if they focused on civil rights, Robinson had the freedom to write about what he wanted. Robinson wrote about sports, family, politics, economy and much more. Only the columns that focus on civil rights are included in this thesis. Chapter eight shows that Robinson's political alliance depended on how the Presidential candidate presented himself on the issues on civil rights, while chapter nine emphasizes Robinson's thoughts about what he thought individuals could do to help African Americans achieve equality within American society. Chapter ten analyzes what Robinson thought about newsworthy events that happened in the Southern states. The last two chapters focus on Jackie's relation with several other prominent African Americans, like; Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Malcom X, Jesse Owens, Tommie Smith, John Carlos and Cassius Clay.

At the time Robinson wrote for the *New York Post* (1959-196) the *Post* was a liberal paper and one of the few racially progressive white newspapers. Editor James Wechsler argued it was a smart move to let Robinson write his columns because he was a "national icon" and a "hero" and a lot of people wanted to know how he thought about newsworthy events.<sup>32</sup> Robinson agreed with the position because he could bring social injustice to the attention of its readers. In 1962 Robinson started writing for the *New York Amsterdam News*. The *New York Amsterdam News* championed for civil rights during the 1950's and 1960's. It was at the forefront in chronicling the events of the

---

<sup>32</sup> M. Long Ed., *Beyond Home Plate*, Introduction XXII.

civil rights movement.<sup>33</sup> Robinson received professional help with his columns with William Bright helping him at the *New York Post* and Al Duckett at the *New York Amsterdam News*.<sup>34</sup> It was still Robinson's thoughts that stood at the center of his columns and thus provide historical value.

Robinson wrote his columns for the citizens who wondered what their sport idol had to say about the social issues that dominated the American consciousness. The columns also provide a contrast to the baseball player that turned the other cheek. He fought racism where he could and the columns show the transformation Robinson underwent, from a patient cheek turning baseball player to a fierce columnist and activist who argued that the time for change was imminent. This thesis will provide a more complex and dynamic depiction of Jackie Robinson than other scholars have done that only focused on his baseball career or his post baseball career. This thesis argues that the latter one could not have been possible without the first. It is of utmost importance to understand the whole story, if you want to know what Jackie Robinson meant for the emancipation of African Americans.

---

<sup>33</sup> PBS Staff, "Newspapers: The Amsterdam News," *The black Press: Soldiers without swords*, <http://www.pbs.org/blackpress/film/index.html>, accessed July 24, 2017.

<sup>34</sup> M. Long Ed., *Beyond Home Plate*, XXV

## Chapter 1: “Let’s keep his name out of the box scores”

On February 1, 2010, United States Senator Claire McCaskill wrote a letter to President Obama, urging him to honor Stan “The Man” Musial with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. McCaskill stated that baseball was America’s game, that every aspect of it from the crack of the bat to the pageantry of the ballpark were ingrained in the national culture. McCaskill argued that a critical part of the game’s story was the nation’s story.<sup>35</sup> Though hyperbolic, McCaskill was right. Baseball is a quintessential element of America’s DNA. It became popular at the end of the Civil War, especially in urban areas, and in 1868 C.A. Peverelly defined it as one of the favorite national pastimes. He argued that baseball had become “beyond question the leading feature of the outdoor sports of the United States.”<sup>36</sup> From that period on the story of the game reflected the story of American society and vice versa. The treatment of African American baseball players reflected how African Americans were treated within society.

In 1867, the National Association of Baseball Players added a clause in its constitution specifying that no club applying for membership could be composed of persons of color.<sup>37</sup> But in an article, that was initially presented at the Baseball Hall of Fame’s Fifth Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture on June 10, 1993, A.R. Pratkanis and M. E. Turner argued that after the Civil War about two dozen African Americans played semi-professional baseball. “their treatment was characteristic of the ambivalent racial attitudes of the Reconstruction period.”<sup>38</sup> Black players were in fact openly discriminated and only half tolerated. After a reorganization of the National Association of Baseball Players in 1871 the clause that they made up in 1867 was left out. Baseball owners agreed that they would not allow African Americans to play baseball, this became known as the “Gentleman’s Agreement.”<sup>39</sup> Brian Carrall argued that the press was aware of the unspoken and unwritten color line since 1895. An article in *Sporting Life* in June of that year, remarked that nothing was “ever said or written about drawing the color line in

---

<sup>35</sup> Clair McCaskill, Letter to President Barack Obama, February 1 (2010)

<sup>36</sup> C. A. Peverelly, *The Book of American Pastimes, Containing a History of the Principal Base-Ball, Cricket, Rowing, and Yachting Clubs of the United States* (New York: The Author, 1868) 336.

<sup>37</sup> B. Carrall, “When to Stop the Cheering? The Black Press, the Black Community and the Integration of Professional Baseball” (New York & London: Routledge, 2006) 14-16.

<sup>38</sup> A. R. Pratkanis and M. E. Turner. “The year “Cool Papa” Bell lost the batting title: Mr. Branch Rickey and Mr. Jackie Robinson’s plea for affirmative action,” in *Out of the shadows: African American baseball from the Cuban Giants to Jackie Robinson*, edited by B. Kirwin (Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 2005) 30.

<sup>39</sup> B. Carrall, “When to Stop the Cheering?,” 14-16.

the [National] League.” According to the article it was “generally understood that none but whites shall make up the League teams, and so it goes.”<sup>40</sup> This was in line with the political change at the end of the Reconstruction Era when the so called “Redeemers” dominated the regional politics in the South. They called themselves the Redeemers because they claimed they redeemed the region from the horrors that happened during the Reconstruction. They saw the Reconstruction Era as an era of “black rule.”<sup>41</sup> Their goal was to undo what was achieved during the Reconstruction. The Compromise of 1877 made sure the South could enforce the Jim Crow laws and the few African American players in the semi-professional minor leagues suffered the consequences. They had to endure a constant stream of verbal abuse, which came from the fans but from other fellow players as well.

Two black players could undermine racial discrimination and played professional baseball years before Jackie Robinson officially broke the color line. The first one was Moses Fleetwood Walker, who was a catcher for the Toledo Blue Stockings between 1883 and 1884. In 1884, he was joined by his brother Weldy Wilberforce Walker, who played five games. There is some controversy if they are to be considered the first African Americans to play professional baseball. William Edward White, the son of a plantation owner and a slave, played in one game for the Providence Greys in the National League, on June 21, 1879.<sup>42</sup> When Peter Morris, a researcher for the Society for American Baseball Research, dug into White’s history he found that the Chicago federal census listed him as white.<sup>43</sup> Additionally, John Husman argued that “By the retroactive application of genetic rules” William Edward White was the first known black man to play major-league baseball. Within his society, he was not. White played baseball and lived his life as a white man.”<sup>44</sup> Thus Moses Fleetwood Walker is considered as the first African American to play major league baseball.

When Walker joined the Blue Stockings, they were a semi-professional minor league team. After the Blue Stockings won the semi-professional Northwestern League they qualified to transfer

---

<sup>40</sup> B. Carrall, “When to Stop the Cheering?,” 14-16.

<sup>41</sup> E. Foner, *Give Me Liberty! An American History* (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014) 648.

<sup>42</sup> AP, “Was William Edward White Really First?, *ESPN*, <http://www.espn.com/mlb/news/story?id=1723322> (January 30, 2004) accessed, May 9, 2017.

<sup>43</sup> J. Husman, “June 21, 1879 the cameo of William Edward White,” published in *Inventing Baseball: The 100 Greatest Games of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, edited. B. Felber (Phoenix, 2013)

<sup>44</sup> J. Husman, “June 21, 1879 the cameo of William Edward white.”

to the American Association. Walker became the first African American to play in the major league. His arrival stirred controversy within the professional league. Husman argued that a representative of the executive committee of the baseball league tried to end Walker's career before it started. On March 14, 1883, the committee came together and argued that no colored players were allowed in the league, but the motion was dismissed and Walker could play professional baseball.<sup>45</sup> This example showed that Walker's life was not easy and that his ability to play was always questioned. This was not the only time he was met with opposition

When Walker arrived in the Major League he was met with resistance, especially by Cap Anson. Anson was one of baseball's first superstar who at the time of Walker was the manager of the successful Chicago White Stockings.<sup>46</sup> Husman maintained that Anson's "views were hardly unique at the time, but his prominent position made him a major factor in segregating the game."<sup>47</sup> When the Blue Stockings were scheduled to play a game against Anson's White Stockings on August 10, 1883, Anson initially refused to play the game if an African American played in it. He later came back on it because of the financial loss it would have meant for his team. But he stated: "we'll play this here game, but won't play never no more with the nigger in."<sup>48</sup> While blatant racism could be found all over the United States, it was Cap Anson that became the face of the segregation movement within baseball. His stature as the first true national sports hero influenced other players and managers to follow suit. Incidents like this became more regular during the following decade.

Pratkanis and Turner described another incident involving Anson and Walker, that took place in 1887 while the Blue Stockings played the White Stockings. They argued that Anson yelled across the field at Walker, "get that nigger off the field."<sup>49</sup> But in 1887 Walker did not play for the Blue Stockings anymore. Walker was released in 1884 officially due to an injury, unofficially the club could not handle the pressure anymore. A clear example of the mounting social pressure is given by the following letter, which was originally published in the *Toledo Evening Bee* on September 18, 1884.

*Manager Toledo Base Ball Club:*

---

<sup>45</sup> J. Husman, "August 10, 1883: Cap Anson vs. Fleet Walker," published in *Inventing Baseball: The 100 Greatest Games of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, ed. B. Felber (Phoenix, Arizona, 2013)

<sup>46</sup> J. Husman, "August 10, 1883: Cap Anson vs. Fleet Walker"

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> A. R. Pratkanis and M. E. Turner. "The year "Cool Papa" Bell lost the batting title," 32.

*Dear Sir: We the undersigned, do hereby warn you not to put up Walker, the Negro catcher, the evenings that you play in Richmond, as we could mention the names of 75 determined men who have sworn to mob Walker if he comes to the ground in a suit. We hope you will listen to our words of warning, so that there will be no trouble: but if you do not, there certainly will be. We only write this to prevent much blood shed, as you alone can prevent.*<sup>50</sup>

After 1884 Fleetwood Walker played for various minor league teams, semiprofessional, and on July 14, 1887, the Newark Giants, with Fleetwood Walker and another African American player, had to play an International league match against the Chicago White Stockings of Cap Anson. Anson stood by his statement earlier that decade and the Newark Giants agreed with his demands, thus Walker and Stovey were kept off the roster. Not much later a vote was cast in the (high) minor leagues against renewing the contracts of African American ballplayers. This led to the disappearance of African American baseball players in the major- and minor league after the 1888-1889 season.

Because African Americans could not play in the white leagues anymore they created their own teams and leagues, called Negro League Baseball. Jerry Malloy argued that the first professional black team, the Cuban Giants, “played a key role in nineteenth-century baseball’s halting, uncertain drift toward the color line.”<sup>51</sup> He continued that the “impenetrable veil of racial exclusion” eradicated recollections of a more hopeful time and promising time for African American baseball players.<sup>52</sup> Malloy stated that the “Cuban Giants came to existence at just such a time and prepared black baseball for the harsh realities that were to follow.”<sup>53</sup> What followed was representative for what happened for African Americans in the United States. Between 1890 and 1906 southern states drafted legislatures that disenfranchised African Americans. segregation became the norm after the landmark decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, where the Supreme Court approved the plans of states that required separated cars or sections for African Americans. The term “separate but equal” was not only coined but it also became widely accepted.<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> J. Husman, “Biographical project, Fleet Walker,” <https://sabr.org/bioproj/person/9fc5f867>, edited on May 1, 2017, accessed on May 9, 2017.

<sup>51</sup> J. Malloy, “The Birth of the Cuban Giants, the Origins of Black Professional Baseball,” in *Out of the Shadows*, edited by B. Kirwin, 16.

<sup>52</sup> J. Malloy, “The Birth of the Cuban Giants,” 16.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>54</sup> E. Foner, *Give me Liberty!*, 654.

Segregations was more than a form of racial separation it was “one part of an all-encompassing system of white domination, in which each component- disenfranchisement, unequal economic status, inferior education- reinforced the others.”<sup>55</sup> The goal was whenever there was contact between white- and black people it had to be clear that the white people were superior to the African Americans. This was also the case in baseball. Bill Kirwin stated that African American teams could play and interact with local white teams, but they could not play too aggressively. They had to take it easy, and once the game was done; they could not eat, sleep or stay at the local hotels. They had to sleep in the team bus or at a ghetto flophouse, but Kirwin argued that the money was good for the players.<sup>56</sup> there were the black clown teams, barnstorming teams, teams that travelled through the country to play exhibition matches. Many of those teams, like the Zulu Cannibal Giants, acted on the stereotypes that were present in the minds of the white population. These teams made it harder for competitive teams to be taken seriously in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Most of the time, the African American players and teams were accepted only as entertainers as they were not seen as real competitors.<sup>57</sup> The same could be said for African American actors, singers, writers and other artists. In the 1910 and 1920s there were almost no African American actors in main stream films. The African American characters were represented by white actors, who were “black faced.” White actors applied various products to look black. They exaggerated the hair and lips to create and reinforce existing stereotypes.<sup>58</sup> Movies like; *Birth of a Nation* (1915), not only eulogized the old South but they depicted African Americans as dumb, dangerous and aggressive.

In the 1920s some films were produced that showed positive depictions of African Americans, but these films were not mainstream. The so called “race films” like; *By Right of Birth* (1921) were shown in black theaters as they targeted African Americans.<sup>59</sup> From the 1920s to the mid-1930s there was a “literary, artistic and intellectual movement that kindled a new black cultural identity” called the “Harlem Renaissance.”<sup>60</sup> in 1926 Alain Locke described the core of the Harlem

---

<sup>55</sup> E. Foner, *Give me Liberty!*, 655.

<sup>56</sup> B. Kirwin, *Out of the Shadows*, introduction VIII.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. VIII

<sup>58</sup> J. Thompson and J. Carew, “From Blackface to Blaxploitation: Representation of African Americans in film,” exhibit at Duke University, found at <http://exhibits.library.duke.edu/exhibits/show/africanamericansinfilm>, accessed May 9, 2017.

<sup>59</sup> J. Thompson and J. Carew, “From Blackface to Blaxploitation”

<sup>60</sup> History.com Staff, “Harlem Renaissance,” *History.com*, <http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/harlem-renaissance>, published 2009, accessed, July 7, 2017.



Renaissance when he stated that African Americans seized the first chances “for group expression and self-determination.” According to Locke it was the “spiritual coming of age” for African Americans.<sup>61</sup> The movement inspired generations of African American artists and writers, for the first time African Americans were not only seen as entertainers but they were taken seriously as competitors in various facets of American cultural life.

---

<sup>61</sup> History.com Staff, “Harlem Renaissance.”

## Chapter 2: Only on the field it was just Jackie Robinson

When African Americans tried to challenge the racist status quo, they did not only face political and legal power but were also threatened by vicious physical retaliation. In 1919, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People published the book, *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States 1889-1918*. They collected the data of lynching's that took place during those three decades. Top of the list was Georgia; 386 lynching's took place (26 white people and 360 black people).<sup>62</sup> It was also in Georgia that the defunct Ku Klux Klan was revived in 1915, inspired by *The Birth of a Nation*.

It was in this state that Mallie and Jerry Robinson got married in 1909 and lived there until 1919/1920. Jerry was a sharecropper, a situation described by Jackie Robinson in his autobiography, *I Never Had It Made* (1972), as a more sophisticated form of slavery.<sup>63</sup> While the National Association for the Advancement of Color People won some legal battles; in 1911, with the case *Baily v. Alabama*. In general, the Progressive Era made a moderate progress on terms of social justice.<sup>64</sup> After Jerry confronted the landowner about the situation he became a “half cropper” and the life of the Robinsons improved. But six months after Jack Roosevelt Robinson was born, January 31, 1919, his dad left the family for a romantic adventure with a wealthy, married, black women. For his mom life on the farm became harder.

The landowner blamed Mallie that her husband left. That Jerry had left meant economic loss for the landowner. Mallie had to choose to start all over with her brother in Pasadena, California, or stay on the farm. She chose California. Arnold Rampersad argued that the racial tension that intensified during the 1919's was another reason for the move to California. He described how in April 1919, five African Americans were killed, seven churches and lodges hall were burned after an incident in a church that led to the death of two, white, policemen.<sup>65</sup> Rampersad argued that the Red Summer had scared Mallie and she wanted to flee the South. When she tried to leave in 1920 the police tried to stop her. “To many white southerners, migrating blacks were an insult and a threat: an insult to the myth that the South was perfection itself, especially in

---

<sup>62</sup> NAACP, *Thirty years of Lynching in the United States 1889-1919* (New York: 1919; reprint, 1969)

<sup>63</sup> J. Robinson and A. Duckett, *I Never had it Made; Jackie Robinson an Autobiography* (New York: HarperCollins, 1972; reprint 1995) 3.

<sup>64</sup> E. Foner, *Give me Liberty!*, 754.

<sup>65</sup> A. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson, a Biography*, 16.

the harmony of its races; and a threat in that it meant the loss of some of the South's cheapest labor."<sup>66</sup> While African Americans had hoped that the war time rhetoric would have led to change in the racial system back home, it did not help them get more freedom. The war led to social changes. For the first time, black laborers could get industrial jobs and more than half a million African Americans left the south between 1910 and 1920. In cities like Chicago the black population grew with 148.2 percent.<sup>67</sup> Violence and discrimination against African Americans was not just confined to the South, because of this mass exodus whites and blacks was fighting and competing for jobs and housing. When the, mostly young, African Americans arrived in the north, with an idea of social and economic freedom they were met with resistance. There were restricted opportunities for jobs. Housing was segregated and African Americans were excluded from unions. "The new black presence, coupled with demands for change inspired by the war, created a racial tinderbox that needed only an incident to trigger an explosion."<sup>68</sup>

Race related incidents followed Jackie around during his youth in Pasadena. He was often confronted with Jim Crow and bigotry from white neighbors. At one point, they tried to force the family out of the neighborhood. Mallie did not bend to idle threats and slowly they got accepted by their white neighbors. The only place where Jackie was not confronted with Jim Crow was in the sporting arena. This is where Robinson blossomed; his skill, talent and winning attitude made him one of the most well-known youth athletes of Pasadena. On the field, they did not look at his race or social status, on the field there was no Jim Crow, on the field he was just Jackie Robinson. In his formative years Jackie saw that there was an alternative to Jim Crow, or as Rampersad described it "after the democracy he had known as a boy among boys and girls in Pasadena, nothing could convince Robinson that Jim Crow in any sport- or in any other aspect of American life, for that matter- was right or natural."<sup>69</sup> Robinson also knew that sport was not representative for American society. His brother, Mack, was part of the Olympic track team of 1936 and won silver at the "Nazi Olympics" behind Jesse Owens on the 200-meter sprint. When Mack returned to Pasadena, there were no festivities, no key of the city or any other celebration. Mack was treated as all other African Americans. The only job he could get was a job as a street sweeper.<sup>70</sup> The Great

---

<sup>66</sup> A. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson, a Biography*, 16.

<sup>67</sup> E. Foner, *Give me Liberty!*, 755.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 756.

<sup>69</sup> A. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson, a Biography*, 27.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

Depression hit African Americans hard. The “last hired and first fired” policy led to high unemployment rates under African Americans. They faced competition of whites, for jobs they previously thought they were too good for.<sup>71</sup> This also affected the Robinson household; Jackie had to take up all kinds of jobs to support his family. That jobs were limited for African Americans could be seen in the way African Americans were represented in films. African Americans could play roles now, but only roles as butlers, drives, laborers or maids. A reflection of the societies mainstream perception of African Americans. What did not change was the fact that the old South was still romanticized.<sup>72</sup>

The economic crisis also opened new opportunities for racial integration. During the 1930s, black journalists wrote articles and open letters to baseball owners to convince them that they had to hire African American ballplayers. Some said they had no objections against this and brought African American players to private, unscheduled tryouts during spring training.<sup>73</sup> While progressive unions and civil rights groups gathered signatures and drew up petitions, the color barrier was kept intact. One of the driving forces behind keeping up the color barrier was former judge Kennesaw Mountain Landis. After the “Black Sox Scandal” of 1919, where eight players purposely lost the World Series, Landis was appointed to be the first commissioner of baseball in 1920 and he did not want to reform.

Jackie’s high school and junior college athletic career received a lot of publicity. Robinson received a lot of scholarship offers; he accepted an offer by UCLA and became the first four-letter man, playing basketball, baseball, football and track.<sup>74</sup> While there was no Jim Crow in high school and college sports, at least in Los Angeles. There was racism, it ranged from racial slurs by fans and opponents to being refused service in restaurants and hotels while they were on the road. At one point during his Pasadena Junior College years (1937-1939) a group of white players, who all had transferred from Oklahoma, told Robinson and the other African Americans players that they did not want to play football with them. When the coach, Tom Mallory, arrived on the practice field, the African American players had decided they would “honor” the wish of the white players

---

<sup>71</sup> E. Foner, *Give me Liberty!*, 838.

<sup>72</sup> J. Thompson and J. Carew, “From Blackface to Blaxploitation.”

<sup>73</sup> P. Dreier, “The Real Story of Baseball’s Integration That You won’t see in 42,”

<http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2013/04/the-real-story-of-baseballs-integration-that-you-wont-see-in-i-42-i/274886/>, Published Apr. 11, 2013, accessed, May 9, 2017.

<sup>74</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 10.

and they sat out the practice. Robinson told the coach that he would go somewhere else to play sports. Rampersad quoted Robinson who stated that “coach Mallory laid down the law and the Oklahoma fellows became more than decent.”<sup>75</sup> It is quite clear that Robinson knew his value for the team and that in this instance he used his value to protest the racism that was lingering in the team. When Robinson left UCLA in 1941 he left with the feeling that no amount of education would help him get a job.<sup>76</sup> Nor did he see athletics as a serious career, the major teams in sports were still “whites only.” The only offer he got came from the Honolulu Bears and he accepted that. Robinson worked at a construction company near Pearl Harbor. Jackie’s first season with the Bears ended in November and he missed California. So, on December 5, 1941, he took a ship home. Two days later the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and the United States declared war.

When the war began, there were no African Americans in the air force or in the marine. The army only had five black officers, three of them were chaplains.<sup>77</sup> The Red Cross barred African Americans from giving blood, because they did not want to mix it. Thus, accepting racial, Nazi, theories. It was Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson who called segregation a must for the national defense. According to Stimson it had proved its worth during World War I and changing it would only cause demoralization of the troops.<sup>78</sup> After the war, more than one million African Americans served in the armed forces, mainly limited to noncombat tasks and in segregated units. Eric Foner argued (2014) that “the war years witnessed the birth of the modern civil rights movement.”<sup>79</sup> Among its most prominent leaders, was Phillip Randolph, who in July 1941, called for a March on Washington. Randolph demanded access to defense employment, an end to segregation and a national anti-lynching law. “Roosevelt issued Executive order 8802, which banned discrimination in defense jobs and established a Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) to monitor compliance.”<sup>80</sup> The FEPC became a significant organ into helping African Americans find industrial jobs. About six months later, February 1942, the term “Double-V” was coined by the *Pittsburgh Courier*. Victory over Japan and Germany had to go hand in hand with the victory back home, a victory over segregation. Gunnar Myrdal (1944) depicted how deep racism was rooted within American society; he analyzed laws, politics, economics and social

---

<sup>75</sup> A. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson, a Biography*, 49.

<sup>76</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 10.

<sup>77</sup> E. Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 878.

<sup>78</sup> A. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson, a Biography*, 90.

<sup>79</sup> E. Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 880.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 880.

behavior. He questioned how this could be combined with the American creed of liberty and equality. Myrdal argued that the result of the war had to change status of African Americans.<sup>81</sup>

“On July 6, 1944, Robinson became entangled in a dispute that threatened to end his military service in disgrace.”<sup>82</sup> When Robinson entered a camp bus, he moved to the rear. Where the African Americans were supposed to be seated according to the Jim Crow laws. but while he moved to the rear he saw a woman he knew, Virginia Jones. Jackie started talking with her and sat down next to her. The driver, Milton Renegar, became upset that a white woman (although she was not white) was talking to a black second lieutenant. Renegar stopped the bus and ordered Robinson to move to the back of the bus. In his autobiography Robinson wrote, “I was aware of the fact that recently Joe Louis and Ray Robinson had refused to move to the backs of buses in the South.”<sup>83</sup> Joe Louis and Ray Robinson were world famous boxers and this incident plus the shooting and killing of a black soldier, because he did not move to the back of the bus, by a white driver caused so much negative publicity for the army that they put out new rules against discrimination in vehicles operating on American bases. The army could not change rules on the civilian bus lines so the army provided non-segregated buses on bases in the South; Robinson was aware of this.<sup>84</sup> Renegar promised to make trouble for Robinson and when he pulled into the station the military police arrived and escorted Robinson to the guard room. In his autobiography, Robinson wrote the following about the incident, “I was naïve about the elaborate lengths to which racists in the armed forces would go to put a vocal black man in his place.”<sup>85</sup> After a tense questionnaire, where Robinson argued with Captain, Gerald Bear, and the stenographer, Wilson, he found out that he was up against bigots and racists.

When Jackie got back to the hospital a doctor told him that there was talk about a drunken black officer who tried to start a riot. It was in his best interest that he took a blood test so he could prove that there was no alcohol in his blood. Initially “Robinson was charged with insubordination, disturbing the peace, drunkenness, conduct unbecoming an officer, insulting a civilian woman and refusing to obey the lawful orders of a superior officer.”<sup>86</sup> On the verdict of the court-martial

---

<sup>81</sup> E. Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 885.

<sup>82</sup> A. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson, a Biography*, 102.

<sup>83</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 18.

<sup>84</sup> J. Tygiel, “The Court-Martial of Jackie Robinson,” *American Heritage Magazine*, Vol. 35, issue 5, Aug/Sep (1984)

<sup>85</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 19.

<sup>86</sup> J. Tygiel, “The Court-Martial of Jackie Robinson.”

Robinson was only charged with violating the 63<sup>rd</sup> and the 64<sup>th</sup> articles of war, this meant disobeying and disrespecting an officer.<sup>87</sup> Robinson was convinced these charges were racially motivated and he felt he was being framed. This was not a completely crazy thought, during World War II African American soldiers were unjustly convicted because of bigots assumed they were guilty or because they wanted to set an example for other black soldiers.<sup>88</sup> In a letter Robinson wrote to Gibson, he wondered if he should appeal the NAACP and the black press to bring this under the spotlight.<sup>89</sup> Only Robinson did not want unfavorable publicity. The only thing he wanted was justice as he wrote, “I don’t mind trouble, but I do believe in fair play and justice.”<sup>90</sup> The other charges were dropped because of the attention in the black press and because black officers campaigned for Jackie Robinson, so when he was finally court martialed the charges were not about how he refused to move to the back in the bus or the dispute with the driver and a white woman, but only what happened in the guard house where he was questioned

On August 2, the case of *The United States V. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Jack R. Robinson 0-10315861, Cavalry, Company c, 758<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion* began.<sup>91</sup> His attorney tricked several witnesses into unclear and contradictory testimony’s and the trial lasted more than four hours. When the defense summed up the situation the whole case did not consisted of violations of the articles of war. what it was according to the defense was “simply a situation in which a few individuals sought to vent their bigotry on a Negro they considered ‘uppity’ because he had the audacity to seek and exercise the right that belonged to him as an American and as a soldier.”<sup>92</sup> Robinson was found not guilty on all the charges.<sup>93</sup> The whole incident showed how the United States army worked in the 1940s. This was not just an isolated incident, it was the daily experience for African American soldiers in an army based on Jim Crow laws. While they fought overseas to defend freedom and to bring an end to the racist regime of the Nazi’s they were discriminated and treated as second class citizens back home. Robinson’s case also showed that things were changing and that because of the war

---

<sup>87</sup> Lt. Colonel, R Kile, “Review of Corps Judge advocate, United States VS. 2d Lt. Jack R. Robinson, 0-1031586, Cavalry, Company C, 758<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion.” (Brownwood Texas, Aug. 23, 1944) retrieved from <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2008/spring/robinson.html>, accessed, July 11, 2017.

<sup>88</sup> J. Tygiel, “The Court-Martial of Jackie Robinson.”

<sup>89</sup> J. Robinson, “letter to assistant to secretary of war, Truman K. Gibson” (July 16, 1944), retrieved from <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2008/spring/robinson.html>, accessed, July 11, 2017.

<sup>90</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant, J. Robinson, “letter to assistant to secretary of war.”

<sup>91</sup> Lt. Colonel, R Kile, “Review of Corps Judge advocate.”

<sup>92</sup> A. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson, a Biography*, 109.

<sup>93</sup> Lt. Colonel, R Kile, “Review of Corps Judge advocate.”

and the “Double V” campaign it paid off to resist the mainstream ideology of white supremacy, racism and bigotry. Justice was being served and Robinson was acquitted. His trial showed what kind of man Robinson was, that he was ready to confront social injustice if he felt that he was mistreated.

Soon after the trial Jackie had enough of the army, and the army probably of him. On October 30, 1944, the Army Retiring Board approved Robinsons request for honorable discharge. While he waited to be discharged he met an African American named Alexander that had played with the Kansas City Monarchs. He advised Jackie to try out with the Monarchs because there was good money to be made in black baseball. Robinson wrote a letter to the Monarchs and he was invited for tryouts. Meanwhile in Major League Baseball the “Gentleman’s Agreement” was still honored. While the pressure increased to integrate the Major-League Baseball, Landis did everything he could to bar African Americans. In 1943, the Pittsburgh Pirates tried to sign Josh Gibson, from the Homestead Grays, But Landis put a stop to it, by stating that African Americans had their own league and had to stay there.<sup>94</sup>

In December of 1943 Paul Robeson, the African American singer and activist, addressed the baseball owners during their annual winter meeting about the integration in baseball. Under instructions of the commissioner, the owners were not to ask questions or debate about the problem.<sup>95</sup> Examples like this show why Landis is regarded as the only successful dictator in American history.<sup>96</sup> In 1945, Ben Davis, African American Communist, spread flyers with two depictions of African Americans, one was a dead soldier, the other was a baseball player. The corresponding text, “good enough to die for his country, but not good enough for organized baseball.”<sup>97</sup> By 1945, the status of the African American had not changed yet, but support for racial justice gained broad acceptance from the liberal left. More and more liberals argued that racial issues had to be fought head on.

---

<sup>94</sup> B. Watson, “The Judge Who Ruled Baseball,” 120-132.

<sup>95</sup> P. Dreier, *The Real Story of Baseball’s Integration*.

<sup>96</sup> B. Watson, “The Judge Who ruled Baseball.,” *Smithsonian* 31, No. 7, Oct. (2000) 120-132.

<sup>97</sup> P. Dreier, *The Real Story of Baseball’s Integration*.



## Chapter 3: The guinea pig

In 1944 Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal wrote that “the observer finds that in the North there is actually much unawareness on the part of white people of the extent of social discrimination against Negroes.”<sup>98</sup> Myrdal stated that the problem about discrimination was the lack of publicity. Baseball reflected American society so there was a lack of publicity about discrimination in baseball as well. Soon after World War II, Major League Baseball was not only a reflection of American society anymore. Baseball became what historian Jules Tygiel called “a symbol of imminent racial challenge and a direct agent of social change.”<sup>99</sup>

The integration of baseball was part of a broader undertaking to eradicate discrimination in different aspects of society; social: segregation in housing, economic: jobs and boycotts “Don’t shop where you can’t work” and political: the call for a federal anti-lynching law. On March 12, 1945, the New York Legislature amended chapter 23 of the Laws of 1909 and added a new article 12.<sup>100</sup> The new article 12, became known as “State Commission Against Discrimination” or the Ives-Quinn Act. Because the headquarter of the Major-League Baseball organization was established in New York State, a short note was sent to all employees that stated the Ives-Quinn Anti-Discrimination Law became effective in the state of New York. The act covered the employment policy of MLB as a company. it was made “unlawful for an employer to refuse to hire a person because of the race, color, religion or national origin of the applicant, or to discriminate in any way against an employee on similar grounds.”<sup>101</sup> in the note was written that the Major-League Baseball organization expected loyalty of every employee and that they would comply with this new law. Because of the Ives-Quinn Act, New York City, Mayor Fiorello La Guardia appointed a ten men committee to study the question of racial discrimination within professional baseball.<sup>102</sup> Wesley Branch Rickey, manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, was part of that committee.

---

<sup>98</sup> G. Myrdal, *An American Dilemma, The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York & London: HarperBrothers Publishers, 1944) 600.

<sup>99</sup>J. Tygiel, *Baseball’s Great Experiment*, 9.

<sup>100</sup> T. Lichtash, “Ives-Quinn Act—The Law Against Discrimination,” *St. John’s Law Review*, Vol. 19: issue 2, Article 18, (2013)

<sup>101</sup> “Announcement of Ives-Quinn Anti-Discrimination Law, 1945,” *National Baseball Hall of Fame*, Manuscripts, Integration – Correspondence & Clippings, 1937-1980, East Archives, Box 1, Aisle 9 Range B, Shelf 5, <https://collection.baseballhall.org/islandora/object/islandora%3A212190>, accessed July 11, 2017.

<sup>102</sup> “Committee Report to Mayor Asks Equal Rights for Negro in Baseball,” *New York Times* Nov. 19, 1945.

The conclusion of the committee was that the African Americans were excluded purely on “sheer prejudice and tradition.”<sup>103</sup> According to the committee there was no difference between the potential of black and white athletes. Their advice was that the Major League should adopt a policy where African Americans had an equal opportunity. Their solution was simple, clubs should treat individuals based on their abilities and not race or skin color.<sup>104</sup> The committee also analyzed the structure of all the leagues, Major-, Minor- and the Negro, and concluded that black teams could not compete with the white teams because of the disadvantages; limited ballparks, training, finance, contracts, etc. To sum it all up, the Committee wrote: “If the equity of Negro professional baseball clubs was never to be disturbed, the reform could never be accomplished and the onus of present Jim Crow practices would be placed on Negroes themselves. Thus, the practice which arose because of an evil would become the reason for its perpetuation.”<sup>105</sup> To put it in the words of Tygiel, “the ability of people to survive and sustain a flourishing culture in the face of discrimination does not erase the stain.”<sup>106</sup> Organized baseball had to take responsibility and positive action instead of being silent, like it had done the seventy years before. Other sports, even those in which more intimate teamwork and physical contact was required, proved integration could be successful. “Negro youth have demonstrated their abilities both to preform and to cooperate with other players in team-work in practically every other sport, leaving organized baseball as one of the last to square itself with the ideals of democracy.”<sup>107</sup> The committee did not present a concrete plan to end the discrimination, that was a problem for each club to face individually. The committee warned that the problem could no longer be ignored.<sup>108</sup> The man that took affirmative action was Branch Rickey.

These changes were happening while an educated Jackie Robinson considered himself not made for the life in the Negro League. Robinson was combative, held strong religious beliefs, believed in dignity and discipline. Jackie did not smoke nor did he drink. His lifestyle collided with the lifestyle of the other in the Negro Leagues. Often players partied late, showed up hungover or drunk and could not play to the best of their abilities. More than once the score was not kept because

---

<sup>103</sup> “Committee Report to Mayor,” *New York Times*.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> J. Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, 29.

<sup>107</sup> “Committee Report to Mayor,” *New York Times*.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

the man responsible left the game because he was bored.<sup>109</sup> Jackie thought the teams were poorly financed and the travel schedules were hectic, especially compared to the way college sports were set up. The worst part about the playing in the Negro Leagues was the way they were treated in public when they were on the road. Hotels and restaurants declined to serve or help them. Finding a place to stay or to eat was a daily struggle and every time they went south they were faced with Jim Crow. In his autobiography, Robinson argued that the money, 400 dollars a month, was great but that he also questioned if everything was worth it. “What had the black player to hope for? What was his future?”<sup>110</sup> Robinson saw no glory in the segregated league. According to Robinson the prominence of stardom could only be found in Major League Baseball. Jackie not only talked about the racial injustice he faced. Robinson also spoke out against it. “A victim of prejudice, he reacted vehemently when he perceived a racially-motivated slight. His driving desire for excellence and his keen sense of injustice created an explosive urge.”<sup>111</sup>

It was this explosive urge that caused many people to believe Robinson was not suited to break to color barrier. At the same time, many others thought Robinson would be the ideal man. One of these persons was influential *Pittsburgh Courier* sportswriter, Wendell Smith. When Boston councilman, Isadore Muchnik, saw his electorate change from Jewish to African American in 1945. He forced the Boston teams to keep tryouts for African Americans, otherwise he threatened to ban baseball on Sundays. Wendell Smith convinced the Boston Red Sox to let Jackie tryout, but after the session Robinson never heard from the Red Sox again. Robinson was already on the radar of Branch Rickey and by August 1945 Rickey was convinced Robinson was the ideal player to brake the color barrier. None of the scouts Rickey had assigned to look for an African American player considered Jackie as the best player in the Negro Leagues, but Rickey was impressed with the total package. “He was college-educated, unusual for a baseball player of that era, and had played with white teammates in the past. Destined for the spotlight of publicity, Robinson was articulate, intelligent, and witty.”<sup>112</sup> his experience in the army, or better said his experience fighting racism within the American army showed that Jackie had the nerve and conviction to brake the color barrier. For Rickey, this combination of skill, experience and personal beliefs made Robinson the ideal candidate to integrate baseball. Rickey did not tell the world of his plan. He told everyone he

---

<sup>109</sup> A. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson, a Biography*, 116.

<sup>110</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 25.

<sup>111</sup> J. Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, 62.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

was scouting players for his new team the Brown Brooklyn Bombers. Robinson was not randomly selected; more than twenty-five thousand Dollar was spent on scouting domestically and abroad. Rickey was convinced he needed the right man. In the “*One Hundred Percent Wrong Club*” Speech Rickey held for the Atlanta Banquet in Georgia, 1956 he explained why he signed Robinson. “I couldn’t come with a man to break down a tradition that had in it centered and concentrated all the prejudices of a great many people North and South unless he was good. He must justify himself upon the positive principle of merit. He must be a great player.”<sup>113</sup> Otherwise Rickey would have been condemned that he just did it for a “holier than thou” feeling.<sup>114</sup> Rickey argued it had to be a good player, but what was even more important for Rickey was that man was a good man of the field. “I wanted a man of exceptional intelligence, a man who was able to grasp a control the responsibilities of himself to his race and could carry that load.”<sup>115</sup>

On August 28, 1945, a three-hour meeting between Rickey and Robinson took place. Rickey told Jackie that he wanted to sign him for the Brooklyn organization. First for the farm team in Montreal and If he proved to be good enough he could move up to the Brooklyn Dodgers. Branch Rickey also told Robinson that his ability as a player was only a small part of the challenge they faced. He pointed out the fact that while Jackie was at UCLA he was depicted as a “racial agitator,” but that his research had led to the conclusion that he was only depicted in this way because he was black.<sup>116</sup> Point blank Rickey asked Robinson if he had the guts to not fight back. Stating that they could not fight through this, “we’ve got no army. There’s virtually nobody on our side. No owners, no umpires, very few newspapermen. And I’m afraid that many fans will be hostile. We’ll be in a tough position. We can win only if we can convince the world I’m doing this because you’re a great ballplayer and a fine gentleman.”<sup>117</sup> Rickey was aware how Jack Johnson was treated by the white media. During the 1910’s Jack Johnson reigned supreme in the boxing ring. White newspapers depicted him as a “bad nigger,” because Johnson did not “accept his place.” Johnson did not care what “white America thought about him.”<sup>118</sup> Johnson’s flamboyant lifestyle and

---

<sup>113</sup> B. Rickey, “One Hundred Percent Wrong Club, Speech, banquet, Atlanta, Jan. 26, 1956,” Collection: *By Popular Demand: Jackie Robinson and Other Baseball Highlights, 1860s-1960s*, retrieved from Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Branch Rickey Papers, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/jackie-robinson-baseball/articles-and-essays/baseball-the-color-line-and-jackie-robinson/one-hundred-percent-wrong-club-speech/>, accessed July 11, 2017.

<sup>114</sup> B. Rickey, “One Hundred Percent Wrong Club.”

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 32.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> C. Lamb, Ed., *From Jack Johnson to LeBron James*, 4.

victories over white challengers made him a “racial symbol that threatened America’s social order.” White newspapers publicly searched for a “white hope” that could put him back in his place and “settle the mooted question of supremacy.”<sup>119</sup> But Johnson was unstoppable in the ring and he had to be brought down otherwise. White newspapers led the campaign to get Johnson convicted for the fact that he had violated the Mann Act.

Rickey told Robinson in detail what he could expect, from racial slurs and threats to physical attacks and balls thrown at his face. Robinson saw this request as an attack on his personal pride. In his autobiography Robinson wrote, “I was twenty-six years old, and all my life back to the age of eight when a little neighbor girl called me a nigger- I had believed in payback, retaliation.”<sup>120</sup> Robinson asked Rickey if he was looking for an African American who was afraid to fight back. Rickey told Robinson he was looking for somebody who had the guts to rise above that and not fight back. Only the philosophy of active nonviolence would bring the social change in baseball that they were looking for. Rickey was deeply religious, Rickey never attended Sunday games, and his philosophy of nonviolence was based on the Sermon on the Mount, Gospel of Matthew 5-7, where Jesus preached to turn the other cheek when someone had hit you. The same method that was used a decade later by Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. After the intense conversation, Robinson verbally agreed to join the Dodger organization, he had to wait until October 23, 1945 to sign his \$600 a month salary (plus a \$3500 bonus) contract. As Rampersad described it, “he understood that if something wonderful was to happen to him, as was now promised, a white man would almost certainly be central; and Rickey was more than a plausible white man. Rickey had probably shown more concentrated personal fury and passion on the question of race and sports than Jackie had ever seen in a white man.”<sup>121</sup>

So, when on October 23, 1945, Hector Racine, President of the Montreal Royals, announced they had signed Jackie Robinson. he became the first professional baseball player to break the seemingly impassable color line. It came as a shock to most of the people. “But to those who had been paying attention, the writing had been on the wall for some time. Invisible to most of America, activists like Wendell Smith and Sam Lacy had worked for more than a decade to end segregated

---

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>120</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 32.

<sup>121</sup> A. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson, a Biography*, 128.

baseball, before Rickey signed Robinson.”<sup>122</sup> Reporters bombarded the owners with questions. while other reporters rushed to the telephones to spread the news. All the major newspapers reported the signing. The *Los Angeles Times* published an article with the title, “Dodgers Sign Jack Robinson: Negro Sets Baseball Precedent.”<sup>123</sup> While the *New York Times* titled their article, “Club Heads Give Views: Some Feel That Any Capable Player Should Get Chance.”<sup>124</sup>

Racine told the reporters that Robinson was signed because he was a good player, but also because of a point of fairness. He thought that during World War II African Americans had earned the right to play alongside whites.<sup>125</sup> They also knew that the signing would be condemned by parts of the United States, sections where racial prejudice was rampant.<sup>126</sup> The Dodger organization even realized that some Southern players would not want to play with Robinson and would not sign with the organization or even leave it. They argued that those players would be back after two years of hard physical labor.<sup>127</sup> The reactions on the signing of Robinson were mixed. Ludlow Werner, editor, of the *New York Age* wrote that he felt “that the destiny of the race had come to rest on a glove and a baseball bat.”<sup>128</sup> How all the pressure of fifteen million African Americans rested on the shoulders of Robinson. that Robinson could never afford an off-day or night, he would be in the constant spotlight. “Because white America would will judge the Negro race by everything he does.”<sup>129</sup>

Robinson wrote an article for the *Pittsburgh Courier* on his signing. He stated that he was very grateful towards Rickey and Racine for the opportunity he got. “We all know that this is something new and it represents a change in custom. These gentlemen took a courageous and democratic step when they decided to give me an opportunity.”<sup>130</sup> Robinson went on and described himself as a proud American and a guinea pig.<sup>131</sup> Despite of all the faults America had, this was the only place were something like this could happen according to Robinson. He was aware that

---

<sup>122</sup> C. Lamb, *Blackout*, 39.

<sup>123</sup> H. Turkin, “Dodgers Sign Jack Robinson: Negro Sets Baseball Precedent,” *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 24, 1945, 10.

<sup>124</sup> “Club Heads Give Views: Some Feel That Any Capable Player Should Get Chance,” *New York Times*, Oct. 24, 1945, 17.

<sup>125</sup> C. Lamb, *Blackout*, 42.

<sup>126</sup> J. Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, 72.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> E. T. Rouzeau, “Robinson’s Signing Brings Mixture of Joy and Trepidation to Harlem,” *New York Herald Tribune*, Oct. 24, 1945.

<sup>129</sup> E. T. Rouzeau, “Robinson’s Signing Brings mixture of Joy and Trepidation to Harlem.”

<sup>130</sup> J. Robinson, “Glad of Opportunity and Will Try to Make Good,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, Nov. 3, 1945.

<sup>131</sup> J. Robinson, “Glad of Opportunity and Will Try to Make Good.”

he became the first African American baseball player in the twentieth century and that it brought a lot of pressure. He mentioned it three times, “I will not forget that I am representing a whole race of people who are pulling for me. I will try not to do a single thing other than that which will be creditable” a few paragraphs later “I’d have to be the best guinea pig that ever lived, both on the field and off.” and in the final paragraph “I will try to do as good a job as Joe Louis has done. He has done a great job for us and I will try to carry on.”<sup>132</sup> Robinson knew that people were concerned about the social implications, but he was not worried. He emphasized that he had played with Southerners during his college days and while some of them sometimes had their reservations it always turned out good. According to Robinson it was a matter of human relations. Robinson also knew their opponents and opposing fans would try to upset and provoke him, but he argued that he was prepared for it. “When I was a kid my mother assured me that names and taunts would never hurt me.”<sup>133</sup>

Most interesting from the article is the comparison with heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis. His reign as boxer was from 1934 to 1945 (With a record of thirty-five wins, twenty-nine knockouts and one loss). Louis had to overcome severe hardship in a hostile racist environment. The way he did it he not only became a champion of the black people but he also became a national icon. “In a time of economic crises when white citizen displayed racial intolerance, when white leaders approached civil rights with “political calculus,” and when white liberals, North and South, ignored society’s deep-seated, institutionalized anti-black attitude, Louis appeared messianic; as black leaders became more aggressive and black masses more aware, he dramatized their struggle between “good and evil.”<sup>134</sup> Louis was born May 13, 1914, in Alabama. During his life Louis was influenced by a few people, mostly by his mother. Who taught him to work hard and be somebody that inspired others. he was influenced by his manager and trainer. They told him that he had to be careful how he acted outside the ring “Aware of the resentment triggered by Jack Johnson, they instructed Louis in clean living and sportsmanlike conduct.”<sup>135</sup> On June 22, 1938 Joe Louis became a national icon, on that day he fought the German, Max Schmeling. It was the second time they faced each other, on June 19, 1936, Schmeling was victorious. This time the fight was more than

---

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> D. Capeci & M. Wilkerson, “Multifarious Hero: Joe Louis, American Society and Race Relations During World Crisis, 1935-1945, *Journal of Sport History*, Vol. 10, No 3 Winter (1983) 6.

<sup>135</sup> D. Capeci & M. Wilkerson, “Multifarious Hero: Joe Louis,” 6.

just a fight. “black and white citizens alike placed the second Louis-Schmeling fight in an international, racial context: America democracy versus Aryan supremacy.”<sup>136</sup> After just 124 seconds and four knock downs Joe Louis won the rematch.

His popularity among blacks and white liberals made Louis a person of political interest. During the 1940 campaign, advisors of both the major parties’ candidates thought that the Northern black votes could play a crucial role in deciding the outcome. “During the crucial, closing days of the campaign, Republicans used him as Democrats had hoped to. He stumped in Chicago, St. Louis, and New York noting Roosevelt’s failure to support an anti-lynch bill or get blacks off the WPA rolls. Louis predicted Wilkie would “win by a Knockout and “Help my people.”<sup>137</sup> But the African American voters did not buy the story, they did not see how voting for Wilkie would help them get an equal opportunity. They voted for the party that was responsive, Roosevelt listened to his advisors and civil rights advocates and made concessions towards African Americans. While Louis aligned himself with a presidential candidate his managers always barred him from controversial racial issues. When they permitted him exposure, it was a more conservative position. Louis was never militant. Officials from the army, government and black organizations exploited Louis for his commercial and patriotic value. After the 1943 riots in Los Angeles and Detroit, Roosevelt sent Louis to Pittsburgh because he believed that was another powder keg and Louis could help defuse it. When riots broke out in Harlem, New York City and Mayor LaGuardia called on Louis to establish peace. In the black newspapers, the rioters were scolded and they “invoked Louis’s example and words: “You cannot expect to win a fight by hitting foul blows.””<sup>138</sup> Robinson kept quiet about the incident.

Joe Louis weakened segregated structure in American society (civilian and military). Outside the ring he fought for equal opportunity for all and inspired American society with his character. “Certainly, citizens of both races associated themselves, their courage, and commitment in the face of disaster with the champion who represented “The best ideals of Americanism.””<sup>139</sup> He made African Americans feel optimistic about the near future and helped change white perspective on African Americans. Louis reflected both white and black culture and he pleased

---

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>139</sup> D. Capeci & M. Wilkerson, “Multifarious Hero: Joe Louis,” 24.



various sections in both cultures, this symbolism was his greatest historical significance. various organizations used his fame to manipulate public behavior, “black editors desiring democratic advances without rebellion, southern newsmen taking aim at Hitler without hitting Jim Crow targets, government officials seeking racial peace without social justice, white liberals wanting moral integrity without societal change, and white citizens striving for respectability without recognizing black grievances.”<sup>140</sup> Is this what Robinson meant when he wrote the article where he mentioned that he would try to carry on the job Louis had done? Robinson’s new status, brought immediate fame and he was the center of attention the press, but he was not yet a national icon. Robinson had to prove himself first as a baseball player.

## Chapter 4: The loneliest man in baseball

Robinson wanted to carry on the way Joe louis had done. He wanted to be a person whose character set an example for all of society. To inspire the whole society, he had to be accepted and that was

---

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 25.

the first challenge Robinson faced. The first biography on Robinson was written by Arthur Mann in 1951. Mann described one of the first conversations between the Montreal manager, Clay Hopper, who was from Porterville Mississippi, and Branch Rickey. Rickey told the manager that he was impressed with Robinson and called him a “superhuman.” Hopper was astonished and questioned Rickey: “Do you really think a nigger’s a human being?”<sup>141</sup> Even before the manager had met with Jackie, the manager already had made up his mind about Robinson.

A day after the announcement that Robinson had signed his contract, Journalist Tommy Holmes of *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* described some of the problems Robinson and the Brooklyn Organization were going to face. “Probably, the first headache will come next Spring if Robinson reports for Spring training.”<sup>142</sup> Traditionally baseball clubs had their spring training in the South; due to the better weather circumstances. The Brooklyn organization, including the Montreal Royals, went to Daytona Beach, Florida. In 1946, the Dodger organization did not own training facilities in Florida so they had to rent accommodations from locals. Holmes wondered how everything would be arranged in the “deepest Dixie.” Especially the “fundamental things” such as where Jackie would sleep and eat.<sup>143</sup> Holmes also argued that during the regular season the problems would be less, because Robinson would play in Montreal, Canada. Holmes wondered what would happen if Robinson was promoted to the Brooklyn Dodgers and the club had to play in the “quasi-Southern cities as St. Louis and Cincinnati.”<sup>144</sup> Holmes saw these problems not as particular baseball problems, but as social problems that existed “in the form of barriers against the Negro of greater or lesser extent everywhere in the land.”<sup>145</sup>

During the months between the signing of the contract and the beginning of spring training there was an escalation of violence against African Americans in the South (in 1946, six African Americans were lynched, the same amount as the three years before that).<sup>146</sup> This concurred with an increase in memberships with the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>147</sup> The increase of violence had nothing to do with Robinson, it had to do with the bigotry of Southerners. After World War II, African Americans

---

<sup>141</sup> A. Mann, *The Jackie Robinson Story*, 142.

<sup>142</sup> T. Holmes, “Rickey Signs Negro Amid Complications,” *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Oct. 24, 1945, 17.

<sup>143</sup> T. Holmes, “Rickey Signs Negro Amid Complications,” 17.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>146</sup> “Lynching, Whites & Negroes, 1882-1968,” *Tuskegee University Archives Repository*, Monroe Work’s collection, <http://hdl.handle.net/123456789/511>, published Sept. 9, 2010, accessed May 31, 2017.

<sup>147</sup> C. Lamb, *Blackout*, 174.

demanded more civil rights, but Southerners did not want to change their way of living. According to Rickey, Daytona Beach was different; it offered advantages to African Americans that were not seen in other cities in the South. City officials described it as a place where there were no problems between races because they offered everybody the same. To them, there was no discrimination, only segregation.<sup>148</sup> A week after the signing of Robinson, Rickey was questioned about spring training. He responded as followed: “We are not going down to Daytona Beach, Florida and try to change the Law.”<sup>149</sup> Rickey argued that his organization would “recognize the laws of the South” and that Jackie was intelligent enough to adjust himself to the Jim Crow laws.<sup>150</sup>

It was not long after Jackie and his newlywed wife Rachel boarded the plane from Los Angeles they met Jim Crow. Their destination was Daytona Beach, so they had to change flights a couple of times. When they first landed in Louisiana they were bumped out of their flight. due to so called military priorities. The pair had to wait for a long time for the next plane. When they wanted to grab some food, they learned they could only get some if they did not eat it in the restaurant. In his autobiography Robinson wrote, “though we were both weary and hungry, we decided to skip food until we reached a place where we could be treated as human beings.”<sup>151</sup> After that they had to find a place to spent the night but there was nothing available except a dirty worn out place. After a delay of twelve hours they flew to Pensacola, Florida. The plane had to refuel there. While they waited at the airport they were bumped out again, this time without an explanation. A white couple occupied their seats.<sup>152</sup> So again they tried finding a hotel, but there was nothing available for them. So, newlyweds took a Greyhound bus to Jacksonville, “The bus driver gestured to us, indicating that we were to move to the back of the bus. The seats at the back were reserved seats—reserved for Negroes –and they were straight-backed.”<sup>153</sup> It was this trip from Los Angeles to Daytona Beach that almost made Robinson snap. Robinson realized it was futile to get angry. Jackie swallowed his pride and calmed himself down.

Robinson realized he had to give up his personal freedoms and bottle up his resentment against injustice. Robinson had to adjust to the Jim Crow laws that ruled the deep south, meaning

---

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>149</sup> W. Smith “Why He Signed Jackie Robinson: Major League Owner Sees Nothing Unusual in Signing Robinson” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, Nov. 3, 1945.

<sup>150</sup> W. Smith “Why He Signed Jackie Robinson.”

<sup>151</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 39.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>153</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 40.

he could not sleep and eat with his teammates. Robinson recalled that he was “conscious every minute of every day” and that during the many sleepless nights that he had, he felt he had “to make good out there on that ball field.”<sup>154</sup> While Robinson could play without incidents on the training ground in Daytona Beach, this was not the case when the Royals played elsewhere. On March 22, 1946 journalist, Roscoe McGowen wrote an article for *The New York Times* with the headline, “Florida City Bars Montreal Negroes.”<sup>155</sup> Rickey had signed another African American player, a pitcher by the name of John Wright, to try out for the Brooklyn organization. The article focused on how George G. Robinson, the executive secretary of the Playground and Recreational Commission of the city of Jacksonville made it clear African American could not play with whites. “It is part of the rules and regulations of the Recreational Department that Negroes and whites cannot compete against each other on a city-owned playground.”<sup>156</sup>

In his autobiography, Robinson wrote that most of his teammates were not overtly hostile towards him. But on the other hand, they also did not talk to him, nor did anybody come to his defense when he was slated with racial slurs and taunts during the games he could play. John Wright could not deal with the tension, taking insult after insult without being able to retaliate. It affected his pitching and he did not make the team. Robinson had steeled himself from the jeers, taunts and insults and made it into the team. On the opening day of the International League, Montreal played Jersey City. Robinson had a great game, four hits: a home run and three singles and two stolen bases. Robinson wrote about that game, “I knew what it was that day to hear the ear shattering roar of the crowd and know it was for me. I began to really believe one of Mr. Rickey’s predictions. Color didn’t matter to fans if the black man was winner.”<sup>157</sup> Black fans were beginning to come to the ball games in unprecedented numbers in the Southern cities. Racial tension was held down by segregated seating, but for Jackie Robinson their presence, their cheers and their pride came through. He knew that they were counting on him and he fancied the challenge.<sup>158</sup>

Life in Montreal was different than in the South. The black population never exceeded two percent, so there was less racial prejudice. “Only 10,000 blacks lived in Montreal in 1946 and the

---

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>155</sup> R. McGowen, “Florida City Bars Montreal Negroes: Jacksonville Says Wright and Robinson Cannot Play There Against Jersey Sunday,” *New York Times*, Mar. 22, 1946.

<sup>156</sup> R. McGowen, “Florida City Bars Montreal Negroes.”

<sup>157</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 46.

<sup>158</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 49-50.

relative absence of prejudice in the city grew apparent to the Robinsons as they searched for lodgings.”<sup>159</sup> During the first postwar years there was a housing shortage in both the United States and Canada. In the United States, African Americans were discriminated looking for houses. In Montreal, it was relatively easy for the Robinsons find an apartment in the French-Canadian part of town. Montreal was a haven as the home fans loved him. On the road Robinson had to ignore racial taunts, he had to walk away from fastballs aimed at his head or ribs and if an umpire decided Robinson was out, he was out. While Robinson’s personal life was free of controversy, he was always surrounded by controversy because the color of his skin. That Robinson had to swallow everything that was thrown at him did not mean he liked it. “Within his inner circle of Wright, Wendell, Smith, Billy Row, and his wife Rachel he raged privately. He had to restrain himself time and time again. Rachel calmed him at night, massaging both his sore arm and his sense of righteous indignation.”<sup>160</sup>

It took Robinson two months to win over his teammates, he won them over with his attitude in the face of racists and his determination to win. In the beginning if players did not ask Robinson to join him to eat with them he would sit alone and eat in silence. As the season progressed he felt more comfortable joining his teammates without being asked and at the end of the season he was playing cards with them. His relationship with his teammates was restricted to the baseball diamond and the clubhouse. Robinson had an outstanding season with the Royals, he led the league with a batting average of .349 and finished second in the league with bases stolen. The question was not if he was good enough for the Major League Baseball but when he would make his debut in the Majors. In his first and only season with the Montreal Royals he won the International League pennant and in the Little World Series (where the champions of the International League play against the champions of the American Association for the championship of the Minor League) they faced the Louisville Colonels. The Royals had to go South one more time. There was discussion if Robinson could take the field in Louisville. Local officials feared racial tension and barred African Americans from the game. The Jim Crow section of Parkway Field was reserved for whites. During the series in Louisville the fans verbally abused Robinson, John Welaj, who

---

<sup>159</sup> J. Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, 123.

<sup>160</sup> C. Lamb, *Blackout*, 177.

played for the colonels recalled, “they probably called him watermelon eaters, chicken thief, crap shooter, nigger, everything.”<sup>161</sup>

The Royals won the series in six games. In an article after that last game journalist of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, Sam Maltin, hailed Jackie Robinson as the most popular athlete that ever wore the Montreal athletic uniform.<sup>162</sup> Maltin described the scenes after the game. “To large group of Louisville fans who came here with their team, it may be a lesson of goodwill among men. That it’s the man and not his color, race or creed. They couldn’t fail to tell other down South of the “Riots,” the chasing of a Negro –not because of hate but because of love.”<sup>163</sup> Robinson was in tears and told all the fans, who did not want to leave the field, he would never forget this moment. At one-point stewards came to Robinson and asked him to go, “so they could close the park and call it a season.”<sup>164</sup> Robinson could not leave, a mob awaited him. the police and stewards could not reach Robinson and after several tries Robinson “launched his shoulders, opened the door -and then came the near-riot.”<sup>165</sup> The crowd started kissing and hugging Robinson and begged him not to go, but Robinson was not coming back. Jackie Robinson was Brooklyn bound. Before Robinson left the Royals, the manager came up to him and shook his hand and told Robinson what a great ballplayer and fine gentleman he was. Hopper told Robinson that it was wonderful having him on the team. In only six months Robinson changed the mind of a man who first thought Robinson was not even human.<sup>166</sup>

The 1946 season is an illustration of Jackie’ early career, the next spring training Jackie had to report in Havana, Cuba, for spring training with the Royals. Everybody knew Robinson was going to be promoted to the Dodgers, it was just a matter of time. When Robinson was finally promoted he faced the same problems as he did in 1946. To avoid Jim Crow laws, Rickey moved spring training from Florida to Cuba and Panama. Robinson was infuriated when he heard that the black players had to sleep in a separate hotel. Rickey argued that they were on the threshold of success and he did not want to jeopardize it because of a racial incident.<sup>167</sup> Branch Rickey had

---

<sup>161</sup> J. Tygiel, *Baseball’s Great Experiment*, 141.

<sup>162</sup> S. Maltin, “Jackie’s Dazzling Play Wins ‘Little Series’ for Montreal: Fans ‘Mob’ Jackie in Great Tribute,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, Oct. 12, 1946.

<sup>163</sup> S. Maltin, “Jackie’s Dazzling Play Wins ‘Little series’”

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 52.

<sup>167</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 52.

signed two more African Americans for the Brooklyn organization, Roy Campanella and Don Newcombe, the plan was that they would join the Dodgers after spending some time with the Montreal Royals; they both joined the Dodgers, Campanella in 1948 and Newcombe in 1949. Officially Robinson was still a Royal, but some of the Southern Dodgers feared Robinson's promotion to the Dodgers. They drew up a petition where they declared they would not play with Robinson. Rickey told the petitioners that if they wanted to stay with the Dodgers they had to "concentrate on their own efforts and not to try to pick the personnel of the club."<sup>168</sup> Tygiel argued that the petition would have failed anyways because the Northern players had no intention in signing it and a few influential Southern players, like Pee Wee Reese, just wanted to play. On April 10, 1947 Jackie Robinson became the first African American player to achieve Major League Baseball status in seventy years.<sup>169</sup> The major newspapers, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times* and *the New York Times* all reported the historical significance of the signing.

## Chapter 5: From the loneliest man to the troublemaker

On April 15, 1947, 25,236 spectators came to Ebbets Field and saw the debut of Robinson in the MLB. The Dodgers won five to three and Robinson was hitless, but he scored on a hit from

---

<sup>168</sup> "Rickey Puts Down Anti-Robinson Move: Players' Petition Reported," *Baltimore Afro-American*, Apr. 5, 1947.

<sup>169</sup> L. Efrat, "Royals' Star Signs with Brooks Today" *New York Times*, Apr. 11, 1947.

Reiser. The media described his defensive work at first base as perfect.<sup>170</sup> Robinson soon won his teammates over by his sheer quality as a player. When Robinson was verbally abused during the 1946 season, nobody stood up for him. This would change during the 1947 season as teammates defended Robinson against racial slurs. The best example came when the Dodgers faced the Philadelphia Phillies during the third week of the season. Every time Robinson came to the plate or somebody passed him he was hurled with “wise-cracks based on race.”<sup>171</sup> The manager of the Phillies, Ben Chapman was the instigating the abuse. the manager “told his players to call Robinson everything and anything they wanted to.”<sup>172</sup> Chapman defended his actions by stating that Robinson was just another ballplayer and that they would ride anybody if that helped them to win.<sup>173</sup> Tygiel wrote that bench jockeying was always part of baseball and that no topic was sacred; from personal problems, appearance, ethnicity to race.<sup>174</sup> But he argued that this assault on Robinson was too much and crossed the line. While no official complaint was made by the Brooklyn Dodgers, the fans that could hear the profane and derogatory remarks filed a complaint. The fans wrote letters to the commissioner of baseball, Happy Chandler. After receiving several reports, the Commissioner called the general manager of the Phillies, Herb Pennock and told him that “his office would not tolerate that kind of bench riding.” Chandler went on that Robinson should not receive any special treatment or favors but that there was “a limit to everything and he thought that hurling racial epithets was beyond that limits.” If the Phillies continued Chandler would take more drastic actions.<sup>175</sup> Teams could ride Jackie, but not based on his race.

At one point, his teammate Ed Stanky had enough and started screaming back towards the Phillies bench: “Listen, you yellow-bellied cowards, why don’t you yell at somebody who can answer back?”<sup>176</sup> In his column for *the Pittsburgh Courier* he downplayed the whole situation, stating that he did not felt that Chapman and the other players really meant what they were shouting.<sup>177</sup> He also downplayed the death threats he received, Robinson stated: “I would say they

---

<sup>170</sup> “Robinson Fails at Plate, But Dodgers Win, 5-3,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Apr. 16, 1947.

<sup>171</sup> “‘Phillies’ Players Slur Jackie As He Slumps: Chapman Lead in ‘Bench Jockeying,’” *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 3, 1947.

<sup>172</sup> W. Smith, “‘Stop Race Baiting’ - Chandler: Phillies Warned by Baseball Czar over Robinson Incident,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 10, 19.

<sup>173</sup> S. Povich, “This Morning with Shirley Povich,” *Washington Post*, May 4, 1947.

<sup>174</sup> J. Tygiel, *Baseball’s Great Experiment*, 182.

<sup>175</sup> W. Smith, “‘Stop Race Baiting.’”

<sup>176</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 60.

<sup>177</sup> J. Robinson, “Jackie Robinson Says:,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 17, 1947, 14.



they're from scatter-brained people who just want something to yelp about."<sup>178</sup> Robinson even agreed with the plan to take a picture together with Chapman, so they could show that the Major League was a place of harmony and solidarity. Robinson told nobody how he really felt about the whole situation. In his autobiography, he wrote that he felt he was being tortured, that the slurs were really getting to him. "what was I doing here turning the other cheek as though I weren't a man? In college days, I had had a reputation as a black man who never tolerated affronts to his dignity. I had defied prejudice in the army. How could I have thought that barriers would fall, that indeed, my talent could triumph over bigotry?"<sup>179</sup>



The picture of Robinson and Chapman as printed in the *New York Amsterdam News* of May 17, 1947. Credits to, INS Photo.

Robinson almost snapped, he described how he almost gave up creating this image of a patient African American who would let everything pass unfazed. "I could throw down my bat, stride over to that Phillies dugout, grab one of those white sons of bitches and smash his teeth in with my despised black fist."<sup>180</sup> Robinson remained calm and the fact that his white teammates stood up for him helped him. It made Robinson feel slightly better. Only in his autobiography Robinson wrote what he really thought of the photo with Chapman, "There were times, after I had bowed to humiliations like shaking hands with Chapman, when deep depression and speculation as to whether it was all worthwhile would seize me."<sup>181</sup>

Shaking hands with Chapman was one of the hardest things Robinson ever had to do. Actions like this made Jackie Robinson an American hero, his public willingness to forgive and 'understand' the bigots. Robinson never, not once strayed from the path of dignity he set out with Branch Rickey. Everybody saw Jackie Robinson not only as a fine player but as a true gentleman. Incidents like this also helped Jackie settle in with the Dodgers. Jackie became closer with his teammates and with some of them he became friends off the field, like Pee Wee Reese. His image

---

<sup>178</sup> J. Robinson, "Jackie Robinson Says:," 14.

<sup>179</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 59.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

in 1947 reflected the image of Joe Louis, his “charismatic personality inspired not merely sympathy and acceptance, but sincere adulation from both whites and blacks alike.”<sup>182</sup> Robinson was the new sensation and wherever the Brooklyn Dodgers went they broke attendance records. In his first season with the Dodgers, Robinson won the Rookie of the Year award and according to Walter White journalist of the *New York Herald Tribune* and one of the most prominent civil rights leaders, there were other serious contenders for the Rookie of the year award. White said that: “behind the selection is a story of cool headedness and guts which is paralleled in American sports history by no other man, with the possible exception of Joe Louis.”<sup>183</sup> Arthur Daley of *The New York Times* wrote an article in 1949 where he summed up Robinsons experience in the Major League. In the beginning “he was in the big leagues but he was not part of it.”<sup>184</sup> Stating that Robinson always had to be conscious about his actions and could not talk back to umpires or opponents. Daley went on describing that African American fans cheered every time he made an action, even if it was unsuccessful, “it was embarrassing but he was the pioneer who had to blaze the trail.”<sup>185</sup> But the cheers when Robinson hit a foul ball slowly disappeared and Robinson gained acceptance as a baseball player. “All fans, Negro as well as white, began to cheer only his hits and not his outs.”<sup>186</sup>

After that first season Jackie felt he belonged to the team and in his biography. He described this feeling in two different situations. First, he described when he moved to the Flatbush section of Brooklyn, New York City. Jackie learned that the predominately Jewish neighbors signed a petition so that the black landlady, from who the Robinsons rented the apartment, could not occupy the house.<sup>187</sup> Aware of the fact that some of the neighbors could be hostile, the Robinson’s kept to themselves. But every time Robinson came out of the house there was a little white boy standing there, just looking at Jackie. “At first, this puzzled me, until I began to understand that he was just like a lot of other people –many much older than he.”<sup>188</sup> The little boy was a Jackie Robinson fan and wanted some attention from his sport hero. The second situation he described occurred during a game. Robinson was thrown out of the game because he was as he wrote it “booing and raucously protesting” a bad decision. The referee did not throw Jackie out of the game because he was black

---

<sup>182</sup> J. Tygiel, *Baseball’s Great Experiment*, 182.

<sup>183</sup> W. White, “Triumph of Jackie Robinson Credited to Backing of Fans,” *New York Herald Tribune*, Sep. 28, 1947

<sup>184</sup> A. Daley, “Sports of the Times: Jackie Robinson and the Ku Klux Klan,” *New York Times*, Jan. 18, 1949, 29.

<sup>185</sup> A. Daley, “Sports of the Times: Jackie Robinson and the Ku Klux Klan,” 29.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>187</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 73.

<sup>188</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 73.

he treated Jackie “as he would treat any ballplayer who got on his nerves.”<sup>189</sup> Just as Daley wrote, “he started talking back to umpires and he formally came of age when he almost got into a fist fight with Whitey Kurowski, a Pennsylvania Pole, at the plate.”<sup>190</sup> Robinson soon realized that being accepted in baseball and being accepted in society were two completely different things. “I thought I had learned the worst there was to learn about racial hatred in America. The year 1949 taught me more.”<sup>191</sup>

Just one of the incidents that occurred in 1949 was when the Grand Dragon, Dr. Samuel Green, a member of the Ku Klux Klan, questioned the legality of the appearance of Jackie Robinson and Roy Campanella in a game that was scheduled in Atlanta. The Grand Dragon claimed, “that this would be a violation of Georgia’s segregation laws.”<sup>192</sup> On April 23, 1944 the Klan was dissolved as a national organization due to the fact the organization was no longer under a tax-exempt status, “the Collector of Internal Revenue presented the Klan with a bill for back taxes amounting to \$685,305.00.”<sup>193</sup> While the Klan was officially disbanded, Green kept the spirit of the Klan alive in Georgia. To avoid taxes, he called his organization the Association of Georgia Klan’s, but he made it no secret that he “perpetuate the philosophy, ritual and methods of operations”<sup>194</sup> of the disbanded Klan. On a national level the Klan was eradicated, but on a local level it was still active. The Klan became more underground, just as it had it done in the past. Historian Chester Quarles argued that “the eradication attempt by the government made the Klan even more secretive than it had been during the days of Reconstruction.”<sup>195</sup> After the Second World War the Klan would be revived in full force, former Klansmen rejoined and on May 9, 1946 the Klan conducted its first large ceremony after the war. “Imperial Wizard Green led his followers up Stone Mountain, Georgia where they lighted the first cross that had been burned on the summit since Pearl Harbor.”<sup>196</sup> Why did the Klan emerge after the Second World War? According to the Klan leaders it had to do with the “Assertiveness on the part of the Negro race.”<sup>197</sup>

---

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>190</sup> A. Daley, “Sports of the Times: Jackie Robinson and the Ku Klux Klan,” 29.

<sup>191</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 75.

<sup>192</sup> A. Daley, “Sports of the Times: Jackie Robinson and the Ku Klux Klan,” 29.

<sup>193</sup> C. Quarles, *The Ku Klux Klan and Related American Racialist and Anti-Semitic Organizations, a History and Analysis* (Jefferson and London: McFarlan & Company Inc. Publishers, 1999) 81.

<sup>194</sup> C. Quarles, *The Ku Klux Klan and Related American Racialist and Anti-Semitic Organizations*, 81.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>196</sup> C. Quarles, *The Ku Klux Klan and Related American Racialist and Anti-Semitic Organizations*, 83.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 84.

According to Quarles despite their small numbers and divided leadership “the Klansman were such terrorists that they caused havoc wherever they were established.”<sup>198</sup> Klan violence rose as they burned crosses as a warning to their enemies; as they did in front of the homes where Robinson and Campanella stayed.<sup>199</sup> They shot at houses of unfriendly lawyers and threatened newspaper editors and “Tennessee was once again turned into a land of terror where neighbors were afraid to visit each other after dark.”<sup>200</sup> City officials did not oppose interracial sporting events, the Grand Dragon claimed that the Atlanta baseball club broke down the traditions of the South. He called for a boycott of the game he threatened that they would pay for it.<sup>201</sup> Robinson reacted to the threats: “I will play baseball where my employer, the Brooklyn Dodgers wants me to play.”<sup>202</sup> he hoped that “the fans in Atlanta, or all over America for that matter, will not allow this objection to cause a cancellation of the game.”<sup>203</sup> Branch Rickey was a little more outspoken as he declared that “nobody can tell me anywhere what players I can or cannot play.”<sup>204</sup> According to Arthur Daley, “No matter what the Klan did, African Americans would eventually preform freely in the South.” This was as “inevitable as death and taxes.”<sup>205</sup>

Over sixty-four hundred people crammed in to the stadium with a capacity of four thousand.<sup>206</sup> While this can be seen a victory, a shift in race relations or even as an example that Jim Crow laws were softening. Robinson argued that he did not have it made, nor did any other African American if they could not fight back. Robinson wanted to inspire the youth, but also did not want to lie to them. He felt that when African Americans became too big, too important or too powerful they would be brought down. “It is not terribly difficult for the black man as an individual to enter into the white man’s world and be partially accepted. If that individual black man is, in the eyes of the white world, an “uppity nigger,” he is in for a very hard time indeed.”<sup>207</sup> Robinson now an established sports hero wanted to fight back, he was done with turning the other cheek. “It was hard to believe the prejudice I saw emerging among people who had seemed friendly toward me

---

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>199</sup> J. Tygiel, *Baseball’s Great Experiment*, 267.

<sup>200</sup> C. Quarles, *The Ku Klux Klan and Related American Racialist and Anti-Semitic Organizations*, 87.

<sup>201</sup> J. Tygiel, *Baseball’s Great Experiment*, 259.

<sup>202</sup> “Ku Klux Seeking to Bar Dodgers’ Two Negro Stars,” *Hartford Courant*, Jan. 15, 1949, 10.

<sup>203</sup> “Jackie Shrugs off KKK Threat,” *Afro American*, Jan. 22, 1949, 1.

<sup>204</sup> A. Daley, “Sports of the Times: Jackie Robinson and the Ku Klux Klan,” 29.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>206</sup> J. Tygiel, *Baseball’s Great Experiment*, 267.

<sup>207</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 75.

before I began to speak my mind. I became, in their minds and in their columns a “pop-off,” a “troublemaker,” a “rabble-rouser.” It was apparent that I was a fine guy until “Success went to his head,” until I began to “change.”<sup>208</sup> Robinson believed that there were enough African Americans in Major League Baseball, to be the Jackie Robinson he was in college. The Jackie he was during his days in the army. Robinson was no longer happy with only talking back to whites on the field, he felt the urge to use his fame and address broader questions about social injustice.<sup>209</sup>

Journalists from the *Sporting News*, saw Jackie’s outspokenness “as evidence of ingratitude to the game that had given him fame and fortune.” This view was echoed by several African American players, like Roy Campanella.<sup>210</sup> Jackie saw it different, Branch Rickey just gave him a chance. The success he had was because of his courage and his skill. Jackie argued that he had to use his fame to speak out. Many commentators disagreed with this and pleaded that Robinson should stay on the path of the great Joe Louis. Louis was “the greatest goodwill ambassador his race had ever had.”<sup>211</sup> Robinson respected Louis, but he did not think of Louis as the proper image for African Americans. “Black leaders, argued Robinson, should be demanding and outspoken” Robinson wanted to be an African American who concluded that he was not “going to beg for anything.”<sup>212</sup> Robinson asserted himself as a proud, defiant and combative African American and that is what he wanted to show the new generation. It was only after Robinson was a house hold name in the MLB he started showing militancy about social justice, primarily within the context of baseball. “Robinson responded that as long as discrimination continued on the playing field, in spring training and in major league communities, his achievement remained incomplete. Others viewed the integration of baseball as an end; Robinson envisioned the baseball experience as the stepping stone to more significant advances.”<sup>213</sup> To give just one example, in December 1952, Commissioner Ford Frick had summoned Jackie Robinson to his office regarding a television interview. Robinson had accused the New York Yankees of discriminating against African American players.<sup>214</sup> Robinson explained Frick what happened, he was asked the question, “do you think the Yankee management is prejudiced against Negro ball players?” I answered ‘yes!’

---

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>209</sup> A. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson, a Biography*, 220.

<sup>210</sup> J. Tygiel, *Baseball’s Great Experiment*, 325.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 326.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 326.

<sup>213</sup> J. Tygiel, *Baseball’s Great Experiment*, 327.

<sup>214</sup> “Frick Calls Robinson in On Racial Jab at Yanks,” *New York Times*, Dec. 18, 1952, 32.

that's all I said."<sup>215</sup> When the commissioner asked Robinson to avoid issues like this in the future. Robinson told Frick he would do that, but he added "I would give the same answer if I were ever asked the same question again."<sup>216</sup> Robinson argued he was not looking for a fight with anybody but he wanted to be honest about how he felt, adding that there were a lot more people in Harlem that felt the same way.<sup>217</sup>

In September 1953, only six of the sixteen Major League clubs fielded African American players.<sup>218</sup> The slowness of the integration reflected both the persistent resentment against African Americans and the prevailing racial attitudes of that time. Tygiel wrote that "baseball executives also demanded loftier standards of behavior from black athletes."<sup>219</sup> All African American athletes had to be like Joe Louis or Jackie Robinson, in his first two years. Most owners mentioned a lack of quality among African American players rather than that it was deliberate bigoted. Even Jackie Robinson argued in 1951 there were not too many African Americans who could make it into the Major League. "the cream has already been skimmed of the top of the Negro League and it will take time for the youngster to develop."<sup>220</sup> Baseball is a game of statistics and the following statistics proved them wrong about the lack of quality within the Negro Leagues. Between 1947 and 1954 six of the seven Rookie of the year titles in the National League went to African Americans.<sup>221</sup> The title of Most Valuable Player of the National League was won by African American eight times in the ten years after Jackie Robinson won it in 1949.<sup>222</sup> After the 1952/1953 season more teams began to sign African American players. It took until 1959 for all teams to be integrated.<sup>223</sup> In an article, published in the *Chicago Daily Defender* the owners of the Tigers and Red Sox were mocked. "Since Jackie Robinson got into the major leagues, integrated teams have consistently been in the thick of the pennant race."<sup>224</sup> Since the Boston Red Sox and the Detroit Tigers clung to their "lily-white policy" they did not speak to the imagination and were no title

---

<sup>215</sup> "Frick Calls Robinson in On Racial Jab at Yanks," 32.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>218</sup> J. Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, 285.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 287.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 286.

<sup>221</sup> S. Kendrick, "National League Rookies of the Year," <https://www.thoughtco.com/national-league-rookies-of-the-year-319910>, updated March 7, 2017, accessed June 6, 2017.

<sup>222</sup> "MLB Most Valuable Player MVP Awards & Cy Young Awards Winners" [http://www.baseball-reference.com/awards/mvp\\_cya.shtml](http://www.baseball-reference.com/awards/mvp_cya.shtml), updated 2016, accessed June 6, 2017.

<sup>223</sup> "Integration Helps Baseball," *Chicago Daily Defender*, Aug. 22, 1957.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*

contenders. According to Shirley Povich, 1957, was also the that marked “the complete emancipation of the American Negro in America’s national game,” It was the first time an African American player had thrown the first punch in a player argument.<sup>225</sup>

---

<sup>225</sup> J. Tygiel, *Baseball’s Great Experiment*, 310.

## Chapter 6: From baseball to politics

During his ten-year career, Robinson was chosen as the Major League Baseball Rookie of the Year (1947), got voted National League's Most Valuable Player (1949) won the batting championship (1949) and was leader in the number of stolen bases twice (1947 & 1949). he was selected to be part of the all-star team six times between 1949 and 1954. With the Dodgers, he won six National League pennants and eventually he won the World Series in 1955. In 1962 Jackie was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. When Jackie Robinson retired these things became less important to him. In 1957 Robinson spoke in Oakland, California in front of a crowd of ten thousand people. In that speech Robinson declared that if he had to choose between baseball's Hall of Fame and first-class citizenship he would choose first class citizenship for all people.<sup>226</sup>

When Robinson was inducted into the Baseball Hall of fame in 1962 people criticized Robinson for his outspokenness about politics and civil rights. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. argued that Robinson had all the right to talk about social injustice. In his Column Dr. King Jr. wrote, "he has the right because back in the days when integration wasn't fashionable, he underwent the trauma and the humiliation and the loneliness which comes with being a pilgrim that walks in the lonesome byways toward the high road of Freedom. He was a sit-inner before sit-ins, a freedom rider before freedom riders."<sup>227</sup> This was important for Jackie because he did not want to be perceived as a symbol, as an African American who had it made or as a success story. In his autobiography Robinson quoted Malcom X on how he felt. "Don't tell me about progress the black man has made. You don't stick a knife ten inches in my back, pull it out three or four, then tell me I'm making progress."<sup>228</sup> As long as he was treated as a second-class citizen off the field Jackie would fight social injustice. While most scholars have focused on the importance of Jackie's baseball career I would argue that his baseball career was part of a larger story. An important aspect that helped define Robinson's thinking about civil rights but also gave him a platform he could use to fight racism. Jackie was one of the first African American athletes to do so.

The first time and only time during his baseball career, Jackie Robinson was politically involved was in 1949. When he clashed with singer, actor and ex-athlete Paul Robeson. This

---

<sup>226</sup> A. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson, a Biography*, 318.

<sup>227</sup> M. L. King Jr., "People in Action Hall of Famer."

<sup>228</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 76.



collision between two African Americans heroes happened in the early Cold War period. The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) launched attacks on everybody who had ties with communists. In 1947 HUAC launched a series of hearings on the influence of Communists in Hollywood; the goal was to blacklist those performers that had ties with Communists. In 1947 the committee charged the “Hollywood Ten” which included ten famous and influential screenwriters, directors and producers. This became known as the “Hollywood blacklist”.<sup>229</sup> The Robinson – Robeson collision can be seen in the same light, as Professor Ronald Smith argued “the political collision of two black heroes tells us much about the nature of American society and of the place of sport and the performing arts during the precipitous years of the communist-hunting post World War II era.”<sup>230</sup> On April 19, 1949, Paul Robeson spoke in front of 2000 delegates from 52 countries at the World Peace Congress in Paris.<sup>231</sup> There he stated that African Americans would never fight the Soviet Union, “I bring you a message from the Negro people of America that they do not want a war which would send them back into a new kind of slavery.”<sup>232</sup> According to Robeson it was “unthinkable” that African Americans would fight a war on behalf of those who oppressed them for generations. Especially when it was against a country “which in one generation has raised our people to the full dignity of mankind.”<sup>233</sup> The government deemed these kinds of opinions unpatriotic and dangerous. Robinson was asked by officials of the United States government to help diminish Robeson’s leadership role.

Robeson was born two years after the *Plessy versus Ferguson* decision and was raised with the believes of E. B. Du Bois, that the African Americans needed liberty, justice and rights. Things that were marked “For White People only.”<sup>234</sup> Robeson opposed the believes of Booker T. Washington who believed that African Americans should prove their worth by their own productivity. By focusing on getting farm or skilled jobs, instead of demanding political and civil rights.<sup>235</sup> Robeson knew he was not inferior and showed this during his education, he graduated cum laude and best of his year from Rutgers University. After that he studied law at Columbia

---

<sup>229</sup> E. Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 918.

<sup>230</sup> R. Smith, “The Paul Robeson – Jackie Robinson Saga and a Political Collision,” *Journal of Sport History*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Summer (1979) 6.

<sup>231</sup> “Negroes Won’t Fight Soviet, Robeson Says,” *Washington Post*, Apr. 21, 1949, 3.

<sup>232</sup> “Negroes Won’t Fight Soviet, Robeson Says,” 3.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>234</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, (originally published in 1903, E-book version released Jan. 29, 2008, Project Gutenberg) <https://www.gutenberg.org>, Ebook #408.

<sup>235</sup> E. Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 661.

University. Robeson also flourished in the athletic department, he was named All American and played professional football, before becoming a successful singer and actor. Robeson played in the *All God's Chillun*, where he played an African American that was married to a white woman. Because of this role, he received death threats from the Ku Klux Klan. It also brought recognition among fans, black and white.<sup>236</sup> Robeson spent more and more time in Europe during the 1920's and 1930's because he felt there was less racial hate than in America, especially in London. In the 1930's Robeson became aware that the fascism was on the rise and he questioned "the imperialistic policies of European nations and America towards Africa, of fascist Italy toward Ethiopia, and of Nazi Germany toward the Spanish Civil War."<sup>237</sup> It was during his stay in Moscow that he became impressed with the Soviet Union, he felt he was treated as an equal there. When Robeson moved back to the United States in 1939 nobody minded that he praised the Soviet Union, during the war his fame as a singer and actor rose to new limits and everybody saw him as an opponent of fascism. Robeson never changed and he continued praising the Soviet Union and spoke out against racial injustice within the United States.

During the war Robeson criticized the "Gentlemen's agreement" in baseball. Robeson argued that it was hypocritical of the United States fighting the Nazi's while maintaining racist policies back home. In an interview with the *Pittsburgh Courier* he was quoted "the temper of the Negro has changed, and will remain changed—he is playing to fight a world-wide war for the right of people to be free, and he will resist any attempt to keep him tied down to a reactionary status quo."<sup>238</sup> In 1943 Commissioner Landis invited Robeson to address the owners of the baseball clubs, Robeson was chosen because of his fame, Landis called him "a great man in public life" and a "great American."<sup>239</sup> Robeson accepted the invitation because he had the feeling he could relate to the problem as an ex athlete and as a performer.<sup>240</sup> According to Wendell Smith, Robeson "received a rousing ovation."<sup>241</sup> When all the speakers were done, none of the owners asked any questions about desegregating the baseball leagues. After World War II, Robeson continued criticizing

---

<sup>236</sup> R. Smith, "The Paul Robeson – Jackie Robinson Saga, 10.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>238</sup> "Robeson Sees Labor as Salvation of Negro Races: Praises CIO Plan to Better Racial Conditions Here," *Pittsburgh Courier*, Dec. 25, 1943, 11.

<sup>239</sup> W. Smith, "Publishers Place Case of Negro Players Before Big-League owners," *Pittsburgh Courier*, Dec. 11, 1943, 1.

<sup>240</sup> W. Smith, "Publishers Place Case of Negro Players Before Big-League owners," 1.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

American society and kept praising the racial policies of the Soviet Union. Ronald Smith argued, “his outspoken stance for black rights and his pro-communist ideology created a furor wherever he went as America turned to a hate-Russia campaign in the post-war era.”<sup>242</sup> So when Robeson spoke in Paris about the matter that African Americans would never fight a war against the Soviet Union he not only became a target for HUAC. Almost all the newspapers, in the United States, were “unequivocal in their stands against Robeson.”<sup>243</sup> The reactions were hostile and it was made clear that Robeson did not speak for all African Americans.

While most American newspapers, black and white, were hostile they believed there was truth in what Robeson was saying. Because of his association with the Communist ideology HUAC needed to discredit Paul Robeson. They were afraid that his fame and popularity would influence African Americans. HUAC conducted “a hearing on the communist infiltration of minority groups and invited prominent blacks to testify about the Negro loyalty and Robeson’s disloyalty.”<sup>244</sup> HUAC needed somebody who was just as popular as Paul Robeson. In 1949, Jackie Robinson was probably the most famous African American in popular culture or at least as famous as the great Joe Louis and Paul Robeson. In his autobiography Robinson stated that he knew this was the reason the committee asked him to testify, “I Realized that they must have felt my popularity with black and white sports-loving masses would help them refute the Robeson statement.”<sup>245</sup> Robinson doubted if he had to testify because he did not want to be used as a pawn by a white institution. He thought he would be a “traitor” if he attacked another African American publicly. Jackie also believed in the fight Robeson fought against racial inequality. In the end, Robinson still believed that the white man would deliver justice. “In those days, I had much more faith in the ultimate justice of the American white man than I have today.”<sup>246</sup> He accepted the invitation because he believed it was impossible to speak for all the African Americans, he was afraid that Robeson’s comments would “discredit blacks in the eyes of whites.”<sup>247</sup> Robinson accepted the invitation out of a “sense of responsibility.”<sup>248</sup>

---

<sup>242</sup> R. Smith, “The Paul Robeson – Jackie Robinson Saga, 16.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>245</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 82.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>248</sup> H. Heft, “Jackie Robinson Chides Robeson,” *The Washington Post*, Jul. 19, 1949, 2.

Robinson began his testimony with stating that it was not very pleasant to find himself in the middle of a public argument while he was trying to win a pennant for the Dodgers. He told the committee he was not an expert on Communism or any other kind of political ‘ism’. Jackie told he could not speak for fifteen million people, nor could anybody else.<sup>249</sup> Robinson stated that if Robeson wanted to sound “Silly in public, that was his decision.”<sup>250</sup> In *The Washington Post*, Robinson was quoted, “But I know that I’ve got too much invested for my wife and child and myself in the future of this country... to throw it away because of a siren song sung in bass.”<sup>251</sup> He continued that did not mean he would stop fighting race discrimination in the United States until it was “licked.”<sup>252</sup> Robinson stated that the fight against racism could be won without the help of the Communists. He emphasized that they did not need their help.<sup>253</sup> But Robinson also emphasized that Robeson had the right to have his own personal views, whether he agreed with them did not matter. According to Robinson the racial problems in the United states were much older than the Communist Party. “Negroes were stirred up long before there was a Communist Party, and they’ll stay stirred up long after the party has disappeared –unless Jim Crow has disappeared by then as well.”<sup>254</sup> HUAC praised his testimony and used its publicity value. For the first time, the committee allowed photographers and newsmen in the room.<sup>255</sup> The major newspapers emphasized the anti - Robeson aspect of his testimony instead of the civil rights aspect of it. “While major white papers were cheering Robinson for castigating Robeson, black paper were generally cheering Robinson for advocating black civil rights and criticizing HUAC’S investigation for dividing blacks against each other.”<sup>256</sup>

After the hearing Robeson’s decline into near oblivion started. His passport was cancelled by the Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles and the Federal Bureau of Investigation heckled Robeson on a continuous base. Robeson’s personal freedom and economic independence were attacked.<sup>257</sup> “The vicious attacks upon Robeson were part of the hysteria created out of the Cold War ideology of the post- World War II era. It was the same hysteria which gave rise to the

---

<sup>249</sup> H. Heft, “Jackie Robinson Chides Robeson,” 2.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>256</sup> R. Smith, “The Paul Robeson – Jackie Robinson Saga, 22.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

demagogic character of Joseph McCarthy, who as Senator used character assassination involving the issue of communism in his rise to prominence around 1950.”<sup>258</sup> While Robeson and the Communist party rapidly diminished during the 1950’s the fight for social justice was only started and Jackie Robinson began to speak out against it. Only spoke out against racism within a more conservative frame work than Paul Robeson did. By the mid-1950s racial violence and intimidation became symbol of Southern life once more. “The white South’s refusal to accept the *Brown* decision reinforced the conviction that black citizens could not gain their constitution rights without Washington’s intervention.”<sup>259</sup> Against this backdrop the integration of baseball in the South took place. While it looked that the integration of baseball proceeded with an absence of friction, the early years marked a difficult period of adjustment for players, managers, fans and sportswriters. “A process which would be repeated as blacks entered other industries and institutions in the subsequent years.”<sup>260</sup>

On July 26, 1948, President Harry Truman issued an executive order; “that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or nation origin.”<sup>261</sup> The crises that soon followed in Korea accelerated the integration of African Americans in ‘white platoons’. Historian Edward Woodward argued that “race relations took a turn for the better instead of for the worse as feared.”<sup>262</sup> Because of this success the new policy of integration within the armed forces was applied wherever the United States army was stationed. where Truman had success in desegregating the armed forces he was less successful in desegregating other aspects of society. When Dwight D. Eisenhower became president the struggle for civil rights declined in importance, his policy preferred state action.<sup>263</sup> The initiative to fight social injustice did not came from the executive branch, the issues had to be addressed by courts and civil rights groups. They succeeded and virtually eliminated lynching for a time in the early 1950’s. They also had other successes, six states adopted laws against the Ku Klux Klan, private universities admitted African American students without legal pressure and a

---

<sup>258</sup> R. Smith, “The Paul Robeson – Jackie Robinson Saga, 22.

<sup>259</sup> E. Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 965.

<sup>260</sup> J. Tygiel, *Baseball’s Great Experiment*, 303.

<sup>261</sup> C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, (New York: Oxford University Press, first published 1955, third revision, 1974) 136.

<sup>262</sup> C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 137.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, 138-139

few cities began to open public facilities on non-segregated basis.<sup>264</sup> Tygiel argued that the integration of baseball affirmed the liberal creed of “greater interracial familiarity and enlightenment through education.”<sup>265</sup> A creed that formed the foundation of the *Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka* decision. The NAACP, especially Charles Hamilton Houston and Thurgood Marshall, challenged the “separate but equal” doctrine that was laid down after the *Plessy versus Ferguson* case in 1896. “At first, the NAACP sought to gain admission to white institutions of higher learning for which no black equivalent existed.”<sup>266</sup> With the support of the new Chief Justice, Earl Warren, the NAACP supported local cases that challenged unfair school policies.

The NAACP assisted Oliver Brown, whose “daughter, a third grader, was forced to walk across dangerous railroad tracks each morning rather than being allowed to attend a nearby school restricted to whites.”<sup>267</sup> For Thurgood Marshall, it was not enough to fight against the applications of the “separate but equal” principle. Marshall wanted to attack the whole doctrine. According to Marshall “segregation was inherently unequal since it stigmatized one group of citizens as unfit to associate with others.”<sup>268</sup> He argued that it damaged African American children for the rest of their lives. On May 17, 1954, Earl Warren read the decision out loud; the court concluded that segregation in public education violated the equal protection of the laws that were guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment.<sup>269</sup> Woodward described the decision of the court as the most “momentous and far-reaching of the century in civil rights.”<sup>270</sup> It was the beginning of the end of Jim Crow and while the *Brown* decision did not cause the modern civil rights movement, it surely showed they were backed by the Federal Courts. Mass actions against segregation reappeared, like the yearlong, 381 days, bus boycott after Rosa Parks was arrested. After she refused to give up her seat to a white person, as was the law in the Jim Crow South. Hundreds of African Americans, from maids, janitors to teachers and students walked to their destination or used an informal network of taxis. Until the Supreme Court ruled segregation in public transportation unconstitutional, which they did in November 1956. The Montgomery Bus Boycott is a turning

---

<sup>264</sup> C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 143.

<sup>265</sup> J. Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, 303.

<sup>266</sup> E. Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 961.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*, 961-962.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, 962.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, 962.

<sup>270</sup> C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange career of Jim Crow*, 147.

point in twentieth century American history. It not only “launched the movement for racial justice as a nonviolent crusade based in the black churches of the South.”<sup>271</sup> It also helped gather support from northern liberals and “focused unprecedented and unwelcome international attention on the country’s racial policies.”<sup>272</sup> it saw the emergence of Martin Luther King Jr.

---

<sup>271</sup> E. Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 964.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid*, 964.

## Chapter 7: The emergence of a civil rights activist

Where the verdict in the *Brown* case was the sparking moment, Rosa Parks was the match that lit up the fight for civil rights. In the 1950's and 1960's the civil rights movement peaked. Their goal was to secure equal access to basic privileges and rights for African Americans. In 1956 Martin Luther King Jr. invited other black clergy and civil rights activist to form the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). King Jr., had studied Henry David Thoreau's and Mahatma Gandhi's writing on peaceful civil disobedience and the nonviolent protests the Congress of Racial Equality had organized in the 1940's. Building on that King Jr. "outlined a philosophy of struggle in which evil must be met with good, hate with Christian love, and violence with peaceful demands for change."<sup>273</sup> This philosophy sent a powerful message across the country, it showed that violence was only used by the oppressors and not the oppressed. It became a powerful tool for the civil rights movement, King was a master of appealing to the feeling of the masses, among the blacks to a feeling of injustice among white to their conscience. The philosophy was shared with other groups, like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the NAACP. together they had success in popular mobilization, had victories in the court room and held sit-ins, marches, boycotts and registration drives. But the South was reluctant to desegregate. More than hundred Southern congressmen signed a manifesto that supported segregated schools after Senator Harry Byrd, of Virginia, called for "massive resistance" to integration. This made the various organizations of the civil rights movement realize they needed Washington.<sup>274</sup> Their efforts paid off and led to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. After 1965 the success of the movement declined because of the rise of black power, an internal division occurred between the, older, supporters of nonviolence and the, younger, advocates of separatism.<sup>275</sup>

In 1956 the NAACP rewarded Jackie Robinson the 41st Spingarn Medal. A medal that recognized the "highest or noblest achievement by an American Negro during preceding year or years."<sup>276</sup> While there were no restrictions to which field, intellectual, spiritual, scientific, artistic, educational etc. the winner had to belong, Robinson was the first athlete to win the award (One

---

<sup>273</sup> E. Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 964.

<sup>274</sup> A. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson, a Biography*, 295.

<sup>275</sup> T. Lauren. "Topic Center: The Civil Rights Movement, 1954–1975." *American History the Civil Rights Movement, 1954–1975*, americanhistory.abc-clio.com, accessed June 11, 2017.

<sup>276</sup> NAACP, "The Spingarn Medal Award annually for the highest achievement of an American Negro" (New York) 2, Reproduced from the Collections of the manuscript Division, Library of Congress.



other notable winner, Paul Robeson in 1945).<sup>277</sup> The goal was not only to serve as a reward for that person it also had serve “as a stimulus to the ambition of colored youth.”<sup>278</sup> For Robinson this award showed him that he transcended the role of just an athlete. He had made a mark on American society. In the press release of the NAACP about the winner of 1956 they stated, “The medal was awarded to Jackie for “his superb sportsmanship, his pioneer role in breaking the color bar in organized baseball, and his civic consciousness,” particularly his work in the efforts to curb juvenile delinquency.”<sup>279</sup> In his acceptance speech on December 8, 1956 (The NAACP did not want to disturb Jackie during the season) Robinson called it “The high point” in his career and that it meant more to him than anything else that happened to him before.<sup>280</sup> According to Robinson the NAACP stood for everything a man should stand for, human dignity, brotherhood and fair play.<sup>281</sup> Robinson told how important the NAACP was and that he was willing to help fight for their cause, the American cause.<sup>282</sup>

*Ever since I first knew enough to know what the NAACP is, it has stood out for me as the tireless champion of rights and the well-being of the Negroes of America. It is even more than that, because its cause is the cause of democracy, which makes it the champion of all Americans who cherish the principles on which this country was founded. Today, when it is under a relentless and widespread attack, designed to bring its great work to an end, at least in the South —where it is needed most— I hope that I will be able, in whatever way I can, to help in its defense.*

Twelve days later Jackie agreed to be the Nation-Wide Freedom Fund Chairman for 1957 and at the same time he was negotiating about a contract to become the vice president of Chuck Full O’Nuts. On January 6, 1957, all the newspapers had the same kind of headline, “Jackie Robinson Quits Baseball” on the front page.<sup>283</sup> Two weeks later, on January 20, Jackie started to tour the country for the NAACP’s Fight for Freedom Fund. Robinson visited nine cities in nine states in fourteen days.<sup>284</sup> By 1953 the NAACP was caught up in costly legal battles and their main

---

<sup>277</sup> H. L. Moon, “News from NAACP, Jackie Robinson Named 41<sup>st</sup> Spingarn Medalist,” (New York, June 14, 1956) Reproduced from the Collections of the manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

<sup>278</sup> NAACP, “*The Spingarn Medal Award*,” 2.

<sup>279</sup> H. L. Moon, “News from NAACP.”

<sup>280</sup> J. Robinson, “Acceptance Address at special Luncheon Honoring Him on Presentation of 41<sup>st</sup> Spingarn Medal” (New York, December 8, 1956) Reproduced from the Collections of the manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

<sup>281</sup> J. Robinson, “Acceptance Address”

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>283</sup> J. Lynch, “Jackie Robinson Quits baseball; Trade is voided,” *The New York Times*, Jan. 6, 1957, 1.

<sup>284</sup> G. Current, “Memorandum to Mr. Moon,” Dec. 21, 1956

source of income were the annual dues. The NAACP started a ten-year program, the Fight for Freedom Fund, to raise money. Their goal was to annually raise a million dollar so they could end segregation by January 1, 1963, a hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation.<sup>285</sup> 1957 was not an easy year for the NAACP. For the first time since 1944 membership declined, mainly because of the drastic measures that were taken by Southern states to outlaw the NAACP.<sup>286</sup> they had to battle the SCLC. While the two organizations worked together and had the same goals they were direct competitors, “not only for funds but also for the hearts and minds of black Americans and the growing number of their liberal white allies.”<sup>287</sup> Robinson could not raise a million dollar never the less his tour was considered a success. Mainly because the interplay his celebrity status and his believe in the cause. Robinson, more than once state that he believed the NAACP was not there just for the African Americans. “If I thought the NAACP was working for Negro-Americans and not for the country I wouldn’t be making this tour.”<sup>288</sup> Robinson argued that the struggle in the United States was significant for the world. “In the present world crisis, the colored people of the world have their eyes on America to see how Negroes are treated here.”<sup>289</sup>

During that tour, Robinson began to realize that there was more to the world than just baseball. In June, he spoke at the 48<sup>th</sup> annual NAACP convention in Detroit about how much he had changed the past year. How last year he was occupied with ‘problems’ as the pennant race with the Dodgers and how insignificant that was compared with the real problems he became to address more frequently. When Jackie came back from his first tour he kept speaking for the NAACP every spare weekend he had. Jackie did not just try to sell lifelong memberships of the NAACP. Robinson also questioned the actions, or rather the lack of action, from prominent public figures; especially that of President Eisenhower. After the successful Montgomery Bus Boycott that resulted in the integration of the city’s buses. White supremacists bombed four churches and two homes of ministers that supported the boycott. In a letter Jackie wrote to his wife, he stated that the more he read about the whole Montgomery situation, the more he respected what they, the SCLC, did.<sup>290</sup> Robinson could relate to the whole boycott because to a point it reflected his actions of July 1944,

---

<sup>285</sup> A. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson, a Biography*, 315.

<sup>286</sup> “Jackie Robinson here Friday for NAACP Membership Drive Kick-off,” undated news clipping, Reproduced from the Collections of the manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

<sup>287</sup> A. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson, a Biography*, 316.

<sup>288</sup> B. Nunn Jr., “Change of Pace, Jackie Robinson shows in New Role,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, Feb. 2, 1957

<sup>289</sup> B. Nunn Jr., “Change of Pace, Jackie Robinson shows in New Role.”

<sup>290</sup> A. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson, a Biography*, 287.

when he refused to move to the back of the bus. Not long after the bombings he met with King Jr. and in his autobiography, he wrote “I had been extremely impressed by his calmness in the face of such terrible violence and threats to his family.” Jackie referred to incident when the house of the King family was bombed by white supremacists.<sup>291</sup> Jackie befriended King and saw the qualities that made King the leader he was. “Godliness, strength, courage, and patience in the face of overwhelming odds were his chief characteristics.”<sup>292</sup> In a letter Robinson asked Reverend King for his support on his Freedom Fund Campaign, stating that these dollars were “fighting for freedom for all men; her at home we seek a fund to make democracy real for our largest minority group.”<sup>293</sup> Robinson argued that King’s leadership would give a boost to the cause. While King replied that his schedule was extremely busy he would do everything in his power to help, because it was a “magnificent task.” while historian Michael Long argued that there was no evidence that “King offered any significant help to the NAACP.”<sup>294</sup>

Robinson felt that Eisenhower had the moral obligation to condemn the bombings because they occurred “in the one place where they have felt safe.”<sup>295</sup> Robinson went on how the United States lost prestige because of bombings like this and he concluded that he was sure President Eisenhower would protest the bombings because the struggle for civil rights was the struggle of all Americans.<sup>296</sup> These remarks showed that Robinson was aware of the political aspect of the fight for civil rights. While Robinson was critical about President Eisenhower, he was inspired by vice President Richard Nixon. Especially when Nixon spoke about civil rights in Ethiopia, “we shall never be satisfied with the progress we have been making in recent years until the problem is solved and equal opportunity becomes a reality for all Americans.”<sup>297</sup> This was exactly what Robinson expected from the White House, clear statements on their position about civil rights. According to Robinson Nixon described the “sentiment of the vast majority of the American people who wish to see an end to racial discrimination and segregation.” But to achieve that progress should be made at “an accelerated pace.”<sup>298</sup> Robinson believed that Nixon was sincere about the issue. Robinson

---

<sup>291</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never Had It Made*, 211.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>293</sup> J. Robinson, “Letter to Martin Luther King Jr.,” Feb. 11, 1957, in *First Class Citizenship*, Edited by M. Long.

<sup>294</sup> M. Long, ed., *First Class Citizenship*.

<sup>295</sup> A. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson, a Biography*, 323.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, 323.

<sup>297</sup> E. Mazo, “Nixon Tells Ethiopia of U.S. Negro: Cities Progress of Integration,” *New York Tribune / Herald Tribune*, March 13, 1957, 11.

<sup>298</sup> J. Robinson, “Letter to Vice President Nixon,” March 19, 1957, in *First Class Citizenship*, edited by M. Long.

was particularly impressed that Nixon held his speech in what Robinson called the “Heart of Africa.”<sup>299</sup> In a letter President Eisenhower wrote to Jackie Robinson, Eisenhower expressed gratitude towards Jackie. For that he believed in the “efforts to achieve equality” from the White House.<sup>300</sup> One sentence showed Robinson and other civil rights activist a lot about the willingness of President Eisenhower for a comprehensive integration. President Eisenhower spoke about shaping “a moral climate.”<sup>301</sup> Eisenhower did not mention anything about executive leadership, changing legislations or the enforcement of laws. According to Jackie Robinson these were of utmost importance if they wanted to end segregation.

In 1957 a civil rights bill was introduced that focused mainly on voting rights. Eisenhower believed it was disturbing “that in some localities allegations persist that Negro citizens were being deprived of their right to vote and likewise being subjected to unwarranted economic pressures.”<sup>302</sup> When the bill moved through the Senate, it was met with a lot of opposition. To give an example, Senator Strom Thurmond, South Carolina, set the record for longest filibuster in American history. He spoke for twenty-four hours and eighteen minutes against the civil rights bill.<sup>303</sup> A watered down version of the bill passed Congress and because of the bill the Commission on Civil Rights and the Civil Rights Division within the US Department of Justice were established. The goal of the bill remained the same, to get more African Americans to voting booth. The enforcement of the act was limited, because the commission had “no power to enforce a law or act as a police agency.” They only could “report its findings to the President and Congress and make recommendations for governmental action.”<sup>304</sup> That meant if a white Southerner was being sued for obstructing an African American to vote he had to face an all-white jury; African Americans could not be in a jury. Bayard Rustin, representative of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) thought the bill was important. According to Rustin it was the first civil rights act in eighty-two years. Rustin declared that it could have been better, but for him it was the symbolism that counted.

---

<sup>299</sup> J. Robinson, “Letter to Vice President Nixon.”

<sup>300</sup> A. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson, a Biography*, 326.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*, 326.

<sup>302</sup> “[Fact Paper - The Administration and Civil Rights Legislation, March 27, 1957](#),” Frederic Morrow Records, Box 9, Civil Rights Bill; NAID #12167051, Eisenhower.archives.gov, *Civil Rights Act of 1957*, accessed June 14, 2017.

<sup>303</sup> Congressional record, Proceedings and Debates of the 85<sup>th</sup> congress first session Volume 103 – Part 12, August 22, 1957, to August 30, 1957, Pages 15561 to 17012, (United States Government Printing Office, Washington 1957) 16456.

<sup>304</sup> “Pamphlet, the Commission on Civil Rights,” E. Frederic Morrow Records, Box 9, Civil Rights Bill; NAID #12167074, Eisenhower.archives.gov, *Civil Rights Act of 1957*, accessed June 14, 2017.

Rustin thought it would be the first bill of many.<sup>305</sup> Jackie Robinson disagreed with Rustin. In a Telegram Robinson sent to Presidential assistant Frederick Morrow in August 1957, he wrote that he was “opposed to Civil Rights Bill in its present form.” Jackie disagreed that “half a loaf” was better than none. Jackie suggested that the African Americans could wait a bit longer for a “Bill with meaning.” He urged the President to veto the bill in the form it was presented.<sup>306</sup>

That governmental action was needed was crystal clear after Governor Orval Faubus called upon the National Guard to prevent nine African American students entering the Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas on September 4, 1957. Faubus had ordered the National Guard to Central High “to preserve peace” and maintain order if the integration was forced.<sup>307</sup> The school foresaw no problems with the integration.<sup>308</sup> While the nine students tried to enter the school a white mob had gathered and with every step the students took they were met with racial abuse. The National Guard prevented the students from entering the school and thus challenged the court order that was issued by the federal government. The district court ordered Faubus to stop intervening and ordered him to remove the National Guard. Faubus refused to obey. On the morning of September 21, the NAACP president of the Arkansas branch, Daisy Bates, accompanied the students into the school through an entrance on the side.<sup>309</sup> At the same time the white mob was growing and the racial abuse was ferocious; the students were spat on. Afraid of a riot the mayor of Little Rock ordered that the students would return home. Daisy Bates told that the students were not coming back if their safety was not guaranteed.<sup>310</sup> President Eisenhower denounced the situation in Little Rock as a disgrace and ordered those who obstructed the, federal, law to stop. Eisenhower demanded that the mob disband itself and he stated that he would uphold the constitution. At the same time, he urged that everybody had to remain patient.<sup>311</sup> After that statement Robinson wrote the president, with the question to who he was referring when he said: “we must be patient.” For Robinson, it was clear as he wrote, “for those who haven’t felt the evils

---

<sup>305</sup> C. Trueman, “The 1957 Civil Rights Act,” [historylearningsite.co.uk](http://historylearningsite.co.uk), *The History Learning Site*, edited Aug. 16, 2016, accessed June 14, 2107.

<sup>306</sup> J. Robinson, “Telegram to Frederick Morrow,” Aug.13, 1957, [Archives.gov](http://Archives.gov), *Jackie Robinson, Civil Rights Advocate*, accessed June 14, 2107.

<sup>307</sup> “Little Rock Quiet; N. Little Rock Too,” *Daily Defender*, Sep. 12, 1957.

<sup>308</sup> M. Kronenwetter, “Little Rock Desegregation Crisis,” [americanhistory.abc-clio.com](http://americanhistory.abc-clio.com), *American History the Civil Rights Movement 1954-1975*, accessed June 14, 2017.

<sup>309</sup> M. Kronenwetter, “Little Rock Desegregation Crisis.”

<sup>310</sup> A. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson, a Biography*, 328.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*, 327.

of a prejudiced society to urge it, but for us who as Americans have patiently waited all these years for the rights supposedly guaranteed us under our Constitution, it is not an easy task.”<sup>312</sup> According to Robinson the African Americans had always remained patient. A statement from the President that he did not like violence was not enough.<sup>313</sup> The President did not take any action. What he had achieved was that segregationists gathered in larger numbers before the school. The police that were outnumbered needed help. The Mayor called for federal help and “on September 24, 1957, Eisenhower ordered 1,000 troops of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division to Little Rock and federalized 10,000 members of the Arkansas National Guard.”<sup>314</sup> The soldiers remained there for two months while the Federalized National Guard stayed there the whole school year. Despite their presence the nine students, who became known as the “Little Rock Nine” were harassed the whole year.<sup>315</sup>

Jackie was relieved that the government finally acted and he congratulated Eisenhower on the “positive position” he had taken during the crisis. Robinson felt that Eisenhower did the “right thing at the crucial time.”<sup>316</sup> In October Robinson telephoned with the students and told them he was inspired by “their heroism in the face of mob behavior.”<sup>317</sup> The coverage of the press made sure that the Little Rock incident, the enforcement of the *Brown* decision, was national news. On a national level, it showed that the federal government was in the corner of those who fought for equality. The inhumane treatment the students received, stimulated new support for the civil rights struggle. One thing loomed in the back of Jackie’s mind and that was Eisenhower’s call to remain patient. On May 12, 1958, the President spoke at the Summit of Negro Leaders and Jackie sat in the audience. Once again Eisenhower told the audience to remain patient.<sup>318</sup> In a letter to the President Jackie revealed how he felt about that remark. “On hearing you say this, I felt like standing up and saying, “Oh no! Not again.””<sup>319</sup> Robinson continued that African Americans had been the “most patient of all people.”<sup>320</sup> When Eisenhower talked about self-respect, Robinson wondered “how we could have self-respect and remain patient considering the treatment accorded

---

<sup>312</sup> J. Robinson, “Letter to President Dwight D. Eisenhower,” Sep. 13, 1957, in *First Class Citizenship*, edited by M. Long.

<sup>313</sup> J. Robinson, “Letter to President Eisenhower.”

<sup>314</sup> M. Kronenwetter, “Little Rock Desegregation Crisis.”

<sup>315</sup> M. Relman, “‘Little Rock Nine’ Back in Classes,” *The Austin Statesman*, Sep. 26, 1957.

<sup>316</sup> A. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson, a Biography*, 328.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.* 328.

<sup>318</sup> J. Robinson, “Letter to President Dwight D. Eisenhower,” May 13, 1958, Archives.gov, *Jackie Robinson, Civil Rights Advocate*, accessed June 14, 2107.

<sup>319</sup> J. Robinson, “Letter to President Dwight D. Eisenhower.”

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*

us through the years.”<sup>321</sup> Robinson felt that the seventeen million African Americans could no longer wait “for the hearts of men to change.”<sup>322</sup> Jackie advocated that they wanted rights now. He felt they were entitled to the same rights the white Americans got “over 150 years ago.”<sup>323</sup> Robinson insisted that the comments by Eisenhower crushed the spirits of the African Americans and that he gave hope “to those pro-segregation leaders like Governor Faubus who would take from use even those freedoms we now enjoy.”<sup>324</sup> Robinson used the Little Rock situation to illustrate that men like Faubus were proof that if the governmental action was necessary. “Let it be known that America is determined to provide -- in the near future – for Negroes – the freedoms we are entitled to under the constitution.”<sup>325</sup>

in the address, “Patience, Pride and Patience,” Jackie gave at the Mississippi State Conference of NAACP branches on February 16, 1958. He opened with the following sentence: “We remain patient though we press insistently for our rights as American citizens.”<sup>326</sup> Robinson thought that elimination of racial prejudice was not the primary concern, the primary concern was containing it.<sup>327</sup> He thought it was impossible to change the minds of the “ill thinking of those possessed of it.” He even argued that probably nobody was “truly free of prejudice” but that it had to be a private affair. Nobody had the “right to impose his stupidity upon society or any segment of society.”<sup>328</sup> Because idiots imposed their prejudice on parts of society, poor white people got the illusion they belonged to something better than the non-white people. This “simulated status” as Robinson called it was “one of the greatest tragedies” because it required a scapegoat.<sup>329</sup> Robinson continued that he did not believe a violent rebellion was on the horizon because African Americans always showed great pride in their country. Robinson believed in the Constitution, because he believed it was written for all Americans. To those who argued that African Americans moved too fast he countered that he had heard to be patient his whole life. “When I was a kid in Pasadena, California, trying to use the recreational facilities of that city, I was told to be patient, to wait a

---

<sup>321</sup> J. Robinson, “Letter to President Dwight D. Eisenhower.”

<sup>322</sup> Ibid.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid.

<sup>326</sup> J. Robinson, “Patience, Pride and Progress,” *Press released address for rally sponsored by the Mississippi State Conference of NAACP Branches*, Feb. 16, 1958, Reproduced from the Collections of the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

<sup>327</sup> J. Robinson, “Patience, Pride and Progress.”

<sup>328</sup> Ibid.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid.

while, that things take time to change.”<sup>330</sup> Robinson was willing to remain patient but he would not be silenced in his demands for equal opportunities. According to Robinson the country was now ready to move and move rapidly; but that did not mean radical. He was not opposed to gradual or moderate change, but he believed that in meant something different than what most men meant who used those terms. Those men often meant “stand still” or “do nothing.”<sup>331</sup> Southerners who posed as moderates advocated retreatment or moving backwards, while he wanted to move forwards.

This progress could only be made if the national leadership, of both political parties, decided that progress should be and must be made.<sup>332</sup> He recalled on the “revolutionary change” brought about in baseball by Branch Rickey. “if such a revolutionary change can be brought about in baseball, it can also be brought about in education, transportation and any other area of our American life.”<sup>333</sup> it was important regarding the status of the United states, in the Cold War context. According to Robinson the world looked how the United States handled their problems. As Robinson stated, “The hungry and downtrodden will not be taken in by propaganda. Their decision will be based upon what actually happens to the men, women and children who live under different systems.”<sup>334</sup> Robinson agreed that steps had been made, he asserted that it was not about what was done, but that it was about what could be done. “We cannot measure by how much we have done but by how far we must go.”<sup>335</sup> Because of this stance Jackie clashed with Roy Wilkins, the executive secretary of the NAACP. Wilkins stated, “that a seven-year delay in completing integration in Prince Edward county, Va., “could be regarded as reasonable.”<sup>336</sup> Jackie declared he was upset and angry about the comment. He wondered how “Daisy Bates and the kids in Little Rock would feel about such statement?”<sup>337</sup> Robinson continued that he thought the “so-called little man down on the firing lines” would felt they have been let down by the leadership of the NAACP.<sup>338</sup> The conservative attitude shown by the NAACP was one of the causes Robinson got frustrated with the organization. Robinson traveled thousands of miles and held dozens of speeches

---

<sup>330</sup> J. Robinson, “Patience, Pride and Progress.”

<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid.

<sup>336</sup> J. Booker, “Jackie, Judge Delarry Blast Roy Wilkins,” *New York Amsterdam News*, Aug. 19,1958.

<sup>337</sup> J. Booker, “Jackie, Judge Delarry Blast Roy Wilkins.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid.



on behalf of the NAACP during the 1960's. He got more and more disappointed in the NAACP and was concerned about its future. This ultimately lead to Robinson resigning from his position within the NAACP.<sup>339</sup>

In his column, Robinson wrote that he had “watched the strangling political grip which Roy Wilkens and a clique of the old guard of the NAACP have held over the ruling board of Directors.”<sup>340</sup> The old guard hampered the progression, every time “younger, more vibrant, more aggressive, well-prepared insurgents” tried to achieve something. The old guard found a way to stomp them down.<sup>341</sup> The leadership of the NAACP was more like a dictatorship that was “insensitive to the trends of our times, unresponsive to the needs and aims of the Negro masses – especially the young.”<sup>342</sup> Robinson felt that the old guard rejected talents, such as Frank Williams, to keep everything as it was. He declared that by doing it this way the might have gained money from the “Ford Foundation,” but it was not the way to gain respect of the young people. according to Robinson the young African Americans felt the NAACP was “archaic” and they rejected “its rigid posture completely.”<sup>343</sup> In his autobiography Robinson wrote that he felt he made a grave mistake in resigning from his position, he felt it was better if he stayed and tried to reform the NAACP from within.<sup>344</sup>

---

<sup>339</sup> J. Robinson, “Taking Off On the NAACP,” *New York Amsterdam News*, Jan. 14, 1967.

<sup>340</sup> J. Robinson, “Taking Off On the NAACP”

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>342</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>344</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 76.

## Chapter 8: The President, friend or foe of civil rights?

During his retirement Jackie became a popular speaker, but he also became a columnist. First for the *New York Post* (1959 to 1960) and later for the *New York Amsterdam News* (1962-1968). His columns in the *Post* would appear in the sports section, but the head editor, James Wechsler, assured Robinson he had had the freedom to write about the thing he cared for. Robinson used this freedom to write about the justice system, politics and civil rights. He always gave his honest opinion about matters and therefore he clashed with the likes of John F. Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Malcom X and Muhammad Ali. In the early days as a columnist Robinson remained critical about the Presidency of Eisenhower.

Robinson believed Eisenhower's policies regarding civil rights were failing. When in Monroe, North Carolina, a white man was acquitted of attempting to rape an African American Woman. Robert Williams, head of the local NAACP branch, was furious. In the *New York Times* Williams was quoted that African Americans should "meet violence with violence" and if it was necessary they should be "willing to kill."<sup>345</sup> The reasoning behind this logic was, that this was the only way African Americans could get justice. African Americans could not get justice in the courts, because the juries were all white. Robinson quoted a speech by President Eisenhower where he stated that he preferred to focus on "moral law rather than statutory law." Eisenhower did not believe that statutory law could "change the human heart" or could "eliminate prejudice."<sup>346</sup> But incidents like Monroe proved Robinson that there was "not much progress with moral law in some sections of the country." He found that both moral and statutory law were "brazenly flouted and ignored."<sup>347</sup> Robinson wondered what the President expected from African Americans. The African Americans were not focused on eliminating prejudice because they were focused on eradicating the violent acts aimed at them. "When a man has his foot on your throat, you can worry later on about changing his heart. Right now, your main concern is to keep him from choking you, else you may never live to save his soul."<sup>348</sup> It was clear to Robinson that moral law had failed and statutory laws were

---

<sup>345</sup> "NAACP Leader Urges Violence," *New York Times*, May 7, 1959.

<sup>346</sup> M. Long, ed., *Beyond Home Plate Jackie Robinson on Life After Baseball*, 129.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>348</sup> M. Long, ed., *Beyond Home Plate Jackie Robinson on Life After Baseball*, 130.

needed immediately. Robinson wrote that civil rights legislation would not affect the good people in the South, because they were law abiding citizens.

In his second column Jackie opted to write about the upcoming presidential election of 1960. Robinson called himself an Independent. “As a negro, I’ve been wooed by the Democrats with the memory of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal and cultivated by the Republicans with the memory of Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War.”<sup>349</sup> Robinson would look at the actions of the candidates instead of the “Party label” or the “Ancestral ghost.”<sup>350</sup> He criticized Senator Kennedy, who he called the “fair-haired boy of the Dixie politicians” because he tried to kill the civil rights bill of 1957.<sup>351</sup> Robinson was also critical about the Republican candidate, Governor Rockefeller. According to Robinson he had done nothing against discrimination in private housing in New York City. Robinson stated that he would not only consider voting based on what was good for African Americans, because he was also concerned about other issues like, foreign policy and a balanced budget. He concluded that civil rights were his primary concern as he argued that “to effectively participate in a democracy, you must first enjoy the basic freedoms that democracy guarantees to everyone else.”<sup>352</sup> It was only logical according to Robinson that the African Americans focused on the candidate who made sure the “basic freedoms” were guaranteed. If America wanted to be “100 percent strong – economically, defensively and morally” they could not afford to have “second and third-class citizens.” Robinson concluded that no candidate or party could “lay safe prior claim to the so-called “Negro Vote.””<sup>353</sup>

Robinson called himself an independent who chose for the candidate who he deemed the most progressive towards civil rights for African Americans. When Robinson joined Barry Gray in his radio show. Gray asked if Robinson and other African Americans had “a blind spot” for civil rights. According to Gray civil rights were not the only issue in American society, “he doubted if it was even the most important issue.”<sup>354</sup> Robinson argued that those people who thought civil rights were not important had a “ticket of admission to the starting line.”<sup>355</sup> Jackie stated that there was nothing “luxury” about civil rights and that without civil rights it was hard to look at the

---

<sup>349</sup> M. Long, ed., *Beyond Home Plate*, 127.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>354</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*

“larger” problems in the United States and the world.<sup>356</sup> “Freedom of the individual” was the “cornerstone of democracy” and Robinson based his political choice of candidates and parties “primarily on civil rights grounds.”<sup>357</sup> Robinson was grateful for the opportunities he had but he was not willing to neglect the fact that millions of other African Americans still not had it made. He insisted that he did not had “it “made” until the most underprivileged Negro in Mississippi can live in equal dignity with anyone else in America.”<sup>358</sup>

After Hubert Humphrey dropped out of the Democratic Party Presidential primaries in 1960, Robinson went on to support Republican candidate Richard Nixon. After Robinson had lunched with the Vice President he was convinced that Nixon was the candidate that would “use the influence of the office” to “advance equal rights and human dignity.”<sup>359</sup> According to Robinson Nixon was aware that he had to overcome the conservatives in the Republican Party. Nixon had shown that he had “grown tremendously during the past seven years.”<sup>360</sup> Robinson believed that Nixon was distancing himself from the “conservative, go-slow policies” of President Eisenhower.<sup>361</sup> Robinson was impressed with the leadership Nixon had shown during the civil rights bill of 1957. The same civil rights bill that caused Robinson’s distaste for John F. Kennedy. Especially after the Governor of Alabama, John Patterson, called Kennedy “a friend of the South.”<sup>362</sup> But he also disliked the Vice-Presidential candidate, Lyndon B. Johnson, calling him a “proven segregationist” and a Dixiecrat.”<sup>363</sup> Robinson argued that the Democrats “Recklessly jeopardized” their stance on civil rights by adding Johnson to the ticket.<sup>364</sup> According to Robinson, Kennedy was in for a “rude awaking” if he thought that liberals, minorities and African Americans would like this alliance. Robinson thought Kennedy was a “sell-out” and that in choosing Johnson as his running mate he “ruthlessly gambled with the rights- and the very lives- of millions” African Americans in the South.<sup>365</sup> According to Robinson, Kennedy chose Johnson for pragmatic reasons.

---

<sup>356</sup> M. Long, ed., *Beyond Home Plate*, 74.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.* 75.

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>362</sup> “Alabama Governor Endorses Kennedy,” *New York Times*, June 17, 1959.

<sup>363</sup> M. Long, Ed., *Beyond Home Plate*, 135.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>365</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

Kennedy chose Johnson because he wanted to appease the Southern “bigots” and “segregationists,” just like Kennedy did with the “Patterson breakfast.”<sup>366</sup>

Almost three years later Robinson had a change of heart. He admitted that he was “deeply proud” of the President.<sup>367</sup> Especially when Kennedy on June 11, 1963 delivered a speech; that has been described as his “finest moment.”<sup>368</sup> Robinson called the speech “one of the finest declarations ever issued in the cause of human rights.”<sup>369</sup> Jackie was impressed how Kennedy called upon individuals to “examine his conscience,” how Kennedy argued that “racial injustice” was “contrary to the principles upon which America was founded on” and how he acknowledged that when the rights of one man were threatened the rights of every man were threatened.<sup>370</sup> Robinson was impressed with the fact that Kennedy worried about the leadership role the United States had in the world. In his speech Kennedy questioned which image the United States wanted to depict on the international stage. Because according to the President they showed that it was the land of the free “except for negroes.” That they did not have “second-class citizens except Negroes.” That they had no “class system or caste system, no ghettos, no master race, except with respect to Negroes.”<sup>371</sup> Kennedy argued that the time “for the nation to fulfill its promise” had come.<sup>372</sup> The most important aspect for Robinson was, that Kennedy was not only talked the talk, but also walked the walk. After Governor Wallace, Alabama, tried to obstruct two African American students from entering the University of Alabama by standing in front of the door. Kennedy nationalized the Alabama National Guard, so Wallace could not control them. He ordered U.S. Marshalls to escort the two students and he had Deputy Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach legally flatten George Wallace at the door.<sup>373</sup> Robinson lauded Kennedy for the “courage,” “wisdom,” “sincerity,” “statesmanship” and “inspired leadership” that was needed from a President. Robinson even went as far as stating that it was the moment Kennedy was re-elected.<sup>374</sup>

---

<sup>366</sup> M. Long, Ed., *Beyond Home Plate*, 138.

<sup>367</sup> J. Robinson, “The President is Reelected,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 22, 1963, 11.

<sup>368</sup> L. O’ Donnell, “The Last Word, John F. Kennedy’s Civil Rights Speech June 11<sup>th</sup>, 1963, *MSNBC*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPGrpSbp1oA>, June 11, 2013, accessed July 7, 2017.

<sup>369</sup> J. Robinson, “The President is Reelected.”

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>373</sup> L. O’ Donnell, “The Last Word”, John F. Kennedy’s Civil Rights Speech, <http://www.msnbc.com/the-last-word/watch-jfks-civil-rights-speech-50-years-ag>, published 6 Nov., 2013, accessed July 7, 2017.

<sup>374</sup> J. Robinson, “The President is Reelected.”

After Kennedy was assassinated Robinson wrote a column where he argued that 1963 was a tragic year because two courageous men had lost their lives in the fight for equality. Robinson also referred to Medgar Evers, a civil rights activist who was murdered in Jackson, Mississippi. In his column Jackie wrote that he criticized Kennedy often because he believed that strong pressure had to be “applied by those of us who believe in human dignity since such strong pressure was being exerted by those who do not.”<sup>375</sup> The actions of Kennedy showed that he was a courageous and noble man. Robinson wondered where the African American would stand if the new Presidential nominees would be Lyndon Johnson and Barry Goldwater. If Robinson had to choose he would go with Johnson, although he was not completely convinced. Jackie recognized what Johnson had accomplished with equal job opportunities. Robinson believed “Johnson could sufficiently shrug off the old Southern traditions.”<sup>376</sup> while Jackie believed this was not the case with Barry Goldwater.

In April 1964, Governor George Wallace received twenty-three percent of the total vote in the primary Presidential elections, in Wisconsin. According to Robinson this was not only “fresh evidence” that there were many prejudiced people in the North as well. It was also a “white Northern counterrevolution” which had been “growing in resentment against civil rights legislation and the Negro demands for equality and justice.”<sup>377</sup> Robinson argued that the saddest part was that it included “so-called white liberals” who were “horrified at the injustices committed in the South.”<sup>378</sup> Robinson continued that after the “barking dogs of Birmingham were stilled and the Pressure of the fire hoses had been curtailed” the African American in the North looked at his own situation and saw that segregation and discrimination “Northern-Style, were as insidious as any open and frank Southern brutalities.”<sup>379</sup> The white people in the North suddenly realized they did not want to compete with African Americans for jobs. they realized they did not want African American students in their lily white schools and they did not want African Americans as neighbors.<sup>380</sup> What they wanted according to Robinson was to “send a check to the NAACP, belong to some study group on race relations and observe Brotherhood Week one week out of the year.”<sup>381</sup>

---

<sup>375</sup> J. Robinson, “The Death of a President,” *New York Amsterdam News*, Dec. 7, 1963, 13.

<sup>376</sup> J. Robinson, “The Death of a President.”

<sup>377</sup> J. Robinson, “The Counterrevolution,” *New York Amsterdam News*, Apr. 11, 1964, 11.

<sup>378</sup> J. Robinson, “Serious Troubles,” *New York Amsterdam*, Apr. 25, 1964 11.

<sup>379</sup> J. Robinson, “Serious Troubles,” 11.

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*

Robinson stated that the American nation was in trouble and that most people did not realized the depth of these troubles because they were too “concerned about the Castro’s and the Khrushchev’s.” They did not see the corruption that threatened them from within.<sup>382</sup>

Robinson called Goldwater a “bigot” and “an advocate of white supremacy” that only showed “contempt for the Negro People.”<sup>383</sup> According to Jackie, Goldwater was more dangerous than Governor Wallace. Robinson continued with stating that if he did not everything in his power to help defeat Barry Goldwater he felt he was not only “a traitor” to himself, but also to his “children, race and country.”<sup>384</sup> He would work hard for the candidacy of Lyndon Johnson. When people questioned Robinson on how he could align with Johnson. He would claim that while Johnson’s civil rights record up until 1960 was bad, but that in 1964 he was “both saying and doing bold and forthright things in civil rights.”<sup>385</sup> This was better than a man who said he had a good civil rights record in the past, but who in 1964 sought “to gain the presidency by capitalizing on white resentment to Negro demands for justice.”<sup>386</sup> Robinson called upon all African American to vote and not stay home. Because if they stayed home they would help the enemy of their caus. Four years later Robinson moderated his stance on Goldwater, he had lunch with him and while he still disagreed with him on several issues his “personal anti-Goldwater feelings” had ebbed away considerably.<sup>387</sup> This was because Robinson heard Goldwater “vigorously attacking the racial prejudices he had observed during a Southern trip.”<sup>388</sup> Whereas Robinson moderated his stance on Goldwater, he started criticizing Richard Nixon more and more as he stated that had shown “warmth towards Wallace” in the hope he could “write off the black vote policy.”<sup>389</sup> Robinson thought this was bigoted, but he admitted that bigotry was not illegal. As a black American he could never vote for Mr. Nixon and Robinson argued that “millions of black voters” thought the same way.<sup>390</sup>

---

<sup>382</sup> J. Robinson, “Serious Troubles,” 11.

<sup>383</sup> J. Robinson, “A Negro First,” *New York Amsterdam News*, July 4, 1964, 19.

<sup>384</sup> J. Robinson, “A Negro First,” 19.

<sup>385</sup> J. Robinson, “Answering the Mail,” *New York Amsterdam News*, Aug. 29, 1964, 19.

<sup>386</sup> J. Robinson, “Answering the Mail,” 19.

<sup>387</sup> J. Robinson, “Nixon Nomination Called Disaster,” *New York Amsterdam News*, mar. 23, 1968, 13.

<sup>388</sup> J. Robinson, “Nixon Nomination Called Disaster,” 13.

<sup>389</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*

## Chapter 9: Action

In one of his first columns Jackie wrote about what individuals could do in the struggle for civil right. The question “what can I as an individual do to help?” was one that he heard on a daily base.<sup>391</sup> Jackie recognized that he was not a “race relations advisor” nor a “Sociological expert” that had all the answers; he argued that he could give some practical tips “to keep the ball rolling.”<sup>392</sup>

The first tip Robinson had was that every individual had to realize they did not live in a vacuum. Robinson argued that nobody was unprejudiced and people had to be made aware of that. Once you recognized that it was time to change it; according to Robinson it was a giant step in preparing yourself to be of service.<sup>393</sup> It was crucial to stop judging people on what has been “planted and cultivated” by society. Jackie’s advice was to judge people as individuals.<sup>394</sup> One step that would help with that according to Robinson was the removal of the Jim Crow signs. While Robinson argued that prejudice was a state of mind, a Jim Crow sign or practice was real.<sup>395</sup> He argued that when a sign was removed the mind would change on its own accord. Jackie illustrated this by giving an example out of his own life; “I’ve had literally scores of Southern whites’ state to me that once they left the segregated South, they began to think for the first time of Negroes as fellow human beings because there were no separate facilities and no special treatments in the North.”<sup>396</sup> The second step according to Robinson was that individuals had to set good examples. “I’d suggest being a good example in dealing with and talking about people of other groups. In your everyday dealings, show that you regard other people with exactly the same esteem and respect as you do your own group.”<sup>397</sup> Because Robinson believed that when you set an example other would respond and follow, “even though they might not otherwise take the lead themselves.”<sup>398</sup>

---

<sup>391</sup>M. Long, ed., *Beyond Home Plate Jackie Robinson on Life After Baseball*, 65.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>395</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>396</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>397</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.



In 1959 Robinson had taken the lead himself a couple of times. He was not only speaking on behalf of the NAACP he also held a fund-raising drive for the burned-out churches in Montgomery, because Martin Luther King Jr. asked Robinson.<sup>399</sup> when Philip Randolph asked Robinson to head a march to Washington he accepted. “His presence helped to ensure a wide cross-section of support from groups as well as individuals for what was called the Youth March for Integrated Schools.”<sup>400</sup> The march so successful that on April 18, 1959, Robinson participated in another successful march on Washington D.C. After the first march, White House officials complained that it was partisan and radical. The President or any other White House official declined to talk with the marchers. After the second march, a few officials wanted to discuss the goals of the marchers. Actions like this emphasized that Robinson not only talked the talk but also walked the walk.

In his column Robinson continued that “Rome wasn’t built in a day” and that the same could be said for the eradication of prejudice.<sup>401</sup> What he meant with this was that people had to keep their back straight and keep believing in the right cause even if others discouraged them, tried to hold them back or accused them of ulterior motives. Because according to Robinson everybody had to “live with himself” and should not expect “to accomplish too much at one time.”<sup>402</sup> While change could be slow, the satisfaction when it finally started was great. According to Jackie the one thing everybody could do was support organizations like the NAACP, the National Urban League, The National Conference of Christians and Jews and the Anti-Defamation League.<sup>403</sup> Robinson often worried about the division within the civil rights movement and when Roy Wilkins made “disparaging remarks against other civil rights agencies” Robinson was “disappointed” and “shocked.”<sup>404</sup> Wilkins allegedly told that the NAACP did all the work while the other groups got the publicity. Robinson acknowledged the “grand job” the NAACP did but he thought it was “dangerously foolish” that Wilkins tried to divide the ranks in a time when the greatest unity was

---

<sup>399</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 212.

<sup>400</sup> “3,000 to March on DC: Jackie Robinson Will Lead Way,” *New York Amsterdam News*, Oct. 25, 1958 1.

<sup>401</sup> M. Long, ed., *Beyond Home Plate Jackie Robinson on Life After Baseball*, 67.

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>403</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>404</sup> J. Robinson, “Disunity Is No Memorial,” *New York Amsterdam News*, July 6, 1963, 11.

needed.<sup>405</sup> “If they permit themselves to begin squabbling and pointing fingers at each other, we shall be lost.”<sup>406</sup>

On March 19, 1960, former President Truman stated in the *New York Times*, that the “Negro should behave himself and show he’s a good citizen.”<sup>407</sup> Truman referred to the student sit-ins that took place throughout the South. According to Truman the sit ins did more wrong than good. He argued that by backing these sit-ins the NAACP did the “wrong thing” and they were “losing friends instead of making them.” Truman also argued that he would throw the protesters out if they did it in his shop.<sup>408</sup> In his column Robinson attacked Truman for what he argued was “a sad commentary” of a man “who, in 1948 gained the world’s respect for trashing the Dixiecrats.”<sup>409</sup> Jackie stated that Truman’s commentary was irrelevant and insignificant because it did not matter whose voice was raised against the African Americans. They were “determined to obtain their full rights and human dignity.”<sup>410</sup> Robinson asserted that African Americans in the South could not show they were good citizens because they were denied the “basic rights.” they were denied opportunities in “education, jobs, housing, culture and every other activity.”<sup>411</sup> In the face of discrimination Robinson thought the African Americans had always behaved themselves. The “young people” refused to be contented with the “patronizing gradualism” that was advocated by the likes of Truman.<sup>412</sup> Robinson thought it was “exceedingly pathetic” from Truman that he declared that “he would resort to violence to oppose children peacefully asking to buy ice cream at a soda fountain.”<sup>413</sup>

A month later, April 25, 1960 Robinson wrote a column where he drew the comparison between his choice to turn the other check when he first entered the MLB and the sit-ins that occurred in Nashville, Tennessee.<sup>414</sup> The CBS documentary, “Anatomy of a Demonstration,” showed that between February and May 1960 more than hundred-fifty students were arrested as they peacefully sat at the counters; while the diners refused to serve them. When the protesters

---

<sup>405</sup> J. Robinson, “Disunity Is No Memorial,” 11.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid.

<sup>407</sup> “Truman Says He’d Oust Disrupters in His Shop,” *New York Times*, March 20, 1960.

<sup>408</sup> “Truman Reiterates Views on Sit-Downs,” *New York Times*, March 25, 1960.

<sup>409</sup> M. Long, ed., *Beyond Home Plate Jackie Robinson on Life After Baseball*, 67.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>411</sup> Ibid.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid.

<sup>413</sup> Ibid.

<sup>414</sup> Ibid., 70.

were mocked, taunted and thrashed they refused to hit back.<sup>415</sup> The documentary also showed how Reverend James Lawson gave a workshop in the techniques of nonviolent resistance. “the Gandhian method by which Negro Americans in the South were forging a new chapter in the struggle against human indignity.”<sup>416</sup> Robinson argued that just as it worked for him in 1947 it would work for the students. It would bring a “sense of shame” to those who attacked them and that sense of shame was “often the beginning of progress.”<sup>417</sup> Additionally he argued that the protests and demonstrations had effect because of the drastic measures the “desperate segregationists” undertook to restrict them, “Mass arrests, tear gas, fire hoses and beatings,” but while the segregationists tried everything the protests went on and grew. According to Lawson and Robinson this was because the African Americans no longer “sinned by cooperating with the evils of segregation.”<sup>418</sup>

In August 1962, Martin Luther King Jr. had invited Jackie Robinson to Albany, Georgia to help inspire civil rights activists. Robinson encouraged the people to carry on their fight to “cultivate the power of the ballot.” It was the only way to one day “throw out segregationists and race haters” and “elect decent men.”<sup>419</sup> Robinson was impressed with the turnout, he thought there were more than thousand people. The fact that seven- and eight-year-old sang the “theme of the Freedom Fighters of Albany” impressed Jackie.<sup>420</sup> After Robinson had gave his speech he went to Sasser, Georgia only thirty minutes away from Albany. When he arrived there, he stood “before the smoldering ruins of what had once been the Mount Olivet Baptist Church.” Robinson saw the Reverend weeping “as he looked out over the debris and the wreckage of the institution into which he and his people had poured their devotion and their dreams.”<sup>421</sup> It was already the third church burned down in recent months. All because the leaders of these churches “encouraged voter registration.”<sup>422</sup> In his column Robinson asked a contribution of his readers, because he thought that the churches had to be rebuild quickly. Only that would show the Klan that African Americans would not “be frightened” and “intimidated” by them.<sup>423</sup> Robinson did not only ask a donation

---

<sup>415</sup> M. Long, ed., *Beyond Home Plate Jackie Robinson on Life After Baseball*, 70.

<sup>416</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>418</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>419</sup> J. Robinson, “it’s Sad to Watch a House of God Die,” *New York Amsterdam News*, Sept. 22, 1962, 1.

<sup>420</sup> J. Robinson, “it’s Sad to Watch a House of God Die,” 1.

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>422</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.*

from his readers he “served as honorary head of the fundraising effort” and eventually raised fifty thousand dollars for the campaign.<sup>424</sup>

---

<sup>424</sup> “WALB Newsfilm of the burned ruins of African American churches in Terrell and Lee counties, Georgia, 1962 August and September,” *Albany Movement Compilation, WALB News Film Collection*, The University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Ga., as presented in the Digital Library of Georgia, [http://cdl.usg.edu/cgi/cdl?query=id:ugabma\\_walb\\_walb00067](http://cdl.usg.edu/cgi/cdl?query=id:ugabma_walb_walb00067) accessed July 4, 2017.

## Chapter 10: What went on in the Southern states

Robinson did not think highly of the various governmental representatives in the Southern states. He regularly spoke out against events that occurred in the South. When a mob of whites grabbed Mack Charles Parker from his cell in Pear River County, Mississippi, on April 25, 1959, Robinson argued it was the “same old story all over again.”<sup>425</sup>

Parker was lynched, the perpetrators were known and identified and again everybody claimed nothing could be done about it.<sup>426</sup> Robinson asked how Americans could allow this to happen. How could they to “just sit by helplessly and do nothing about it.”<sup>427</sup> Especially because news like this was broadcasted all over the world. While the United States were “struggling as never before for the goodwill and alliance of the uncommitted peoples of the world.” Incidents like this provided ammunition for its enemies. They just pointed out the headlines in the newspapers and said: “See there? That’s what America thinks of people whose skin color is not ‘right.’”<sup>428</sup> America was not trustworthy, how can they say one thing in the United Nations, but could not even “clean up its own back yard?”<sup>429</sup> Robinson agreed with that vision and he argued that government officials should know that African Americans had been “waiting patiently for people’s hearts to change” for almost ninety-six years. He asserted if things did not change fast and African Americans were not defended by the “equal-justice-under-law provisions” that were written in the Constitution, they would soon start defending themselves.<sup>430</sup> Robinson was concerned about this because he did not believe in violence “or fighting fire with fire” he wanted to fight social injustice with peaceful and legal means. Robinson thought it was tragic if anybody, black or white, tried to solve problems by “hate, violence and Spite.” Nobody would win if they resorted to violence and hate. That was the reason Robinson called on the federal government to act.<sup>431</sup>

After the *Brown* decision in 1954, a massive resistance strategy was declared to prevent school desegregation. In Virginia, this led to the closing of many schools and in 1959 “Virginia’s school-closing law was ruled unconstitutional.” Many schools in Virginia reopened after this

---

<sup>425</sup> M. Long, ed., *Beyond Home Plate Jackie Robinson on Life After Baseball*, 102.

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>427</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>428</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>429</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.*

because they “preferred integrated schools to none at all.”<sup>432</sup> But in Prince Edward County they took a rather different decision. They closed the entire public-school system and created private schools to educate the county’s white children. “These schools were supported by tuition grants from the state and tax credits from the county.”<sup>433</sup> The African American children could not attend schools and were educated in unconventional ways. These students became known as “the Lost Class of ’59.”<sup>434</sup> In 1964 the United States Supreme Court outlawed “Virginia’s tuition grants to private education” and ruled that federal courts could legally reopen the public school. In his column Jackie stated that the depriving of the right to go to school for four years inflicted wounds that were difficult to heal. Jackie and his wife entertained thirty African American students from Prince Edward County after they had been brought East for a trip that was sponsored by the Interracial Committee of the Riverdale Community.<sup>435</sup> One student broke down during this holiday trip, because he argued he had missed out on so much education. Robinson wrote about that student, “he was oppressed with the feeling that he might never catch up with all he had lost during four years of his life when school doors had been slammed in his face because his face is dark.”<sup>436</sup>

The Summer of 1964 became known as the “Freedom Summer.” During the summer organizations like CORE and the SNCC organized voter registration drives in Mississippi. The activists who tried to increase the voter registration consisted of black Mississippians and out-of-state, predominantly white volunteers.<sup>437</sup> The project was dangerous as Klan membership was roaring in Mississippi. The Klan already showed they did not shun violence. During that summer 20 black churches were burned.<sup>438</sup> One of those churches was the Zion Methodist Church, and on the morning of June 21, three young civil rights activists, Michael Schwerner, James Chaney and Andrew Goodman, investigated the burning. The three men were arrested by the local police force. They were held in jail for a couple of hours before they were released. The trio was never seen alive again. The next day the Federal Bureau of Investigations handled the disappearance as a

---

<sup>432</sup> Virginia Historical Society staff, “The Closing of Prince Edward County’s Schools,” *Vahistorical.org*, <http://www.vahistorical.org/collections-and-resources/virginia-history-explorer/civil-rights-movement-virginia/closing-prince>, accessed July 5, 2017.

<sup>433</sup> Virginia Historical Society staff, “The Closing of Prince Edward County’s Schools.”

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>435</sup> J. Robinson, “How Deep Are the Wounds?,” *New York Amsterdam News*, Jan. 18, 1964, 9.

<sup>436</sup> J. Robinson, “How Deep Are the Wounds?,” 9.

<sup>437</sup> PBS Staff, “Murder in Mississippi,” *American Experience: Freedom Summer*, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/freedomssummer-murder/>, accessed, July 5, 2017

<sup>438</sup> PBS Staff, “Murder in Mississippi.”

kidnapping investigation and soon found the burned-out car of the activists. The bodies were nowhere to be found. The case was drew national attention, partially “because Schwerner and Goodman were both white Northerners.”<sup>439</sup> Schwerner’s wife, who was also a CORE worker, confessed that this was the only reason because “the slaying of a Negro in Mississippi was not news.”<sup>440</sup> After six weeks of searching, and finding the remains of eight more African American men who disappeared in 1964, the investigators found the bodies of the three activists on August 4.<sup>441</sup> The FBI found out that the local law enforcement were part of the plot. They contacted the local leader of the Ku Klux Klan about the whereabouts of the activists after they were released from custody.

Robinson was baffled how “the sovereign state of Mississippi had once more found a way to thwart justice, despite FBI arrests.”<sup>442</sup> He argued that they were consistently defiant towards the federal government, because every time the fate of the accused was left in the hands of “friend and neighbors.”<sup>443</sup> who according to Robinson rather upheld “the doctrine of white supremacy than to discharge the demands of justice.”<sup>444</sup> The defendants stood in front of a judge who Robinson deemed an “avowed segregationist” and a jury that would consist of white people.<sup>445</sup> Robinson maintained that these three young men gave their lives “in the belief that the corrupt state Of Mississippi” had “kinship with American democracy.”<sup>446</sup> Even in their “sadistic death” there was discrimination, as the perpetrators “did such a horrible job on the Negro boy” that Brooklyn pathologist, David Spain, told he never saw “bones so severely shattered except in tremendously high-speed accidents, such as plane crashes.”<sup>447</sup> Robinson lauded the three youngsters as “classic prototypes of the new breed of valiant American youth.” that no matter what carried on the struggle, and that they were raised by fine parents.”<sup>448</sup> Robinson co-chaired a fundraising that led to a community center that was meant as a memorial to Chaney, Goodman and Schwerner.<sup>449</sup>

---

<sup>439</sup> PBS Staff, “Murder in Mississippi.”

<sup>440</sup> Ibid.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid.

<sup>442</sup> J. Robinson, “Mississippi Find a Way,” *New York Amsterdam News*, Dec. 26, 1964, 9.

<sup>443</sup> J. Robinson, “Mississippi Find a Way,” 9.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid.

<sup>445</sup> Ibid.

<sup>446</sup> Ibid.

<sup>447</sup> J. Robinson, “Life Must Go On,” *New York Amsterdam News*, Aug. 22, 1964, 19.

<sup>448</sup> J. Robinson, “Life Must Go On,” 19.

<sup>449</sup> Ibid.

Jewish civil rights activist, Bruce Hartford described Grenada, Mississippi, as a “segregationist stronghold” that in 1966 still lived as if it was 1886.<sup>450</sup> Three percent of the African Americans were registered to vote. African Americans were not permitted in the library and African American women pushed the mops or scrubbed the floors.<sup>451</sup> On Monday August 29, 1966, students could fill out the “Freedom of Choice” forms to select what school they wanted to go to, because school desegregation was court ordered. When the school started two weeks later, a huge white mob surrounded the local high schools. The mob looked for African American students who tried to enter. Most of the black students walked to school and were “set upon by the roving bands of whites who beat them with clubs, chains, bullwhips, and pipes.”<sup>452</sup> Hartford argued it was not just “a spontaneous mob” but a “military-style action organized and led by the KKK.”<sup>453</sup> Most of the children had to retreat, bruised and covered in blood, to the Bell Flower Baptist Church. The church resembled more of a “battle zone first-aid station than a place of worship.”<sup>454</sup> Hartford described how Emerald Cunningham was attacked, as she could not run fast enough to escape the mob. “She was beaten down in the street, kicked, and clubbed with an iron pipe.”<sup>455</sup> After that “a Klansman put a pistol to her head” and threatened to kill her if she dared to enter the school. Hartford also described how the police just watched as it unfolded and laughed.<sup>456</sup> The students who made it into the school faced a similar fate when they went back home, as the white mob awaited them. Three more children were hospitalized.

Robinson thought the African Americans were “pretty naïve” about the “so-called Great Society” they lived in, as they had witnessed “pretty raw brutalities.” Robinson referred to the murder of Emmet Till, Medgar Evers, the execution of the activists in Philadelphia, Mississippi, and the burning of churches. Robinson never had expected that the community would “sunk into the very lowest depths.”<sup>457</sup> He never expected that he would read in the newspapers that a “mob of sick sadists” had beaten “twelve- and thirteen-year old school children.”<sup>458</sup> What happened in

---

<sup>450</sup> B. Hartford, “Grenada Mississippi-Chronology of a Movement,” *Civil Rights Movement Veterans Hosted by Tougaloo College*, <http://www.crmvet.org/info/grenada.htm>, accessed July 5, 2017.

<sup>451</sup> B. Hartford, “Grenada Mississippi-Chronology of a Movement.”

<sup>452</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>453</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>454</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>455</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>456</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>457</sup> J. Robison, “A Look at This Great Society,” *New York Amsterdam News*, Oct. 1, 1966, 9.

<sup>458</sup> J. Robison, “A Look at This Great Society,” 9.



Grenada showed that African Americans were not making progress. Despite the claims of many legislators, Robinson was “sick of hearing” that phrase being “used as a cover up.”<sup>459</sup> While he did not agree with Stokely Carmichael’s definition of “Black Power.” He got why it echoed “across the very state in which grown-up goons unmercifully whipped” black children who just wanted to go to school.<sup>460</sup>

On July 29, 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson established the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, later known as the Kerner Commission. Since 1965 riots broke out across the United States, most notable were the Watts Riots in Los Angeles (1965), Division Street Riots in Chicago (1996). July 1967 saw the Newark Riots and the 12th Street Riots in Detroit. Johnson argued that no society could “tolerate massive violence” and the Commission had to investigate the riots. Not just to “solve the problem,” but to understand why the riots happened.<sup>461</sup> It was formulated in three basic questions. “What happened,” “why did it happen?” and “what can be done to prevent it from happening again and again?”<sup>462</sup> Robinson soon argued that if they wanted to study the roots of the riots they should investigate the “Senate Judiciary Committee” that was headed by Senator John Stennis out of Mississippi. Robinson called Stennis a “notorious racist.”<sup>463</sup> According to Robinson it was the Senator “who poured the oils of white supremacy on the blazing fires in the cities.”<sup>464</sup> After the March on Washington in 1963 Stennis stated that “it was a disgrace for black Americans to protest” as he argued they were “better off economically than any other people of color in the world.”<sup>465</sup> A bit further down his column Robinson argued why riots begin. It was not because a cop hit a boy, nor when a teenager was arrested or when a crowd tried to restrain an officer from making that arrest. According to Robinson riots began “with the hopelessness which lives in the hearts of a people who, from childhood expect to live in a rundown house, to be raised by one parent, to be denied proper recreation, to attend an inferior

---

<sup>459</sup> J. Robison, “A Look at This Great Society,” 9.

<sup>460</sup> Ibid.

<sup>461</sup> L. B. Johnson, “Remarks Upon Signing Order Establishing the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders,” July 29, 1967. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=28369>, accessed July 7, 2017.

<sup>462</sup> L. B. Johnson, “Remarks Upon Signing Order Establishing the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders.”

<sup>463</sup> J. Robinson, “They Should Probe Stennis,” *New York Amsterdam News*, Aug. 12, 1967, 17.

<sup>464</sup> J. Robinson, “They Should Probe Stennis,” 17.

<sup>465</sup> Ibid.

school, to experience police brutality, to be turned down when seeking a decent job and to watch the spectacle of a Senate bigot baiting one of the most brilliant black men of our society.”<sup>466</sup>

---

<sup>466</sup> J. Robinson, “They Should Probe Stennis,” 17.

## Chapter 11: Robinson and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

When J. Edgar Hoover called King “the most notorious liar in the country” Jackie came to the defense of Dr. King.<sup>467</sup> He wrote that the “violent and vicious attack” reflected that Hoover was a “disturbed man.”<sup>468</sup> Hoover never publicly attacked murderers, kidnappers, rapists or gangsters. He blasted Dr. King in the newspaper. Just because King, and other civil rights leaders told the truth “about the seeming inability of the FBI to take steps to protect American citizens of color in the South and to solve the many bombings of homes and churches.”<sup>469</sup> Robinson never questioned King because for Robinson, King was “the very characterization of integrity and courage.”<sup>470</sup>

Robinson continued to criticize the justice system after Dr. King was arrested in Alabama. He saw it as “a serious and alarming attempt to discredit and eliminate militant Negro leadership in an effort to slow down the already minute pace of recent advance.”<sup>471</sup> Robinson wondered how it was possible that Dr. King had been arrested seven times between 1957 and 1960 but the police could not apprehend anybody for the murders of African American civil right activists, like Harry Moore, George Lee, Gus Courts, Lamar Smith and so on.<sup>472</sup> According to Robinson it was only a matter of time when Martin Luther King would become a target, because the segregationist were firm in their resolution to deprive African Americans of their “effective leadership.” While Dr. King had expressed his willingness to pay with his life if that helped “secure the course of decency.” It was clear to Robinson that it was not just the African Americans that needed the Leadership of Dr. King. According to Robinson all America that needed the “wise leadership of men like Martin Luther King.”<sup>473</sup>

On April 17, 1964, African American school children overturned a fruit stand, James Baldwin argued “this would have been a mere childish prank if the children had been white.” They were black so the police chased them and the police took out their guns.<sup>474</sup> Six men stepped up and tried to protect the children from police brutality; they were beaten as well. This incident became

---

<sup>467</sup> B. Franklins, “Hoover assails Warren Findings, *New York Times*, Nov. 19, 1964.

<sup>468</sup> J. Robinson, “In Defense of Martin Luther King Jr.” *New York Amsterdam News*, Dec. 5, 1964.

<sup>469</sup> J. Robinson, “In Defense of Martin Luther King Jr.”

<sup>470</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>471</sup> M. Long, ed., *Beyond Home Plate Jackie Robinson on Life After Baseball*, 105.

<sup>472</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>473</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>474</sup> J. Baldwin, “A Report from occupied Territory,” *The Nation*, July 11, 1966.

known as the Little Fruit Stand Riot and the six men became known as the Harlem Six and the Blood Brothers.<sup>475</sup> After the initial incident, “acts of violence and vandalism” by the African American youth in Harlem increased.<sup>476</sup> In his column Robinson tried to defuse the situation because he believed the vandals endangered the freedom struggle. They were “playing into the hands of the enemy” and they were alienating “people of goodwill who could bring something of value” to the cause.<sup>477</sup> Robinson maintained that they endangered their own lives and that they hurt the image of their own community. Robinson concluded that nothing good could come from this, as he stated: “you don’t win like this, you don’t free yourselves or your brothers of color like this.”<sup>478</sup> The “road to progress” was not the to behave immoral. Robinson explained that he understood that it was difficult to “return hatred with love” and because of this he “deeply admired” Dr. King.<sup>479</sup>

After Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated on April 4, 1968 in Memphis Tennessee, riots swept the country. Between April 4 and April 14, 1968, “cities in thirty-six states and the District of Columbia experienced looting, arson or sniper fire. Fifty-four cities suffered at least \$ 100,000 in property damage, with the nation’s capital and Baltimore topping the list at approximately \$15 million and \$12 million.”<sup>480</sup> Robinson dedicated his column to what he called “the greatest leader of the twentieth century” and how his presence, speeches and personality inspired a nation.<sup>481</sup> He went into detail about the time Dr. King’s home was bombed after the successful Montgomery Bus Boycott. After a crowd of angry African Americans gathered to take revenge the police had their hands full to calm the crowd down. Only after King showed up to the scene and “pleaded with his people to go home and desist from any rash or violent acts until Sunday morning” the crowd calmed down.<sup>482</sup> Dr. King asked them to come to the church where he explained why “nonviolence should continue.”<sup>483</sup> That Sunday King preached that “sometimes God allows evil to exist in order to change the hearts and minds of men so that he can then exercise

---

<sup>475</sup> M. Long, ed., *Beyond Home Plate Jackie Robinson on Life After Baseball*, 107.

<sup>476</sup> J. Robinson, “Heart to Heart about Violence,” *New York Amsterdam*, June 13, 1964.

<sup>477</sup> J. Robinson, “Heart to Heart about Violence.”

<sup>478</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>479</sup> J. Robinson, “I Am Not Nonviolent, but Wiser NAACP Youth Are,” *New York Amsterdam News*, July 11, 1964.

<sup>480</sup> P. Levy, “The Dream Deferred: The Assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., and the Holy Week Uprising of 1968,” in J. Elfenhein, T. Hollowak and other, *Baltimore ’68: Riots and Rebirth in an American City* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011) 6.

<sup>481</sup> J. Robinson, “After Emotions Die Down,” *New York Amsterdam News*, Apr. 13, 1968, 21.

<sup>482</sup> J. Robinson, “After Emotions Die Down,” 21.

<sup>483</sup> *Ibid.*

his creative, redemptive will.”<sup>484</sup> What King meant with this according to Robinson was that maybe the bombs in Montgomery were necessary “so that the white community could feel the necessity for reconciliation with the black community.” Robinson argued that “after the raging emotions quiet down” and “the streets of our cities are no longer haunted by angry black people seeking revenge” there was time for reconciliation.<sup>485</sup>

Robinson did not always agree with Dr. King. On April 4, 1967 Dr. King held a speech about the war in Vietnam. His denunciation of the war evoked criticism from every corner of the United States, from editorials in the *New York Times* to conservative politicians, from numerous civil rights leaders also from Robinson. After Robinson wrote a critical column on May 13, where he argued that King should recognize that if the United States would cease fire it only gave the Vietcong an opportunity to kill more American troops. Robinson contended that Dr. King focused too much on what the United States did wrong and gave the Vietcong a moral pass.<sup>486</sup> Robinson asked Dr. King for a response and that came in the form of a telephone call. Robinson understood that Dr. King as a Nobel Peace Prize Winner, focused on waging peace instead of waging war, because that was what King had done in the United States. King “risked his life for nonviolence in Montgomery, in Birmingham, in Selma- and yes, in the North.” It was logical that King called for “nonviolence in Vietnam” and Robinson could understand that.<sup>487</sup> What Robinson did not understand was that King advocated “a marriage” between the civil rights movement and peace movements.<sup>488</sup> Robinson not only thought such connection would be a “disastrous alliance” he also wondered where Dr. King got “his knowledge to assess the war situation.” Did King really believe that the President did not do anything he could to end the war?<sup>489</sup> Despite their differences about the war in Vietnam, King was still Robinson’s leader, a man to whose defense he would come at any time he might need it.<sup>490</sup>

Another point where Robinson differed from Dr. King was the economy. King thought that democratic socialism was the solution to advance civil rights. Robinson argued that creating economic opportunities within a capitalist framework was the best way to advance civil rights. This

---

<sup>484</sup> J. Robinson, “After Emotions Die Down,” 21.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid.

<sup>486</sup> J. Robinson, “Dr. Martin L. King,” *New York Amsterdam News*, May 13, 1967.

<sup>487</sup> J. Robinson, “What I Think of Dr. Martin King,” *New York Amsterdam News*, July 1, 1967.

<sup>488</sup> J. Robinson, “What I Think of Dr. Martin King.”

<sup>489</sup> Ibid.

<sup>490</sup> Ibid.

was also one of the reason Robinson played a large role in the founding of the Freedom National Bank in Harlem. Robinson argued that it was important that African American became more “integrated into the mainstream” of society’s economy. Jackie did not mean job integration but the “involvement in the world of business.”<sup>491</sup> Robinson argued that African Americans should no longer be just consumers of jobs, they had to be creators as well.<sup>492</sup> Robinson thought that a lot of the social problems African Americans faced were “rooted in economic causes” by being creators they would build something for their children.<sup>493</sup>

Robinson had respect for the nonviolence approach of Dr. King he argued he could not do it if he was faced with violence or provocation. He argued he was not one of those “turn-the-other-cheek advocates” anymore.<sup>494</sup> Robinson favored the use of controlled force in certain situations. When Robinson held a speech at the NAACP youth banquet in Washington a white man began to shout about “sending all the niggers back to Africa” and the man was “waving a swastika.”<sup>495</sup> Robinson stated he was “not nonviolent in such circumstances.” He felt that he was getting angry and he wanted to give the “unexpected visitor a good swift jab in the head.”<sup>496</sup> He continued how the NAACP youngsters were quicker and “took hold of him and hustled him out of the room” and they did it with determination but they also remained calm.<sup>497</sup> Robinson concluded that the youth showed “greater wisdom” than he had. He argued that the future of America was in good hands. If young people like this knew what they wanted and had the courage to after it, their actions could “only make appreciative people proud.”<sup>498</sup>

---

<sup>491</sup> J. Robinson, “Into the Mainstream,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 20, 1964, 21.

<sup>492</sup> J. Robinson, “Into the Mainstream,” 21.

<sup>493</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>494</sup> J. Robinson, “Two Legged Mice,” *New York Amsterdam News*, July 1, 1964, 19.

<sup>495</sup> J. Robinson, “Two Legged Mice,” 19.

<sup>496</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>497</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>498</sup> *Ibid.*

## Chapter 12: Jesse Owens, Cassius Clay, Malcom X and the 1968 Olympics

The civil rights movement peaked in the 1950's and 1960's as it sought to secure equal access to basic privileges and rights for African Americans. Civil rights activists tried to achieve their goals with various tactics, nonviolent, like boycotts, marches and sit ins. The efforts of these activists paid off when in 1964 the Civil Rights Act was signed and in 1965 the Voting Right Act. The world of sport was not immune to the changes in American society. After Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in baseball, the role of African Americans in sports grew steadily in the 1950's. It was in the 1960's that the role of African Americans in sports exploded. Since his retirement Jackie used his fame and cultural relevance to speak out against social injustice within American society and He was one of the first African Americans to do so. As the role of African Americans in sports exploded so did the number of African American athletes that spoke out against racial justice.

During the Olympic Games of 1960, Wilma Rudolph won three gold medals and she became "a symbol of the future of women's athletics."<sup>499</sup> While there was national attention for male African Athletes, such as Jesse Owens, there was no attention for women, but after Rudolph won, this changed. In 1961, Ernie Davis became the first African American College football player to win the Heisman Trophy, in 1965 the Texas Western University became the first champion, college basketball, that started with five African American players.<sup>500</sup> in college sports the percentages of African Americans grew, in 1948 only ten percent of college basketball teams had African American players in 1965 that number had grown to forty-five percent.<sup>501</sup> The American government used these success stories to promote the American ideology of democracy. In 1953 the United States Information Agency was created, their objective was to "understand, inform and influence foreign public in promotion of the national interest, and to broaden the dialogue between Americans, US institutions and their counterparts abroad."<sup>502</sup> The creation of the agency rooted in the ideological conflict with communism and the government spent millions of dollars to sell democracy.

---

<sup>499</sup> J. Buckley, "The Emergence of African American Athletes," *Pop Culture Universe: Icons, Idols, Ideas*, 2017, <http://popculture.abc-clio.com/Topics/Display/1474047?cid=180&sid=1773616>, accessed June 22, 2017.

<sup>500</sup> J. Buckley, "The Emergence of African American Athletes."

<sup>501</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>502</sup> M. Schwenk, "'Negro Stars' and the USIA's portrait of Democracy," *Race, Gender & Class*, 8, no. 4 (2001) 117.

But the propaganda spread by the agency was not representative for the situation in the United States. Although the accomplishments of the African Americans were praised. Racial division both on and off the field was still part of American society. The African American community realized that the procedural reforms, mattered very little in their daily lives and that deeper and more structural causes were present in their fundamentally unequal status as Americans within society. The civil rights movement fell into decline by the late 1960's, because "for many the civil rights movement had produced only the illusion of progress."<sup>503</sup> The rise of black power deepened the internal division between followers of nonviolence strategy and the advocates of separatism.<sup>504</sup> Those disillusioned with the civil rights legislation argued that it was not enforced in the South and that the Jim Crow policies were still the norm. Universities in the South continued fielding white-only athletic teams, black athletes were denied product endorsements and coaching opportunities were denied to African American coaches.<sup>505</sup> As African American athletes gained fame, people looked at them for leadership in the question on civil rights. Some athletes avoided controversy and just played, while others stepped up and used their prominence to fight against social injustice.

Jackie did not always agree with those who stepped up or with those who avoided controversy. When Robinson and boxing champion Floyd Patterson went to Birmingham, Alabama, after Dr. King had invited them to support the campaign. Jesse Owens, the gold medal winner at the 1936 Nazi Olympics, questioned what good their visit did.<sup>506</sup> Unlike Robinson, Owens was a conservative and a believer of Booker T Washington's gradualism and individualism. Owens claimed that the civil rights movement was too confrontational. Robinson was surprised by the statements made by Owens because Robinson believed he had to let the people in Birmingham know he was on their side. He and Patterson felt that "anytime the President of the SCLC or any of the other civil rights leaders in the South think we can help" they owed it to themselves and to those who fought racial injustice to go there and assist them in any way possible.<sup>507</sup> While Robinson understood why the *New York Daily News* depicted King, Patterson and himself as "outside

---

<sup>503</sup>M. Lomax, *Sports and the Racial Divide: African American and Latino Experience in an Era of Change*, (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008) 60-61.

<sup>504</sup> J. Buckley, "The Emergence of African American Athletes."

<sup>505</sup> J. Peterson, "A 'race for equality: Print Media Coverage of the 1968 Olympic Protest by Tommie Smith and John Carlos," *American Journalism Historians Association*, 26:2 (2009) 99-121.

<sup>506</sup> J. Robinson, "Jesse Owens and Alabama," *New York Amsterdam News*, June 1, 1963, 11.

<sup>507</sup> J. Robinson, "Jesse Owens and Alabama," 11.



agitators” that only caused trouble in Birmingham. He could not understand why the same attitude was expressed by one of America’s greatest athletes. An athlete “who ran into the same kind of bigotry in Berlin” as was shown in Birmingham.<sup>508</sup>

Robinson contacted Owens and told him he was worried that his statements “could help the enemies of racial progress and true democracy.” Segregationists could “quote a highly respected” African American.<sup>509</sup> Robinson insisted that what he and Paterson did was not “real heroism,” the real heroism came from the likes of Dick Gregory and Al Hibbler. Who let the Southern African Americans know they did not stand alone. The only thing Robinson and Paterson did was to bring “a little inspiration and encouragement to kids who braved the nightstick, the police dogs -and now- dismissal from school- to help us all.”<sup>510</sup> Robinson argued that especially the African Americans who had been fortunate, like Patterson, Owens and himself, had to keep making youngsters aware “that no Negro has it made, regardless of his fame, position or money, until the most underprivileged Negro enjoys his rights as a free man.”<sup>511</sup>

Robinson was an avid Boxing fan and in 1964 he saw a young Cassius Clay defeat Sonny ‘The Great Unconquerable’ Liston. This was not the only time Clay shocked the world. “Two days later, he shocked the world again by announcing that he had accepted the teachings of the black separatist religion known as the Nation of Islam.” Clay changed his name into Muhammad Ali, because he regarded Cassius Clay to be his slave name.<sup>512</sup> In the column Robinson wrote he still referred to Ali as Clay. He used his column to answer a question a lot of people asked him, if he was disturbed “because, ideologically” Clay had taken on Malcom X as his new trainer.<sup>513</sup> Robinson wrote that he was not worried because everyone had as much right to choose his own religion. Ali embraced the Islam, but Robinson did not believe that “great flocks of young and adult” African Americans would embrace the Islam, just like they did not embrace communism.<sup>514</sup>

Robinson was critical about the nonconfrontational gradualist approach that was advocated by Jesse Owens. He was also critical about the radical approach stimulated by Malcom X. Robinson

---

<sup>508</sup> J. Robinson, “Jesse Owens and Alabama,” 11.

<sup>509</sup> Ibid.

<sup>510</sup> Ibid.

<sup>511</sup> Ibid.

<sup>512</sup> T. Hauser, “The Importance of Muhammad Ali,” Turning Points in American Sports, *The Journal of the Gilder Lehrman Institute*, <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/civil-rights-movement/essays/importance-muhammad-ali>, accessed July 5, 2017.

<sup>513</sup> J. Robinson, “Cassius Did More Than Just Win,” *New York Amsterdam*, Mar. 14, 1964, 13.

<sup>514</sup> J. Robinson, “Cassius Did More Than Just Win,” 13.

did not believe in separatism and he did not believe that social justice could be achieved with any means necessary. Malcom X represented the Nation of Islam and black nationalism. After Dr. King was hit with eggs when he arrived in Harlem to preach at the Salem Methodist Church. Robinson wrote a column on what he thought about the Malcom X and his ideology.<sup>515</sup> While Malcom X was not directly involved in the egg throwing, Robinson thought he was partially responsible because he helped “create a climate in the Harlem community” where this was possible.<sup>516</sup> On multiple occasions “Malcom called upon members of his group to turn out” to let Dr. King know what they thought about the nonviolent struggle for social justice.<sup>517</sup> Malcom opposed the philosophy and methods used by Dr. King. Robinson stated that he had as much right as anyone to oppose it. Again, Robinson argued that he himself could not apply the nonviolent method when he faced violence. “Personally, I am not and don’t know how I ever could be nonviolent if someone punches me or otherwise physically assaults me.”<sup>518</sup> he admired men like, Dr. King, Wyatt Walker, Ralph Abernathy and Fred Shuttlesworth, because of their dedication and loyalty to the nonviolent approach. According to Robinson that took “real guts.”<sup>519</sup>

Robinson also wondered if Malcom X and his organization so fiercely believed in separatism and wanted an “all black community” why they did not just leave. Robinson did not believe that the Nation of Islam represented the “will of the masses.” The masses were demonstrating in cities all over the country for integration.<sup>520</sup> Robinson argued that the Nation of Islam existed for thirty five years but that the African Americans did not know anything about them, “until the white man put them on his television.”<sup>521</sup> Malcom X had been invited to speak on several white colleges across the country but seldom got invited to speak at an African American College.<sup>522</sup> Robinson found it odd that the “power structure in journalism, television and radio” kept promoting the Muslims. Robinson wondered that groups or individuals that believed in segregation found “the Muslim version of segregation-separation useful to their cause?”<sup>523</sup>

---

<sup>515</sup> J. Robinson, “Egg-Throwing and Dr. King,” *New York Amsterdam News*, July 13, 1963, 11.

<sup>516</sup> J. Robinson, “Egg-Throwing and Dr. King,” 11.

<sup>517</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>518</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>519</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>520</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>521</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>522</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>523</sup> *Ibid.*

Robinson argued that the group called Black Muslims, had the right to hate others. According to Robinson there was no manmade law that forced people to love each other, it was just “ethics, morality and religious conscience” that stated hate was wrong and love was good.<sup>524</sup> Robinson maintained that people like congressman Francis Walter, forgot that the right to hate was not just for white people. Robinson did not get why Walter wanted to investigate the Black Muslims while he never questioned the actions of Ku Klux Klan. A group that killed “Negroes whenever a lynching atmosphere could be created.”<sup>525</sup> Robinson also made it clear that he did not agree with the philosophy of the Black Muslims, because he considered “black supremacy as dangerous as white supremacy.” Robinson believed that integration, instead of segregation as proposed by the Black Muslims, was the solution to the problems.<sup>526</sup> Robinson did not care if somebody hated him, but it was different when somebody put a foot on his neck, or kept him from getting a job, or denied him a walk in the park. So far, the Muslims had not shown they were “dedicated to murder, naked violence, hatred, mugging and Yoking” as Mendel Rivers, South Carolina, argued on the Congress floor.<sup>527</sup> The only terrible deeds that were committed “openly and boldly” were the deeds of the Klan and the “Gestapo Southern police officers.”<sup>528</sup>

According to Robinson most African Americans wanted more democracy, and were willing to suffer, fight and die for it. “They want to be integrated into the mainstream of American life, not invited to live in some small cubicle of this land in splendid isolation”<sup>529</sup> He believed that if the masses of African Americans ever embraced the Black Muslim movement it was not because of Cassius Clay or Malcom X. It was because “white America has refused to recognize the responsible leadership of the Negro people and to grant us the same rights that any other citizen enjoys in this land.”<sup>530</sup> What Robinson admired about Ali was his assertiveness in the public spotlight. When Ali Shouted: “I am the greatest” Robinson thought that more African Americans needed to do that, not to advocate that they were better than anyone else but to know they were “just as great as other human beings” African Americans needed to believe in themselves<sup>531</sup>

---

<sup>524</sup> J. Robinson, “Right to Hate,” *New York Amsterdam News*, Aug. 25, 1962, 11.

<sup>525</sup> J. Robinson, “Right to Hate,” 11.

<sup>526</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>527</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>528</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>529</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>530</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>531</sup> J. Robinson, “Cassius Did More Than Just Win,” 13.

In March of 1964, Malcom X left the Nation of Islam and embraced the Sunni Islam. The Sunni Islam preached racial equality and Malcom strayed away from racial separatism. Malcom X founded the Organization of Afro-American Unity and in the *New York Journal-American* an article was published where it was declared that Malcom X would take over the civil rights leadership.<sup>532</sup> Robinson stated that African Americans would cut their own throats if they listened to the confusing leadership of Malcom X. Robinson argued that yesterday Malcom owed everything to the “honorable Elijah Muhammad,” while today the “honorable Elijah is not so honorable in Malcom’s book” because he taught hate. According to Malcom’s new beliefs that Islam did not teach hate. Malcom had sworn that “white folks were devils,” while now he had decided “some white folks are all right.”<sup>533</sup> It were these shifts that made Malcom X unpredictable and unfit to lead the civil rights movement. Robinson thought that other African Americans thought the same. He proclaimed that he had “too much faith in the commonsense of the majority of the Negroes to believe that Malcom’s new organization will ever amount to much.”<sup>534</sup>

In the fall 1967 the Olympic Project for Human Rights (OPHR) was founded by Dr. Harry Edwards, at that time a professor of sociology at San Jose State College. The principal athletic spokespeople were 100-meter sprinter Tommie Smith, 400-meter runner, Lee Evans and basketball star Lew Alcindor. Their goal was to set up an African American boycott of the 1968 summer Olympics that were held in Mexico City. They believed that the civil rights movement had not made enough progress in eliminating inequality within American society. The OPHR wanted to show the hypocrisy of the United States government on how they used African American athletes to promote democracy, while they were treated as second class citizens. Many more African American athletes joined and the boycott became a national issue. The Governor of California, Ronald Reagan, disapproved of the boycott, because it contributed “nothing toward the harmony between races.”<sup>535</sup>

Jackie had mixed emotions about the proposed boycott. He saw it as a “beautiful cause,” but he did not want to see it end up as a “lost cause.”<sup>536</sup> He argued it was hard to organize a successful boycott and he did not want to see Tommie Smith, Lee Evans or Lew Alcindor end up

---

<sup>532</sup> J. Robinson, “The Riddle of Malcom X,” *New York Amsterdam News*, July 18, 1964, 21.

<sup>533</sup> J. Robinson, “The Riddle of Malcom X,” 21.

<sup>534</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>535</sup> D. Hartmann, *Race, Culture, and the Revolt of the Black Athlete: The 1968 Olympic Protests and Their Aftermath* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004) 56.

<sup>536</sup> J. Robinson, “Mixed Emotions Over Boycott of Olympics,” *New York Amsterdam News*, Dec. 16, 1967.

alone. Robinson asserted that he was inspired when Tommie Smith stated that he would “give it all up” even “his life if necessary” if that meant he “could change racial conditions in America and destroy the exploitation of the Negro athlete.” It was because of this attitude that Jackie had to honor the young man.<sup>537</sup> Jackie claimed that a boycott could be “a powerful aid” because a lot of African American athletes were behind it. Robinson also saw it as “one of the few remaining peaceful methods of pricking the public’s conscience to act immediately for racial equality.”<sup>538</sup> He even wondered if he had not “been around too long” thus “accepting inequities and indignities and going along with worn-out promises” about how things were going to improve.”<sup>539</sup> Jackie quoted what Malcom X once said to him during a debate, “Jackie, in days to come, your son and my son will not be willing to settle for thing we are willing to settle for.”<sup>540</sup> Jackie realized this and thought this was how it was meant to be and he could “sympathize with their point of view.”<sup>541</sup>

1968 unfolded as an electric year. A year that had seen the Tet Offensive, the Prague Spring and the assassination of Dr. King, the latter had a great impact on the OPHR. In April, as racial riots swept across the country and the Black Panther Party began to grow, more athletes began to see the boycott as a valid option. Ralph Boston, an all-round athlete, mostly remembered for the long jump, wondered what to do. On the one he thought if he went to the Olympics he would represent the people “like the one that killed Dr. King” but on the other hand he felt that if he did not go and someone else won that medal, he felt he did not accomplished anything either.<sup>542</sup> More athletes began to wonder and for a while the boycott seemed possible. But for different reasons the boycott failed.

John Carlos and Tommie Smith were frustrated with the attitude of those athletes, Carlos argued that winning medals would not protect them from racism. “it might give you fifteen minutes of fame, but what about the rest of your life?”<sup>543</sup> After Smith won gold in the 200-meter race, and John Carlos, bronze. The two sprinters decided to stage a demonstration during the medal ceremony. Their goal was to protest the persistence of racism, inequality and poverty within

---

<sup>537</sup> J. Robinson, “Mixed Emotions Over Boycott of Olympics.”

<sup>538</sup> Ibid.

<sup>539</sup> Ibid.

<sup>540</sup> Ibid.

<sup>541</sup> Ibid.

<sup>542</sup> D. Zirin, “The Explosive 1968 Olympics,” *International Socialist Review*, Issue 61, Sept.-Oct. (2008)

<sup>543</sup> D. Zirin, *what’s My Name, Fool? Sports and Resistance in the United States* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2005)

American society.<sup>544</sup> When the sprinters bowed their heads and raised their gloved fists during the national anthem, they were met with outrage as the crowd began to boo and taunt the medal winners. The salute was interpreted as a “black power” salute and according to the President of the International Olympic Committee, Avery Brundage, their stance was “outrageous.” Brundage declared that the athletes had violated “the basic principles of the Olympic Games.”<sup>545</sup> Both sprinters were ejected out of the Olympic Games and out of Mexico within days. Robinson was interviewed about the incident and he praised the two sprinters because he “admired the pride in their blackness and he was livid that they were suspended. Jackie stated that the Olympic Committee made a “Grave mistake.”<sup>546</sup>

In 1968 Jackie’s column at the *New York Amsterdam* had ended but Jackie was not done fighting racial injustice. Until the day he died, October 24, 1972, Robinson toured the country and kept speaking and writing every moment he could against social injustice. He primarily did it because he believed in the cause, but also because people want to hear from him. Or as Long described it, “it was the public insatiable desire to listen to someone who had something worth saying, someone whose respect, heroism and integrity were without equal among national sports icons of his times.”<sup>547</sup>

---

<sup>544</sup> D, Leonard & C. King, “Revolt Black Athletes” *Journal for the study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, Volume 3, Issue 2 (2009) 215-232.

<sup>545</sup> History.com Staff, “Olympic protestors stripped of their medals,” *History.com*, <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/olympic-protestors-stripped-of-their-medals>, Published 2009, accessed June 16, 2017.

<sup>546</sup> “Jackie Praises Olympic Star,” *Chicago Daily Defender*, Oct. 23, 1968.

<sup>547</sup> M. Long, *First Class Citizenship: The Civil Rights Letters of Jackie Robinson*, Introduction XXIX.

## Conclusion

By limiting Jackie Robinson's legacy to his baseball career. Is to present a static and simplistic view of a complex person. This thesis acknowledged that Robinson's baseball career played an important role in shaping him and helped him in his later years. He used his fame and cultural relevance to open doors that were closed for others. Robinson befriended Dr. Martin Luther King and had intensive contact with various presidents. Because Jackie was a national icon his column was read throughout the country. Robinson always spoke his mind in his columns and this led to confrontations with people like Malcom X, John F. Kennedy and Muhammad Ali.

Robinson grew up in the 1920's and 193's when Jim Crow was very much alive. Baseball had been segregated for over thirty years and there was nothing that indicated that this would change. Whereas the Harlem Renaissance made sure artists, writers and actors were taken serious this was different for athletes. Athletes were confined to what the white media deemed appropriate, this was the reason that Jack Johnson was depicted as a "bad nigger" while, Joe Louis was described as the embodiment of "Americanism."<sup>548</sup> Already in high school people saw Jackie's skills on the field and he quickly became one of the most well-known high school athletes. On the field Jackie was accepted as an equal but outside sports he was met with racism and prejudice. His youth was filled with race related incident, because Jackie never accepted the fact that he was treated unjust. In his formative years Jackie saw an alternative for Jim Crow, if he was accepted on the field, why couldn't he be accepted in society? During his college years his star begun to shine brighter and Robinson became the first four letter star. Robinson saw no future in sports so he joined the army.

Jackie joined the army in 1941. During the war, the term "Double V" was introduced and the call for integration became louder.<sup>549</sup> While World War II had not changed the status of African Americans yet, although many moved North to work in the war industry. The fight for racial justice gained broad acceptance from the liberal left. If African Americans were good enough to die for America, they were good enough to be treated as American citizens. In the Army Jackie was often confronted with Jim Crow Law. The one time he refused to go to the back of the bus he was court martialled. Robinson felt he was treated unjust and the only thing he wanted was to be treated as an

---

<sup>548</sup> D. Capeci & M. Wilkerson, "Multifarious Hero: Joe Louis," 22-24.

<sup>549</sup> E. Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 885.

equal. The hypocrisy of the American army, to fight abroad for freedom but being treated as a second-class citizen, made Robinson decide to leave the army. He went on and played baseball in the Negro League. Meanwhile Judge Landis did everything in his power that the Major League Baseball stayed lily white.

The integration of baseball was part of a larger movement, the Ives Quinn Anti-Discrimination Act, played an important role and Jackie really wanted to leave the Negro League. Jackie's serene lifestyle was different from his undisciplined and drinking teammates.<sup>550</sup> While he played with the Kansas City Monarchs, Jackie spoke out against the racial injustice he experienced when he was on the road. Because he was outspoken, people argued that Robinson was not suited to become the first African American baseball player in the MLB. They argued Robinson was not the type that Branch Rickey was looking for. Rickey decided otherwise, Rickey was impressed with the fact that Robinson was college educated, that he already had experience with interracial sports and that he had fought racism in army. Rickey argued that Robinson was articulated, witty and smart.<sup>551</sup>

Rickey knew how the white media had dealt with African American athletes before and as long as they confined to what the media deemed appropriate they were celebrated (Jack Johnson versus Joe Louis). Rickey knew that not a lot of people would cheer the integration at first and that Robinson would face racial slurs, spiking and other threats. Rickey asked Robinson to turn the other cheek, to show he was not only a good baseball player but also a good man. Robinson had to adopt the philosophy of nonviolence like Jesus had preached. While this was not in Jackie's nature he understood what had to be done. He was aware that he was a guinea pig that represented all the Africans Americans on and off the baseball field. If he wanted to become a national icon, a symbol for all Americans he had to behave like Joe Louis had done.

In the first two years Robinson bottled up his frustrations about the racial incidents he had to endure. Only in a private circle Jackie told what he truly felt. Soon Jackie realized that he was accepted on the field because he helped the team win games and teammates and fans came to his defense. In 1949 Jackie won the Most Valuable Player Award and Jackie was an established sports hero, Robinson thought this was the moment he could talk back. Jackie was done with turning the

---

<sup>550</sup> A. Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson, a Biography*, 116.

<sup>551</sup> J. Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, 64.



other cheek. Soon he was met with resistance, he was perceived as uppity and ungrateful towards baseball.<sup>552</sup> Robinson saw it different. He Claimed that it was because of baseball he had a podium that could reach the youth. That because of baseball he could inspire and change American society. Robinson no longer saw Joe Louis as an acceptable image for African Americans. The new black leaders had to be demanding and outspoken, Robinson was not going to beg for anything anymore. Jackie was one of the first American athletes that used his fame and prominence to speak out against racial injustice.

After Jackie retired he asserted that despite he had won everything he could win in the MLB he did not had it made. Off the field African Americans were still treated as second-class citizens and this is what resonated in everything Jackie Robinson did after he retired. In 1956 Robinson won the Spingarn Medal and this was an inspiration for Robinson to keep fighting for racial justice. He realized there was more in the world than just baseball. He toured the country to help civil rights organizations raise money, he wrote letters to presidents urging them to act, gave speeches to inspire local civil rights leaders, organized marches and wrote columns to address newsworthy events.<sup>553</sup>

His columns in the *New York Post* and the *New York Amsterdam* gave us good insight into the thoughts of Jackie Robinson. These columns showed how Jackie thought about certain events and persons and they show a completely different Jackie Robinson than the cheek turning pioneer that integrated professional baseball. The columns showed that Robinson could not be placed in a box, he was neither Republican nor a Democrat. He supported the candidate that fought for equality and he clashed with those who he thought obstructed the progress of equality.<sup>554</sup> According to Robinson civil rights were of utmost importance because without basic rights people could not look to other issues. Robinson criticized people when he deemed it necessary, but he also praised people when praise was due. The best example of that were his changing views about John F Kennedy. Robinson was clear in how he thought social justice should be achieved. Individuals had to set examples, that others could follow. It was clear Robinson admired the leadership of Dr. King, although they did not always see eye to eye. It was King's method he deemed most appropriate to achieve civil rights. Robinson argued that if people would believe in the methods of Malcom X it

---

<sup>552</sup> J. Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, 325.

<sup>553</sup> NAACP, "The Spingarn Medal Award annually for the highest achievement of an American Negro."

<sup>554</sup> M. Long, ed., *Beyond Home Plate*, 127.

was because the white people refused to recognize responsible leadership and did not grant African Americans the same basic rights that everybody else had. Robinson believed in black power in the sense that black power stood for self-determination. Jackie believed that African Americans were just as great as other human beings and he fiercely believed in the fact that he did not had it made until all African Americans had it made.<sup>555</sup>

When one wants to know how Jackie Robinson impacted the life of others, you cannot look at one part of his life. That would only partially answer the question. It would result in a static depiction of Jackie Robinson. By providing insights about the role Jackie Robinson played within civil right this thesis transcends the mainstream historiography that mainly focused on his baseball career. At the same time, this thesis showed that his baseball career played an important role. His baseball career provided him a platform to speak out against racism and prejudice. He set a precedent for other African American athletes to use their fame as a platform to speak out and became a point of reference for many young African Americans.

Dr. Martin Luther King argued that Jackie Robinson's story was exceptional as he underwent the "humiliation," "trauma" and "loneliness" that came with "being a pilgrim" that walked the "lonesome byways towards the high road of freedom."<sup>556</sup> Dr. King even went as far as stating that Robinson was a "sit-inner before sit ins and a freedom rider before freedom riders."<sup>557</sup> While I agree with Dr. King that Robinson's story was exceptional, as his integration into professional baseball foreshadowed that of the integration of African Americans in other parts of American society. Quickly after World War II Jackie integrated professional baseball and soon he became a star in the MLB, white players, fans and journalists re-examined their racial attitudes. Jackie's integration also had a larger impact on society, because baseball was the national pastime and the most popular sport in the United States. Because of Robinson more Americans became aware of the racism that was present in their society or as Tygiel described it Robinson became "a symbol of imminent racial challenge and a direct agent of social change."<sup>558</sup> his story was exceptional because he had set a precedent for later African American athletes. Robinson was the catalyst that helped inspire other African Americans athletes to speak out against social injustice.

---

<sup>555</sup> J. Robinson, "Cassius Did More Than Just Win," 13.

<sup>556</sup> M.L. King Jr., "People in Action Hall of Famer"

<sup>557</sup> Ibid."

<sup>558</sup> J. Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, 9.

Robinson's use of national charisma and athletic accomplishments to speak out against social injustice, after his retirement set in motion the "culmination of many years of struggling" at "a snail's pace."<sup>559</sup> That resulted into the "Year of Awakening."<sup>560</sup>

Robinson's story could also be read as the story of the larger movement of emancipation that affected millions of African Americans. Baseball and therefore Jackie Robinson's story, reflected American society as it moved from segregation to integration. Jackie's story showed that it was a slow and painful process. the humiliation and trauma Robinson underwent, was the humiliation and trauma millions of African Americans underwent when they were refused service in hotels, restaurants. When they were instructed to move to the back of the bus or when they could not get a job because of the color of their skin. It could be embedded within the larger developments of American society as it was a result of the "Double V" campaign that was waged during World War II that resulted into the Ives-Quinn Anti-Discrimination Act in New York; a law that tried to eradicate discrimination in housing, education and jobs.<sup>561</sup> The integration of baseball could be linked to the civil rights movement because a decade later Dr. King and other civil rights activists used the same philosophy of nonviolence in the face of threats, violence and abuse. Robinson's columns through the years and the subsequent clashes he had with several public figures like Muhammad Ali and Malcom X, showed the development of the civil rights movement. The columns showed the internal division that occurred between the supporters of nonviolence and the advocates of separatism.

While Robinson's sport career was important to explore the roots of his views on racial equality and social justice, because they explained the motivations for his reformative agenda. It is also important to look how Jackie used his public prominence, derived from sports, and became an influential public intellectual and a civil rights activist that spoke about what he believed in. In 1949 the HUAC asked Robinson to testify against Paul Robeson, because HUAC believed if they wanted to discredit Robeson they needed someone just as popular and famous. Robinson was aware of this as he realized "they must have felt my popularity with black and white sports-loving masses would help them refute the Robeson statement."<sup>562</sup> After his retirement Robinson used his fame to

---

<sup>559</sup> R. Wigginton, *The Strange Career of the Black Athlete*, 51.

<sup>560</sup> D. Wiggins, *Glory Bound: Black Athletes in a White America*, 6.

<sup>561</sup> E. Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 885.

<sup>562</sup> J. Robinson, *I Never had it Made*, 82.

advocate the progress of civil rights because he believed no African American had it made until the poorest African American had it made. He believed in individual actions and whenever he was called upon by the SNCC, the NAACP or any other civil rights movement he believed in. When called upon, Robinson was there to give a speech, to raise funds, to write a letter or to give his opinion. His cultural relevance opened doors that were closed for others. He had ties with political leaders, civil rights leaders and even Presidents. The pronouncements Robinson made in his columns counted not only because the *New York Amsterdam News* was a leading African American Newspaper that championed for civil rights during the 1950's and 1960's but also because of the "the public insatiable desire to listen to someone who had something worth saying, someone whose respect, heroism and integrity were without equal among national sports icons of his times."<sup>563</sup> He knew a lot of influential people and could give the people an insight into world that was unknown for most of his readers. He was not afraid to give his honest opinion about matters and because of that he clashed with many public figures. Robinson was influential because he had something to say, he had experienced both the "American nightmare" as well as the "American dream." Robinson's story is both exceptional and yet embedded within the story of American history.

This thesis not only presented Jackie Robinson's story but also linked, African American history, African American athletes, baseball and the civil rights movement and raised more questions about the importance of the role race and sports played in American society.

---

<sup>563</sup> M. Long, *First Class Citizenship: The Civil Rights Letters of Jackie Robinson*, XXIX.

## Bibliography: Primary Sources

- Afro American. "Jackie Shurges off KKK Threat." *Afro American*, January 22, 1949: 1.
- "Announcement of Ives-Quinn Anti Discrimination Law, 195." *National Baseball Hall of Fame, Manuscripts, Integration- Correspondence & Clippings, 1947-1980, East Archives, Box 1, Aisle 9, Range B, Shelf 5*. 1945.  
<https://collection.baseballhall.org/islandora/object/islandora%3A212190> (accessed July 11, 2017).
- Baldwin, J. "A Report From Occupied Territory." *The Nation*, July 11, 1966.
- Baltimore Afro-American. "'Phillies' Players Slur Jackie as he Slumps: Champan Lead in 'Bench Jockeying'." *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 3, 1947.
- . "Rickey Puts Down Anti-Robinson Move: Players' Petition Reported." *Baltimore Afro-American*, April 5, 1947.
- Booker, J. "Jackie, Judge Delarry Blast Roy Wilkins." *New York Amsterdam News*, August 19, 1958.
- Chicago Daily Defender. "Integrations Helps Baseball." *Chicago Daily Defender*, August 22, 1957.
- . "Jackie Praises Olympic Star ." *Chicago Daily Defender*, October 23 , 1968.
- . "Little Rock Quiet; N. Little Rock Too." *Chicago Daily Defender*, September 12, 1957.
- Chicago Daily Tribune. "Robinson Fails at Plate, But Dodgers Win, 5-3." *Chicago Daily Defender*, April 16, 1947.
- Current, G. "Memorandum to Mr. Moon." Reproduced from the Collections of the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, December 21, 1956.
- Daley, A. "Sports of the Times: Jackie Robinson and the Ku Klux Klan." *New York Times*, January 18, 1949.

Donnell, L.O. "The Last Word, John F. Kennedy's Civil Rights Speech June 11, 1963." *MSNBC*. June 11, 1963. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPGrpSBq1oA> (accessed July 7, 2017).

Du Bois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Chicago: McClurg & Co., 1903.

Efrat, L. "Royals' Star Signs With Brooks Today." *New York Times*, April 11, 1947.

"Fact Paper - The Administration and Civil Rights Legislation, March 27, 1957." *Eisenhower Archives, Civil Right Act of 1957, Frederic Morrow Records, Box 9, Civil Rights Bill; NAID #12167051*. 1957. [Eisenhower.archives.gov](http://Eisenhower.archives.gov) (accessed June 14, 2017).

Franklins, B. "Hoover Assails Warren Findings." *New York Times*, November 19, 1964.

Hartford Courant. "Ku Klux Seeking to Bar Dodgers." *Hartford Courant*, January 15, 1949: 10.

Heft, H. "Jackie Robinson Chides Robeson." *Washington Post*, July 19, 1949: 2.

Holmes, T. "Rickey Signs Negro Amid Complications." *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 24, 1945: 17.

Johnson, L.B. "Remarks Upon Signing Order Establishing the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders." *The American Presidency Project*. July 29, 1967. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=28369> (accessed July 7, 2017).

Kile, R. "Review of Corps Judge Advocate, United States vs. 2d Lt. Jack R. Robinson, 0-1031586, Cavalry, Company C, 758th Tank battalion." *National Archives*. August 23, 1944. <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2008/spring/robinson.html> (accessed July 11, 2017).

King Jr, M.L. "People in Action Hall of Famer." *New York Amsterdam News*, August 4, 1962.

Lynch, J., "Jackie Robinson Quits Baseball; Trade is Voided." *New York Times*, January 6, 1957: 1.

Maltin, S. "Jackie's Dazzling Play Wins 'Little Series' for Montreal: Fans 'Mob' Jackie in Great Tribute." *Pittsburgh Courier*, October 12, 1946.

Mann, A. *The Jackie Robinson Story*. New York: Grosset and Dunlapp, 1951.

- Mazo, E. "Nixon Tells Ethiopia of US Negro: Cities Progress of Integration." *New York Tribune/Herald Tribune*, March 13, 1957: 11.
- McGowen, R. "Florida City Bars Montreal Negroes: Jacksonville Says Wright and Robinson Cannot Play There Against Jersey Sunday." *New York Times*, March 22, 1946.
- Moon, H.L. "News from the NAACP, Jackie Robinson Named 41st Springarn Medalist." *NAACP Newsletter*, June 14, 1956: Reproduced from the Collections of the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
- Myrdal, G. *An American Dilmma, The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*. New York & London: Harper Brothers Publishers, 1944.
- NAACP. "Jackie Robinson here Friday for NAACP Membership Drive Kick-off." Reproduced from the Collections of the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, n.d.
- . "The Springarn Medal Award anually for the highest achievement of an American Negro." New York: Reproduced from the Collections of the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, n.d. 2.
- . *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States 1889-1919*. New York, 1919, Reprint 1969.
- New York Amsterdam News. "3,000 to March on DC: Jackie Robinson Will Lead Way." *New York Amsterdam News*, October 25, 1958: 1.
- New York Times. "Committe Report to Mayor Asks Equal Rights for Negro in Baseball." *New York Times* , November 19, 1945.
- New York TImes. "Alabama Governor Emdprses Lemmedu." *New York Times*, June 17, 1959.
- New York Times. "Club Heads Give View: Some Feel That Any Capable Player Should Get Chance." *New York Times*, October 24, 1945.
- . "Frick Calls Robinson in on Racial Jab at Yanks." *New York Times*, December 18, 1952.
- . "NAACP Leader Urgers Violence." *New York Times*, May 7, 1959.
- . "Truman Reiterates Views on Sit-Downs." *New York Times*, March 25, 1960.
- . "Truman Says He'd Oust Disrupters in His Shop." *New York Times*, March 20, 1960.

- Nunn Jr., B. "Change of Pace, Jackie Robinson shows in New Role." *Pittsburgh Courier*, February 2, 1957.
- "Pamphlet, the Commission on Civil Rights, Civil Rights Act of 1957." *E. Frederic Morrow Records, Box 9, Civil Rights Bill; NAID #12167074*. 1957. Eisenhower.archives.gov (accessed June 14, 2017).
- Peverelly, C.A. *The Book of American Pastime, Containing a History of the Principle Base-ball, Cricket, Rowing, and Yachting Clubs of the United States*. New York: The Author, 1868.
- Pittsburgh Courier. "Robeson Sees Labor as Salvation of Negro Races: Praises VIO Plan to Better Racial Conditions Here." *Pittsburgh Courier*, December 25, 1943: 11.
- Povich, S. "This Morning With Shirley Povich." *Washington Post*, May 4, 1947.
- Relman, M. "'Little Rock Nine' Back in Classes." *Austin Statesman*, September 26, 1957.
- Rickey, B. "One Hundred Percent Wrong Club." *Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Branch Rickey Papers*. January 26, 1956. <https://www.loc.gov/collections/jackie-robinson-baseball/articles-and-essays/baseball-the-color-line-and-jackie-robinson/one-hundred-percent-wrong-club-speech/> (accessed July 11, 2017).
- Robinson, J. "Acceptance Address at special luncheon honoring him on presentation of 41st Springarn Medal." New York: Reproduced from the Collections of the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, December 8, 1956.
- . "Letter to Assistant of Secretary of War, Truman K. Gibson." *National Archives*. July 16, 1944. <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2008/spring/robinson.html> (accessed July 11, 2017).
- . "Letter to Martin Luther King Jr." New York, February 11, 1957.
- Robinson, J. "Letter to President Dwight D. Eisenhower (1957)." In *First Class Citizenship: The Civil Rights Letters of Jackie Robinson*, by M. Long. New York, 2007.
- . "Letter to President Dwight D. Eisenhower." *Jackie Robinson, Civil Rights Advocate*. May 13, 1958. Archives.gov (accessed 14 2017, June).
- . "Letter to Vice President Nixon." New York, March 19, 1957.



- "Answering the Mail." *New York Amsterdam News* , August 29, 1964: 19.
- "Taking Off on the NAACP." *New York Amsterdam News* , January 14, 1967.
- "The Counterrevolution." *New York Amsterdam News* , April 11, 1964: 11.
- "The President is Re-Elected." *New York Amsterdam News* , June 22, 1963: 11.
- "A Look at This Great Society." *New York Amsterdam News*, October 1, 1966: 9.
- "A Negro First." *New York Amsterdam News*, July 4, 1964: 19.
- "After Emotions Die Down." *New York Amsterdam News*, April 13, 1968: 21.
- "Cassius Did More Than Just Win." *New York Amsterdam News*, March 14, 1964: 13.
- "Disunity Is No Memorial." *New York Amsterdam News*, July 6, 1963: 11.
- "Dr. Martin L. King." *New York Amsterdam News*, May 13, 1967.
- "Egg-Throwing and Dr. King." *New York Amsterdam News*, July 13, 1963.
- "Heart to Heart about Violence." *New York Amsterdam News*, June 13, 1964.
- "Heroism and Tragedy of Muhammad Ali." *New York Amsterdam News*, October 14, 1967.
- "How Deep Are the Wounds?" *New York Amsterdam News*, January 18, 1964: 9.
- "I Am Not Nonviolent, But Wiser NAACP Youth Are." *New York Amsterdam News*, July 11, 1964.
- "In Defense of Martin Luther King Jr." *New York Amsterdam News*, December 5, 1964.
- "Into the Mainstream." *New York Amsterdam News*, June 20, 1964: 21.
- "Jesse Owens and Alabama." *New York Amsterdam News*, June 1, 1963: 11.
- "Life Must Go On." *New York Amsterdam News*, August 22, 1964: 19.
- "Mississippi Find a Way." *New York Amsterdam News*, December 26, 1964: 9.
- "Mixed Emotions Over Boycott of Olympics." *New York Amsterdam News*, December 16, 1967.

- "Nixon Nomination Called Disaster." *New York Amsterdam News*, March 23, 1968: 13.
  - "Right to Hate." *New York Amsterdam News*, August 25, 1962: 11.
  - "Serious Troubles." *New York Amsterdam News*, April 25, 1964: 11.
  - "The Death of President." *New York Amsterdam News*, December 7, 1963: 13.
  - "The Riddle of Malcom X." *New York Amsterdam News*, July 18, 1964: 21.
  - "They Should Probe Stennis." *New York Amsterdam News*, August 12, 1967: 17.
  - "Two Legged Mice." *New York Amsterdam News*, July 1, 1964: 19.
  - "What I Think of Dr. Martin King." *New York Amsterdam News*, July 1, 1967.
  - "Patience, Pride and Progress." *Press Released address for rally sponsored by the Mississippi State conference of NAACP Branches*. Reproduced from the Collections of the Manuscript Division, February 16, 1958.
  - "Jackie Robinson Says:." *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 17, 1947.
  - "Glad of Opportunity and Will Try to Make Good." *Pittsburgh Courier*, November 3, 1945.
  - "Telegram to Frederick Morrow." *Jackie Robinson, Civil Rights Advocate*. August 13, 1957. Archives.gov (accessed June 14, 2017).
- Robinson, J. *I Never had it Made; Jackie Robinson an Autobiography*. New York: HarperCollins, 1972.
- Rouzeau, E.T. "Robinson's Signing Brings Mixture of Joy and Trepidation to Harlem." *New York Herald Tribune*, October 29, 1945.
- Smith, W. "Publihers Place Case of Negro Players Before Big-League Owners." *Pittsburg Courier*, December 11, 1943: 1.
- "Stop Race Baiting- Chanlder: Phillies Warned by Baseball Czar Over Robinson Incident." *The Pittsburgh Courier*, May 10, 1947.
  - "Why He signed Jackie Robinson: Major League Owner Sees Nothing Unuseual in Signing Robinson." *The Pittsburgh Courier*, November 3, 1945.

Turkin, H. "Dodgers Sign Jack Robinson: Negro Sets Baseball Precedent." *Los Angeles Times*, October 24, 1945: 10.

United States Government. "Congressional Record, Proceedings and Debates of the 85th Congress First Session." *Volume 103 - Part 12, August 22, 1957 to August 30, 1957, Pages 15561 to 17012*. Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1957.

WALB News Film Collection. "WALB Newsfilm of the burned Ruins of African American churches in Terrell and Lee Counties, Georgia 1962 August and September." *Albany Movement Compilation, WALB News Film Collection, The University Georgia Libraries, Athens*. n.d. [http://crdl.usg.edu/cgi/crdl?query=id:ugabma\\_walb\\_walb00067](http://crdl.usg.edu/cgi/crdl?query=id:ugabma_walb_walb00067) (accessed July 4, 2017).

Washington Post. "Negroes Won't Fight Soviet, Robeson Says." *Washington Post*, April 21, 1949.

White, W. "Triumph of Jackie Robinson Credited to Backing of Fans." *New York Herald Tribune*, September 28, 1947.

## Bibliography: Secondary Sources

- Simon, A. *No. 42 to return as baseball celebrates Jackie* . April 15, 2016.  
<http://m.mlb.com/news/article/172418840/mlb-brings-back-no-42-for-jackie-robinson-day/> (accessed July 22, 2017).
- Bleske, G. and C. Lamb. "Democracy on the Field" *The Black Press Takes on White Baseball.* *Journalism History*, 1998.
- Boyer, D. "Obama Prasis Ex-Olympians Tommie Smith and John Carlos For '68 'Black Power' Salute." *Washington Times*, September 29, 2016.
- Buckley, J. *The Emergence of African American Athletes.* n.d. <https://popculture-abc-clipo-com.i.ezproxy.nypl.org/Topics/Display/1474047?cid=180&sid=1773616>.
- Capeci, D. and M. Wilkerson. "Multifarious Hero: Joe Louis, American Society, and Race Relations during World Crisis, 1935-1945." *Journal of Sport History*, 1983: 6-24 .
- Carall, B. *When to Stop the Cheering? The Black Pres, the Black Community and the Integration of Professional Baseball.* New York & London: Routledge, 2006.
- Carew, J., and J. Thompson. "From Blackface to Blaxploitation: Representation of African Americans in Film." *Exhibit Duke University, African Americans in film.* n.d.  
<http://exhibits.library.duke.edu/exhibits/show/africanamericansinfilm> (accessed May 9, 2017).
- Carlos, John, and Dave Zirin. *The John Carlos Story.* Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2011.
- Carroll, B. "'This is It!' The PR Campagin by Wendell Smith and Jackie Robinson." *Journalism History*, No 3., Fall 2011: 151-162.
- DiGiovanna, M., and B. Shaikin. "Statue of Jackie Robinson unveiled at Dodger Stadium." *Los Angeles Times*, April 15, 2017.
- Dorinson, J., and J. Warmund. *Jackie Robinson Race Sports and the American Dream.* Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1998.

- Dreier, P. *The Real Story of Baseball's integration That You Won't See in 42*. April 13, 2013. <http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2013/04/the-real-story-of-baseballs-integration-that-you-wont-see-in-i-42-i/274886/> (accessed May 9, 2017).
- ESPN. *Was William Edward White Really First?* January 30, 2004. <http://www.espn.com/mlb/news/story?id=1723322> (accessed May 9, 2017).
- Foner, E. *Give Me Liberty! An American History*. New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014.
- Hartford, G. "Grenada Mississippi-Chronology of a Movement." *Civil Rights Movement Veterans Hosted By Tougaloo College*. n.d. <http://www.crbmbvet.org/info/grenada.htm> (accessed July 5, 2017).
- Hartmann, Douglas. "The Politics of race and sport: Resistance and domination in the 1968 African American Olympic Protest Movement." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 1996: 548-566.
- Hauser, T. "The Importance of Muhammad Ali, Turning Points in American Sports." *The Journal of the Gilder Lehrman Institute*. n.d. <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/civil-rights-movement/essays/importance-muhammad-ali> (accessed July 5, 2017).
- Henry, E. *42 Faith: The Rest of the Jackie Robinson Story*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2017.
- History.com. *Harlem Renaissance*. 2009. <http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/harlem-renaissance> (accessed July 7, 2017).
- . *Muhammad Ali Refuses Army Induction*. 2009. <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/muhammad-ali-refuses-army-induction> (accessed July 7, 2017).
- . *Olympic protesters stripped of their medals*. 2009. <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/olympic-protesters-stripped-of-their-medals>.
- Husman, J. "August 10, 1883: Cap Anson vs. Fleet Walker." In *Inventing Baseball: The 100 Greatest Games of the 19th Century*, by B. Felber. Phoenix: Society for American Baseball Research, 2013.

- . *Biographical Project, Fleet Walker*. May 1, 2017. <https://sabr.org/bioproje/person/9fc5f867> (accessed May 9, 2017).
- Husman, J. "June 21, 1879 the Cameo of William Edward White." In *Inventing Baseball: The 100 Greatest Games of the 19th Century*, by B. Felber. Phoenix : Society for American Baseball Research, 2013.
- Kendrick, S. *National League Rookies of the Year*. March 7, 2017. <https://www.thoughtco.com/national-league-rookies-of-the-year-319910> (accessed June 6, 2017).
- Kirwin, B. *Out of the Shadows: African American Baseball from the Cuban Giants to Jackie Robinson*. Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 2005.
- Kronenwetter, M. "Little Rock Desegregation Crisis." *American History the Civil Rights Movement 1954-1975*. n.d. [Americanhistory.abc-clio.com](http://Americanhistory.abc-clio.com) (accessed June 14, 2017).
- Lamb, C. *Blackout: The Untold Story of Jackie Robinson's First Spring Training*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004.
- Lamb, C., and M. Long. *Jackie Robinson: A Spiritual Biography: The Faith of a Boundary-Breaking Hero*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2017.
- Lamb, Chris. *From Jack Johnson to LeBron James: Sports Media and the Color Line*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016.
- Lauren, T. *American History the Civil Rights Movement*. n.d. [Americanhistory.abc-clio.com](http://Americanhistory.abc-clio.com) (accessed June 11, 2017).
- Leonard, David, and C. King. "Revolting Black Athletes." *Journal for the study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, 2009, Published online 2013: 215-232.
- Levy, P. "The Dream Deferred: The Assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., and the Holy Week Uprising of 1968." In *Baltimore '68: Riots and Rebirth in an American City*, by J. Elfenhein and T. Hollowak. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011.
- Lichtash, T. "Ives-Quinn Act- The Law Against Discrimination." *St. John's Law Review*, 2013.

- Lomax, Michael. *Sport and the Racial Divide: African American and Latino Experience in an Era of Change*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008.
- Long, M. *Beyond Home Plate Jackie Robinson on Life After Baseball*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2013.
- . *First Class Citizenship: The Civil Rights Letters of Jackie Robinson*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2007.
- Malloy, J. "the Birth of the Cuban Giants, the Origins of Black Professional Baseball." In *Out of the Shadows: African American Baseball from the Cuban Giants to Jackie Robinson*, by B. Kirwin. Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 2005.
- McCaskill, C. "Letter to President Barack Obama." Washington DC, February 1, 2010.
- MLB Most Valuable Player MVP Award & Cy Young Award Winners*. 2016. [http://www.baseball-reference.com/awards/mvp\\_cya.shtml](http://www.baseball-reference.com/awards/mvp_cya.shtml) (accessed June 6, 2017).
- PBS. "Murder in Mississippi." *American Experience: Freedom Summer*. n.d. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/freedomsummer-murder> (accessed July 5, 2017).
- . *The Amsterdam News*. n.d. <http://www.pbs.org/blackpress/film/index.html>, .
- Peterson, Jason. "A 'Race' for Equality: Print Media Coverage of the 1968 Olympic Protest by Tommie Smith and John Carlos." *American Journalism Historians Association*, 2009: 99-121.
- Pratkanis, A.R., and M.E. Turner. "The Year "Cool Papa" Bell Lost the Batting Title: Mr. Branch Rickey and Mr. Jackie Robinson's Plea For Affirmative Action." In *Out of the Shadows: African American Baseball from the Cuban Giants to Jackie Robinson*, by B. Kirwin. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005.
- Putz, P. *Finally Jackie Robinson's Faith is Getting the Attention it Deserves*. June 29, 2017. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2017/june-web-only/jackie-robinsons-faith-attention-deserves.html?start=3> (accessed July 20, 2017).

- Quarles, C. *The Ku Klux Klan and Related American Racialist and Antisemitic Organizations, a History and Analysis*. Jefferson & London: McFarlan & Company Inc. Publishers, 1999.
- Rampersad, Arnold. *Jackie Robinson: A Biography*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1998.
- Robinson, Jackie. *I Never had it Made; Jackie Robinson an Autobiography*. New York: HarperCollins, 1972.
- Schwenk, Melinda. "'Negro Stars' and the USIA'S portrait of Democracy." *Race, Gender & Class*, 2011: 117.
- Smith, R. "The Paul Robeson - Jackie Robinson Saga and a Political Collision." *Journal of Sport History*, 1979.
- Trueman, C. "The 1957 Civil Rights Act." *The History Learning Site*. August 16, 2016. [historylearningsite.co.uk](http://historylearningsite.co.uk) (accessed June 14, 2017).
- Tuskegee University. "Lynching, White & Negroes, 1882-1968." *Tuskegee University Archives Repository, Monroe Work's Collection*. September 9, 2010. <http://archive.tuskegee.edu/archive/handle/123456789/511> (accessed May 31, 2017).
- Tygiel, J. "The Court-Martial of Jackie Robinson." *American Heritage Magazine*, August/September 1984.
- Tygiel, Jules. *Baseball's Great Experiment, Jackie Robinson and his Legacy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- USA Today, Wire Reports. *MLB: Every April 15 to be Jackie Robinson Day*. March 3, 2004. [http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/sports/baseball/2004-03-03-april-15\\_x.htm](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/sports/baseball/2004-03-03-april-15_x.htm) (accessed July 22, 2017).
- Virginia Historical Society. "The Closing of Prince Edward County's Schools." *Vahistorical.org*. n.d. <http://www.vahistorical.org/collections-and-resources/virginia-history-explorer/civil-rights-movement-virginia/closing-prince> (accessed July 5, 2017).
- Watson, B. "The Judge Who Ruled Baseball." *Smithsonian*, 2010: 120-132.
- Wiggins, D. *Glory Bound: Black Athletes in a White America*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997.



Woodward Vann, C. *The Strange career of Jim Crow*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1974.

Zirin, Dave. *A People's History of sports in the United States: 250 years of Politics, Protest, People and Play*. New York: The New Press , 2008.

Zirin, Dave. "The Explosive 1968 Olympics." *International Socialist Review* , 2008: Issue 61 .

—. *What's My Name, Fool? Sports and Resistance in the United States*. Chicago : Haymarket Books , 2005.