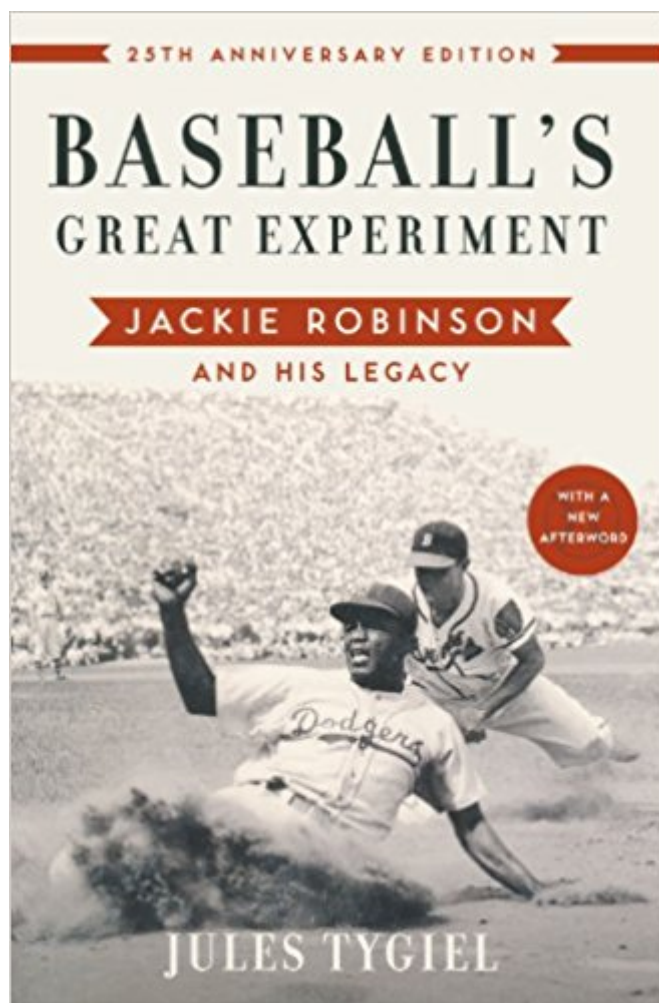


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Baseball's Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson And His Legacy



Synopsis

In this gripping account of one of the most important steps in the history of American desegregation, Jules Tygiel tells the story of Jackie Robinson's crossing of baseball's color line. Examining the social and historical context of Robinson's introduction into white organized baseball, both on and off the field, Tygiel also tells the often neglected stories of other African-American players--such as Satchel Paige, Roy Campanella, Willie Mays, and Hank Aaron--who helped transform our national pastime into an integrated game. Drawing on dozens of interviews with players and front office executives, contemporary newspaper accounts, and personal papers, Tygiel provides the most telling and insightful account of Jackie Robinson's influence on American baseball and society. The anniversary issue features a new foreword by the author.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Rich, intelligent cultural history.... The effect of Mr. Tygiel's lively narrative is to make us realize, or remind us in case we've forgotten, what a remarkable impact Rickey's experiment had on baseball." --The New York Times

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"Not only is this a book that is long overdue, but it turns out to be a book that is well worth the wait; it is comprehensive, perceptive, balanced--and into the bargain it is eminently readable." --Washington Post Book World

"Gives us the first in-depth, fully rounded picture of the successful integration of major league baseball." --The New Republic

"A thumpingly good baseball book." --Chicago Sun-Times

Jules Tygiel, a native of Brooklyn, is Professor of History at San Francisco State University and founder of the Pacific Ghost League. He is the author of *The Great Los Angeles Swindle: Oil, Stocks, and Scandal During the Roaring Twenties*.

For the first half of the twentieth century, Major League Baseball pretended to be a monument for the Land of the Free's national pastime. But actually it was a shameful bulwark of segregation. *BASEBALL'S GREAT EXPERIMENT* is an enlightening chronicle of how American baseball became integrated--and therefore TRULY American. Jules Tygiel's first chapter displays fireworks. Jackie Robinson's debut in the Dodger organization propels the reader forward like a fast-paced novel. Then the pace slows down and becomes history. In the next chapter Tygiel flashes back to the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, relating how the few blacks who played in organized baseball were gradually squeezed out. Tom Sawyer's fence got whitewashed. In the third chapter, Tygiel returns to the 1940s and begins his detailed account of Branch Rickey's affair with integration and Jackie Robinson. It relegates 42--the recent movie--to the status of a peepshow. So if that movie is all you know about this affair, you know practically nothing. For the last section of the book, you made need to apply yourself. At least I did. It is not quite a scholarly account, but it lacks the narrative flow of the Jackie Robinson section. Even so, it is a cornucopia of precious anecdotes. Baseball players that I knew only as faces on baseball cards became real people, afflicted with the adversities of prejudice and segregation. Can you imagine the great Henry Aaron having to pee alongside the team bus because he was not allowed to use the white restroom? The trade paperback has disadvantages. Its small typescript may be troublesome, and its printed photos are poor. But the hardcover will not have Tygiel's "Afterword," which updates the book to 2007. Both editions have many footnotes, a bibliography, and an index. I generally skip the "Acknowledgments," but for this book it was worth reading. Tygiel tells how he got interested in the subject, and he reveals his authoritative sources of research. (For example, Dodger manager Walter Alston and Jackie Robinson's wife Rachel.)

The story of the integration of baseball needs to be told again and again, especially in a time when a divided nation tends to forget how far we still have to go when it comes to respecting one another and accepting everyone into not only baseball but society as well.

This is the book from which John McCain and his ghost writer "borrowed" most of the content, both

of facts and of rhetoric, for the first chapter of McCain's "Hard Call". The ghost does acknowledge Tygiel, but merely in passing. And this is surely the deepest historical biography of any sports figure ever written. Jules Tygiel is a professor of history at San Francisco State University, and the author of a fine dispassionate biography of Ronald Reagan, as well as the book "Baseball As History", which quite brilliantly examines the culture of America in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries through the lens of baseball. You can read "Baseball's Great Experiment" simply for pleasure, as a baseball lover, or you can read it for historical insight, which it offers aplenty. It's a great irony that baseball and the army were integrated meaningfully long before corporate business, the mainline Christian churches, the federal bureaucracy, or academia! Tygiel writes firm straight-forward prose, with a minimum of sermonizing (McCain's big fault as a writer) or academic pomposity. His portrayals of Branch Rickey and Jackie Robinson are well-rounded and believable, with both their strengths and their weaknesses. Even if you have a total indifference to baseball, you'll find the human drama fascinating. As for yours truly... Do it again, Red Sox!

this is one of the great books of modern civil rights history, far more than a book about integrating baseball. It is a classic.

This is a wonderful book that I can't praise enough. If you - like me - have been putting off reading about Jackie Robinson and the other black baseball pioneers of the late 1940's and 1950's, this is the book for you. It's a shocking description of just what life was like for blacks at that time. It's a real eye-opener that needs to be read by all baseball fans and all students of American history.

Great condition!!!

Got this for my husband for his birthday. He started reading as soon as he opened it. We had to take it away from him for cake and candles!

This is the seminal work on this subject and is important for an understanding of race relations in this country, as well as the transformation of baseball into the game as we know it today.

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