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**Joseph Dorinson, Jorum Warmund**. *Jackie Robinson: Race, Sports and the American Dream.* Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1998. 264 pp. $34.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7656-0317-3.

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I was too little to remember Jackie Robinsons debut in Brooklyn, even though we lived in Queens. I dont recall my father ever making mention of baseball and race in the same sentence, so I doubt he gave much, if any, thought to Robinsons color. To Dad he was another baseball player that might give Brooklyn the edge.

For the most part, *Race, Baseball and the American Dream* is a collection of essays about baseball and one of its stars. Dad would have loved reading it. The thrust of the essays seems to be that while Robinson was good, he was not the best. His invitatio loopbn to the majors rested as much on his playing ability as on his presentation; he represented his race.

Baseball changed, for the better, as a result of Robinsons reaching the majors. First, and obviously, he broke the color line, integrating the game and helping to pave the way for the civil rights actions of the 1950's and 60's. Next, Robinson introduced a new style of play to the majors, which took the game in a differenttion. In his essay, "Jackie Robinson and the Third Age of Modern Baseball," David Shiner contends that baseball has moved through three distinct eras in the twentieth century. The first couple of decades were marked as the dead ball period, which emphasized the bunt, the steal, the hit-and-run play, and opportunistic baserunning (p. 149). In the second phase, the long ball era, bunting and stealing lost their prominence as more and more players hit home runs. The third age, which began with Robinsons arrival, combined the best of the first two. Robinson proved that power and speed could be complementary rather than mutually exclusive ... (p. 152). Finally, by breaking the color barrier Robinson greatly expanded the talent pool. Previously excluded players of the Negro League now could bring their abilities to the majors, thus improving the quality of play.

Overall, the book is divided into seven sections, ranging from essays treating the historical perspectives and Robinsons impact on American society to the remembrances of fans and fellow players. Each of the essays is short, focused and well written. In this regard, editors Dorinson and Warmund did an excellent job. The essays come from the 1997 conference, held at the Brooklyn campus of Long Island University, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of Robinsons entry to the major leagues.

The authors of the articles range from some of Robinsons contemporaries to lovers of the game to professional historians. This mix of writers adds a nice blend to the examination of Robinsons career and his impact on both the sport and society in general, because one is presented with ideas representing several varied perspectives.

To me, Part III, "The Radical Press/Agenda" appears to be the weakest section of the book. The emphasis on American communism, the post World War II Red Scare, and their interaction with American race relations seems a bit contrived. Certainly throughout its history, the American communist party was in the forefront of those fighting segregation. One need only a passing acquaintance with the incidents in Scottsboro, Alabama to know of the extent of communist involvement. Then, as in the integration of baseball, while the communists played an important role, theirs was not the only part. Rusinacks article seems to place too much emphasis on the importance of communists.

On a more positive note, the essays in Part II, "Fans Remembrances," were among the best. Certainly Peter Levines nostalgic recollections of walking to the BIT elevated stop at East 16th Street and Kings Highway to take the train to Abbots Field is among the best in this collection. He recalls with such joy the era of candy stores that stocked the cigars my father was never without and the spaldeens, egg creams, pretzels three-for-a-nickel, and charlotte ruses that were my preferences (A little piece of Paris in Flatbush, Mr. Ring always told me) (p. 62). Like the rest of the collection, while Levines article is basically about baseball, there is much about American society mixed in with the sport.

While there is little that is new or unique about these

essays, they do provide a fascinating look at the interrelationship of race, society and sport in mid twentieth century America. For scholars and baseball afficionados this book will provide some fresh analysis of material with which they may well be quite familiar. For the general reading public, this will prove to be an excellent examination of the boys of summer and their connections to American society. For both groups there will be fascinating biographies of some lesser known players. I found the book to be enjoyable and readable. It certainly provided me with some new material for my course on American history since 1945, and there is plenty here for anyone teaching a course on race and ethnic relations in the United States.

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