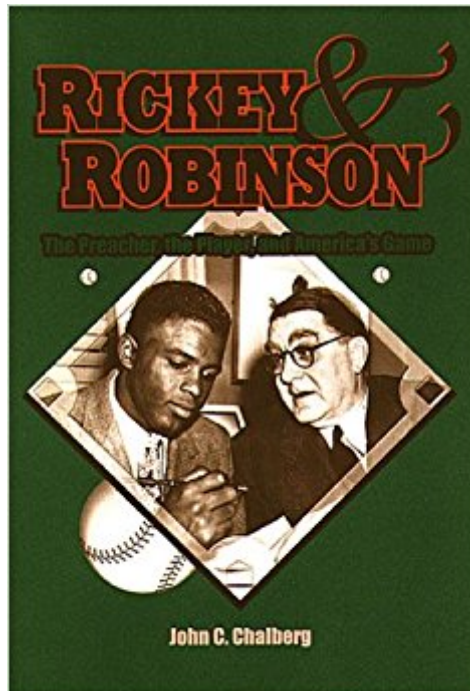




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Rickey And Robinson: The Preacher, The Player, And America's Game



Synopsis

On August 28, 1945, a scout for the Brooklyn Dodgers baseball team escorted an intriguing, if not exactly youthful, prospect into the intriguing, if not exactly welcoming, office of a veteran baseball man who had already revolutionized the sport at least once. Jackie Robinson meet Branch Rickey. What actually happened in that cluttered room over the course of the next few hours will never be known for certain, but without a doubt this meeting set in motion changes in major league baseball and in the nation that would echo long after the postwar became the Cold War. Though baseball necessarily lies at the heart of this fascinating dual biography, the stories of these two remarkable men touch many of the most important issues and changes in American life from 1895-1970-the transition from rural to urban America, two World Wars and the war in Vietnam, the Red Scare, the evolution of mass media, and, of course, the Civil Rights movement-their lives spanning most of the century that they helped to shape. Alone, each story is a good one. Combined-and they can hardly be separated-the Rickey-Robinson story becomes compelling, even mythical. For those readers not particularly interested in baseball, Rickey and Robinson will surely help them appreciate the game's place in American history. At the same time, those who do not have to be persuaded that baseball truly is America's game will treasure this remarkable work. This unique book is certain to make informative and entertaining reading for a variety of courses in sport history, recent America, popular culture, and the U.S. survey.

Book Information

Paperback: 270 pages

Publisher: Wiley-Blackwell; 1 edition (April 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0882959522

ISBN-13: 978-0882959528

Product Dimensions: 5.6 x 0.6 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #379,950 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #227 inÂ Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Sports & Outdoors > Baseball #631 inÂ Books > Sports & Outdoors > Baseball #965 inÂ Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National > African-American & Black

Customer Reviews

Jackie Robinson's Hall of Fame (1962) career with the Brooklyn Dodgers is legendary. It has been

told in movies, TV, and many books, including his own *I Never Had It Made* (LJ 4/15/95). Though Branch Rickey's story is less celebrated beyond his dramatic 1946 signing of the first Big League black player, his own long career with the Browns, Cards, Dodgers, and Pirates won him his Hall of Fame election in 1967. Chalberg, who will portray Rickey in a one-man play at the Hall of Fame in August, offers a warm look at the two baseball rebels who are so often remembered together. A good choice for young adult and adult public library shelves. DMOREY Berger, St. Joseph's Hosp. Lib., Tucson, AZ Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Advanced Praise for Rickey & Robinson: "Chalberg knows his men. This sprightly written dual biography breathes life into two fascinating men forever joined in our historical imagination." "Larry R. Gerlach, Professor of History, University of Utah "A deft and entertaining account of the Rickey and Robinson saga. Based on a thorough knowledge of the secondary sources and great enthusiasm for the subject, this book should appeal to baseball historians and general readers alike." "Steve Gietschier, *The Sporting News* "A striking, provocative, and interesting book about two of the baseball giants of the 20th century" | The changing world of baseball, the civil rights movement, and the American social landscape provide the canvas on which the lives of these two men unfold." "Richard C. Crepeau, Professor of History, University of Central Florida

Both of the protagonists in this book, Branch Rickey and Jackie Robinson, are well known to even the most casual fan of baseball. Rickey was an innovator and front office scion who led the St. Louis Browns, the St. Louis Cardinals, the Brooklyn Dodgers, and the Pittsburgh Pirates between the 1910s and the 1950s. His "farm system" turned the Cardinals into a powerhouse in the 1920s. Even more important, his desegregation of MLB with the Dodgers in the latter 1940s had a lasting impact on the sport. Jackie Robinson, Rickey's first African American signing, integrated the sport and set in train a significant set of changes across the board. This is a dual biography; essentially the chapters discuss one and then the other of the central characters until their stories become interconnected. This is a solid general introduction to both individuals and the integration of MLB beginning with Robinson's debut with the Dodgers in 1947. It is not a great book; but it is a solid general discussion of the story. It is suitable for undergraduate classes; but it is less useful for the specialist or for use in advanced studies. For detailed discussions of this subject nothing surpasses the work of Jules Tygiel, "Baseball's Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy" (Oxford University Press, 1997 expanded edition).

I take Chuck Chalburg's US History class at the community college where he teaches. Reading this book is exactly like listening to him give a lecture: long and droning, but informative. I don't know anything about baseball, nor do I care, and aside from the occasional anomaly, this book is still easy to follow. I feel privileged to be in Mr. Chalberg's class even though it is VERY difficult and he should probably be teaching at a higher level.

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