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Monday, March 31, 1997

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Robinson a Baseball Star? That's Only a Quarter of Story

■ All-around: He also excelled at football, track and basketball at Pasadena JC and UCLA.

By SHAV GLICK, Times Staff Writer

Years before Jackie Robinson broke baseball's color barrier, he was an athletic icon in Southern California, setting records that caused many observers to call him the world's finest all-around athlete.

In two years at Pasadena Junior College and two years at UCLA--from 1937 to 1940--he earned letters all four years in football, basketball, track and baseball with accomplishments some of which had never attained before or nor have since.

None of the great all-around athletes, from Jim Thorpe to Glenn Davis to Bo Jackson to Deion Sanders, have shown the ability at such a high level in so many sports.

TRACK AND FIELD

Because baseball and track seasons coincided, Robinson competed in the broad jump (before it became the long jump) almost as an afterthought. Yet at Pasadena, he set a national junior college record of 25 feet 6 1/2 inches, and at UCLA he won the NCAA championship.

How he won tells a lot about Robinson's competitive nature.

On May 7, 1938, the Southern California JC track championships at Pomona College in Claremont were scheduled the same day as a championship baseball game in Glendale involving Pasadena.

Pasadena track Coach Otto Anderson obtained permission for Robinson to take three jumps in a row, before the other competitors. Robinson's series was 23-5 1/4, 24-7 and 25-6 1/2, breaking his brother Mack's national record by an inch.

Then he jumped into a waiting car and was driven to Glendale by close friend Jackie Gordon--changing into his baseball uniform on the way--and arrived in the third inning to help Pasadena clinch the conference championship, 5-3. Contrary to reports in several of his biographies, he did not hit a late-inning home run to win the game.

Duke Snider, later to become a teammate on the Brooklyn Dodgers, enjoyed recalling one of Robinson's double-duty days:

"Five or six of us kids from Compton watched him play a baseball game, leave [between innings] with his uniform still on, trot over to compete in the broad jump in a track meet and then run back and finish the baseball game as if nothing unusual had happened."

At UCLA, in 1940, the baseball season was over when Robinson decided to enter the Pacific Coast Conference track meet at the Coliseum. Each school was allowed only three entries in any event, and the Bruins were loaded with jumpers, so Robinson entered a jump-off against Bill Lacefield, the AAU champion; Jack Schilling, the West Coast Relays champion; and Pat Turner, a 25-foot jumper.

Robinson knocked Schilling from the team and then, with little practice during the season, won the event and went on to win the NCAA title.

Had the Olympic Games not been canceled because of World War II, Robinson would have been one of the medal favorites in the broad jump.

FOOTBALL

Football was the sport that first put Robinson in the spotlight, and Robinson made junior college football in the Rose Bowl one of the area's most-watched events.

In 1938, Robinson's running style, a football version of his "you-can't-catch-me" baserunning tactics, made crowds of 30,000 to 40,000 a weekly occurrence at Pasadena's home games in the Rose Bowl. And he never failed to excite.

He scored 17 touchdowns and 131 points as Pasadena averaged 33.5 points for 11 games in an undefeated season. Among the high points were a 104-yard kickoff return against Caltech, a 99-yard run from scrimmage, an 83-yard punt return and an 85-yard run from scrimmage on the final play of the game against Glendale.

He also passed for seven touchdowns and kicked three field goals and 20 extra points.

Hank Ives, founder-editor of JC Grid-Wire and the nation's foremost authority on community college football, still has Robinson in his all-time backfield, along with Hugh McElhenny of Compton, O.J. Simpson of San Francisco and Roger Staubach of New Mexico Military.

At UCLA, the excitement continued.

Only twice have the Bruins had an undefeated football season, and the first was in 1939, when Robinson teamed with Kenny Washington. The only thing that kept them from their first Rose Bowl appearance was four ties, including a scoreless game against USC.

One of the ties was 14-14 against Stanford, and Robinson's 37-yard interception return set up the tying touchdown. In a 14-7 victory over Washington--UCLA's first at Seattle--Robinson's 65-yard punt return with two minutes to play was the game's big play.

On his magical 81-yard run down the sideline against Oregon, no fewer than eight tacklers had a shot at him and all wound up with nothing but air.

Robinson led the nation in punt returns with a 21-yard average and also averaged a record 12.2 yards rushing.

The scoreless game against USC before 103,000 in the Coliseum still rankles Robinson rooters, and some old Bruins. At that time, UCLA had never beaten USC and had never been to the Rose Bowl game.

With four minutes remaining, and UCLA needing a win to get the Rose Bowl bid away from the Trojans, the Bruins had a first down on the USC four-yard line.

Washington was stopped for no gain, fullback Leo Cantor gained a yard and then lost two. On fourth down, Washington threw an incomplete pass.

Robinson, who had averaged more than 12 yards every time he handled the ball, was never given a chance by Coach Babe Horrell. A field goal, and Robinson had kicked them before, would have sent them to the Rose Bowl.

In those days, players went both ways, and Robinson came up with the Bruins' most important defensive play.

Grenny Lansdell, USC's All-American quarterback, appeared headed for a touchdown in the first quarter when Robinson hit him on the one-yard line so hard that Lansdell fumbled the ball away. It was the Trojans' only serious threat.

USC got the bowl bid because the Trojans, also undefeated, had only two ties.

After the 1940 season, Robinson was named to the College All-Star team, which lost, 37-13, to the world champion Chicago Bears the next summer--the same Bears team that had demolished the Washington Redskins, 73-0, in the NFL championship game.

Robinson scored one of the collegians' touchdowns on a pass from Boston College's Charlie O'Rourke. After the game, Dick Plasman, the Bears' end, said, "The only time we were worried was when that guy Robinson was on the field." The All-Stars included All-Americans Tom Harmon of Michigan, Norm Standlee of Stanford and George Franck of Minnesota.

BASKETBALL

At Pasadena, Robinson led the Bulldogs to the state basketball championship in the 1938-39 season with an 18-4 record. He was named to the all-state team at forward. The high point came when Robinson and Les O'Gara led the Bulldogs to a 43-36 upset of the USC freshmen, ending an 83-game winning streak by the Trojans.

In each of two seasons at UCLA, Robinson was the leading scorer in the Southern Division of the Pacific Coast Conference. Later, although professional basketball was in its infancy, he played in 1947 with O'Gara and former USC star Eddie Oram on the Los Angeles Red Devils. Among their victories was one over future Hall of Famer George Mikan and the Chicago Gears.

BASEBALL

Curiously, several of Robinson's coaches considered baseball his weakest game, even though he had been an all-star catcher at Muir Tech High in 1936 and MVP of the

Metropolitan JC Conference as a shortstop in 1938, when he batted .417 and stole 25 bases in 24 games.

Jimmy Dykes, a major league manager for 21 years, was one of the first to be impressed by the skinny Pasadena youngster. Dykes managed the Chicago White Sox when they trained at Brookside Park in Pasadena, a baseball diamond later named Jackie Robinson Park.

One day in March 1938, the White Sox played a benefit exhibition with the Pasadena Sox, a group of young players from the city's Department of Recreation baseball school. It was a fund-raiser for the program.

Robinson, then 19, played shortstop and was the team's leadoff batter. Pasadena batters got only six hits off major league pitching and Robinson had two of them.

On his second at-bat, he singled. Immediately, he darted off first, daring the pitcher the way he would dare them a decade later in the National League. After a couple of tosses to first, the pitcher finally threw to the batter and Robinson was off. The catcher's throw to Hall of Fame shortstop Luke Appling was so late that Robinson went in standing up.

Later in the game, with a runner on first, Appling hit a shot toward left field, only to have Robinson make a diving catch and somehow whirl and throw to second base. Instead of a single, the 1936 American League batting champion had hit into a double play.

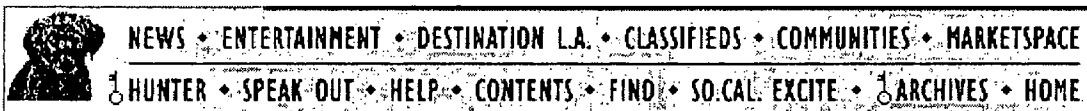
After the game, Dykes told a group of writers, "If that Robinson kid was white, I'd sign him right now. No one in the American League could make plays like that."

That was seven years before Branch Rickey began the "Noble Experiment" in signing Robinson to a baseball contract, nine years before he became a Dodger. The idea of a black playing major league baseball was so foreign to thinking in 1938 that no one wrote of Dykes' remarks except a reporter for the Pasadena school paper.

The game makes a great trivia question: "When was the first time Jackie Robinson played against a major league baseball team?"

Answer: Not March 18, 1946, the day Jackie and the Montreal Royals played the Dodgers at Daytona Beach, Fla., in his first spring game after signing with Rickey, but March 13, 1938, in Pasadena, against the Chicago White Sox.

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50th Anniversary Marked Many Ways

In 1947, Jackie Robinson and Major League Baseball, through the nation's pastime, shattered the conscience of the nation and manifestly moved the United States to a higher level of equality.

In 1997, it is appropriate to honor Jackie Robinson not just for what he has come to symbolize for baseball, but rather it is appropriate to honor a continuing commitment to breaking barriers wherever they exist.

As defined by the Smithsonian Institute, barrier breakers "challenge the boundaries of everyday existence. They contest habitual norms. They explore new realism and relationships. They erase the limits of convention. They make the American dream more accessible to all."

As the 1997 regular season approaches, Major League Baseball prepares to celebrate Robinson's 50th anniversary in a variety of ways. Baseball is honoring Robinson for his barrier breaking efforts to the game, and to America.

Baseball fans will see many events and activities in 1997 to honor the former member of the Brooklyn Dodgers and Kansas City Monarchs. Most visible commemorative patch will be worn by all teams in Major and Minor League Baseball, as well as young people in MLB's Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI) program. The patch will be on the sleeves of all big leaguers on Opening Day.

April

Brooklyn, April 3-5, "Jackie Robinson: Race, Sports and the American Dream," a 3-day conference of players, writers and scholars at Long Island University's Brooklyn campus.

On **Opening Day**, a special commemorative Jackie Robinson baseball will be used in both leagues. The Rawlings baseball will be available in retail stores; all proceeds will go to the Jackie Robinson Foundation, which funds college scholarships for minorities.

Rachel Robinson will be in attendance at the Dodgers Tribute To Jackie Robinson on **April 5** at 7:05 pm at Dodger Stadium.

A Jackie Robinson 50th Anniversary Disc will be unveiled during the Philadelphia Phillies home opener on Friday, **April 11**, vs. San Diego. T

disc will be displayed in centerfield the entire season. Also, a season-long 200-level concourse exhibit will be dedicated to the Negro Leagues and Jackie Robinson.

On **April 15**, the 50th anniversary of Robinson breaking the color barrier, Major League ballparks will broadcast a commemorative video in his honor. The day will mark the beginning of a fundraising drive, culminating at the All-Star Game in Cleveland July 8.

The Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., will be the site for a lecture series sponsored by Major League Baseball on the impact Jackie Robinson had on America. The series will run from **April 21-May 12**. For more information, please call 202-357-1300.

UCLA Alumni including Eric Karros, Todd Zeile and Jeff Conine, will host Jackie Robinson at First Annual Jackie Robinson-UCLA/Dodger Night at Dodger Stadium on **May 27th**.

Special sections will be devoted to Robinson in both *Ebony* and *Sports Illustrated For Kids* magazines.

June

An "Afternoon of Jazz" concert will be held **June 29** in Norwalk, Conn., to benefit the Jackie Robinson Foundation.

July

A **July 4** event will be held with baseball and sponsors to donate money to the Jackie Robinson Foundation for every stolen base in the Major and Minor leagues that day.

At the Midsummer Classic **July 8** at Jacobs Field in Cleveland, a tribute to Larry Doby, the first African American to play in the American League, will also take place.

August

The Jackie Robinson Foundation Invitational Golf Classic will take place **Aug. 18** at the Wilshire Country Club in Los Angeles. All proceeds go to the Jackie Robinson Foundation.

Jackie Robinson Night will be held on Saturday, **August 23** in Philadelphia when the Phillies play the Los Angeles Dodgers at 7:05. All fans will receive a poster featuring Jackie Robinson; a pre-game parade on the field which includes up to 3,000 youngsters from the Rookie Leagues (Phillies inner-city program) and a donation to the Jackie Robinson Foundation will be made during pre-game ceremonies.

Check this list often, it will be updated as more events are added.





Players, scholars, writers honor Robinson

Brooklyn college hosts 3-day conference

BROOKLYN, N.Y. - Long Island University will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Jackie Robinson's Major League debut with a three-day commemoration and educational conference, April 3-5.

An all-star mix of sports legends, prominent educators, media personalities and civil rights activists will gather to discuss the legacy of Robinson's historic achievements and the impact he continues to have on society.

Former ballplayers scheduled to participate include: Enos Slaughter, Car Erskine, Tommy Henrich, Bob Feller, Gene Hermanski, Warren Spahn, D Clendenon, Ralph Branca, Joe Black, Buck O'Neil, Bobby Bragan, Joe Pignatano, Larry Doby, Ed Charles, Johnny Podres, Clem Labine, Bobb Thompson, Tommy Holmes, Al Gionffrido, Hank Bauer and Lou Brock

Although 1997 will feature many anniversary events throughout America, is the only major event planned in Brooklyn, the place where it all began

Registration fee for the conference is \$105. Space permitting, tickets for individual days will be sold at \$40 for Thursday, \$60 for Friday and \$20 for Saturday. For more information, including a conference brochure, call 718-488-1010.

The conference coincides with the opening week of the 1997 baseball season which is being officially dedicated to Robinson. It precedes most of the commemorative events being scheduled by Major League Baseball, the Smithsonian Institution and others.

Endorsed by the Jackie Robinson Foundation, the conference is sponsored by Chase Manhattan Bank, in cooperation with the Brooklyn Dodgers Hall of Fame, the Downtown Athletic Club and the Baseball Assistance Team. The schedule includes:

Thursday April 3: Explore topics ranging from emerging issues in civil rights and sports to the historical implications of Robinson's deeds.

Friday, April 4: Focus on roundtable discussions and personal reminiscences by Robinson's teammates, opponents as well as modern-day athletes. Moderated by prominent sports journalists and broadcasters.

Saturday, April 5: A panel will address "Where Are We Now?", as well as musical presentations, poetry readings and other cultural activities.

Opening the conference will be **Rachel Robinson**, founder of the Jackie Robinson Foundation. She will be followed by award-winning writer **Rog Rosenblatt**, Parsons Family University Professor in Writing at Long Island University's Southampton College, who will deliver the keynote address. Also participating will be Robinson biographer **Arnold Rampersad** and **Howa Golden**, Brooklyn Borough President.

Notable papers and presenters on Thursday include:

- Paul Robeson, Jr., writer: *Robeson and Robinson: Same Goals, Different Styles-1943 to 1949*;
- Kelly Rusinack, Clemson University *Baseball on the Radical Agenda: Daily Worker. ...on Desegregating Major League Baseball, 1933-1947*;
 - Manfred Weicichorn, Yeshiva Univ.: *Jackie Robinson: Hero*.
 - Jimmy Breslin, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist: *Branch Rickey*.
- Robert Cherry, Brooklyn College, *Economic Discrimination in Professional Sports*;
 - Michael D'Innocenzo, Hofstra University: *The Turbulent Forties: A Social-Historical Overview*;
- Joseph Dorinson, Long Island University: *Hank Greenberg, Joe DiMaggio and Jackie Robinson: Race, Identity and Ethnic Power*.
 - Carl Erskine, former Brooklyn Dodgers pitcher, *Capturing Jackie Robinson*;
- Norman Siegel, American Civil Liberties Union, *Jackie Robinson and the Struggle for Civil Rights*;
 - Tom Ferraro, psychoanalyst: *Black Leadership in White America: The Facilitating Influence of Professional Sports*;
 - Amy Bass, State University of New York - Stony Brook: *Black-Fist Flags: Race and Nation in the 1968 Olympics*.
- Marty Glickman, broadcaster and former track star, *Remembering the Olympics, the Dodgers and Jackie Robinson*;
- Leonard Quart, College of Staten Island, *Race and Image: Jackie Robinson on Film*;
 - Lester Rodney, journalist: *White Dodgers, Black Dodgers, Brooklyn Dodgers: Bridging the Gap*.

Notable presenters on Friday include:

Dick Schaap, Maury Allen, Dave Anderson, Roger Kahn, Steve Wulf, and ballplayers Enos Slaughter, Ralph Branca, Johnny Podres, Joe Black, Cle Labine, Bobby Thomson, Bob Feller, Larry Doby, Warren Spahn, Lou Br

It is fitting that Robinson's accomplishments will be celebrated on the Brooklyn Campus of Long Island University, according to its provost, Ga Stevens Haynes. "Mirroring the citizenry of the borough, our campus attracts a very diverse student population," she said. "We share the Jackie Robinson Foundation's commitment to providing education and leadership development."

opportunities to underrepresented youths so that they may realize their full potential."

"Jackie Robinson's dignity and perseverance in the face of extreme obstacles remain an inspiration to all of us," she added. "For those of us who saw him play baseball and followed his battle against bigotry, April 3-5 will be a time to reminisce and put his achievements into perspective. For students born after he died in 1972, it will be a chance to learn about a man who changed the face of American baseball."

Events will also include a dramatic presentation, *Branch Rickey*; showings of the ESPN series, *Twilight at Noon: The Jackie Robinson Story*; book displays, photography and other fine arts exhibits and poetry readings.

The conference coordinator is Joe Dorinson, LIU chair of the history department.





Rawlings Special Ball Ready for Opening Day

Sometime around 1:05 PM on April 1, Toronto Blue Jays pitcher Pat Hent will be standing atop the Skydome mound, slightly hunched as he leans forward to gather the signs from his catcher. With his right hand enclose within the confines of his webbed left wing, he alternates grips on what will not only be the first ball thrown in the 1997 season, but a special Opening Day edition which commemorates the 50th anniversary of Jackie Robinson breaking Major League Baseball's color barrier.

Both the American and National League will be using the Rawlings Jack Robinson balls. Rawlings is the exclusive supplier of official baseballs to American and National Leagues. The balls sport a blue logo on the side, the same logo that big league and Minor League players will wear on sleeve patches this season. The logo incorporates Robinson's signature into it.

The balls will be available at retail stores after Opening Day, for about \$ each. All royalties go to the Jackie Robinson Foundation.





Baseball Legend To Be Honored On A U.S. Gold Coin

As Major League Baseball prepares a season-long celebration to honor the 50th Anniversary of the breaking of the color barrier by baseball legend Jackie Robinson, the United States Mint is designing gold and silver commemorative coins as a tribute to this and Robinson's many other accomplishments both on and off the field.

The Mint will produce up to 100,000 gold coins and 200,000 silver coins. A portion of the proceeds from the sales will benefit the Jackie Robinson Foundation which supports educational and leadership programs to encourage, train and motivate minority youth.

"A place on the nation's coinage is one of the highest tributes we bestow on one of our own," said Mint Director, Phillip N. Diehl. "This program commemorates a remarkable, unforgettable American who elevated both National Pastime and our national ideals."

"My family and I are honored and pleased to have Jack as the first African-American to be honored with a gold coin. While Jack had many accomplishments during his baseball career, I am particularly gratified that he is being recognized for his contributions and leadership throughout life," said Rachel Robinson, wife of the legendary baseball hero and civil rights leader.

The coins, which are in the final stages of design, will be minted in the late Spring and available for purchase in July. Complete information is available from the U.S. Mint by calling 202-283-COIN (2646).

The bill to authorize the Jackie Robinson commemorative coin was introduced in the House of Representatives under the leadership of Reps. Floyd Flake (D-NY) and Robert Franks (R-NJ). Senate backers include Alphonse D'Amato (R-NY) and Carol Moseley-Braun (D-IL).





Live Chat a First For Rachel Robinson

This is an edited transcript of Rachel Robinson's visit with MLB@BAT during her appearance Feb. 26 in New York to launch the celebration honoring her late husband Jackie Robinson. Mrs. Robinson is founder of the Jackie Robinson Foundation, which funds college scholarships for minorities. The JRF is undertaking a fundraising drive this year. Mrs. Robinson also answered questions from MLB@BAT fans.

MLB: The Foundation has big plans this year?

Rachel Robinson: "This is indeed a thrilling day for me, my colleagues and baseball. The biggest achievement out of the growth of this program is our 92% graduation rate. We value our students more than money...we love them! We tell these children when they come into our program that they are joining our family.

"We see Jackie Robinson walking this earth through these children. Jack had an unconquerable spirit. In keeping with our educational mission, we are preparing special educational material for children. Jackie is now on the historical figure list for students. It is very rewarding for me to see the interest they take in Jackie and his life.

The government will be issuing a commemorative coin sometime in July.

Celebrations are more than just opportunities to speak out. Celebrations help you understand the issues. The residue of racism is still with us and the struggle is still on.

We have been since our inception been affiliated with baseball. Every Commissioner has helped us...you have to embrace your legacy. We are after growth and strength and stability. I would like the Jackie Robinson Scholars to come up because that's our product...come on up kids! (much applause)

Thank you...we are pleased to join baseball and have this wonderful opportunity to achieve our goals. Baseball just made a \$1 million contribution to the Jackie Robinson Foundation.

MLB: What would Jackie think of the progress that has been made in race relations and the state of our nation, and baseball, today?

Rachel Robinson: Jack was very impatient for change and I think that he would think we have not gone far enough....I know he'd be impatient...the last thing he said was that he would not rest until change had occurred with baseball managers.

MLB: When will the Jackie Robinson coin come out?

Rachel Robinson: In July.

MLB: What kind of coin is it?

Rachel Robinson: It's a gold and silver coin by the U.S. Mint.

kfrazier asks: Hi, Mrs. Robinson, my name is Craig Wing from Cumberland Elementary in Lansing, Michigan, the fourth graders. Since Jackie is our hero, I was wondering who his heroes were? Thank you.

Rachel Robinson: Joe Lewis, Martin Luther King and his mother.

jsvk asks: How did you deal personally with all the ups and downs during the 1945-19 time period?

Rachel Robinson: By being ourselves and by being committed to certain goals, by being resilient and being able to recover from the bad things. We had a family and family support helped us deal with a lot of the problems we encountered.

Marcia: How did Jackie serve as a leader outside of baseball, in the community?

Rachel Robinson: Jack couldn't wait to get out of baseball in the latter years because the Civil Rights movement was heating up. He was an activist at heart and he wanted to be part of social change apart from baseball.

MLB: Thank you for your time, Mrs. Robinson. Director Spike Lee and Sharon Robinson are next!

[Spike Lee Transcript](#) / [Sharon Robinson Transcript](#)

*Special MLB@BAT thanks to chat masters **Lisa Mogull** and **David Moore** of TV Guide Entertainment Network for assisting us with the live chat! Kevin Fitzpatrick Senior Producer Major League Baseball www.majorleaguebaseball.com*





Spike Lee Takes Part in Chat

Spike Lee, director of *Do the Right Thing* and *Malcolm X* -- among many others -- attended the Jackie Robinson press conference Feb. 26 to show the new 30 and 60-second spots produced. They pay tribute to Robinson, and will be shown on TV and ballpark scoreboards this season. (An effort is being made to get them on MLB@BAT as QuickTime movies). Lee was on his way to a network TV interview when he graciously took time to answer a few questions e-mailed to the live chat.

Howie: Spike, do you feel that African American coaches are fairly represented in the game of baseball?

Spike: I think we are represented on the field. I think where we need representation is in managerial spots and in the front office.

Redsox: What do you say to those that say the game has strayed too much from plugging its steep tradition in favor of appealing to the young yuppies out there?

Spike: I think sports have to market themselves. That's why baseball is a little behind basketball and the NFL in that area.

David: Do you think kids should look up to athletes as their heroes and role models, or should role models come from elsewhere?

Spike: I think role models should come from all areas. I think kids should have role models should come from all areas.

MLB: Thanks for your time Spike, we know you are busy today.

[Rachel Robinson Transcript](#) / [Sharon Robinson Transcript](#)

*Special MLB@BAT thanks to chat masters **Lisa Mogull** and **David Moore** of TV Guide Entertainment Network for assisting us with the live chat! Kevin Fitzpatrick Senior Producer Major League Baseball www.majorleaguebaseball.com*





A Proud Daughter, Sharon Robinson

Sharon Robinson is the author of the new book *Stealing Home*, about the life of her father and her family. Sharon is a nurse-midwife and lives in Connecticut. She was clearly delighted to be able to chat with fans of the Web site! Here is a transcript of the chat

MLB: Sharon Robinson is about to join us!

Nick: What was the most important life lesson that you learned from your father? Was the kind of father to give "fatherly" advice, or did he teach by example?

Sharon Robinson: Combination, he taught by example and gave fatherly advice and prayed that his children would listen to him, as all parents do.

The most important lesson that I learned from my father was the importance of helping others... I've worked in women's health for 20 years and also have numerous volunteer activities.

Garcia Sharon, what is your favorite memory of your father and baseball?

Sharon Robinson: Stealing home! Which is why I named my book *Stealing Home*.

Halpeno: Has the influence of your dad playing baseball caused you to be a large base fan, or do you tend to shy away from it because of too much connection?

Sharon Robinson: I love baseball, but, I'm a football mom. My passion is football because my son plays....he's going to be a UCLA Bruin. Jeff Simms...watch for him!

Mrs. Frazier's Class: What can we do to help promote racial harmony? We are fourth graders who would like to help this important cause. Thank you. Mrs. Frazier's fourth graders at Cumberland Elementary.

Sharon Robinson: By having friends that come from all races and all cultures and appreciating the things that make them different and the things that make them the same.

Also by working in communities. Go outside into the community and find out the need that community.

The other thing I learned from my father was the importance of being focused, being determined and believing in yourself.

David: Do you think kids should look up to athletes as their heroes and role models, or should role models come from elsewhere?

Sharon Robinson: Role models should come from everywhere, not only those who are highly visible. Look at home to Mothers or Fathers or older brother. Don't choose a role model just because they play great ball... go beyond the talent and try to find people with great character.

MLB: Sharon, thanks so much for being with us today. We hope to have you back sometime!

Kevin Fitzpatrick Senior Producer Major League Baseball www.majorleaguebaseball.com

[Spike Lee Transcript](#) / [Rachel Robinson Transcript](#)

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SPORTSZONE

Erasing the line

50 Years: Jackie Robinson to Tiger Woods



What would Jackie Robinson say if he were alive today, if he could survey all that has come in his prodigious wake? As not only a great athlete but a civil rights champion and community activist, would he approve of the state of American sports and the role of black athletes?



Would he be impressed that 80 percent of NBA players, 70 percent of NFL players and 17 percent of Major League Baseball players are African American? If so, would it outweigh his disappointment that few have black coaches, none have black team owners and that the first black commissioner may be as far off as the first black U.S. president?



Would Robinson marvel at the social impact of black athletes? Or be dismayed that "Who's Who Among Black America" lists more athletes than doctors, accountants, journalists, social workers -- even clergy?



Think about that.

And join us for a series of chat sessions, articles and multimedia that examine the ideals that Robinson exemplified when he broke the color barrier in Major League Baseball on April 15, 1947. In the month leading up to the 50th anniversary of that day, ESPN SportsZone will explore how Robinson forever changed sports and America's notions about race.



This week, Roger Kahn, a friend of Robinson and one of America's premier baseball writers, brings to life the groundbreaking 1947 season and tackles the elusive question: Who was the real Jackie Robinson?



Chat Schedule

MARCH 25

Johnny Podres
Three-time All-Star and teammate of Robinson who pitched Brooklyn Dodgers to their lone World Series title in 1955.

MARCH 26

Bobby Bragan
Former Brooklyn catcher and the only surviving member of the group of Southerners who tried to keep Robinson off the team.

MARCH 28

Enos Slaughter
The Cardinals Hall of Famer and alleged bigot, accused of spiking and organizing against Robinson, fights back.

APRIL 1

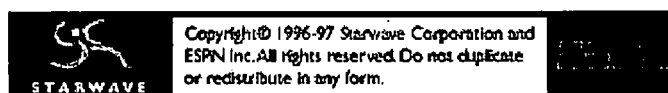
Buck O'Neil
Negro League All-Star and manager, and the first black coach hired by a Major League Baseball team.
5 p.m. ET

APRIL 2

Mike Grier
One of the few black NHL players, the Edmonton Oilers is a pioneer in his own right.

[Complete list of chat sessions and series articles](#)

[ESPN SportsZone](#) | [SportsZone Index](#) | [Major League Baseball](#)



Erasing the line

SPORTSZONE

50 Years: Jackie Robinson to T'ee Woods

1950-1970-1980-1990-2000

Who was the real Jackie Robinson?

**Roger Kahn**

Roger Kahn, author of *The Boys of Summer*, a look at the 1955 Brooklyn Dodgers, has a new book, *Memories of Summer: When baseball was an art and writing about it a game* (Hyperion), out this spring.

All video courtesy of the ESPN home video, "The Brooklyn Dodgers: The Original America's Team." For information on ordering the five-part series, [click here](#).

A curious and oddly troubling conversation took place not long ago between Spike Lee, the flashy movie maker, and Pee Wee Reese, now 78, the captain of the Brooklyn Dodgers during their summers of great glory.

Reese is a white native of the old apartheid South, but such is his nature that he shed bedsheet bigotry and became Jackie Robinson's champion and close friend. "Not that much of a deal," Reese insists to this day. "People say that I helped Jackie. But knowing my background and the progress I've made, I have to say he helped me as much as I helped him."

Fifty years ago, early in the season of 1947, the Dodgers were playing the Cincinnati Reds at Crosley Field, less than a hundred miles from Reese's hometown, Louisville, Ky. A crowd of Reese's fans and longtime buddies -- many still racist -- had driven up to watch the game. After a while some Cincinnati ballplayers began to chant a nasty litany at Robinson. "Snowflake," "Jungle Bunny," "Hey, boy, come here and shine my shoes."

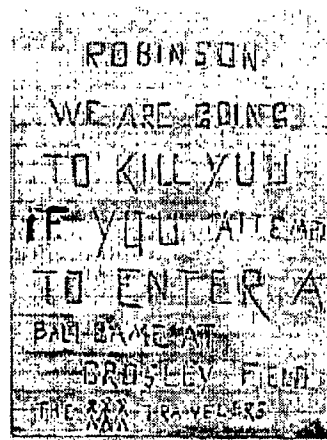
Just shaking hands with Jackie Robinson was an experience for Dodger teammate and Louisville native Pee Wee Reese.

430k wav

RealAudio

"Time," Reese called from shortstop. He walked briskly across the infield and put his arm around Robinson, who was playing first

base. Then white man and black stared the Cincinnati dugout into silence.



Jackie Robinson received several hate notes during his rookie year.

Now a half a century later Spike Lee was talking by telephone with Reese, to enlist his help in creating a new Jackie Robinson movie. "I'm going to make this picture tough and honest," Lee said, "the way I made my picture about Malcolm X. This isn't going to be one of those slick Hollywood things. This is going to be a *black* movie."

CHAT

Buck O'Neil, Negro League veteran and the first black coach in Major League Baseball, will chat with Zone users on Tuesday at 5 p.m. ET.

Reese walked away from the telephone in confusion. "Sure Jack was black," he told his son Mark, who made an ESPN documentary last year on the Dodgers and Robinson. "But isn't his life story black and white? Isn't it about integration? Or am I wrong?"

It is easy to jump Lee as just another commercial filmmaker more concerned with camera angles and current trends than with the complexities of history. Lee probably is better than that, but he is also a

1990s man driven to recast a saga of the 1940s and 1950s into what appears sociologically appropriate today.

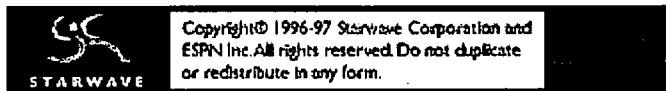
The 50th anniversary of integrated major league baseball is upon us, bringing storms of Robinson tributes, exploitations, films, books -- whatever else marketing America can conceive to lionize (and profit from) a hero. My own advice to students, scholars, academics, journalists, fans, and even to filmmakers, goes about like this:

Hold on to your hats and gloves and spikes. Keep the reference books handy. Truth may be in for a pounding. For instance:

What did Brooklyn Dodgers owner Walter O'Malley once say about Robinson?

- A. "He has made good as a major-leaguer, and proved himself a man."
- B. "Hebrews needed a Moses. Indians needed a Gandhi. Science needed a Louis Pasteur ... We needed a Jackie Robinson."
- C. "He did far more for me than I did for him."
- D. "This Robinson is the most shameless publicity seeker I've ever met."

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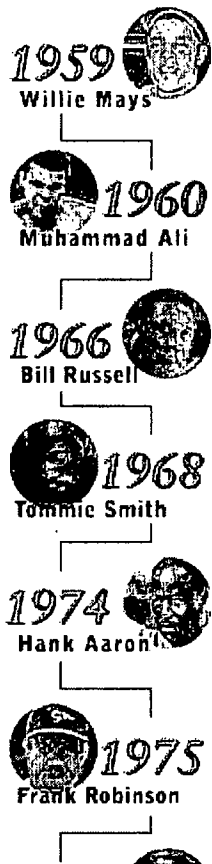
Erasing the line

SPORTSZONE

50 Years: Jackie Robinson to Tiger Woods

Intro 1 2 3 4

In 1959, Boston Red Sox last to integrate

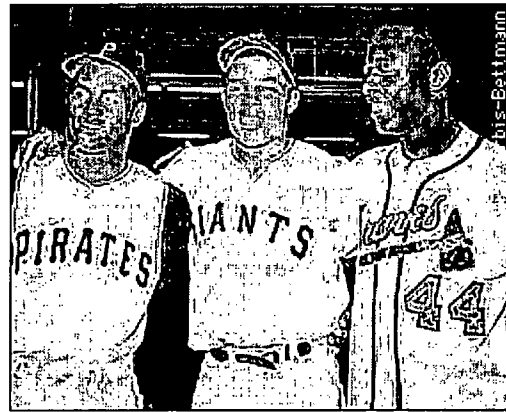


By Howard Bryant
Special to ESPNET SportsZone

In the seven years after Jackie Robinson integrated Major League Baseball, a multitude of color barriers fell in the sports world. The National Basketball Association opened its roster to black players, Althea Gibson became the first African American admitted in the United States Tennis Championships, the Professional Golfers Association lost its battle to keep Bill Spiller and Ted Rhodes from playing, and the National Football League, already integrated in 1946 by Kenny Washington and the Los Angeles Rams, hired and featured more black players.

Former Red Sox player Earl Wilson explains why race played a role in his trade from Boston to Detroit.

🔊 [157k wav](#)
🔊 [RealAudio](#)



Baseball greats Roberto Clemente, Willie Mays and Hank Aaron.

In everyday America, President Harry S. Truman ordered the integration of the Armed Forces and, in *Brown vs. the Board of Education* the Supreme Court ruled 9-0 to overturn the "separate-but-equal" doctrine that had been in place for six decades.

1984 
Michael Jordan

 1987
Al Campanis

1989 
Art Shell

 1991
Bernie Bickerstaff

1996 
Tiger Woods

Where to now?

But not until 1959 -- 12 years after Robinson first put on a Brooklyn uniform -- was integration complete in baseball. It is ironic that the last team to use a black player, the Boston Red Sox, who called up a forgettable infielder, Pumpsie Green, could have been the first.

In April of 1945, the Red Sox had Robinson at Fenway Park for a tryout. It turned out to be a farce, arranged by a black sportswriter and staged only to appease city politicians who pressured Boston's two baseball teams to integrate. While Robinson showed his skills, a man reportedly affiliated with the team shouted, "Get those niggers off the field."

Four years later, the Red Sox passed up another prospect who was black. This time they blew a chance to land Willie Mays, then an 18-year old outfielder with the Negro League Birmingham Black Barons. Mays signed with the New York Giants on his way to the Hall of Fame.

CROSSING THE LINE

When each of the 16 original Major League Baseball teams was integrated, in order:

TEAM	DATE	PLAYER	PLAYER NOTE
Brooklyn Dodgers	04/15/47	Jackie Robinson	Made Hall of Fame
Cleveland Indians	07/05/47	Larry Doby	Managed White Sox in 1978
St. Louis Browns	07/17/47	Henry Thompson	Later broke Giants' line
New York Giants	07/08/49	Monte Irvin, Henry Thompson	Irvin made Hall of Fame
Boston Braves	04/18/50	Sam Jethroe	Career .261 hitter
Chicago White Sox	05/01/51	Minnie Minoso	Played in four decades
Philadelphia Athletics	09/13/53	Bob Trice	Only pitcher to break team line
Chicago Cubs	09/17/53	Ernie Banks	One of top shortstops ever
Pittsburgh Pirates	04/13/54	Curt Roberts	Lifetime .223 hitter
Washington Senators	09/06/54	Carlos Paula	Among first Cuban-born players
St. Louis Cardinals	04/13/54	Tom Alston	Lifetime .244 batter
New York Yankees	04/14/49	Elston Howard	Team like his quiet style
Cincinnati Reds	04/17/54	Nino Escalera	Only played one year
Philadelphia Phillies	04/22/54	John Kennedy	Never got a career hit
Detroit Tigers	06/06/58	Ozzie Virgil	Son played for Braves
Boston Red Sox	07/21/59	Pumpsie Green	Mediocre infielder

Sources: Baseball Hall of Fame; USA Today.

For a moment, forget the idea of racial pioneering, and just think baseball. The Red Sox could have had a lineup in 1950 that looked like this:

Catcher: Les Moss
First base: Walt Dropo
Second base: Bobby Doerr
Shortstop: Jackie Robinson
Third base: Vern Stephens
Left field: Ted Williams
Center field: Willie Mays
Right field: Dom DiMaggio

"Shee-oooot," cackled Willie Mays recently. "There's no telling what I would be able to do in Boston. To be honest, I really thought I was going to Boston. They had a good team, with (pitcher Mel) Parnell, Stephens and of course, Ted (Williams). But that (Boston owner Tom) Yawkey. Everyone knew he was a racist. He didn't want me."

By contrast, the Celtics, Boston's basketball team, were the first NBA team to sign a black player when Chuck Cooper joined the team in 1950. The Bruins, Boston's hockey team, integrated in 1954 -- five years before the Red Sox.

The team's original scouting report on pitcher Earl Wilson noted that Wilson was "a well-mannered colored boy, not too black, pleasant to talk to" Wilson joined the team a week after Green and remained with the Red Sox until he was traded to the Detroit Tigers in 1966.



Jim Rice

The trade came after Wilson encountered a racist snub in a Florida restaurant. "That was the beginning of the end with me and the Red Sox," Wilson later said, "because I was told not to say anything about it and in good conscious I could not." That summer, he was sent to the Tigers, where he won a World Series ring in 1968.

As the Red Sox enter a new century, the team appears intent on shedding its reputation for being hostile to blacks. But the past has created a difficult present for the Red Sox. Perhaps more than any other team, the Red Sox have an incendiary relationship with baseball's black players, a tense association that exists to this day.

In the 1980s, the rightfielder and designated hitter Jim Rice said that he never felt comfortable, as a black player, on the Red Sox. And in today's money-talks market, pitcher Ken Hill -- who grew up in nearby Lynn, Mass. -- refused to consider playing for the Red Sox, even though the Sox offered more money than the Texas Rangers, the team Hill eventually joined.

ZONE POLL

Does Boston
deserve its
reputation as a bad
place for black
players?

Yes

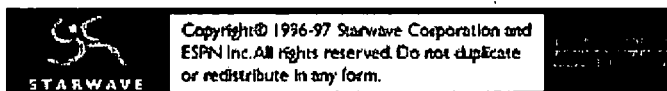
No

"Things are changing," said first baseman Mo Vaughn, the Red Sox' best player. "But the past is hard thing for people to forget, or overcome."

Boston sports is marked by a history of "what ifs," a series of unanswerable questions that haunt generations future and past: What if the Boston Red Sox hadn't sold Babe Ruth to the New York Yankees? What if Johnny Pesky hadn't held the ball in the 1946 World Series? What if hard-luck Bill Buckner had cradled that agonizingly routine grounder in 1986? But perhaps the "what if" that casts the heaviest shadow on the Red Sox today is: What if the Red Sox had signed Robinson?

With its rich abolitionist history that includes such leaders as William Lloyd Garrison, Robert Gould Shaw and Frederick Douglass, perhaps it would have been Boston that became the example of racial harmony and leadership in the United States. Perhaps today, the Red Sox would not be saddled with the reputation of a team hostile and unwelcoming to blacks. And perhaps, just perhaps, the team might have won a World Series since 1918.

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56TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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Los Angeles Times

March 30, 1997, Sunday, Bulldog Edition

SECTION: Sports; Part C; Page 1; Sports Desk

LENGTH: 876 words

HEADLINE: COMMENTARY;
THERE WAS ANOTHER SIDE TO THE COLOR LINE: GREEN /

BYLINE: ALLEN ST. JOHN, NEWSDAY

BODY:

They called it the noble experiment. But a closer look at the circumstances surrounding Jackie Robinson's breaking of baseball's color barrier reveals that nobility, at least among baseball's white establishment, was actually a pretty scarce commodity. Robinson's support system consisted of a lot of people doing the right thing, but often for the wrong reason.

Take Branch Rickey, who set the wheels of desegregation in motion. The Brooklyn Dodger general manager traced his personal fight against racism back almost 50 years to his days as baseball coach at Ohio Wesleyan University. A black player on that team, Charlie Thomas, was denied living accommodations, and Rickey recalled how Thomas cried while rubbing his hands together: "Black skin, black skin! If I could only make them white."

While Rickey was undoubtedly affected by this incident, which he referred to again and again, in less guarded moments, he made the rest of his agenda clear. "I don't mean to be a crusader," he confided to a reporter in 1945. "My only purpose is to be fair to all people and my selfish objective is to win baseball games."

Crusader or not, Rickey was a baseball man and a businessman first. As the game's greatest judge of talent, he understood that bringing in Negro League players such as Robinson and Roy Campanella would bolster the club's prospects immeasurably. And Rickey the executive understood that the Dodgers were the third draw in a three-team town--with barnstorming Negro League clubs also cutting into New York's attendance pie.

To change that, he had to do something to shake things up. Such as signing Robinson. "Only my opinion, but I think Rickey did it for the money," recalls former Dodger Ralph Branca. "Rickey knew we were going to draw a lot of people. And we did."

Even the timing of Robinson's call-up on April 9, 1947, spoke to Rickey's larger concerns: The big announcement diverted attention from the news that Manager Leo Durocher had been suspended for the season for associating with suspected gamblers.

As for Robinson's teammates, most accepted the idea of playing with a black man only grudgingly at best. Several--Dixie Walker, Kirby Higbe and Bobby

Los Angeles Times, March 30, 1997

Bragan among them--circulated an ultimately unsuccessful petition to try to keep him off the team.

Why did it fail? Some like Pete Reiser, a Southerner, genuinely thought it was wrong. Others heard the jingle of the change purse. In 1947, before multimillion-dollar contracts and lucrative endorsement deals, a World Series share represented a significant chunk of money for a ballplayer. And a player of Robinson's obvious talent brought the Dodgers one step closer to the series. Even Pee Wee Reese, the Hall of Fame shortstop still remembered for silencing Boston's bench jockeys by coming over to Robinson and putting his hand on his shoulder, admits that his initial acceptance of Robinson wasn't purely selfless.

"I wasn't trying to think of myself as the Great White Father," said Reese. "I just wanted to play the game, especially after being in the Navy for three years and needing the money."

The loquacious Durocher summed it up best: "I don't care if he's black or yellow or has stripes like a---zebra, I'm the manager of this team and I say he plays," he announced. "What's more, I say he can make all of us rich, and any of you can't use the money I'll see that you're traded."

And, in the days of baseball's ironclad reserve clause, players understood that this was no idle threat. In fact, in the wake of his petition, Walker found himself immediately on the trading block--although the pragmatic Rickey, having made his point, declined to deal him when he couldn't get fair value.

The single factor that most assured the success of baseball desegregation was the vehement opposition of rival players. In the most public example, a string of vile epithets by Manager Ben Chapman of the Philadelphia Phillies, rankled not only the silently fuming Robinson but his teammates as well.

"You yellow-bellied cowards, why don't you pick on someone who can answer back?" yelled the pugnacious Eddie Stanky. If Durocher and Rickey had won the minds of the Brooklyn players, the Chapman incident won their hearts.

"When he poured out that string of unconscionable abuse, he solidified and unified 30 men," recalled Rickey. Chapman made Robinson a real member of the Dodgers. In the face of more organized opposition--teams such as the St. Louis Cardinals threatened to strike if Robinson played--baseball's powers that be were forced to step in. To National League President Ford Frick, the real issue wasn't the integration of baseball but the threat to his authority. "I do not care if half the league strikes," read Frick's ultimatum. "Those who do it will encounter quick retribution. They will be suspended, and I don't care if it wrecks the National League for five years."

The Jackie Robinson story, over half a century, has been sanitized into the kind of neat little morality play that's easily digested in a grammar-school classroom.

Robinson wrote in his autobiography, "Some of the people who have criticized me have labeled me a black man who was made by white people."

His shrewd judgment was proved correct.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: Dodger president Branch Rickey (right) and Jackie Robinson discuss the Brooklyn infielder's contract. PHOTOGRAPHER: Associated Press

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE: March 30, 1997

42ND STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

The Associated Press

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March 30, 1997, Sunday, BC cycle

ADVANCED-DATE: March 28, 1997, Friday, BC cycle

SECTION: Sports News

LENGTH: 281 words

HEADLINE: Robinson made less than \$ 300,000 in baseball career

BYLINE: By RONALD BLUM, AP Sports Writer

DATELINE: NEW YORK

BODY:

What Jackie Robinson made in his career, Albert Belle will match in less than a week this season.

Adjusting for inflation, Belle will equal Robinson's career earnings in little more than a month.

Robinson, who played for the Brooklyn Dodgers from 1947-56, earned a total of \$ 296,250 in his career, according to salary figures obtained by The Associated Press from management sources. This season's minimum salary is \$ 150,000.

Using the Consumer Price Index to adjust for a half-century of inflation, Robinson made a total of \$ 1.82 million in 1997 dollars.

Robinson's highest salary was \$ 39,750 in 1952 following a season in which he hit .338 with 19 homers, 88 RBIs and 25 steals. The money is equivalent to \$ 238,650 today.

Belle, who agreed during the offseason to a five-year contract for \$ 55 million guaranteed, will make \$ 10 million this year - \$ 55,248.62 for each of the season's 181 days. It will take him 5 days to match Robinson's career earnings, 33 in current dollars.

Robinson was paid \$ 5,000 (\$ 35,673 in 1997 dollars) by the Dodgers when he broke the major league color barrier in 1947. He was voted National League Rookie of the Year for hitting .297 with 12 homers, 48 RBIs and a league-leading 29 steals, earning a raise to \$ 14,000 (\$ 92,423) the following season.

His next big jump came after 1949, when he won the NL MVP award with a league-leading .342 average, 16 homers, 124 RBIs and 37 steals. The Dodgers raised his salary from \$ 21,000 (\$ 140,382) to \$ 36,000 (\$ 237,659).

His stats dropped slightly in 1952 - to a .308 average with 19 homers and 75 RBIs - so the Dodgers cut his salary from \$ 39,750 to \$ 38,500 (\$ 229,413 today).

41ST STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

The Associated Press

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March 30, 1997, Sunday, BC cycle

ADVANCED-DATE: March 28, 1997, Friday, BC cycle

SECTION: Sports News

LENGTH: 564 words

HEADLINE: Pee Wee Reese remembers the start of a baseball revolution

BYLINE: By HAL BOCK, AP Sports Writer

BODY:

Pee Wee Reese was on a Navy ship in the final days of his World War II service when the word came from a shipmate. The Brooklyn Dodgers had signed a black player, a kid named Jackie Robinson.

Reese, the Dodgers' captain, greeted the news casually. "I said, 'Oh, they did? When did that happen? That's OK.'"

"Then a half-hour later, the guy who told me came back and said, 'Hey, Pee Wee, he's not only black. He's a shortstop.'"

Now, Reese thought, that was different.

Shortstop was Reese's job in Brooklyn, inherited from Dodgers manager Leo Durocher. There would be no challenge from Robinson, certainly not in 1946 when the black player was ticketed for Montreal and not even in 1947, when the only job open in the Dodgers infield was first base.

Robinson, who had never played the position, made the transition comfortably and Reese became vital in the new player's acceptance in a sometimes tense Dodgers clubhouse. Robinson later moved to second base.

"With some players there was trouble," Reese said. "Guys like Hugh Casey and Dixie Walker. They were from the Deep South. But we also had guys from the north who had gone to school with blacks, guys like Carl Erskine, Clem Labine and Ralph Branca, who helped Jackie.

"I was from Louisville (Ky.) and it was a little strange for me," he said. "I knew about his playing football and basketball in California. I figured he'd be good. I knew he'd help us win."

Acceptance from others came grudgingly. Robinson got storms of abuse from other teams and never answered back. It was part of his pact with Dodgers boss Branch Rickey.

Reese, though, had compassion for his teammate. Once, when the abuse got particularly ugly, he walked over and put his arm over Robinson's shoulder, a

The Associated Press, March 30, 1997

show of unity from a white to a black that spoke volumes.

"I don't remember where it happened, Boston or Cincinnati," Reese said. "But I've got a big picture of it, both of us laughing, hanging in my den."

That moment is cited as a turning point in the assimilation of Robinson. Later they would play golf and tennis together on the road and Robinson would always excel. "He was a great athlete, at anything he did," Reese said.

As for the hostility on the club, Reese short-circuited it. He pointed out to players like Walker that they had blacks watching their children. Why would playing cards in the clubhouse or baseball on the field with a black be any different?

"I get a lot of credit and I appreciate it," Reese said. "But after a while, I thought of him as I would Duke Snider or Gil Hodges or anyone else."

The 78-year-old Reese, who is battling lung cancer, has become an important part of the 50th anniversary celebration of Robinson's debut. He is a little bewildered by all the hoopla.

"We never thought of this as a big deal," he said. "We were just playing ball and having fun. We never thought it would come to this."

In 1972, the old Dodgers were jolted, first by the death of Hodges in April at age 47 and then when Robinson died in October at 53. Hodges died suddenly from a heart attack. Robinson had been ailing from diabetes and had lost the sight in one eye.

"I remember at Gil's funeral, Jack sat by himself in front of the church," Reese said. "I saw him and said, 'Hey, Jack, how're you doing?' He didn't respond."

"Later, he came over and said, 'Pee Wee, I'm sorry. I couldn't tell who you were.'"

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: March 30, 1997

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The Associated Press

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March 30, 1997, Sunday, BC cycle

ADVANCED-DATE: March 28, 1997, Friday, BC cycle

SECTION: Sports News

LENGTH: 1863 words

HEADLINE: Jackie Robinson: The man who changed baseball and America

BYLINE: By HAL BOCK, AP Sports Writer

DATELINE: NEW YORK

BODY:

There is a short wrought-iron gate and two marble benches for those who want to stay awhile.

A few steps away, a huge gray stone bearing the family name identifies the plot, and carved into the granite is one of the man's favorite sayings:

"A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives."

It is signed in script.

Jackie Robinson.

Day after day, they still come, a steady stream of fans who navigate the narrow roads of Cypress Hills Cemetery until they reach his grave.

The cemetery, on New York City's Brooklyn-Queens border, is less than 10 miles from where Ebbets Field once stood, where the Brooklyn Dodgers played and Robinson broke baseball's color barrier 50 years ago.

Robinson's funeral cortege took the long way to get there, winding through the streets of Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant, the city's black neighborhoods. It was an opportunity for the people to say one final farewell to the man who changed baseball - and America.

That was not the original idea. All Jackie Robinson wanted was a job, something that would pay him enough money so that he and his college sweetheart, Rachel Isum, could get married.

What he got instead was the lead role in a sociological revolution.

The Brooklyn Dodgers opened the 1947 National League season at Ebbets Field against the Boston Braves. Batting second for Brooklyn and playing first base was Jack Roosevelt Robinson, son of a sharecropper, grandson of a slave and the first black man to appear in a major league baseball game since well before

The Associated Press, March 30, 1997

the turn of the century.

Blacks had appeared in American sports before Robinson. Joe Louis was the heavyweight champion and Jack Johnson had held that crown before him. Jesse Owens won four gold medals in the 1936 Olympics.

But this was different. This was baseball, the national pastime, where integration would put a black on the field day after day, a constant reminder that the game was no longer all-white.

Branch Rickey, boss of the Dodgers, had decided to integrate baseball and chose Robinson, a marvelously skilled player. The task would not be easy. Robinson would have to silently endure every curse, every slur.

In a confrontational meeting in Rickey's office, the Dodgers' boss verbally abused Robinson with the vile words he could expect to hear on the field. It was a test to see how much the 28-year-old rookie could take.

Finally, an exasperated Robinson asked Rickey if he wanted someone who was afraid to fight back. Rickey's answer was that he wanted someone with the guts not to fight back.

The assignment began on April 15, 1947, five days after the Dodgers casually issued a two-sentence news release in the middle of an exhibition game.

"The Brooklyn Dodgers today purchased the contract of Jackie Roosevelt Robinson from the Montreal Royals. He will report immediately."

The Dodgers' players knew the day was coming, and not all of them were thrilled. There was talk during spring training of an anti-Robinson petition led by a pocket of Southern players, including Dixie Walker and Hugh Casey.

When word of it reached manager Leo Durocher, he called a midnight team meeting and chewed out the players. The revolt was crushed before it ever started, and before the year was over, the ringleaders had all been traded.

Brooklyn second baseman Eddie Stanky was less than enthusiastic about playing next to a black man.

"I want you to know something," he told Robinson on the eve of the opener. "You're on this ball club and as far as I'm concerned that makes you one of 25 players on my team. But before I play with you, I want you to know how I feel about it. I want you to know I don't like it. I want you to know I don't like you."

A famous dugout picture of the Dodgers' starting infield on opening day 1947 shows third baseman Spider Jorgensen, shortstop Pee Wee Reese, second baseman Stanky and first baseman Robinson. Stanky is the only one not smiling. The next year, Stanky was traded to Boston and Robinson, who had been a middle infielder in college, switched to second base.

Robinson arrived early for that first game and was much more relaxed than his wife, who followed with their infant son from their Manhattan hotel.

The Associated Press, March 30, 1997

"Jack was cool and calm and ready to play," Mrs. Robinson said. "It was not a big deal for him. Whatever he felt, he kept to himself. Jack got prepared to leave with no particular discussion of what he was thinking about, no display of nerves or indication that he was worried."

On that day, before a crowd of 26,623, well under a sellout, it did not go particularly well.

The first pitcher to face Robinson was Johnny Sain, then ace of the Braves' staff. "Isn't that something?" Sain said. "Nobody knows that."

Robinson's debut was no big deal to the Braves' pitcher. "We thought he would play, but they didn't announce it until just before the game started," he said. "It was my second opening day and I was more excited that it was opening day, not who I was pitching against."

Robinson was hitless in three at-bats. He grounded to third, flied to left, hit into a double play, reached on an error on 03 28c97f9999bunt and scored a run as Brooklyn won 5-3.

Sain saved a clipping that quotes Robinson on the opener. "It says, 'All I saw from Sain was curveballs, curves of different sizes and speeds. I wondered if I'd soon be back in Montreal.'"

"I'm proud of that," Sain said. "I'm sure he was impressed."

Two days later, Robinson had his first major league hit, a bunt single. Then, in the Dodgers' next series against the New York Giants, he hit a home run. But there was trouble ahead. He slipped into an 0-for-20 slump and was about to face a major test of his endurance when Philadelphia arrived to play the Dodgers.

The manager of the Phillies was Southerner Ben Chapman and he led a fusillade of racial abuse, worse than Robinson had ever heard, worse than the darkest days of spring training in the segregated South.

- "Hey, nigger, why don't you go back to the cotton field where you belong?"

- "They're waiting for you in the jungles, black boy!"

- "Hey, snowflake, which one of the white boys' wives are you dating tonight?"

Robinson's vow of silence was facing its harshest test. The abuse from the Phillies seemed too much to take and for a tense time Robinson thought about discarding the promise, plowing into their dugout and taking on the taunters.

He called it the toughest day he had to endure in that nightmarish first season. Somehow, though, he got through it and managed some revenge by manufacturing the game's only run in a 1-0 Dodgers victory. He singled, stole second, went to third on catcher Andy Seminick's overthrow and scored on a single.

For the next two days, the abuse increased, raining down on Robinson. Finally, one Dodger couldn't take it any more and shouted into the Phillies dugout.

The Associated Press, March 30, 1997

"Listen, you yellow-bellied SOBs, why don't you yell at somebody who can answer back?"

The defender was Stanky, the man who had told Robinson off before the season started. Rickey was thrilled.

"Chapman did more than anybody to unite the Dodgers," he said. "When he poured out that string of unconscionable abuse he solidified and unified 30 men, not one of whom was willing to sit by and see someone kick around a man who had his hands tied behind his back. Chapman made Robinson a real member of the Dodgers."

Chapman's explanation was that this was nothing more than good, old-fashioned bench jockeying, the kind of grief any rookie could expect. He was criticized for the racial ugliness and it seemed that the affair might even cost him his job.

To save face, Chapman sent word through a friend, asking Robinson to pose for a fence-mending photograph. On the Dodgers' second trip to Philadelphia, with Rickey's blessing, the rookie and his chief tormenter met behind the batting cage. They posed together. They did not shake hands.

Robinson said later, "I have to admit that having my picture taken with that man was one of the most difficult things I had to make myself do."

Pee Wee Reese, the Dodgers' captain, was vital to Robinson's assimilation in Brooklyn.

"I knew about him," Reese said. "I knew he had played football and basketball in California. I figured he'd be good and I knew he could help us win."

And for the shortstop, that was all that mattered.

During the season, Robinson, Reese and a couple of other Dodgers sat down in the clubhouse at Wrigley Field for a game of hearts. "He was a hell of a card player," Reese said, chuckling.

Afterward, Dixie Walker and Hugh Casey, the spring training conspirators, confronted the captain. "They said, 'How can you play cards with him?'" Reese said.

He said he told Walker: "'What's that all about? You have a black lady taking care of your kids in New York.' He said, 'It's just different.'"

There was more trouble ahead. There were rumblings about possible player strikes to protest Robinson. Al Gionfriddo, who started the season in Pittsburgh and was later a Robinson teammate, recently told ESPN that every team in the league had voted on whether to play the Dodgers.

"There were a lot of threats in the air," Mrs. Robinson said. "We'd hear rumors of organized boycotts. They were not things we could address or take too seriously. We had other things we had to manage."

The most serious talk about a walkout came from St. Louis, where the World Series champion Cardinals were angry about playing a team with a black man.

The Associated Press, March 30, 1997

This time, National League president Ford Frick stepped in.

"If you do this, you will be suspended from the league," Frick told the Cardinals. "You will be outcasts. I don't care if half the league strikes. Those who do it will encounter quick retribution. All will be suspended and I don't care if it wrecks the National League for five years. This is the United States of America and one citizen has as much right to play as another.

"The National League will go down the line with Robinson, no matter the consequences. You will find if you go through with your intentions that you will have been guilty of complete madness."

Like the Dodgers' spring training petition, the Cardinals' strike evaporated before it ever got started. And Robinson pressed on.

He was thrown at routinely, sent sprawling on a daily basis. In the first two months of the season, he was hit by pitches six times, as many times as any NL player had been hit the entire previous season.

In August, the Cardinals' Enos Slaughter, one of a fistful of Southerners who played for St. Louis, appeared to spike Robinson at first base.

The Dodgers were livid. Robinson, though, said only, "All I know is that I had my foot on the inside of the bag. I gave Slaughter plenty of room."

Then and now, Slaughter denied any wrongdoing. "I've never deliberately spiked anyone in my life," he said. "Anybody who does doesn't belong in baseball."

In Cincinnati, there were death threats against Robinson in grotesquely scrawled letters that the team gave to authorities. Teammate Gene Hermanski was so disgusted that he suggested all the Dodgers blacken their faces and wear Robinson's No. 42. "That way," he said, "they won't know who to aim at."

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: March 30, 1997

40TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

The Associated Press

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March 30, 1997, Sunday, BC cycle

ADVANCED-DATE: March 28, 1997, Friday, BC cycle

SECTION: Sports News

LENGTH: 489 words

HEADLINE: Robinson's debut was no big thing to newspapers 50 years ago

BYLINE: By RONALD BLUM, AP Sports Writer

DATELINE: NEW YORK

BODY:

Jackie Robinson's major league debut wasn't front-page news. It was barely sports page news.

Most New York newspapers mentioned it in passing and some didn't include it at all.

The suspension of Dodgers manager Leo Durocher and Pete Reiser's winning double for Brooklyn were the big stories in the New York sports pages on April 16, 1947, the day after Robinson broke the major league color barrier in his first game. Robinson was given no special mention in the game story of The New York Times.

"The debut of Jackie Robinson was quite uneventful, even though he had the unenviable distinction of snuffing out a rally by hitting into a remarkable double play," Arthur Daley of the Times wrote in the second half of his column. "The muscular Negro minds his own business and shrewdly makes no effort to push himself. He speaks quietly and intelligently when spoken to and already has made a strong impression."

Red Smith, then with the New York Herald Tribune, referred to Robinson as the "dark and anxious young man" and wrote "he seemed frantic with eagerness, restless as a can of worms." In his account of the game, Bob Cooke of the Herald Tribune wrote, "A number of observers had been attracted by the presence of Jackie Robinson, Brooklyn's Negro first baseman."

As for the afternoon papers, The Journal-American didn't mention Robinson at all, and the World-Telegram referred to him only briefly in its late editions following the Tuesday afternoon game at Ebbets Field.

Dick Young mentioned him in his last paragraph in the New York Daily News, calling Robinson "the majors' most-discussed rookie," but Young never said he was black.

The Associated Press, March 30, 1997

"It wasn't that much of a thing back then," said Jack Lang, who covered the game for the Long Island Press. "We knew he was going to be there. He was there during spring training. When it finally happened, it was, 'So what?'"

The Associated Press led with Reiser. International News Service, which later merged with United Press to form UPI, led with Robinson, writing, "For the first time in baseball history a Negro played in a major league game today."

Arch Murray of The New York Post referred to Robinson matter-of-factly in his third paragraph: "Jackie Robinson, the first colored boy ever to don major league flannels, started at first base and batted second for the Dodgers."

"The social significance was not there at that time," said Lang, the only one still alive among the reporters who covered the Dodgers regularly in 1947. "Integration was not as ballyhooed as it is today. If a Martian came down and played in the major leagues today, every major network and every big columnist would be covering it. It would have been a mega media event. It would have been like Nomo's debut, with 200 Japanese reporters."

"None of that kind of coverage was prevalent then. There weren't any out-of-town writers. I think there were just two columnists, Smith and Daley."

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: March 30, 1997

37TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

The Associated Press

The materials in the AP file were compiled by The Associated Press. These materials may not be republished without the express written consent of The Associated Press.

March 30, 1997, Sunday, BC cycle

ADVANCED-DATE: March 28, 1997, Friday, BC cycle

SECTION: Sports News

LENGTH: 1742 words

HEADLINE: How Robinson's debut was covered

BYLINE: By The Associated Press How some media covered Jackie Robinson's debut with the Brooklyn Dodgers on April 15, 1947:

DATELINE: BROOKLYN

BODY:

Pete Reiser, key to Brooklyn's flag chances, blazed a seventh-inning double off the screen a foot inside the right-field foul line at Ebbets Field today to drive across the tying and winning runs as the pilotless Dodgers opened their 1947 campaign with a 5-to-3 victory over the Boston Braves.

Although he did not get a hit in four official times at bat, Jackie Robinson, first Negro to play in modern big league ball, signalized his official debut as a Dodger by sprinting home with the deciding run on Reiser's smash and playing perfect ball at first base.

International News Service

NEW YORK - For the first time in baseball history a Negro played in a major league game today.

The Negro was Jackie Robinson, first-baseman of the Brooklyn Dodgers, who helped his team defeat the Boston Braves 5 to 3.

The Dodgers, minus their manager, Leo Durocher, staged a three-run rally in the seventh to give Hal Gregg the decision over Johnny Sain.

By Roscoe McGowen

The New York Times

Even without Skipper Leo Durocher, the good ship "Dodger" proved yesterday that it could sail safely into port, although slightly storm-battered in the process.

The Associated Press, March 30, 1997

Managed by Clyde Sukeforth, skipper pro tem, who sent eighteen of his crew into action, the Brooks docked just ahead of the Boston Braves and are sharing the National League lead today - if it never happens again.

Flatbush fans, 26,623 of them, who watched their favorite team rally to win, 5-3, had no problem about dividing their cheers. All of them went to an old hero, Pistol Pete Reiser, who has heard that roar of acclaim so many times.

(Robinson mentioned only in play-by-play in sixth and 16th paragraphs)

By Arthur Daley

The New York Times

(second half of his column)

The debut of Jackie Robinson was quite uneventful, even though he had the unenviable distinction of snuffing out a rally by hitting into a remarkable double play. His dribbler through the box in the fifth should have gone for a safety, but Dick Culler, playing in on the grass, made a diving stop, threw to second for a force while prostrate on the ground, and Connie Ryan nailed the fleet Robbie at first for a dazzling twin killing.

The muscular Negro minds his own business and shrewdly makes no effort to push himself. He speaks quietly and intelligently when spoken to and already has made a strong impression. "I was nervous in the first play of my first game at Ebbets Field," he said with his ready grin, "but nothing has bothered me since."

A veteran Dodger said of him, "Having Jackie on the team is still a little strange, just like anything else that's new. We just don't know how to act with him. But he'll be accepted in time. You can be sure of that. Other sports have had Negroes. Why not baseball? I'm for him, if he can win games. That's the only test I ask." And that seems to be the general opinion.

Robinson's tremendous speed afoot did accomplish one thing, since it set up the winning run which he personally carried home. His deft sacrifice bunt was so well placed that Earl Torgeson had to make a hurried throw to Ryan at the bag. And his shot caromed off a Robinson shoulder blade into right field to give both runners an extra base. Then Pete Reiser doubled them both home.

By Bob Cooke

New York Herald Tribune

The Brooklyn Dodgers, still without a permanent leader, found an adequate one for their opener yesterday when they grouped themselves behind Pete Reiser, their winged-footed outfielder, who encircled the Boston Braves with as much ease as he did the bases.

Reiser scored three runs and drove in two more as Brooklyn staged a snappy world premiere with the kind cooperation of the Bostonians. The score was 5 to

The Associated Press, March 30, 1997

3, and it was Reiser who added up the totals.

A solemn crowd of 26,623 customers looked on, none of whom could be accused of relationship to the normal Ebbets Field fan who is frequently guilty of conduct unbecoming to the other boroughs. Both teams were politely cheered when the lineups were announced and John Cashmore, Brooklyn Borough President, was given a timid reception when he threw out the first ball.

The game was played in an atmosphere of stillness interrupted only by the patter of Reiser's feet.

A number of observers had been attracted by the presence of Jackie Robinson, Brooklyn's Negro first baseman, but as the innings passed it was all any one could do to keep their eyes on Reiser.

(10th paragraph)

Robinson fielded his position admirably, but was held hitless in three attempts. He rapped into a double play in the fifth with runners on first and third.

By Red Smith

New York Herald Tribune

Baseball, a game invented in Brooklyn by Larry MacPhail and refined to extreme lengths by Leo Durocher, returned to its birthplace yesterday with both its foster parents missing. Also missing were about 5,800 critters whose absence was unexplained. In spite of honey-and-gold weather, only 26,623 of Ebbets Field's 32,500 seats were occupied, and there were wide, piebald patches of untented pews in left field. This gave rise of to a rumor considered widely implausible in some quarters - that Durocher has 5,800 friends in Brooklyn. ...

(12th paragraph)

However, Hatten, helped himself with a skillful play on a grounder by Danny Litwhiler when the Braves were threatening in the fourth, and he might have got through all the way if Jackie Robinson could have aided him in the fifth innings.

That dark and anxious young man had grounded out the first time he faced Johnny Sain and flied out the second. Now he came up for the third time, with two runners on and one out. He seemed frantic with eagerness, restless as a can of worms.

He fouled off the first pitch. Phil Masi, the Boston catcher, caught it but knocked himself goggle-eyed against the Braves dugout and dropped the ball. Robinson took a called strike on the outside corner, then rapped a bleeder toward second which looked like a sure hit for a man of his speed.

Cutler, however, dived on the ball, scooped it to Connie Ryan, who tagged second and beat Robbie with a throw to first for a double play. Robinson kicked up dirt with his spikes but made no protest.

The Associated Press, March 30, 1997

By Dick Young

New York Daily News

It has been said quite often of Pete Reiser, and by no less a person than Branch Rickey, that the kid is somewhat of a "hypo," meaning hypochondriac. Maybe so, but to the Braves he's a hypo, meaning stimulant, and he wasted no time proving it again this season by breaking the Braves on top of the NL pack with a masterful one-man show in yesterday's 5-3 opening-day victory over the Braves.

(last paragraph)

In his debut, Jackie Robinson, the majors' most-discussed rookie, fielded flawlessly at first base but went hitless in three official trips to the plate. He rolled out to third in the first, lofted a soft fly to left in the third, rifled a hot double-play grounder to short to close out the fifth, and then scored the winning tally on Reiser's seventh-inning double, after reaching on a sacrifice-error by the Braves' rookie counterpart - Earl Torgeson.

By Michael Gavan

New York Journal-American

The name of the new Brooklyn manager was of comparatively small interest in Flatbush today. Just as long as Pete Reiser can hit the ball and scamper around the bases as he did in the opening game what difference does it make who battles the umpires!

Potentially, the best ball player in the business, Pistol Pete could even mean a pennant if he could escape injury and play every day. He's that good. Fitting example of a healthy Reiser's unestimable value was provided in the glorious inaugural triumph over the Braves.

(Robinson not mentioned in story)

By Bill Roder

New York World-Telegram

EBBETS FIELD - Minus last year's manager and coaches, the Dodgers opened the season here today in the first of three games against the Boston Braves, with Clyde Sukeforth as pro tem pilot.

The Dodgers won, 5-3.

Before a near sellout throng of 31,000 lefty Joe Hatten pitched against 20-game winner Johnny Sain.

The Associated Press, March 30, 1997

Jackie Robinson, first Negro to play in the majors, was on first base for the Dodgers and a newcomer of less than 24 hours, Johnny Jorgenson, was on third base. Jorgenson was purchased last night from the farm in Montreal.

(The following day)

By Bill Roeder

New York World-Telegram

Have the Dodgers gone sane? That's what Brooklyn fans were asking one another today as they praised Clyde (Pro Tem) Sukeforth's first managerial performance and reviewed it comparatively, play by play, in terms of what Leo Durocher would have done.

Some of the fans thought they detected a rare element of cautious baseball in Sukeforth's 5-3 opening day victory over the Braves. Are the fans right or wrong? The answer: yes and no. ...

(8th paragraph)

... Howard Schultz replaced Jackie Robinson at first base in the ninth inning.

Sukeforth said he ran Tom Taum for Dixie Walker in the sixth inning, when the Dodgers were behind, because speed was required as a precaution against the double play. "We have so many good players on our team that I could afford to make a move like that," Suke explained.

Reiser, whose two hits, three runs scored and two driven in represented Brooklyn's effective offense in toto, had a reassuring word for Robinson, who went hitless his first game in the big leagues. "He'll be all right," Pète volunteered. "He'll steady down and he'll be fine." Sukeforth had the same to say about the other rookie, Johnny Jorgenson, the overnight regular at third base.

By Arch Murray

The New York Post

Ebbets Field - With their lost leader a forlorn figure in California and nobody exactly eager for his old job, the Durocherless Dodgers started out today on the quest that failed a year ago. As Leo himself used to put it, they'll be out after the Cardinals all over again.

Billy Southworth's resurgent Braves - the same club that knocked them out of the 1946 pennant on the last day of the season - furnished the initial opposition before a sellout house at Ebbets Field. But the world champion Redbirds, heavily favored to repeat, will be the main target as old..

The Associated Press, March 30, 1997

Joe Hatten, sophomore southpaw who beat the Bostons four times last year without defeat, opened on the mound with Johnny Sain, curve-balling 20-game winner, as his opponent. Jackie Robinson, the first colored boy ever to don major league flannels, started at first base and batted second for the Dodgers.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: March 30, 1997

33RD STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

The Associated Press

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March 30, 1997, Sunday, BC cycle

ADVANCED-DATE: March 28, 1997, Friday, BC cycle

SECTION: Sports News

LENGTH: 133 words

HEADLINE: List of first black players on major league baseball teams

BYLINE: By The Associated Press

BODY:

List of first black players on each of the 16 major league teams in operation before expansion:

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Brooklyn Dodgers - Jackie Robinson 1947.

New York Giants - Monte Irvin, Hank Thompson 1949.

Boston Braves - Sam Jethroe 1950.

Chicago Cubs - Ernie Banks 1953.

Cincinnati Reds - Chuck Harmon 1954.

St. Louis Cardinals - Bill Greason 1954.

Pittsburgh Pirates - Curt Roberts 1954.

Philadelphia Phillies - John Kennedy 1957.

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Cleveland Indians - Larry Doby 1947.

St. Louis Browns - Hank Thompson 1947.

Chicago White Sox - Sam Hairston 1951.

Philadelphia Athletics - Bob Trice 1954.

The Associated Press, March 30, 1997

Washington Senators - Vibert Clarke 1955.

New York Yankees - Elston Howard 1955.

Detroit Tigers - Ossie Virgil 1958.

Boston Red Sox - Pumpsie Green 1959.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: March 30, 1997

23RD STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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Los Angeles Times

March 31, 1997, Monday, Home Edition

SECTION: Part A; Page 1; Sports Desk

LENGTH: 1109 words

HEADLINE: JIM MURRAY;
FOR ROBINSON, GAME WAS ABOUT RESPECT

BYLINE: JIM MURRAY

BODY:

Jackie Robinson was not an easy man to know. He was not an easy man to like. Jackie didn't care whether you liked him or not. What he wanted from you was respect, not affection.

Respect, he had. One of the greatest, if not the greatest, athletes in American history, Jackie could play any sport superlatively. Baseball was not even his best sport. Track probably was. If not, football. Basketball. They didn't have a sport he couldn't excel at.

It was nothing for Jackie Robinson to play both ends of a baseball doubleheader on the UCLA campus, and jump into a cab between games and go down to the Coliseum and win the Pacific Coast Conference broad jump and set a record or two.

He had been a great UCLA halfback, leading the team in scoring, total yardage and rushing yardage in 1940. He played professional football for a time for the old Los Angeles Bulldogs in a minor league against teams like the Hollywood Bears and the forerunners of the San Francisco 49ers, with players like the great Frankie Albert and Joe Perry.

It was his athletic prowess that made him a luminous figure in American history, the guy who broke the color barrier in baseball 50 years ago. But his fame and sophistication made it work. It wouldn't have if he had fallen short as an athlete--and it was widely predicted in the press at the time that he would. After all, Jackie was 28 when he made his historic debut.

Other great athletes from other sports had failed at the grand old game. Before Michael Jordan, there was Jim Thorpe. He could not hit the curveball either. But Jackie Robinson could.

His first day in organized baseball, with the Dodgers' Montreal farm team, he went four for five with a home run, two stolen bases and four runs scored. And he caused two pitching balks. Montreal won, 14-1.

Even racists were awed. There were no bigots on the Montreal pitching staff from then on.

Los Angeles Times, March 31, 1997

He led the league in batting his third year in the majors. He batted .342, .328, .338, .308, .329 and .311 over a six-season stretch. He stole bases almost at will. He came up and the Dodgers started winning pennants. They had been in only three World Series in the 45 years before Robinson joined them. They were in six in the 10 seasons he played for them.

But it was Robinson's character and his dignity that made it work. Oh, I'm not talking about the biblical turn-the-other-cheek pep talk Branch Rickey gave him. One of the myths of the game is that Robinson was chosen by Rickey because of his forbearance, his ability to absorb slurs without hitting back.

What a crock! To anyone who knew him, the notion of Jackie Robinson turning the other cheek, putting up with insults, was laughable. I have never been able to find one veteran chronicler of the early Robinson days who remembers Jackie being anything but truculent and unbending in the face of slurs and insults.

Jackie made sure you treated him as a man. He didn't suffer fools gladly. He didn't want any sycophantism either. He was as deeply suspicious of the flatterers as he was the bigots.

Not for Jackie were sackcloth and ashes. Almost right off the bat, he took the stand that forced the Chase Hotel in St. Louis to accept black players or none at all. If you wanted a cringing, obsequious, humble servant type, you had come to the wrong place. Jackie wore no man's collar. Ever. Long before Rosa Parks, he had refused to move to the back of the bus--in the Army. He was court-martialed. He was acquitted.

He got almost paranoid when the Dodgers hired Roy Campanella, a black player who was almost his exact opposite in militancy. Once, when I wrote an admiring column about Campanella, Jackie dashed off an angry letter accusing me of attempting "to put me in my place." Jackie had experienced that kind of knuckle-rapping in the Eastern press.

I wrote to him that I had only written an admiring column on Campy because I thought him deserving of one. Jackie was not entirely convinced--his obduracy was monumental--but we became friends and I had to pass some strict membership requirements. Jackie did not let even imaginary slurs go unchallenged.

He was his own man. Because he was so resolutely in the battle and campaign for civil rights, it was assumed by the liberal left that he was one of them. He wasn't. Jackie was, of all things, a Republican. A Rockefeller Republican.

Certainly, he was a capitalist. When it came to fiscal matters, Jackie was just this side of Calvin Coolidge. Anyway, Jackie didn't like to be taken for granted.

He was also a patriot. He didn't forgive America, but he gave it its due. He had faith that democracy could be changed. Other forms of government, he wasn't so sure. They didn't impress him.

When Paul Robeson told a Communist Party gathering in Paris that in the event of war between Russia and the United States, American blacks would not fight against Russia, Robinson went before Congress to contradict him.

Los Angeles Times, March 31, 1997

"I and many other Americans of many races and faiths have too much invested in America to throw it away because of a siren song sung in bass," he testified. "I am a religious man. Therefore, I cherish America where I am free to worship as I please . . . a privilege some countries do not give. That does not mean we're going to stop fighting racial discrimination in this country until we've got it licked."

Robinson had really reiterated Joe Louis' famous manifesto: "There's lots wrong with this country--but nothing Hitler can fix."

Jackie's update was, "There's lots wrong with our country--but nothing Stalin can fix either."

I saw him the last few years of his life mostly at celebrity golf tournaments. Jackie was not that good at golf. Still, he might have conquered one more sport, except the ravages of diabetes were beginning to manifest themselves by then.

The last time I saw Jackie, his eyesight had failed him. It was at a World Series in Cincinnati, I forget which one. I remember the colloquy only imperfectly but I remember it concluded with Jackie saying, "I'm sorry I can't see you anymore, Jim," and my reply was, "No, Jackie, we're sorry we can't see you." My recollection is, he died the next year.

He died as he had lived--fighting for what he believed was right. What he knew was right.

I remember once, in a kind of confidential exchange I had with him, I was brash enough to suggest incautiously, "But, Jackie, on the whole, wasn't there less bigotry and intolerance out there than you expected?"

Jackie fixed me with a glare.

"There shouldn't have been any," he said sternly.

You never argued with Jackie Robinson. He made America live up to its promises.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: Baseball Milestone: A special section in today's Times marks the 50th anniversary of Jackie Robinson's debut, which broke baseball's color barrier.

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE: March 31, 1997

21ST STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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Los Angeles Times

March 31, 1997, Monday, Home Edition

SECTION: Special Section; Part S; Page 1; Sports Desk

LENGTH: 1949 words

HEADLINE: JACKIE ROBINSON 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE: BREAKING BARRIERS;
CROSSING THE LINE;
IS IT POSSIBLE THAT IN 1947, NO ONE KNEW WHAT THEY WERE WITNESSING?

BYLINE: BILL PLASCHKE, TIMES STAFF WRITER

BODY:

They didn't get it.

On April 15, 1947, the Fourteenth Regiment band played and opening day bunting flapped. Jackie Robinson took his position at first base in the first inning at Brooklyn's Ebbets Field to become the first black player in major league baseball.

But they didn't get it.

Danny Litwhiler, the Boston Braves' starting left fielder, didn't realize until last month that he even played in the game.

The cozy home of the supposedly best fans in baseball was nearly 7,000 short of a sellout.

Good luck finding any photos of Robinson's first at-bat, or game programs, or foul balls. One collector swears there is only one remaining ticket stub, as if few realized this was a memory worth saving.

Not even the New York Times understood.

In its game account and accompanying column, Robinson's achievement was not even mentioned. The star of the Dodgers' 5-3 victory was Pete Reiser. The story was suspended Manager Leo Durocher.

This spring, as we celebrate the anniversary of one of the most important dates in the history of civil rights, it is important to remember when this date wasn't so important.

This was no D-Day. This was no foot on the moon. There was no ticker tape.

This was no triumphant finish, but a beginning. A raw, pained beginning for which there may still be no end.

To this day, Brooklyn first baseman Ed Stevens wants the world to know something.

Los Angeles Times, March 31, 1997

"Jackie Robinson did not win a job from me that first year," Stevens, 72, said. "It was given to him."

To this day, second baseman Eddie Stanky says it was simply another afternoon.

"A big thing for Jackie, maybe," said Stanky, 80. "But I can't give you much information because I'm writing a book."

Rex Barney, a pitcher on that team, laughed.

"Stanky is not writing a book," Barney said. "He just doesn't want to talk about it, because he was one of the guys on the team who made it tough for Jackie because he was black."

To this day, few know what happened to Robinson after he retired.

Or, what didn't happen.

Jackie Robinson may have been a Hall of Famer as the first black player, but his color essentially prohibited him from becoming the first black manager. Or the first black baseball announcer.

He worked in New York for Chock Full O'Nuts and the Freedom National Bank of Harlem. He was a part-time commentator for Long Island University basketball games.

This yearlong national celebration being endorsed by everyone, including the President?

It might not have been endorsed by Robinson.

From the moment he stepped into the batter's box against Johnny Sain on April 15, 1947, that game became a metaphor for the difficult times that were to follow.

He played flawlessly at first base, even though he had never played the position. He set up the game-winning rally. He scored the eventual winning run.

Yet the New York Times called his afternoon "uneventful."

And columnist Red Smith referred to him only as "that dark and anxious young man."

To properly honor Robinson's first game is to do so soberly.

To properly celebrate is not to celebrate at all, but simply remember.

"It was Mr. (Branch) Rickey's drama and . . . I was only a principal actor. As I write this 20 years later, I cannot stand and sing the anthem. I cannot salute the flag; I know that I am a black man in a white world . . . I know that I never had it made."

--Robinson from the book, "I Never Had It Made."

Los Angeles Times, March 31, 1997

*

The change began at the end of spring training, 1947. The Dodgers were finishing their work in Havana. Durocher, who shortly afterward would be suspended for gambling, brought them into the clubhouse for a meeting.

"We're bringing up Jackie Robinson," he announced.

The older players immediately broke up into circles, some talking of accepting him, others vowing to ignore him.

Stevens, a first baseman beginning his third season, didn't belong to the veteran cliques. He didn't think much of it until opening day in the Ebbets Field clubhouse.

That's when he saw that Robinson, a second baseman, was going to take his spot in the lineup.

"I said, 'Wait a minute, he's playing first base?' " Stevens recalled. "I was a better fielder. I had hit 10 home runs the year before. I couldn't believe it."

Robinson walked over, shook Stevens' hand, then played so well, Stevens was sent to the minor leagues before being traded in the off-season.

Robinson played so well, it was the longest off-season of Ed Stevens' life.

"Everywhere I went in my hometown Galveston, Texas , I was ridiculed. Everyone said to me, 'I can't believe you lost your job to a nigger,' " remembered Stevens, who batted .252 with 28 homers in a six-year career. "I told everybody, 'I didn't lose nothing, it was given to him.' "

Stevens added, "Look at how bad he did when he started 0 for 20 . And they didn't send him down? Somebody was determined to keep him in the big leagues."

They just didn't get it.

Robinson made one more stop before taking the field on opening day. Spider Jorgensen, a rookie third baseman who had just been recalled from Montreal with Robinson, didn't have the proper glove.

"Jackie just walked right over with his infielder's glove, said, 'Here, use mine,' " Jorgensen recalled.

From that moment, Jorgensen was ignored by the veterans who also ignored Robinson.

"I was considered an outcast, an outlaw, an informant," he said. "I was considered too close to Jackie."

The cold shoulder was lifted after Jorgensen drove in six runs in one game. Robinson only wished it could be that easy.

Los Angeles Times, March 31, 1997

"Baseball, like some other sports, poses as a sacred institution, dedicated to the public good, but it is actually a big, selfish business with a ruthlessness that many big businesses would never think of displaying."

--Jackie Robinson, from his book.

*

Robinson took the field for player introductions, standing next to pitcher Ralph Branca.

Talking about everything but.

"We just had normal chitchat that day," Branca said. "He never said anything about it. My main concern was, can he play?"

Robinson stepped into the batter's box in the bottom of the first inning, the second batter of the game, facing Sain.

Who was thinking about everything but.

"It wasn't that big of a deal at the time," Sain said. "People ask me if I was worried about letting a pitch get away, hitting him, and I say no. I wasn't even thinking about that kind of stuff."

But he does remember this: After Robinson grounded out to third baseman Bob Elliott in a close play on his first major league at-bat, Robinson glared at the first-base umpire.

"I thought about that later and said, 'This is the man for the job,' " Sain said.

Sain thought about it only much later, like everyone else.

As a big league pitching coach, Sain stunned his players 25 years ago when he announced that he had been the starter in Robinson's first game.

"Willie Stargell couldn't believe it," Sain said. "I don't know if anybody knew it."

Sain then surprised himself when he began searching for a photo of that first at-bat. He has yet to find one.

"All those cameras there, and not one picture anywhere of that at-bat," he said. "Hard to imagine. I guess nobody really knew what they were watching."

"I'm not concerned with you liking or disliking me. . . . All I ask if that you respect me as a human being."

--Jackie Robinson, from the book "Grand Slams and Fumbles"

Los Angeles Times, March 31, 1997

*

Robinson flew out to Litwhiler in left field to end the third inning with no runners on base. It was an inauspicious beginning to an unusual friendship.

Litwhiler didn't remember playing in that first game until the media began calling him last month, but he will never forget the following season.

After Litwhiler was traded to the Cincinnati Reds, team officials approached him before the Dodgers' first visit there. Concerned about the racial tensions, the Reds wondered what Litwhiler thought about Robinson.

"I said if he can play, what's the difference?" Litwhiler said.

"Good," officials said. "Will you pose for a picture with him?"

So he did, and it appeared in the newspapers and the trouble passed.

When Litwhiler met Robinson during a speech 20 years later, the outfielder brought out that picture. Robinson gladly signed it.

"Now isn't that something?" Litwhiler said.

In the fifth inning, with the score tied, 1-1, Robinson made his third consecutive out by grounding into an inning-ending double play after a diving stop by Brave shortstop Dick Culler.

That play was the focus of most of the newspaper's coverage of him the next morning. "An unenviable distinction," Arthur Daley of the New York Times wrote.

It certainly got the attention of teammates, who were already grumbling.

"He wasn't speaking to some of them, and some of them weren't speaking to him," remembered Stan Strull, the Dodger batboy.

"Baseball is very vindictive. I think, very frankly, that a black man who is willing to accept their dictates and do what they want him to do can get along beautifully. But, if you're a man and you stand on your own two feet, then look out."

--Jackie Robinson, in the New York Times in 1971, 10 months before his death.

*

The Dodgers were trailing, 3-2, in the seventh inning when Stanky led off with a walk, and Robinson then did what he did best. He made something happen.

He bunted. He ran hard to first. First baseman Earl Torgeson grabbed it and threw wildly. Robinson hustled to second, with Stanky going to third.

Reiser then lined a double just inside the right-field foul pole. Two runs scored. The Dodgers took a 4-3 lead they never lost.

Los Angeles Times, March 31, 1997

"Flatbush fans had no problem about dividing their cheers," read the New York Times. "All of them went to an old hero, Pistol Pete Reiser."

And that was that. Howie Schultz replaced Robinson for defensive purposes, the rookie returned to the clubhouse after the victory, dressed quietly and prepared for another game.

"I know I have a certain responsibility to my race, but I've got to try not to feel that way about it because it would be too much of a strain," Robinson said at the time.

So he said nothing later when none of his teammates wanted to be the first to shake his hand after his first big-league home run.

"The whole world watching, and nobody shook it," Stevens said. "I wish I had done something, I really do, but I was just a punk around there, I didn't want to cause any trouble."

Robinson also said nothing when teammate Dixie Walker refused to look at the cameras during many team photos in protest of Robinson.

Robinson finally spoke up the following year in spring training, when he held an impromptu clubhouse meeting in the Dominican Republic.

"Guys, I have proven I am a major leaguer," he said, according to Barney. "I don't care if you talk to me. But I am no longer a freak."

Gene Hermanski, the Dodger left fielder in that opening game, was recently asked if he had any interesting stories about Robinson.

"I've got a funny one," he said. "We're in the showers that year, just me and him, and a shot of hot water hits his leg and burns it."

"He shouts, 'Dang, that water gave me a strawberry.' I laugh and say, 'Jackie, no, it gave you a blackberry.' He just looked at me and shook his head."

They didn't get it. Not then. Through 10 years and six World Series and an induction into the Hall of Fame, Robinson just looked at the world and shook his head. There is a chance he is shaking it still.

Hermanski, 76 and living in New Jersey, laughed.

"If you think about it, the guys who didn't like Jackie, they were justified in their thinking," he said. "I mean, that was the way they were brought up."

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: Photo illustration, JACKIE ROBINSON GRAPHIC-CHART: Scorecard from Tuesday, April 15, 1947, at Ebbets Field

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HEADLINE: JACKIE ROBINSON 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE: BREAKING BARRIERS;
BRANCH RICKEY;
COMMISSIONER LANDIS WOULDN'T LET IT HAPPEN, OTHER OWNERS DIDN'T WANT IT TO
HAPPEN, SO IT WAS UP TO HIM TO INTEGRATE BASEBALL

BYLINE: BOB NIGHTENGALE, TIMES STAFF WRITER

BODY:

It was a horrifying thought, a fear so great that Jackie Robinson, Don Newcombe and Roy Campanella talked about it only in hushed tones.

"We were so afraid, especially Jackie, that one day somebody would assassinate Branch Rickey," whispers Newcombe, as if these were those early days of integration in baseball.

"Jackie loved that man, but we thought some fool was going to do it. . . . We never wanted to talk about it because we figured if it ever gets in the paper, it gives people ideas, but it was on our mind constantly.

"We thought, 'Suppose somebody shoots Branch Rickey. What happens then? What does the new owner of the Dodgers do? Is the whole idea of integration scrapped?'

"Branch Rickey was a brave man, but if somebody had shot him back then, no telling where we'd be today.

"I'm not talking about just baseball, man, I'm talking about society."

The fears of those three black Brooklyn Dodgers apparently were grounded in fact. According to his grandson, Rickey received hundreds, perhaps even thousands of death threats after integrating baseball by signing Robinson.

Rickey, who ran the Dodgers in the late '40s, was blamed for ruining the game, for starting the civil rights movement, for corrupting society.

Branch Rickey III remembers the hate mail his grandfather received.

Rickey, however, kept quiet about it, not wanting to draw attention to the death threats. He also kept quiet about his historic achievement.

"Never once did I hear him say, 'I broke the color barrier,' " his grandson said. "Never once did I hear him say he signed Jackie Robinson. He never spoke about his role in it.

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"His philosophy was that if you do something morally right, it is an obligation of yours.

"In terms of common decency, you don't go around looking for credit when you do it and extol it."

Instead, Rickey passed on a moral dictum that hung in his Brooklyn Dodger office. Today, it hangs in his grandson's office in Cincinnati:

He that will not reason is a bigot.

He that cannot reason is a fool.

He that dares not reason is a slave.

*

Wesley Branch Rickey did not need Jackie Robinson to make him famous.

He did not need the pain and heartache of being a crusader, of trying to change society's thinking in race relations.

He did not need the scorn, contempt and ridicule he got from his peers.

"When my grandfather got to the age of 62, he'd accomplished everything in baseball," Rickey III said. "He had played. He had managed. He'd had World Series teams. He was credited for being baseball's innovator. He was recognized for many areas.

"My grandfather risked everything, risked his reputation, to take this step."

Rickey was a mediocre player, batting .239 in four seasons with the St. Louis Browns and New York Highlanders, but he was considered a genius once he stepped into the front office. His teams, the Cardinals and the Dodgers, won eight pennants and three World Series championships from 1926 to 1949.

Rickey redefined spring training. He bought an old naval base and turned it into Dodgertown. He invented the farm system. He conceived of pitching machines, sliding pits and even the hanging rectangle of string that gives pitchers a strike-zone target that remains in Dodgertown today.

Rickey, a devout Methodist who wore black suits and bow ties, would wander the grounds and watch players practice all day.

"He had this unbelievable presence," former Dodger general manager Buzzie Bavasi said. "He's the best baseball man with the greatest baseball mind I've ever been around."

Apparently that was not enough for Rickey.

"I couldn't face God much longer, knowing that his black creatures are held separate and distinct from his white creatures in the game that has given me all I own," he once told his grandson.

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"We told 3 1/2 million Negro slaves a century ago that they were free. Free for what? Free from what? Free to do what?

"Now here they are, no longer in chains, but often and in many areas with no more sense of real freedom than they had a century ago. The Negro in America was legally, but never morally, free.

"I thought, 'If the right man with control of himself could be found. . . .'

"It was time to integrate baseball, and other owners weren't willing to go along, Rickey would do it himself.

The first person he confided in was his wife, Jane. She was strongly opposed. She was in favor of integration but pleaded for someone else, someone younger, to take on the challenge.

"Why should you have to be the one to do it?" she asked him. "Haven't you done enough for baseball? Can't someone else do something for a change?"

His grandson said, however, that Rickey remained haunted by an incident when he was a 21-year-old coach at Ohio Wesleyan University.

It was April 1904, and the team went to South Bend, Ind., to play Notre Dame. The hotel clerk refused to give a room to the team's lone black player, a catcher named Charles Thomas.

Rickey was outraged and ordered an extra cot for Thomas in his room. Then he gathered his players for a team meeting.

"I tried to talk, but I couldn't take my eyes off Tommy," Rickey told his grandson. "Here was this fine young man, sitting on the edge of his chair, crying. He was crying as though his heart would break. . . .

"He was pulling frantically at his hands, and started muttering, 'Black skin. Black skin. If I could only make them white.'

"He kept rubbing and rubbing as though he would remove the blackness by sheer friction.

" 'It's my skin. It's my skin, Mr. Rickey. If I could just tear it off, I'd be like everyone else.'

"For 50 years, I've had recurrent visions of him wiping off his skin."

Rickey was determined to make a difference, but he believed that nothing was going to change until the death of Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis.

"For 24 years, Judge Landis wouldn't let a black man play," Happy Chandler, who succeeded Landis as commissioner, once said. "Landis consistently blocked any attempts to put blacks and whites together on a big league field. He even refused to let them play exhibition games.

"For 24 years, the record will show that my predecessor said, 'If you're black, you can't play.' Why? Because that's what the owners wanted him to do."

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Rickey wanted to be prepared for the day that Landis no longer would be commissioner. He instructed his scouts to watch the Negro leagues.

"Rickey had a colored club in Brooklyn, the Brown Dodgers, and Rickey had us believing that we were scouting for them," scout Clyde Sukeforth once said. "He didn't give anybody any idea that he was looking for a fella that could break the color line."

Sukeforth and the other scouts determined that at least eight Negro league players could play in the major leagues: catchers Josh Gibson and Roy Campanella, first baseman Buck Leonard, second baseman Marvin William, shortstop Piper Davis, outfielders Cool Papa Bell and Sam Jethroe and, of course, Robinson.

"I had to get the right man off the field," Rickey said in his memoirs. "I couldn't come with a man to break down tradition that had centered and concentrated all of the prejudices of a great many people, North and South, until he was good."

"He must justify himself in the principal of merit. He must be a great player. I must not risk an excuse of trying to do something in the sociological field, or in the race field, just because of a sort of 'holier than thou.'"

"I must be sure that the man was good on the field, but more dangerous to me at the time, was the wrong man on the field."

Rickey knew he had to find a man who not only would be good enough to play for the Dodgers, but would become a star. To convince other owners that there were plenty of black players who could make an impact in the major leagues, this player would have to do much more than simply fit nicely into a lineup.

Rickey chose Robinson, a four-sport athlete at UCLA who had spent three years in the Army and was playing for the Kansas City Monarchs.

"I know there were better players than Jackie in the Negro leagues, everyone knows that," said Joe Black, who had played for the Newark Eagles before becoming a Dodger. "But I don't know of another player who could have swallowed everything he did and still performed."

"I remember Willie Mays told me he could have done it, but he said there's no way in the world he could have ever hit .300."

Says Newcombe: "Mr. Rickey knew what he was doing. I wonder if Branch Rickey picked him too, because he was so dark. I think he wanted to find a dark-skinned black."

"He wanted to make sure everyone in the stands knew that a black man was taking the field."

Rickey met Robinson on Aug. 18, 1945. They spent nearly three hours in Rickey's office. Rickey chastised and cajoled, threatened and reassured, and at one point had Robinson read a section on nonresistance from Italian priest Giovanni Papini's "The Life of Christ."

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"I need more than a great player," Rickey told Robinson. "I need a man who will accept insults, take abuse, in a word, carry the flag for his race. Now, can you do it? I know you are naturally combative, but for three years--three years--you will have to do it the only way it can be done. Three years. Can you do it?"

Robinson asked, "Mr. Rickey, do you want a player who's afraid to fight back?"

Rickey said, "I want players with guts enough not to fight back."

Robinson thought about it for three, maybe four minutes and agreed. He was assigned to the Dodgers' triple-A club in Montreal.

By midsummer of 1946, major league owners were terrified. They knew the Dodgers' plans of bringing up Robinson in the spring of 1947. So they got together and voted, 15-1, to retain the gentlemen's agreement banning blacks from the major leagues.

Rickey was furious. He wrote in his memoirs that he went to Versailles, Ky., the vacation home of new Commissioner Chandler and asked for his support.

"I can't go ahead in the face of that vote," Rickey said. "I can't do it unless I'm assured of your support."

Chandler asked, "Can this man play?"

Rickey replied, "He could make the major leagues today."

Chandler said, "Then the only reason he's being kept out is because he's black. Let's bring him in and treat him as just another player. I'll keep an eye on him."

Rickey took Robinson to camp the next spring and, hoping to show off Robinson's ability, scheduled seven games between Montreal and the Dodgers. Robinson batted .625 and stole seven bases in the series.

But instead of extolling his virtues, the Dodger players, led by outfielder Dixie Walker, started a petition calling for Rickey to ban Robinson from playing with the Dodgers. Everyone had signed until it reached Pee Wee Reese.

"I was told that a Negro had signed to play for Brooklyn, although I'd have to say that the word that was used was not 'Negro,' " Reese said. "Like most Americans who were white, I didn't know what a black athlete was like."

"I began to wonder what the people in Louisville where he grew up would think about me playing with him. Then I thought, the hell with anyone who didn't like it. He deserved a chance, just like everybody else."

The Dodgers announced on April 10, 1947, in the sixth inning of a Montreal-Brooklyn exhibition game, that Robinson's contract was being purchased. Five days later, Robinson broke the color barrier.

"Looking back," says Rachel Robinson, Jackie's widow, "I can see how the conviction of Jackie and Mr. Rickey to bring a black into baseball was

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fortified by the fact that they were alike in so many ways.

"There was no doubt about Rickey's business objectives, but equally clear to us was his intense commitment to making integration work, which he tended to underplay in public.

"He and Jack were unequal in power and influence to be sure, but they were always dependent in this social experiment.

"Neither could succeed without the other."

But Rickey didn't stop with Robinson. He signed Campanella in 1948. Newcombe arrived in 1959. Joe Black came along in 1952. Second baseman Jim Gilliam in 1953.

"Black folks will forever be indebted to Branch Rickey," said Buck O'Neil, former player and manager in the Negro leagues. "The civil rights movement started the day Mr. Rickey signed Jackie to that contract."

Said Hal McRae, former Kansas City manager and now Philadelphia Phillie hitting coach, who grew up in Avon Park, Fla.: "I think every black family in America became Dodger fans. We'd sit around and listen to their games on the radio. We loved the Dodgers. I think every black family did."

And the Dodgers, once symbolic of baseball futility, never again were the same. They won the pennant in 1947, and Robinson was honored as the National League's rookie of the year. They went on to win six pennants in 10 years, and four World Series championships by 1965.

Certainly, there were financial benefits. Robinson was a huge drawing card, and fans flooded the gates.

But if Rickey had been motivated simply by money, he could have devoted all of his energies to making a success of the Brown Dodgers, the team he created in 1945 to play in the new black United States League. That would not only have kept baseball segregated, but would also have kept alive the three Negro leagues as extra sources of income.

And it wasn't simply about winning.

Rickey realized that for integration to work, all teams in baseball had to sign blacks. That was why he stepped aside when Cleveland owner Bill Veeck pursued Larry Doby.

"It will help the movement," he said.

And he backed away when the rival New York Giants were trying to sign Monte Irvin.

And one of the proudest days in Rickey's life occurred in 1958. The Boston Red Sox signed Pumpsie Green to play second base. Every team in baseball had been integrated.

In years to come, public transportation was integrated. So were lunch counters, school systems, juries, public and private universities, businesses,

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state legislatures.

"I hate to imagine what life would be like without Branch Rickey," Joe Black said. "The man was a hero. People talk about Rosa Parks, but she was just too tired to move to the back of that bus. She didn't realize the impact of it and how she would become a symbol for the movement.

"I've got a feeling Mr. Rickey knew all along just what would happen.

"I bet he's upstairs smiling right now because not only did he leave baseball much better off, but the entire world."

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: When Branch Rickey signed Jackie Robinson, their first agreement was that he take whatever abuse was dished out for three years. PHOTOGRAPHER: Associated Press

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A LOOK AT HOW THE RACIAL BARRIER WAS ERECTED, THEN EVENTUALLY TORN DOWN, IN
PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL:

BODY:

"I am positive that if Josh Gibson were white, he would be a major league star."

--New York Daily News columnist Jim Powers, 1939.

*

DRAWING A LINE IN THE DIAMOND

In 1867, the National Assn. of Baseball Players, one of eight professional leagues at the time, bans teams with black players. Many teams refuse to play even exhibitions against teams with blacks. Although blacks are not yet universally excluded, it is eight decades before major league baseball is finally integrated.

Future Hall of Famer Cap Anson of the Chicago White Stockings is instrumental in canceling an exhibition against a semipro team with a black player in 1883, saying, "If you want me to play, you'll have to get that . . . off the field."

In 1884, catcher Moses Fleetwood Walker becomes the first black to play in the majors, with the Toledo Blue Stockings of the American Assn. Tony Mullane describes Walker as the best catcher he has ever thrown to, but he disregards his signs because "I dislike Negroes." After 46 games, during which he hit .263, Walker is released.

A 'CUBAN' DYNASTY

Black waiters at New York's Argyle Hotel in New York form a barnstorming team in 1895, playing many major league teams. Because most teams refuse to play against blacks, the waiters call themselves the Cuban Giants and speak in gibberish on the field to pass themselves off as Cubans.

Two years later, the night before a scheduled exhibition against the St. Louis Browns, a St. Louis player recognizes one of the Giants as a waiter. Eight members of the Browns tell the owner they won't play. The next day, owner Chris Van Der Ahe informs 7,000 fans who have gathered that the Browns have too many injuries and the game is canceled. The Cuban Giants fold.

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In their two years of existence, mostly playing major league teams, the Giants' record is 103-1.

THE NEW LEAGUES

The first black organized league, the Southern League of Colored Base Ballists, begins play in 1886, and is followed the next year by the National Colored Baseball League, which folds in seven weeks because of death threats to players and owners. At the same time, the International League's board of directors bans contracts with black players. John Fowler, a black player with a career average of .389, is released by New Castle.

In one 1917 exhibition, Joe Williams of the Negro league New York Lincoln Giants pitches a no-hitter against the National League champion New York Giants, striking out 20. In an exhibition in 1934, Josh Gibson of the Homestead Grays hit the only fair ball out of Yankee Stadium, over the wall next to the left-field bullpen.

IN REMEMBRANCE

On April 5 at Dodger Stadium, before the game against the Pittsburgh Pirates, Jackie Robinson's widow, Rachel, will be on hand for a 30-minute pregame ceremony. Fans will also receive a commemorative item saluting Robinson's career.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: Josh Gibson hit 75 home runs in a 140-game season for the Homestead Grays in 1930.

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HEADLINE: JACKIE ROBINSON 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE: BREAKING BARRIERS;
RACHEL ROBINSON;
JACKIE'S PARTNER PLAYED A BIG ROLE, BUT SHE WANTS TO END ANY MYTHS THAT SHE HAD
TO KEEP PUSHING HIM

BYLINE: ROSS NEWHAN, TIMES STAFF WRITER

BODY:

He was a pioneer on and off the field--breaking baseball's color barrier and lecturing and lobbying later against racial inequity and injustice.

It has been 50 years since Jackie Robinson's debut with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Would he consider it a half-century of progress? Would he be pleased with the status of race relations today?

"No, I think he'd be very disturbed about it," said Rachel Robinson, his widow. "We're seeing a great deal of divisiveness, a lot of hatred, a lot of tension between ethnic groups, and I think he'd be disappointed.

"We would expect to be further along by now, and we're seeing it worldwide, tensions between groups and the failure to recognize and value differences and work out old conflicts.

"I don't feel despair about it because I think despair and cynicism only undercut our ability to address these issues and do something about them.

"So I've maintained a certain level of optimism, but it's restrained by a realistic knowledge of what's going on in the world."

Dignified and vibrant at 74, Rachel Robinson remains her late husband's partner, as she put it, on a course to affect the lives of others.

She is immersed in carrying on his legacy as founder of the Jackie Robinson Foundation, which has sent almost 500 minority students through college, extending through education and community service the breakthrough work he started and "allowing Jack to live on through these students."

Rachel Isum was born and raised in Los Angeles. Her brother, Raymond, still lives in the family house on 36th Place. She and her future husband met as students at UCLA in 1941 and were married in 1946.

While Jackie Robinson went on to carve out a landmark career that changed the course of major league baseball and ultimately took him to the Hall of Fame, Rachel Robinson enhanced her Bachelor of Science degree from UCLA with a

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Masters in psychiatric nursing from New York University and was an assistant professor at Yale's School of Nursing while also serving as nursing director at the Connecticut Mental Health Center.

She found time amid that busy workload to cheer the Dodgers at Ebbets Field and help raise three children: Jackie Jr., who was killed in a 1971 automobile accident; Sharon Robinson Fieffe, a practicing nurse-midwife and assistant professor at Yale, and David, a coffee and sculpture importer who lives in Tanzania.

Among numerous awards and honors, Rachel Robinson has received eight honorary degrees but most prizes her nine grandchildren.

She lives in Salem, Conn., but often visits family and friends in Los Angeles.

She will be at Dodger Stadium on Saturday when the Dodgers commemorate the 50th anniversary of Robinson's debut and at the Museum of Tolerance for the opening of a commemorative exhibit the next day.

During an interview with The Times, she often referred to a book she has written with Lee Daniels titled "Jackie Robinson, an Intimate Portrait."

In it, she wrote:

"As I reflect on my life, I think of it as a creative struggle, and I share the conviction of the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass, who, in a speech made in New York on August 4, 1857, said, 'If there is no struggle there is no progress.' I am one of the fortunate ones granted a mission at the age of twenty-three, a great partner, and the spirit to prevail."

Jackie Robinson's spirit, and in many ways that of his wife, will be commemorated throughout the year.

Players and umpires will wear "Breaking Barriers" arm patches. The U.S. Mint will sell commemorative coins. A video created by Spike Lee will be shown on stadium scoreboards. Individual clubs have scheduled commemorative events, and baseball is pledging \$ 1 million to the Robinson Foundation, part of the foundation's campaign to create a \$ 12-million endowment fund.

Asked if she was satisfied with the commemorative schedule and events, Rachel Robinson said:

"I'm very satisfied. Not just the events that baseball has laid out because baseball is being very active in this process. But also there have been celebrations of different kinds in various cities and universities, so I'm very interested in the diversity of approaches to the celebration and very excited about everything that's happening, because I know we're heightening awareness of Jack's life, activities and achievements."

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Question: Considering your pace and activities, does it seem like 50 years or 50 minutes?

Answer: Well, the way I live, I live very much in the future. I have great reverence for the past, but I live and move so fast that time goes by very fast, so it doesn't seem like 50 years, and I'm going to be 75 years old this year, and that surprises me too.

*

Q: Is one moment or one memory from that first game April 15, 1947 sharpest to you?

A: The whole day is special, but I can't describe it again. You know, I've just written a book and I describe the day in the book because it obviously was a special day, and I had special anxieties and concerns that day and sort of dealt with them in a funny way, but I'll break out in hives if I have to describe that day one more time.

*

Q: Well, you wrote of the day that the meaning of the moment transcended the winning of a game, that the possibility of social change seemed more concrete and the need for it more imperative and that the single most important impact of Jack's presence was that it enabled white baseball fans to root for a black man and encouraged more whites to realize that all our destinies are inextricably linked. You also wrote that breaking the color barrier was another chance to chip away at ingrained racist attitudes. Has all of that happened?

A: I think that we had an auspicious beginning at that time, 50 years ago, an opportunity to both look at the social structure of America and to challenge it and to create change. And I think we have seen change. We had legislated discrimination in those years when we first went South and had separate facilities and all of that. And with the civil rights movement, we've made considerable progress, of course, but two things about the progress. I feel it's fragile. I don't feel it's complete by any means. And I think society has a tendency to retrench on commitments it makes to all of its citizens.

So I think we have to stay vigilant so that when the retrenchment begins we can see it and be active in preventing us from going backward. A lot of that is based on the economics of the country, where jobs are, competition for the resources of the country, so I think changes have taken place, but it's far from complete. We do not have a situation that is equitable, where everyone has an equal opportunity based on their own talents. And until we get to that point we haven't really succeeded in fulfilling the goals that we started with 50 years ago.

*

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Q: Do you believe that's true, not only in society generally, but in baseball as well?

A: Well, I think baseball reflects society, and it certainly reflects the corporate world. So what we see as the steps that need to be taken in corporate life also need to be taken in baseball.

*

Q: Would you agree that there has been improved hiring of black managers and coaches, although modest?

A: Yes, but for the hiring of people for off-the-field positions and positions of authority within the structure. I think there's considerable improvement that could be made there. There have been managers and general managers, but not on any kind of consistent or widespread basis. The opportunities simply have not been as open as they could be.

*

Q: With all of Jackie's courage, talent and tenacity, many of his teammates over the years, Joe Black and Don Newcombe among them, have said you were the true hero, and without your support it would have been difficult for Jackie to keep going amid the abuse.

A: Jackie and I were very definitely partners in the whole enterprise, and I feel I had a significant role in it. He gave me a significant role and I took that. I'm not a heroine, I don't see myself as that. He did not fall apart in my arms and I had to push him out the door. Some people tell that story and it's not true.

He had his down times, he had his doubts, he had his frustrations, and, of course, that's the relevance of a support figure. You're there to assist them in times when they need that kind of help. But he did a lot on his own, and I think sometimes people diminish him by making it sound like I'm standing behind him and holding him up, which I did not do. I walked beside him, and he turned to me often for support, but he was an extraordinary person in and of himself.

*

Q: Players on other teams, and some on the Dodgers, almost staged a work stoppage to protest his employment. Is there any way for the average person to understand the pressure and abuse he was forced to endure?

A: I think it's very hard unless you've been through it in one form or another. I talk to children frequently, and they have a hard time believing this was America and that people would send you hate mail just because of your color or that you would have to fight your way into a situation when you were perfectly well qualified for that role or that position. And I think likewise

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it's hard to think of someone trying to injure you when you're just doing your job. People have got to be able to empathize with other people, have got to be able to put themselves in the position of the other person. If a person can't empathize, he's not going to be motivated to change the injustice.

*

Q: Branch Rickey, then an owner and president of the Dodgers, provided the opportunity and continuous support, but when Walter O'Malley took over, as you write, that changed significantly. In what way?

A: Branch Rickey was the pioneer in this and saw it through to a successful conclusion. Walter O'Malley came in later and was a different kind of person. He didn't quite have the investment in Jack or social change that Rickey had. I also don't know how he felt about being compared to Rickey all the time. I think that must have been tough.

*

Q: Wasn't it also O'Malley's attempt to trade Jackie to the New York Giants that was the final impetus in prompting Jackie's retirement?

A: Definitely. Jackie had begun to sense that he was going to be traded and had begun to look for a position outside of baseball long before the trade actually occurred. He was in good shape. Well, let me separate him from me because I was angry that the Dodgers would trade him to the enemy Giants. I felt they should have had enough of a sense of history and enough appreciation for what he did to retire him with honors instead of selling him off to the Giants as if he was an old used car.

*

Q: The Dodgers retired his number after they moved to Los Angeles and Peter O'Malley began to have a stronger voice in the club's operation. You seem to have developed a close relationship with O'Malley, and he has been a strong supporter of the foundation.

A: Peter is my friend and has been over the years. We've worked together, and he's supported everything I've tried to do. I care a lot about Peter. I've enjoyed the friendship very much and enjoyed his role on the board of directors of the foundation.

*

Q: What was the genesis of the foundation and the legacy in the context of Jackie's contributions to society and race relations?

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A: In 1973, the year after Jackie passed, I incorporated the foundation, although we didn't become an acting entity until 1977. Our family and friends got together and decided we were determined to perpetuate Jack's name and spirit. We just needed to find a vehicle with which to do that.

We ultimately decided our mission would be to support education, particularly the education of minority youngsters, because we knew then and know now that education is the key to any kind of decent and productive life. Jack was very concerned about the education of young people and talked about it frequently.

We target minority students because there's so many and the need is tremendous. The only criteria are that they have a financial need and are accepted in the college of their choice. We have them in Ivy League schools, historic black colleges and state colleges and universities.

As the program has evolved, we not only provide tuition support--we see our students through four years and they get \$ 20,000--but we also provide them with career and personal counseling if they need it, summer jobs, internship, a hot line to our office and we, in effect, have become an extended family for our Jackie Robinson scholars.

We also indoctrinate them with the notion of giving back to the community they reside in even while they're students, so they all have community service projects that we call give-back projects, and we give an annual award for the most innovative project. We're interested not only in the intellectual development of our young people but the character development.

Therefore, I feel that Jack still walks the earth in the shoes of these young people and they somehow stand on his shoulders, and I'm sure he would be extremely proud of the almost 500 students we've supported over the years who are now not only doing well in school but are thinking of others. We currently have 141 in 66 colleges and universities in 22 states, and we have a 92% graduation rate, which is the highest in the country. And we're very proud that Jack lives on, that it's a living legacy, and he will live on in perpetuity. This year we are fund-raising for an endowment fund of \$ 12 million. Once we have that in place, we know this program will continue on well beyond my time. Jack often said that life's not important except in its impact on the lives of others. That's our motto, and the students exemplify it.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: Rachel Robinson recoils at the notion that she had to push her husband in his pioneering, saying instead that she was a "partner."

PHOTOGRAPHER: Associated Press PHOTO: Rachel Robinson

LANGUAGE: English

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March 31, 1997, Monday, Home Edition

SECTION: Special Section; Part S; Page 6; Sports Desk

LENGTH: 508 words

HEADLINE: JACKIE ROBINSON 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE: BREAKING BARRIERS;
A LOOK AT THE LIFE OF JACKIE ROBINSON:

BODY:

"A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives."

--Jackie Robinson

*

Jan. 31, 1919--Jackie Robinson is born in Cairo, Ga., the fifth child of Mrs. Mallie Robinson, daughter of a slave. A year later, his father deserted the family and the mother and five children moved to Pasadena.

1936--By his senior year at Muir High, has starred and lettered in football, basketball, baseball and track.

1937-39--At Pasadena Junior College, he again letters in those four sports, setting the national JC record in the long jump.

1939-41--The first four-sport letterman at UCLA, he is the national long jump champion in 1940 and the basketball team's leading scorer both seasons.

March 18, 1942--Robinson works out for White Sox Manager Jimmy Dykes in Pasadena. Dykes says "He's worth \$ 50,000 of any owner's money." The White Sox make no offer.

1945--Bats .387 for the Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro leagues after three years in the Army.

April 16, 1945--Robinson tries out for the Boston Red Sox at Fenway Park. No offer.

Oct. 23, 1945--Dodger owner Branch Rickey announces he has signed Robinson to play with the Dodgers' Montreal farm team.

1946--In spring training, the Dodgers take Robinson to Jacksonville to play an exhibition. The game is called off soon after they arrive because "the lights in the stadium aren't working." The game was scheduled to begin at noon.

Feb. 10, 1946--Marries the former Rachel Isum.

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April 18, 1946--Robinson plays for the Montreal Royals, the first black to play in modern organized baseball. He bats .349, with 113 runs and 40 stolen bases. The Royals draw a club-record 412,744 at home and 399,047 on the road.

March 9, 1947--In Panama for an exhibition game, several Dodgers draw up a petition protesting Robinson's presence. Manager Leo Durocher tells his players: "I don't care if the guy is yellow or black. I'm the manager of this team and I say he plays. I say he can make us rich. And if any of you can't use the money, I'll see that you're traded." Among those who refuse to support the petition are Pete Reiser and Pee Wee Reese, who goes on to become one of Robinson's biggest supporters on the team.

April 10, 1947--Rickey distributes a statement to the press: "The Brooklyn Dodgers today purchased the contract of Jackie Roosevelt Robinson from the Montreal Royals. He will report immediately."

April 15, 1947--25,623 fans (an estimated 14,000 black), come to Ebbets Field in Brooklyn to see Jackie Robinson make his debut with the Brooklyn Dodgers. With the Dodgers trailing the Boston Braves, 3-2, in the seventh inning and a runner on, Robinson sacrifices and is safe on Earl Torgeson's wild throw. He scores the go-ahead run on Reiser's double. The Dodgers win, 5-3.

IN REMEMBRANCE:

On April 15 in New York's Shea Stadium, 50 years to the day after Jackie Robinson broke baseball's color barrier, there will be a range of festivities before the game between the Mets and Dodgers. President Clinton is among those who will attend.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: (signed baseball)

LANGUAGE: English

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March 31, 1997, Monday, Home Edition

SECTION: Special Section; Part S; Page 7; Sports Desk

LENGTH: 1919 words

HEADLINE: JACKIE ROBINSON 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE: BREAKING BARRIERS;
NEGRO LEAGUES;
SEGREGATION DEFINITELY WASN'T PRETTY, BUT NEWCOMBE STILL HAS SOME FOND MEMORIES
OF YEARS BEFORE ROBINSON BROKE THROUGH

BYLINE: BOB NIGHTENGALE, TIMES STAFF WRITER

BODY:

Lou Johnson stands atop the Dodgertown press box in Vero Beach, Fla., watching the sea of white faces leave the Dodgers' spring-training game, and remembers.

Tears begin to well in his eyes. In a whisper, he says:

"If I had a wish, I would have God get all of the Negro league players, make them 30 years younger, and have them take the field again.

"This way, white folks could see them and what we're talking about. I'd love for those fans to stand up, cheer, show their appreciation, recognizing them for what they've done."

The Negro leagues were drastically different from the major leagues and, as some who played in both will attest, in some ways better.

The players were equals and there were no racist taunts. Players ate in the same restaurants, slept in the same hotels, dated whom they pleased and didn't worry about repercussions.

"It was the way baseball should have been," says Don Newcombe, who played for the Newark Eagles before becoming a Cy Young Award winner and most valuable player for the Dodgers. "People talk about how much better things were, once baseball was integrated. Come on, are you serious?"

"You know what gets me? You hear all of the players today say how much they enjoyed playing with Jackie Robinson, and how much they admired Jackie, and how Jackie was their best friend. That's a bunch of bull. . . .

"They didn't want him here, they didn't want any of us.

"Where were these people when we arrived in St. Louis, waited for our luggage in the train station, and just hoped we got a cab while the rest of the team left for the team hotel in their air-conditioned buses and the fancy Chase Hotel? We couldn't stay at their hotel. We had to go to the Adams Hotel, a black hotel, where there was no air-conditioning, no restaurants, nothing.

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"Not one of the white players on our team ever get off the bus in the morning and said, 'Can I go with you guys? Can I stay with you? Is there anything I can say or do?'

"No one said a damn thing.

"They acted like, 'Well, they're the ones who want to be here, so let them go where they need to go.'

"Jackie would just say, 'Bleep them. Bleep them all.'

"So me, Jackie and Roy Campanella would try to find a cab outside Union Station and go to this hotel. . . . It got so hot that we would soak our sheets in ice water, put them on the bed, and try to fall asleep. It got so loud with the bar downstairs it was impossible to fall asleep until 2:30 in the morning, when the music stopped."

The Dodgers remained segregated in St. Louis until 1954, when Newcombe finally had had enough. He had just returned from the Korean War, and told Robinson he was going to meet with the manager of the Chase Hotel.

"I told Jackie, I'm not living like this anymore," Newcombe said. "So Jackie went with me. I was just daring someone to throw me out of the hotel lobby. I sat in the dining room, got the manager, and we told him what we wanted.

"He said, 'Fellas, I don't have a problem with it. You can stay here. But the only thing is, I don't want you to use the swimming pool.'

"Jackie nearly fell out of his damn chair. Jackie said, 'Mister, I don't even know how to swim, so I'm not going to be using your pool, anyway.'

"Jackie and I went back to the Adams hotel, packed our bags. But Roy and Jim Gilliam wouldn't go with us. They decided to stay put. But Jackie and I couldn't pack fast enough.

"We went back to the Chase hotel, and I still remember walking in and seeing all of those white faces, and they said, 'Welcome to the club. You finally made it our hotel.'

"I'll never forget that as long as I live."

Newcombe and Robinson were proud that blacks from all around soon were staying at the air-conditioned Chase. They had integrated a hotel all by themselves. Yet the feeling of euphoria was replaced by anguish less than a year later when blacks quit staying at the Adams, causing it to shut down.

"It was the same thing that happened to the Negro leagues," Newcombe softly says. "Integration ruined it."

*

There was Satchel Paige. There were Josh Gibson, James "Cool Papa" Bell, Roy Campanella. There was Buck Leonard . . .

Los Angeles Times, March 31, 1997

There were plenty of players who might have been better than Jackie Robinson in the Negro leagues, but when it came time for Dodger President Branch Rickey to select a player to break baseball's color barrier, he chose Robinson.

"We had quite a few players better than Jackie," said Buck O'Neil, who managed the Kansas City Monarchs, Robinson's team. "But most of these guys were older than Jackie. Major league baseball wanted a young player who could make an impact for a long time.

"It bothered a few of the fellas."

Paige, considered by many to be baseball's finest pitcher, black or white, perhaps was the most upset. He figured if anyone was going to break the color barrier, it should be him.

"Signing Jackie like they did hurt me deep down," said Paige, who died in 1982. "I'd been the guy who started all that big talk about letting us in the big time.

"I'd been the one who opened the major league doors to the colored teams.

"I'd be the one who everybody said should be in the majors.

"But Jackie'd been the first one signed by the white boys."

There also was a fear that if Robinson struggled, the majors would stop recruiting Negro league players.

"He was a hustler, but other than that, he wasn't a top shortstop," Monarch teammate Buck Leonard said. "We said, 'We don't see how he can make it.'

"Even when the Dodgers took Robinson, I said, 'If he doesn't make it, they're going to be through with us for the next five or 10 years.

" 'And if he does make it, maybe they are going to keep him in the minors for a long time.'

"Thank God almighty I was wrong."

Perhaps what was most surprising about the choice of Robinson was his quick and fiery temper. He didn't much care for the Negro leagues, having to abide by the Jim Crow laws. It was a life he didn't care to lead.

"You've got to remember that Jackie went to integrated schools and played on integrated teams," O'Neil said. "So when he got to the Monarchs and saw the things they had to put up with--the Jim Crow laws, the separate drinking fountains and restrooms--he became furious.

"Jackie stormed out of so many places, he left behind a fortune."

The most memorable incident occurred in Muskogee, Okla. The Monarchs had been stopping for gas at the same station for years. It had one restroom, which was off limits to blacks, but the Monarchs never much minded until Robinson came along.

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"When the bus pulled into Muskogee and stopped at this station, Jackie got out and headed toward the restroom," O'Neil said. "The owner, who was filling the tank, called after him, 'Hey boy! You know you can't go in there.'"

"Jackie wanted to know why. 'Because we don't allow no colored people in that restroom.'"

"Now, all of the guys knew about Jackie's hair-trigger temper, so they just stood around, wondering what he was going to do. Jackie turned to the man very calmly and said, 'Take the hose out of the tank.'"

"The owner stopped the pump and looked at him. Jackie said it again. 'Take the hose out of the tank.' Jackie turned to his teammates and said, 'Let's go. We don't want his gas.'"

"Well, the Monarchs had two 50-gallon tanks on the bus. That gas station wasn't going to sell 100 gallons of gas to one customer until the bus came back through a few weeks later.

"So he shoved the hose back into the tank and said, 'All right, you boys can use the restroom. But don't stay long.' "

The Monarchs never again patronized a place where they couldn't use the facilities, O'Neil said, and never again were the Negro leagues the same.

Scouts started flocking to their games. Soon, Larry Doby was signed. Campanella. Joe Black. Willie Mays. Henry Aaron. Monte Irvin.

"There was so much talent, and we had such a beautiful time," Newcombe said. "The only guy who bothered us was Satchel Paige. I was surprised he signed because of his age, but he was a drawing card.

"But to me, he was an Uncle Tom with the things he did. He was making a clown of himself. I know Jackie didn't like it, hearing some of the things he would say or the things he did. I know Larry Doby, my best friend, didn't like it.

"But what are you going to do. It got him to the big leagues."

Yet, as the players soon discovered, compared to the racism and hatred they encountered in the major leagues, life in the Negro leagues wasn't bad at all.

"The first day I took the field with the Cleveland Indians in Chicago, I stood on the sidelines for five minutes and no one would warm up with me," Doby said.

"I remember too, when I got introduced to these guys. Manager Lou Boudreau had all the players lined up against their lockers. He'd say, 'So and so, this is Larry Doby.' He'd keep moving down, 'So and so, this is Larry Doby.'"

"The trouble was, when you'd reach out and shake hands, the guy would pull back his hand. Then the next guy, no hand. Then again. Right away I knew I was in trouble."

Doby, who joined the Indians only three months after Robinson had joined the Dodgers, suffered the same pain and torment in the American League. But when

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they got together in the off-season, neither chose to discuss the tribulations of their rookie seasons.

"We knew what we had been through was the same," Doby said. "To talk about it would only have made us angry, made things worse."

Robinson wasn't even sure he could make it through another season. Friends feared that baseball had broken him.

"Jackie almost had a nervous breakdown," Newcombe said. "He was like a blast furnace ready to go off and blow off the safety valve. Rachel took him on a cruise for two weeks just to make sure he would be all right."

"That would have been a tragedy if Jack had blown his top. You had to know Jackie to appreciate what he did. Jackie was a fighter, he wasn't used to taking it. He couldn't prove his righteousness or stand up for his rights."

"It was a hell of a thing for a man to go through just because he's black."

"I know people say Jackie died of diabetes, but I think it was the stress and everything he had to go through that really killed him. I've never saw a man age so fast."

"But to this day, I still don't understand how the diabetes came about. They gave us blood tests every year in spring training. Every year we went through examinations. But Jackie didn't know until 1957 that he had diabetes."

"Why didn't someone check him in Vero Beach? What did they do with our blood? Didn't they test it?"

"Jackie never should have died that young."

Newcombe takes a deep breath, pauses, and slowly exhales. There are days when it seems that the Negro leagues were a lifetime ago. There are other times it seems they were just yesterday.

"Those were the great times, the times we'll all cherish," Newcombe said. "Those were the days when everyone was treated as equals. We played in parks where fans appreciated us. You didn't hear the name-calling or taunts. You just felt the love."

"The one thing I'll remember more than anything was when Martin Luther King Jr. came to my house in '68 and told me, 'You guys will never know how easy you made it for me to do my job.'"

"One month later, he was dead."

"The Negro leagues made it possible for us to be where we are today, and in many ways, where society is today."

"Jackie and Roy are dead, but I think they would join me in saying we're proud of that."

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: Buck O'Neil managed Jackie Robinson with the Kansas City Monarchs and says there were better players in the Negro leagues.

Los Angeles Times, March 31, 1997

PHOTOGRAPHER: GARY FRIEDMAN / Los Angeles Times PHOTO: From left to right, Jackie Robinson in the National League and Larry Doby in the American led the way, then Don Newcombe, Luke Easter and Roy Campanella. PHOTOGRAPHER: Associated Press

LANGUAGE: English

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SECTION: Special Section; Part S; Page 7; Sports Desk

LENGTH: 423 words

HEADLINE: JACKIE ROBINSON 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE: BREAKING BARRIERS;
A LOOK AT THE LIFE OF JACKIE ROBINSON:

BODY:

"Many people resented my impatience and honesty, but I never cared about acceptance as much as I cared about respect."

--Jackie Robinson

*

April 17, 1947--Robinson gets his first major league hit, a bunt single against Glenn Elliott of the Boston Braves.

April 18, 1947--Robinson hits his first home run, against Dave Koslo of the New York Giants.

April 22, 1947--At Ebbets Field, Robinson is the target of taunts and insults from the Philadelphia Phillies, mainly from manager Ben Chapman. Robinson scores the game's only run. According to Dodger traveling secretary Harold Parrott: "At no time in my life have I heard racial venom and dugout abuse to match that sprayed by Chapman that night."

May 8, 1947--The Associated Press reports that a strike by the St. Louis Cardinals against Robinson was averted by the intervention of NL President Ford Frick. The Cardinals had threatened to sit out all games against the Dodgers.

Sept. 12, 1947--The Sporting News, which disparaged Robinson's abilities a year ago, name him National League rookie of the year.

Dec. 30, 1947--An Associated Press poll ranks Robinson behind singer Bing Crosby as the United States' most admired man.

Nov. 30, 1952--Appearing on the NBC program "Youth Want to Know," Robinson accuses the New York Yankees of prejudice. Responding to a question, Robinson says: "It seems to me the Yankee front office has used racial prejudice in its dealings with Negro ballplayers. I may be wrong, but the Yankees will have to prove it to me."

May 12, 1956--Before a game against the Giants that Carl Erskine starts, Giant scout Tom Sheehan is quoted in a newspaper as saying Erskine is through. Robinson plays with the newspaper stuffed in his uniform and shows to Erskine

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between each inning. Erskine pitches a no-hitter for the Dodgers.

Dec. 13, 1959--The Dodgers trade Robinson to the Giants for pitcher Dick Littlefield and \$ 30,000.

Jan. 5, 1957--Robinson retires rather than change teams. He begins a a career as an executive with an insurance firm, a food-franchising firm and an interracial construction firm.

Oct. 24, 1972--Robinson dies of a heart attack in Stamford, Conn. Willie Mays says: "Every time I look in my pocketbook, I see Jackie Robinson."

IN REMEMBRANCE:

In the 50th anniversary season, baseballs for both the American and National leagues will bear an insignia commemorating Jackie Robinson's place in history. All major and minor league teams and umpires will wear a 50th anniversary logo patch in his honor.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: Jackie Robinson was NL's top rookie in 1947 and MVP in 1949

LANGUAGE: English

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SECTION: Special Section; Part S; Page 5; Sports Desk

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HEADLINE: JACKIE ROBINSON 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE: BREAKING BARRIERS;
1947: THE BREAKTHROUGH YEAR;
NOT ONLY DID ROBINSON NOT FIGHT BACK AT INSULTS, HE BEGAN A DODGER TRADITION BY
BECOMING FIRST ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

BYLINE: EARL GUSTKEY, TIMES STAFF WRITER

BODY:

How hard was it, to be Jack Roosevelt Robinson in 1947?

Here, according to various printed sources, is how one afternoon started that year, on May 9, when the Brooklyn Dodgers took the field for warmups before their series-opening game with the Philadelphia Phillies:

"Hey . . . I need a shoeshine!"

"Hey . . . why don't you go back to the cotton fields, where you belong?"

"They're waiting for you in the jungles, black boy!"

"Hey, snowflake, which one of the white boys' wives are you dating tonight?"

Expressionless, Robinson warmed up, pretending not to hear the taunts coming from the Phillies' dugout. And he knew it would go on that way in his journeys through the National League that year.

And he endured. He never answered in kind.

He had promised Dodger President Branch Rickey that he would not fight back for three years, no matter what the provocation.

He played and kept a tight lid on the anger that boiled up inside, which is exactly why Jackie Robinson was the first black man to wear a major league baseball uniform.

Robinson's promotion to the major leagues was not based solely on his baseball talent, which was considerable. He had been hand-picked. His ability to play baseball, Rickey believed, was exceeded by his strength of character.

Of all the black players good enough to play in the big leagues, Robinson, Rickey believed, had the temperament to best endure the unendurable.

A clear indication of that is that not once did Robinson charge the mound that season, despite uncountable brushback and knockdown pitches. He was hit

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by pitches nine times in 1947.

He was a Dodger, but he was made to feel like a pariah.

On that first 1947 Philadelphia visit, when the Dodgers arrived with Robinson at their normal hotel, they were told, "All the rooms are taken."

Later, in St. Louis, instead of staying at the Chase Hotel with his teammates, Robinson had to stay with private black families, or at black-only hotels.

In Cincinnati, management of the Netherlands Plaza hotel told the Dodgers that Robinson could stay, provided he ate his meals in his room and stayed out of the swimming pool.

Reading today of all he endured 50 years ago magnifies the numbers he put up that season.

Despite racial insults, and knowing that in at least one city, Cincinnati, death threats compelled police to search buildings near the ballpark for snipers, Robinson had a remarkable 1947 season.

Playing in 151 games at first base, he batted .297--19th in the league--with 175 hits and 12 home runs. He was named the National League rookie of the year.

He led the league with 29 steals--he stole home three times--and drove in 48 runs.

He was second in the league in runs with 125.

One of the great bunters, Robinson, according to his friend and biographer, Wendell Smith, bunted successfully 42 times through Sept. 9 of that season. He beat out 14 of them, the others going for sacrifices.

His month-by-month averages reflect the strain of the early trips, when receptions were at their most hostile.

In the first month, he had a 0-for-20 slump. He hit .225 in April, .284 in May, then had a 21-game hitting streak in June and hit .377. He dipped to .253 in July but had a .311 August.

In the 1947 Dodger-Yankee World Series, Robinson hit .259, stole two bases and scored three times.

That Series still stands as one of the great ones, primarily because of two plays.

In Game 4, the Dodgers' Cookie Lavagetto broke Yankee pitcher Bill Bevens' heart. With two out in the ninth, and Bevens working on a no-hitter, Lavagetto hit a game-winning double.

In Game 6, Dodger center fielder Al Gionfriddo's catch of a deep drive by Joe DiMaggio remains one of baseball's great outfield plays.

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Gionfriddo, who lives today in Solvang, Calif., extended the hand of friendship to Robinson early in the '47 season, often encouraging him to feel he was part of the team in every way.

"My locker was next to Jackie's that year," Gionfriddo recalled.

"I noticed he'd bring a newspaper to the games and put it in his locker. After the games, he'd take his shirt and shoes off, then just sit on his stool and read every bit of that paper.

"When everyone was gone, he'd take his shower. It occurred to me maybe he felt like the other guys wouldn't want him showering with them. I asked him about it one day and he indicated that was it.

"I said to him, 'Hey, you're just as much a member of this team as anyone. You get your butt in there and take a shower whenever you want.' "

In his New York Times column a week after Robinson joined the Dodgers, Arthur Daley quoted an unnamed "Dodger veteran" as saying:

"Having Jackie on the team is still a little strange, just like anything else that's new. We just don't know how to act with him. But he'll be accepted in time. You can be sure of that. Other sports have had Negroes. Why not baseball?"

Oddly, even though Robinson was from Pasadena and UCLA, no Los Angeles Times columnist had anything to say about Robinson's promotion to the majors until May 11, nearly a month after Robinson's debut, when Braven Dyer's column contained mailed responses to questions put to Robinson by Dyer in a letter.

In those days, Times reporters needed to submit a written request to the managing editor before making a long-distance phone call. Perhaps Dyer was turned down.

One of the most startling elements in the 1947 season was that while Robinson was enduring the foulest kind of racial epithets on the field, he was also the sport's biggest drawing card since Babe Ruth.

Several teams set attendance records when the Dodgers came to town. The first Saturday the Dodgers played the Giants at the Polo Grounds, 52,000 watched, then the largest Saturday afternoon crowd in league history.

Brooklyn drew 1.8 million fans, another league record, and it launched a streak of 10 years of million-plus attendance seasons.

New York, Boston, Pittsburgh and St. Louis also set records when they played the Dodgers at home.

And blacks were going to Dodger games like never before.

Another Robinson biographer, Barry Denenberg, quoted one baseball writer: "Jackie's nimble, Jackie's quick . . . Jackie's making turnstiles click."

Owners, then, were making big money.

Los Angeles Times, March 31, 1997

And Robinson?

The Dodgers paid him \$ 5,000 that year.

(BEGIN TEXT OF INFOBOX / INFOGRAPHIC)

Jackie Robinson's Career Statistics

REGULAR SEASON

Year	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	AVG
1947	590	125	175	31	5	12	48	29	.297
1948	574	108	170	38	8	12	85	22	.296
1949	593	122	203	38	12	16	124	37	.342
1950	518	99	170	39	4	14	81	12	.328
1951	548	106	185	33	7	19	88	25	.338
1952	510	104	157	17	3	19	75	24	.308
1953	484	109	159	34	7	12	95	17	.329
1954	386	62	120	22	4	15	59	7	.311
1955	317	51	81	6	2	8	36	12	.256
1956	357	61	98	15	2	10	43	12	.275
Career	4,877	947	1,518	273	54	137	734	197	.311

WORLD SERIES

Year	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	AVG
1947	27	3	7	2	0	0	3	2	.259
1949	16	2	3	1	0	0	2	0	.188
1952	23	4	4	0	0	1	2	2	.174
1953	25	3	8	2	0	0	2	1	.320
1955	22	5	4	1	1	0	1	1	.182
1956	24	5	6	1	0	1	2	0	.250
Career	137	22	32	7	1	2	12	6	.234

GRAPHIC: GRAPHIC-TABLE: Jackie Robinson's Career Statistics PHOTO: While Jackie Robinson endured racial epithets, he was also baseball's greatest drawing card during his first National League season. PHOTOGRAPHER: United Press International

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE: March 31, 1997

12TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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Los Angeles Times

March 31, 1997, Monday, Home Edition

SECTION: Special Section; Part S; Page 5; Sports Desk

LENGTH: 538 words

HEADLINE: JACKIE ROBINSON 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE: BREAKING BARRIERS;
A LOOK AT HOW THE RACIAL BARRIER WAS ERECTED, THEN EVENTUALLY TORN DOWN, IN
PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL:

BODY:

"Jackie Robinson opened the door of baseball to all men. He was the first to get the opportunity, but if he had not done such a great job, the path would have been so much more difficult."

--Former New York Giant Monte Irvin, after Robinson's death in 1972.

*

Many African Americans followed Robinson to the major leagues, not immediately and not without controversy. Some important dates after April 15, 1947:

July 5, 1947--Larry Doby becomes the first black player in the American League when he plays for the Cleveland Indians.

Aug. 26, 1947--Dan Bankhead of the Dodgers becomes the first black pitcher in the modern major leagues. He pitches against Pittsburgh.

July 1, 1948--Catcher Roy Campanella breaks in with the Dodgers. Pitcher Hugh Casey refuses to throw the pitches called for by Campanella.

July 7, 1948--Satchel Paige, at least 42, is signed by the Indians' Bill Veeck. Paige is the oldest rookie in major league history.

July 14, 1948--The Sporting News criticizes Veeck for signing Paige. "To sign a hurler at Paige's age is to demean the standards of baseball. Were Paige white, he would not have drawn a second thought from Veeck." Veeck responds: "If Satch were white, he would have been in the majors 25 years ago."

Oct. 10, 1948--Paige becomes the first African American to pitch in the World Series, giving up no hits in two-thirds of an inning for Cleveland against Boston.

July 12, 1949--Jackie Robinson, Don Newcombe and Campanella of the Dodgers and Doby of the Indians become the first blacks to appear in the All-Star game.

Los Angeles Times, March 31, 1997

Nov. 21, 1949--The Boston Red Sox and New York Yankees pass on the services of Willie Mays. Bill McCorry, the team's traveling secretary, tells the Yankees: "I got no use for any of them. I wouldn't arrange a berth on a train for any of them."

Aug. 6, 1952--Paige, 46, now with the St. Louis Browns, becomes the oldest player to pitch a complete game when he defeats the Tigers, 1-0, in 12 innings. After the game, Paige says: "Man, I'm a hundred years old and I can still strike these guys out."

Dec. 2, 1953--Vic Power, the most talented black player in the Yankee farm system, is traded to the Athletics. Power says: "They were waiting to see if I could turn white, but I couldn't do it."

April 15, 1955--The Yankees finally cross the color line as catcher Elston Howard makes his debut.

June 6, 1958--Ozzie Virgil breaks in with the Tigers, leaving the Red Sox the only team with no black players.

July 21, 1959--The Red Sox get their first black player, shortstop Pumpsie Green, 12 years after Robinson's first appearance.

Oct. 17, 1960--The Negro American League, the last of the major black circuits, disbands.

Feb. 20, 1961--Emmett Ashford becomes the first black umpire in the majors.

April 8, 1975--Frank Robinson of the Cleveland Indians becomes the majors' first black manager.

*

IN REMEMBRANCE:

For the first time in history, an African American will be pictured on a gold commemorative coin issued by the U.S. Mint. In July, the mint will issue 100,000 gold coins and 200,000 silver coins bearing Jackie Robinson's likeness. Proceeds from the sale of coins will go toward the Jackie Robinson Foundation.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: Satchell Paige

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE: March 31, 1997

Jackie Robinson

Biography

Jackie Robinson, the first baseball player to break Major League Baseball's color barrier that segregated major league baseball for more than 50 years, was born in 1919. Born in Cairo, Georgia, to a family of sharecroppers, he grew up in Pasadena California. His mother, Mallie Robinson, single-handedly raised Jackie and her four other children. They were the only black family on their block, and the prejudice they encountered only strengthened their bonds.

Growing up in a large, single-parent family, Robinson excelled early at all sports and learned to make his own way in life. At UCLA, Robinson became the first athlete to win varsity letters in four sports: baseball, basketball, football, and track. In 1941, he was named to the All-American football team. After his college education was left incomplete due to financial pressures, Robinson enlisted into the U.S. Army. After two years in the army, he had progressed to second lieutenant. His army career was also cut short due to a court-martial sparked by Robinson's objections to racial discrimination, therefore he was honorably discharged.

In 1945, there were few career opportunities open to a Black man, even to those who had attended college. Jackie played one season in the Negro Baseball League, traveling all over the Midwest with the Kansas City Monarchs. In 1947, when Jackie Robinson first donned a Brooklyn Dodger uniform, he pioneered the integration of professional athletics in America. By breaking the color barrier in baseball, the nation's preeminent sport, he courageously challenged the deeply rooted custom of racial segregation in both the North and the South.

At the end of Robinson's rookie season with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947, he had become National League Rookie of the Year with 12 homers, a league-leading 29 steals, and a .297 average. In 1949, he was selected as the N.L. Most Valuable player of the Year and also won the batting title with a .342 average that same year. As a baseball player, Robinson was on display for the whole country to judge. As a result of his great success, he was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962. In 1947, Jackie married Rachel Isum, a nursing student he met at UCLA. Rachel and their three children provided Jackie with the emotional support and sense of purpose essential for bearing the pressure during the early years of baseball.

Jackie Robinson died in 1972, with an image to all as being a well-known celebrity. On the 40th anniversary of Robinson's historic debut, all major teams across the nation celebrated the milestone. The United States Post Office has honored Robinson as well, by making him the subject of a commemorative postage stamp.

Sports Listings

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Jackie Robinson Career Highlights

In 1947, Jackie Robinson engineered the integration of professional sports in America by breaking the color barrier in baseball. He overcame numerous obstacles in his ten year career to become one of baseball's most exciting and dazzling players. His enormous talent helped lead the Brooklyn Dodgers to six pennants and one World Series Championship. The ultimate honor was bestowed when Jackie was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1962, his first year of eligibility.

However, Jackie Robinson's contributions go far beyond the baseball diamond. Upon retirement from baseball, Jackie tirelessly fought to improve the quality of life not only for African Americans, but for society as a whole. By becoming the first black vice president of a major American corporation, Robinson continued to open doors for African Americans. CMG Worldwide is proud to represent one of history's most influential athletes, Jackie Robinson.

Personal:

- ☐ Born January 31, 1919, in Cairo, Georgia
- ☐ Died October 24, 1972, in Stamford, Connecticut
- ☐ Married Rachel Issum February 10, 1946
- ☐ Children include Jackie Jr. (Died in 1971), Sharon, and David
- ☐ Served in the US Army from 1942-45, during which he became first Lieutenant

Education:

- ☐ Attended Pasadena Junior College 1938-39
- ☐ Attended UCLA 1939-41

Career:

- ☐ In 1947, he broke the color barrier in major league baseball by becoming the first African-American player when he played for the Brooklyn Dodgers
- ☐ Had a career batting average of .311 with the Dodgers, .333 in All-Star games
- ☐ Won the 1949 batting title with a .342
- ☐ National League All-Star Team 1949-54
- ☐ In ten years with the Dodgers, helped lead them to six (6) World Series and one (1) World Series Championship
- ☐ Selected as the National League MVP in 1949
- ☐ Named National League Rookie of the Year in 1947
- ☐ Elected to the Hall of Fame in 1962, his first year of eligibility
- ☐ Author of autobiography "I Never Had It Made"

Quotes:

- ☐ "Above anything else, I hate to lose"
...Jackie Robinson

Sports Listings

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Did You Know

- ☐ Jackie Robinson, in 1982, became the first major leaguer to appear on a US postage stamp
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Sports Listings

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Jackie Robinson's career totals

Year	G	AB	H	2B	3B	HR	TB	R	RBI	TBB	IW	SO	HP	SH	SF	SB	CS	SB%
GDP	BA	OBA	SA															
1947	151	590	175	31	5	12	252	125	48	74	3	36	9	28	0	28	11	72
5	.297	.383	.427															
1948	147	574	170	38	8	12	260	108	85	59	2	37	7	8	0	22	14	61
7	.296	.369	.453															
1949	156	593	203	38	12	16	313	122	124	86	12	26	8	17	0	37	16	70
22	.342	.432	.528															
1950	144	518	170	39	4	14	259	99	81	80	14	24	5	10	0	12	5	71
11	.328	.423	.500															
1951	153	548	185	33	7	19	289	106	88	79	6	27	9	6	0	25	8	76
10	.338	.429	.527															
1952	149	510	157	17	3	19	237	104	75	106	8	40	14	6	0	24	7	77
16	.308	.440	.465															
1953	136	484	159	34	7	12	243	109	95	74	5	30	7	9	0	17	4	81
12	.329	.425	.502															
1954	124	386	120	22	4	15	195	62	59	63	4	20	7	5	4	7	3	70
13	.311	.413	.505															
1955	105	317	81	6	2	8	115	51	36	61	5	18	3	6	3	12	3	80
8	.256	.378	.363															
1956	117	357	98	15	2	10	147	61	43	60	2	32	3	9	2	12	5	71
9	.275	.382	.412															
TOT.	1382	4877	1518	273	54	137	2310	947	734	742	61	290	72	104	9	196	76	72
113	.311	.409	.474															

Discrepancies between Retrosheet data and official Totals.

- ☐ 1. 7-8-47. The official totals show a stolen base that is not shown on the Roth scoresheet. Several newspapers were examined for the last half of the 1947 season and there is no indication that this stolen base took place.
- ☐ 2. 5-9-48. The official totals do not include a walk that is clear on the Roth scoresheet. The total walks allowed by the opposition pitchers according to wire service box scores agree with us.
- ☐ 3. 6-27-48. Another case in which the official totals do not include a walk that is clear on the Roth scoresheet. Again our version agrees with the wire service box score.
- ☐ 4. 7-2-49. The official totals show a strikeout that the Roth scoresheet does not. Again we are in compliance with the wire service.

The career totals for Robinson in Total Baseball and the Macmillan Encyclopedia agree with the official totals. The net effects of these four disagreements are:

Category	Retrosheet	Official
SB	196	197
BB	742	740
SO	290	291

Brooklyn Dodgers Home Page

10TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1997 Times Newspapers Limited
The Times

March 31, 1997, Monday

SECTION: Sport

LENGTH: 879 words

HEADLINE: The day they tore down baseball's barriers

BYLINE: Keith Blackmore

BODY:

Keith Blackmore looks back 50 years to the event that changed the face of American sport.

Fifty years ago next month, one man changed the face of baseball, and American sport, for ever. When Jackie Roosevelt Robinson trotted on to the diamond at Ebbets Field to play for the Brooklyn Dodgers against the Boston Braves on April 15, 1947, he became the first black man to play Major League baseball this century.

There had been black players for years, of course. Some had even played with whites until about 1895, when an unstated and unofficial colour bar was brought down, forcing often highly-talented outcasts to play in the loosely structured Negro Leagues.

There had been a handful of prominent black sportsmen in other fields, too. Jack Johnson and Joe Louis had ruled the world of boxing, Jesse Owens had won four gold medals at the 1936 Olympic Games, but no black man had excelled (or been allowed to excel) in the leading team sports, and certainly not in the game known then and now as the American national pastime. Then came Jackie Robinson, son of a sharecropper and grandson of a slave, to break the mould.

When the new season begins tomorrow, the modern game will acknowledge its debt. Every player will wear a small arm patch (inscription: Breaking barriers) commemorating that first appearance. President Clinton will honour the anniversary on April 15 with a speech before the game between the Dodgers, now based in Los Angeles, and the New York Mets.

On that day, all the Major League games will be preceded by the showing of a short film, produced by Spike Lee, and every game will be played with balls featuring a Robinson logo - all this to celebrate the fact that Branch Rickey, the legendary general manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, found the "right kind of man" to launch "baseball's great experiment".

Robinson had enjoyed a distinguished multisport career at the University of California, Los Angeles, before a troubled stint in the US Army. As a player with the Kansas City Monarchs in the Negro Leagues, he was evidently talented, but when Rickey offered him a contract with one of the Dodgers' minor teams, the player was as surprised as anyone.

Rickey's motives were difficult to discern. A wheeler-dealer in the classic style, he was not known for making noble gestures and it had surely not

Times Newspapers Limited, March 31, 1997

escaped his attention that there was a growing black population in Brooklyn ready and waiting to fill the empty bleachers at Ebbets Field.

Whatever his reasons, Rickey had settled on exactly the right man to fill probably the most demanding role in the history of American sport.

Rickey made it clear to Robinson before he signed that there would be insults, protests and perhaps worse, from players, officials and the fans. "Are you looking for a man without the guts to fight back?" Robinson is said to have asked. "I'm looking for someone with the guts not to fight back," Rickey responded.

In 1946, Robinson took the minor leagues by storm with the Dodgers junior team in Montreal. The next year, he did the same in the majors. But there was much to be endured. At 28, he was old to be joining the big leagues and several commentators let him know it. Even before he arrived, some of the Dodgers players signed a petition asking Rickey not to bring Robinson to Brooklyn. It was ignored.

At one stage in that first season, it seemed that the St Louis Cardinals would refuse to play the Dodgers if Robinson was in the line-up. Ford Frick, the National League president, immediately warned that anyone refusing to take the field against Robinson would be banned for life. "The National League will go down the line with Robinson, no matter the consequences," he told the Cardinals. "If you go through with your intentions you will find you have been guilty of complete madness." The threat subsided.

In the first two months of the season, Robinson was hit by pitches six times. He was spiked by base-runners. He was taunted by opposing players and fans. But despite it all he never once retaliated and, at the end of the season, was voted the first rookie of the year.

Robinson, however, was much more than just a symbolic figure - he was also a great player. On the field, he galvanised the Dodgers. His aggressive style of play contrasted strikingly with the graceful stoicism he showed in the face of often vicious provocation. In due course, he was to be batting champion and voted the league's most valuable player.

Robinson turned the Dodgers from also-rans into winners. In his ten years with them, Brooklyn won six National League pennants and, in 1955, they won the World Series for the first and only time in their history. Yet his impact off the field was greater.

By the end of that first year, four more black players had joined Major League clubs and a revolution was under way. By 1959, every Major League team had at least one black player. Today, the three best-paid stars in the game - Barry Bonds, Ken Griffey Jr and Albert Belle - are black.

Robinson, a diabetic, died in 1972, aged 53, and was buried in Cypress Hills Cemetery, Brooklyn. His headstone bears an epitaph he provided himself: "A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives."

6TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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Agence France Presse

March 31, 1997 31:22 GMT

SECTION: Sports

LENGTH: 1227 words

HEADLINE: Baseball racism

BYLINE: Jim Slater

DATELINE: NEW YORK, March 31

BODY:

Fifty years after Jackie Robinson challenged United States apartheid through the beloved national pastime of baseball, racism haunts the US sports world as much as its society.

"The residue of racism is still with us," Robinson's widow Rachel said. "The struggle is still on."

Robinson became Major League Baseball's first African-American player in 1947 and the anniversary of his debut with the Brooklyn Dodgers will be honored here on April 15. The season begins on Tuesday.

Robinson died in 1972 aged 53, never living to see how much his sacrifice accomplished and yet how little has changed since he forced club owners to end a 60-year ban on blacks in baseball.

"As I sing the national anthem, I cannot salute the flag," Robinson wrote in an autobiography. "I know that I am a black man in a white world. In 1972, in 1947, at my birth in 1919, I know I never had it made."

His integration of baseball paved the way for minority athletes to become multi-millionaires in every major sport. Golfer Tiger Woods is one at the age of 21. Basketball star Michael Jordan will make 70 million dollars in 1997.

Eighty percent of the National Basketball Association's 361 players are black. Two-thirds of American football's 1,815 players are black. About one-third of big league baseball's 1,100 players are black or Latino.

"A lot of young players have no idea what Jackie meant," Boston baseball star Jim Rice said. "All they see are dollar signs. They should get on their knees every night and thank God for Jackie Robinson. He gave us a chance."

Shoemakers and sports equipment manufacturers have perverted the dream for profits, promoting heroes to poor youth who dream of rising from ghettos to riches when reality shows astronomical odds for such a leap.

"There is an overemphasis on sports in the black community," Harvard University psychiatrist Alvin Poussaint said. "Too many black students are putting all their eggs in one basket."

Agence France Presse, March 31, 1997

Honouring Robinson will bring baseball a lot of money. Officials would hope people ignore the fight that goes on and buy some of 55 million dollars in Robinson anniversary souvenirs.

Most profits from Robinson anniversary merchandise will go to corporations with few black executives. The number of black men in US prisons grows faster than the number in management jobs.

"I believe it will always be baseball's proudest moment," said acting commissioner Bud Selig, a white man who has presided over dark days of labor feuding that wiped out a World Series.

"It's an important day for the game as well as the nation. It signifies the breaking down of one of our society's most significant barriers."

But how broken are the barriers?

In a sport where Cincinnati Reds owner Marge Schott praises Adolf Hitler and insults Asian-American children, it is no wonder that two-time World Series-winning manager Cito Gaston of Toronto feels discrimination.

"No one has said, 'Look what Cito has done here. Now maybe we can have some more black guys managing.' It has been the other way. I get ripped from one end of town to the other," Gaston said.

"There are a few supposedly brilliant managers who have won World Series titles. I don't hear anybody say that about me. I have to say it's racism."

In 1990s America, Texaco oil executives were caught using racist hiring practices, Denny's restaurants were found discouraging blacks from dining there and some Avis car rental branches refused business from blacks.

Ex-sport star O.J. Simpson was seen to be guilty of murder by most whites and innocent by most blacks, in part because of how much they thought white police officers were racists. Differing court verdicts reflected the divide.

Robinson helped conquer white supremacy on ballfields. But whites remain rulers in executive boardrooms in a sport that also ignores Native American protests over clubs nicknamed Braves and Indians.

The only black general manager in the major leagues is Bob Watson of the New York Yankees. He was rebuked for obtaining hurt Australian pitcher Graeme Lloyd, only to watch him help bring the Yankees a World Series title.

"When you are the only one, and I have been the only one for a number of years now, it's difficult when you have the weight of everybody else watching you," he said.

"But this is my lot. This is my destiny. I do the best I can. I hope it doesn't take another 49 years to see it happen again. If doing what I am doing can help, so be it."

Then there is Al Campanis, the former Dodger vice president and player personnel director and a former teammate of Robinson. He showed baseball's hidden racism in 1987 on the 40th anniversary of Robinson's debut.

Agence France Presse, March 31, 1997

AFP

"I have never said blacks are not intelligent. Many of them are highly intelligent. They are outstanding athletes, very God-gifted and wonderful people. But they may not have the desire to be in the front office."

The late Arthur Ashe, a black tennis star and Dodger fan from Robinson's earliest days, was horrified at the remarks.

"Al Campanis said what we knew all along but nobody wanted to admit -- that there were people like him who acted on the assumption blacks didn't have the 'necessities' to manage in the front office with any degree of credibility," Ashe said.

"The pain for me as a long time baseball fan was that it came from the Dodgers."

Hideo Nomo is one of the most popular current Dodgers, but the idea of a Japanese pitcher in the post-World War II era of Robinson was unthinkable. Robinson was a US soldier who fought racism in war and peace.

"I learned I was in two wars, one against a foreign enemy and the other against prejudice at home," he said.

In some ways, holdout Japanese pitcher Hideki Irabu fights that battle today, trying to change contract rules in his homeland and fight a major league system that denies the Japanese the free agency US players enjoy.

js/pi97

AFP

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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