

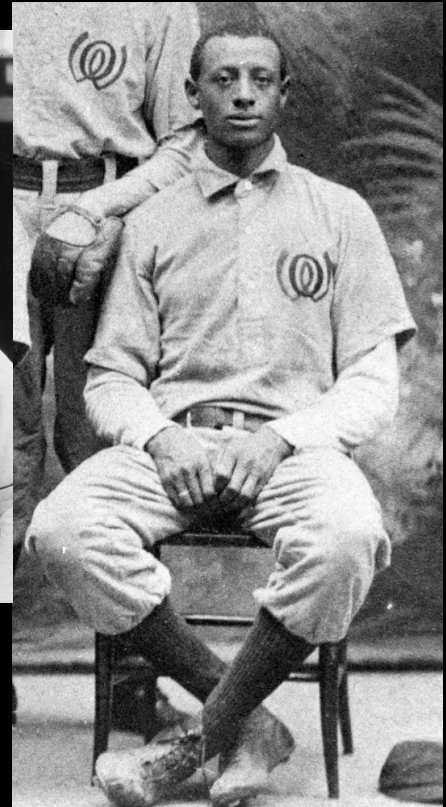
# 1942: Rickey to Dodgers and his motivations for the great experiment: civic virtue? (53)



El Cheapo Rickey would not gamble on bringing in a stranger Flatbush to succeed Durocher but the \$80,000-a-year Brooklyn president is no dope and he realizes that the popular Dixie Walker would



be an excellent rallying point for all the fans, if and when Durocher knocks himself out with some bedroom, courtroom, bar, apartment, or under-the-stands shenanigans in the future.



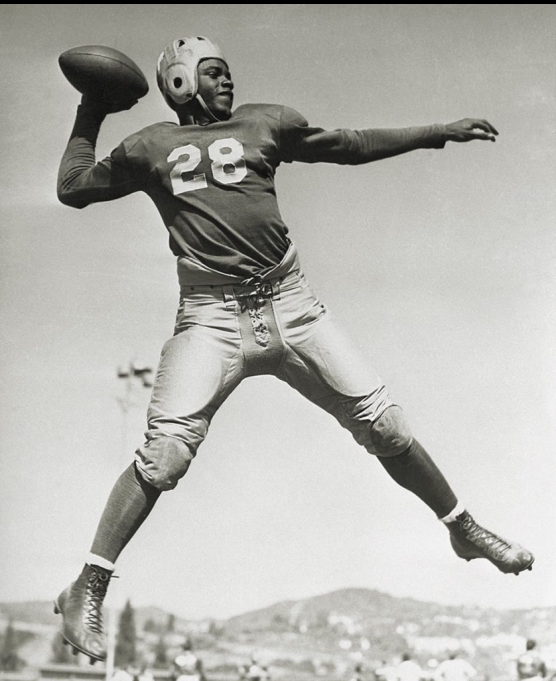
“Please tell me why...I spent four mortal hours today conversing with a man named Dizzy Dean.” Tygiel, 53



“I’ve never been sure Rickey didn’t do it to knock us out,” mused Negro League star Frank Forbes. “We were giving him fits at the gate.” Tygiel, 53. At right, Negro League game at Polo Grounds; top right, Charlie Thomas; top left Jimmy Powersm New York *Daily News* columnist



# The One: JR as troublemaker or virtuous citizen?



**RECORD OF TRIAL**  
(Proper)  
of  
Robinson, Jack R. O-1031586  
(Last name) (First name and middle initial) (Army serial No.)  
Second Lieutenant, Cavalry Company C, 758th Tank Bn  
(Grade) (Organization)  
Camp Hood, Texas,  
(Station)  
By  
**GENERAL COURT MARTIAL**  
Appointed by the Commanding ~~Officer~~ General  
Headquarters XXIII CORPS  
Tried at  
Camp Hood, Texas, 2 August, 1944.



JR's Fort Hood court martial, his college athletics, with Newcombe, and testifying before HUAC in 1949. Called to discredit Paul Robeson's statement that blacks would not fight against the Soviets, JR also spoke for racial equality.

"A victim of prejudice," writes Tygiel, Robinson "reacted vehemently when he perceived a racially-motivated slight. His driving desire for excellence and his keen sense of injustice created an explosive urge. 'He was the kind of man who had to make his presence felt,' says his friend and teammate Don Newcombe. 'He sometimes overdid it. Like a boiler he could not keep it all inside.'" Tygiel, 62.

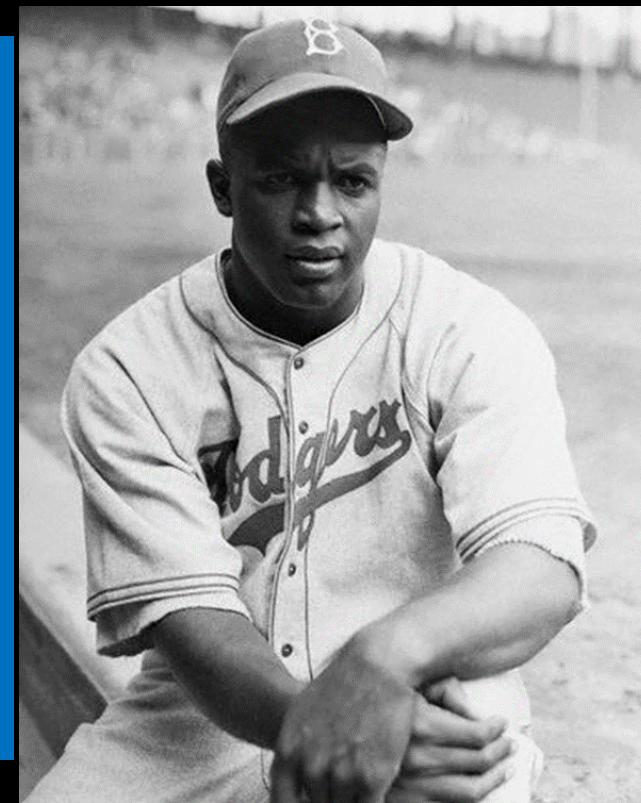






The Meeting:  
nonresistance,  
collaboration,  
and secrecy

“Robinson possessed, by one description, ‘a sensitive, intelligent face, with strong features, a high forehead, and determined chin.’” One columnist called him “the blackest black man, as well as one of the most handsome, I ever saw.” Tygiel, 66.



Larry McPhail of the Yankees, a foe of integration, left the Mayor’s committee to issue his own report, stirring up controversy and threatening to make the JR signing as forced.



“Mr. Rickey, do you want a ballplayer who’s afraid to fight back,” Robinson asked Rickey. “I want a player with guts enough to not fight back,” Rickey answered. Tygiel, 66



"There comes a time when people get tired. We are here this evening to say to those who have mistreated us so long, that we are tired. Tired of being segregated and humiliated; tired of being kicked about by the brutal feet of oppression. We have no alternative but to protest....our actions must be guided by the deepest principles of our Christian faith. Love must be our regulating ideal. Once again we must hear the words of Jesus echoing across the centuries: 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you.' If we fail to do this our protest will end up as a meaningless drama on the stage of history, and its memory will be shrouded with the ugly garments of shame. In spite of the mistreatment that we have confronted we must not become bitter and end up by hating our white brothers. As Booker T. Washington said, 'Let no man pull you so low as to make you hate him.' If you will protest courageously, and yet with dignity and Christian love, when the history books are written in future generations, the historians will have to pause and say, 'There lived a great people - a black people - who injected new meaning and dignity into the veins of civilization.' This is our challenge and our overwhelming responsibility." - Martin Luther King, Jr., speaking extemporaneously during the Montgomery bus boycott, 1955

Reinhold Niebuhr and “the spiritual defense against resentment”: "If social cohesion is impossible without coercion, and coercion is impossible without the creation of social injustice, and the destruction of injustice is impossible without the use of further coercion, are we not in an endless cycle of social conflict?"

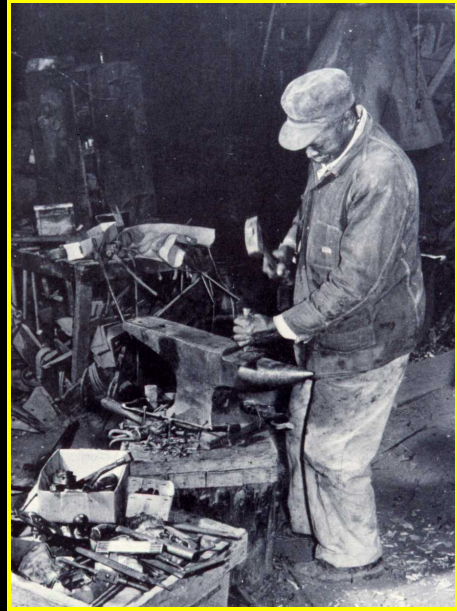




## A Populist and Civic Movement

“Life is to be lived, not controlled, and humanity is won by continuing to play in face of certain defeat.”

- from Ralph Ellison's  
Invisible Man (1952)





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## RICKEY, ROBINSON, AND THE PUBLIC REALM

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An important underlying theme of much of what I have had to say this semester is that baseball preserves something of the spirit and the possibilities of "the public realm" central to the ancient Greek polis (the realm of freedom and of politics, where ambition and honor were more important than mundane economic interests; in contrast, the Greeks understood the market as a realm of necessity and coercion). The occasional references to baseball as an important civic institution, indeed as America's civic religion, that dot its history, as well as the commercial game's exploitation of and dependence on civic pride and civic rivalry, suggest as much. But I think the link is more organic than that. The idea of a public realm of virtuous men transcending mere material concerns came down to our founding fathers via the republican tradition of Renaissance Italy and early modern England (see J.G.A. Pocock's influential *The Machiavellian Moment* or the more accessible study by Gordon Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*). But early on in the history of the American republic the opportunities and the distractions of the marketplace and the rise of a profession of interest-oriented broker-politicians raised doubts about the existence of a unitary public good independent of the material interests of groups and individuals. The public good, if anything, seemed less a product of the disinterested actions of virtuous citizens than the product of the competition among selfish interests. Rather than a matter of virtue, imagination, ambition, politics became a process of compromise, the art of the possible as delimited by interests.



It is in this context, in the 1840's and 1850's, that baseball (and sports generally) began to emerge (recall Norbert Elias on the link between state-building and sports). The development of organized forms of play coincided with what the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga has described as the gradual eradication of the play element from most other cultural forms from which they had taken shape. These cultural forms, as I try to suggest above, included politics. The rationalization of such activities, historian Christopher Lasch argues, left "little room for the spirit of arbitrary invention or the disposition to leave things to chance. Risk, daring, uncertainty - important components of play - have no place in industry or in activities infiltrated by industrial standards, which seek precisely to predict and control the future and to eliminate risk." Sports, of course, celebrated exactly these threatened attributes of risk, daring, uncertainty (and baseball, in particular, attracted clerks and artisans who felt most acutely the impact of industrial discipline and standards). The appeal of sports, notwithstanding their increasingly commercialized nature, owed a great deal to their transcendence of purely rational, instrumental, and pecuniary matters. Glory, honor, inventiveness, and imagination remained central virtues in the world of sports.



Thus sports inherited something of the qualities of the classical public. Perhaps the best indication of this is that a variety of political issues in American society have been more frankly and more playfully approached through baseball than through formal political institutions. Racial segregation is, of course, the most famous and most important example. In the late 1940's and early 1950's, Jules Tygiel writes, "developments on southern playing fields spearheaded the attack on segregation. The acceptance of blacks in interracial competition dented Jim Crow's armor, and in many instances, caused people, particularly business leaders, to re-evaluate the efficacy and wisdom of southern racial policies. Even as resistance to integration escalated, the baseball diamond remained an oasis of relative enlightenment amidst and increasingly hostile environment." Moreover, the essence of the more modern public (that thing which we call public opinion) is the capacity for debate, deliberation, and decision (for talk), as such scholars as Jurgen Habermas and Benjamin Barber argue. Here again baseball touches on the political and public realm. Again, listen to Tygiel and note the emphasis on the telling of tales: "The saga of Robinson's first season has become a part of American mythology - sacrosanct in its memory, magnificent in its retelling. It remains a drama which thrills and fascinates, combining the central themes of the illusive Great American Novel: the undertones of Horatio Alger, the interracial comradery of nineteenth-century fiction, the sage advisor and his youthful apprentice, and the rugged and righteous individual confronting the angry mob. It is a tale of courage, heroics, and triumph. Epic in its proportions, the Robinson legend has persevered - and will continue to do so - because the myth, which rarely deviates from reality, fits our national perceptions of fair play and social progress." Myth can enlighten as well as mislead (as Joe Dugan reminds us in his comment about Ruth - "Even the lies about him are true").

**the style of the Negro Leagues:** a version of "inside," or scientific" baseball, longer lasting; with special emphasis on speed, daring, trickery - in part a holdover from the (Harlem Globetrotting-style) clowning teams

***"Up in the Race"***





Spring 1946: Robinson's dangerous (and unpleasant) encounter with Jim Crow



Columbia, Tennessee race riot, February 1946: Upper right, Thurgood Marshall defended two blacks arrested and was later almost lynched. Tygiel, 100. Bus waiting rooms, New Orleans, Jacksonville. In better times, the Robinsons flying in 1955 (lower right).





Planning and Post-War  
Chaos: Wright, Hopper, and  
Daytona Beach (Tygiel, 102)



“if they come  
here, they  
can’t play  
and that’s  
flat.” Miami  
civic leader.  
Tygiel, 102



Segregated Florida Beach, above, Bethune-Cookman University, far left  
and right, Daytona Beach ballpark and Joe Harris Park, below.

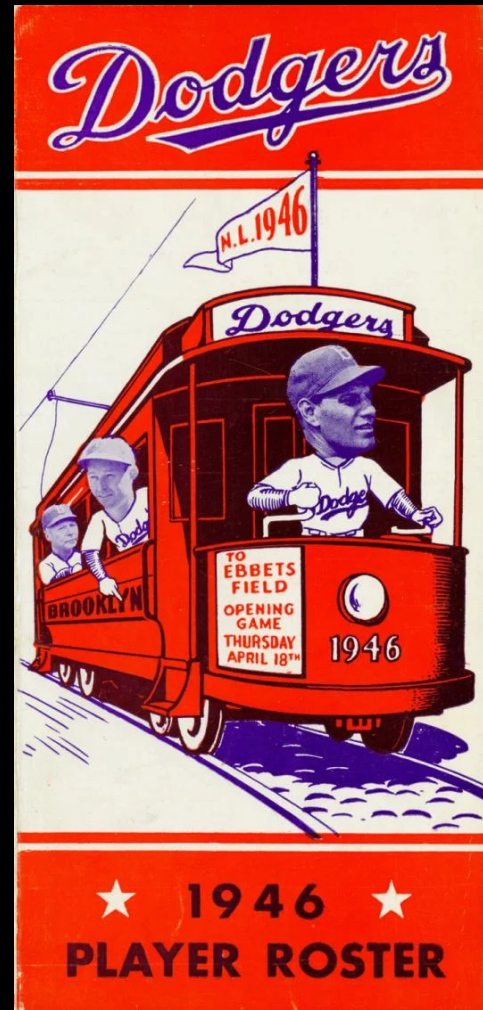








## Florida Lockouts vs. Rickey's Strong Hand (Tygiel, 110-111)

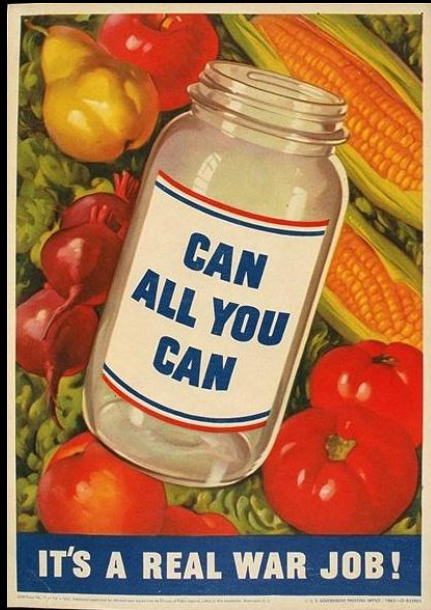


Today's Jackie Robinson Park, Daytona Beach. In this first game, despite worries and an overflow crowd, "there was absolutely nothing to remind the observer that 'something different' was occurring." Tygiel, 108

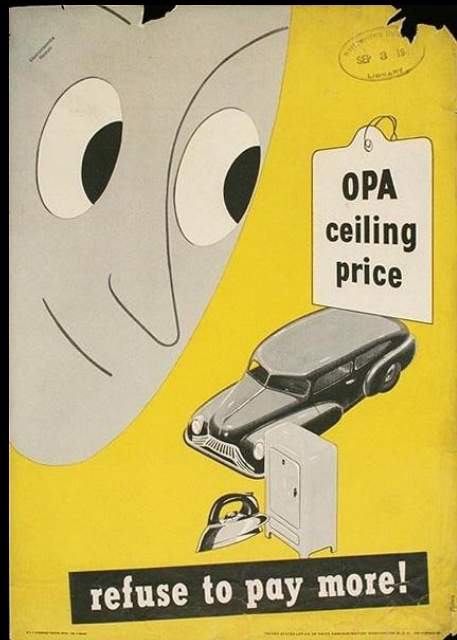
The Sanford lockout, Rachel Robinson recalled, served "not only to enlighten us and open our eyes to what things were going to be like, but it also mobilized a lot of fight in us. We were not willing to think about going back. It gave us the kind of anger and rage to move ahead with real determination." Tygiel, 107

Tygiel, 107





During World War II, the consumer took an increasingly central role in civic life. Public accommodations became a key focus of the civil rights movement.



“The Dodgers are big business and there no mistaking that....Daytona Beach is getting its name printed daily in the newspapers printed all over the U.S.” Daytona Beach sportswriter.  
 “Don’t get any idea that we aren’t for the boys from Brooklyn.” – local car dealer.

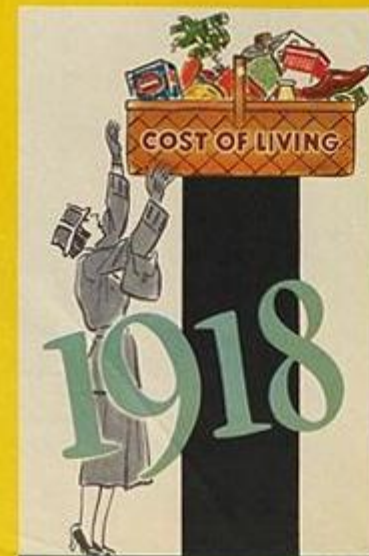


SEP 3 1944

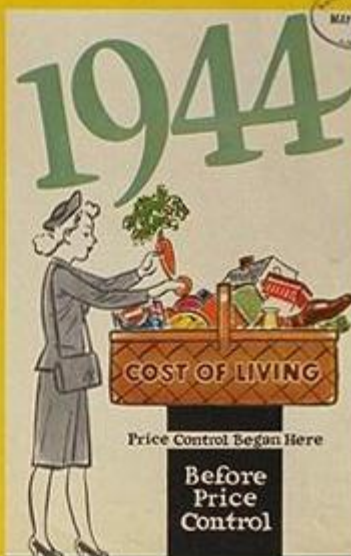
**OPA  
ceiling  
price**

**refuse to pay more!**

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION



**64.6%** RISE IN COST  
OF LIVING  
53RD MONTH  
WORLD WAR I



RISE IN COST  
OF LIVING  
53RD MONTH  
WORLD WAR II **25.9%**

Here's a war job all America may be proud of. The rise in the wartime cost of living today is less than half the World War I increase... only the patriotic cooperation of the public and businessmen with the government's price control program made this record possible... let's keep up the good work by keeping the Home Front Pledge:

"I pay no more than ceiling prices..  
..I pay my ration points in full."



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

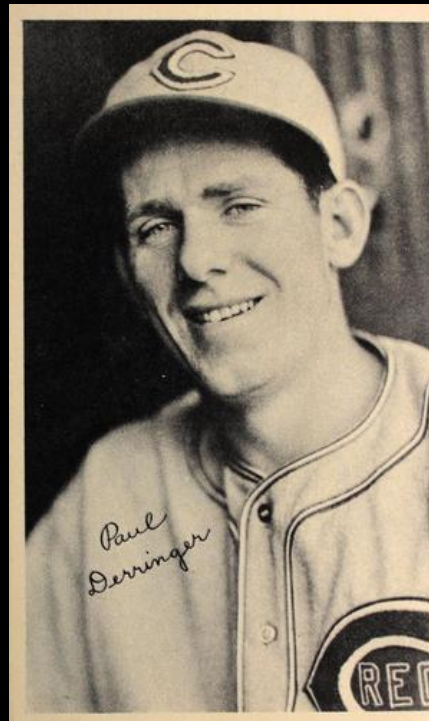


The Postwar Settlement: Affluence through stability





## A Rocky Spring: National debate, fans, and fellow players



The rest of the story,  
Tygiel 116, 118



Robinson felt intense pressure to live up to the expectations of black fans while white fans often cheered him. The tension with white teammates quickly dissipated. Robinson commented: "All the fellows seem to be pulling for us." The *New York Age* called out those "who've screamed for years that putting Negroes and Whites on the same battlefield would be like setting a match to kerosene." Tygiel, 114-115

Jimmy Powers of the New York *Daily News* attacked "liberals" who "frame pretty press releases primarily to make money out of colored people and colored athletes." Wendell Smith responded to Powers's celebration of racial progress by noting that Powers "fail[ed] to mention that a lot of fabulously 'rich' colored garbage collectors hold degrees from 'big' colored colleges, but can't get anything better because the South is progressing so rapidly."







## Regular Season: Initial (and triumphant) road trip: Newark, Syracuse, Baltimore

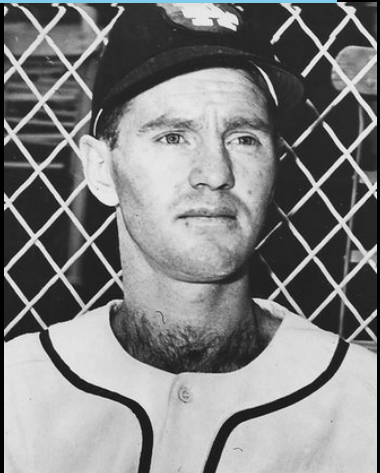
60 Second Syracuse: A stain on the city's sports history

Watch later



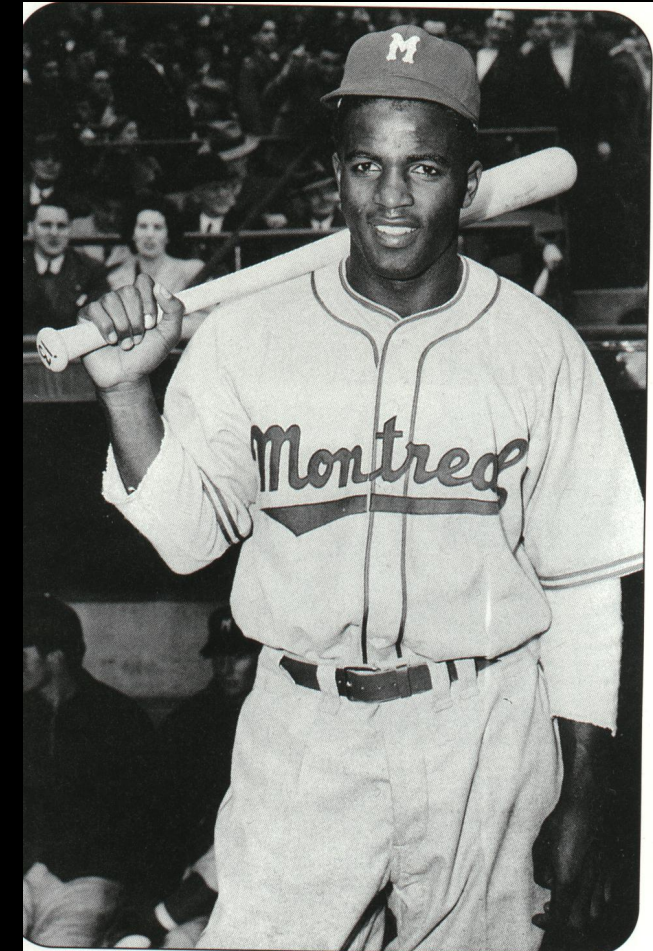
“For God’s sake, Branch, don’t let that colored boy go to Baltimore. There’s a lot of trouble brewing down there.”  
International League President Shaughnessy. Tygiel, 121

Leon Treadway



## Ugly incidents in Syracuse

At right, Baltimore park on fire later that summer. Through it all, Robinson hit .372

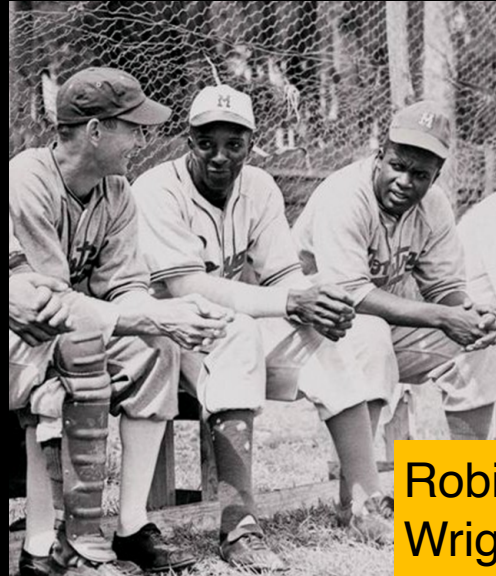




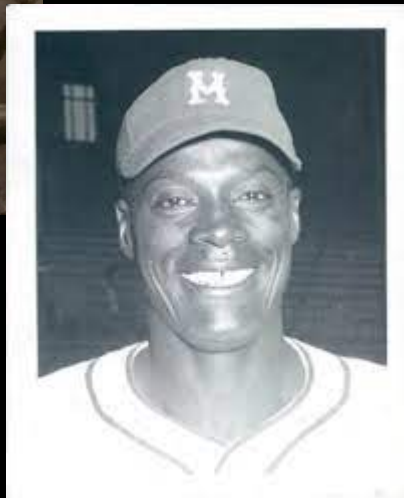
# Back in Montreal: acceptance and singular success



The Robinsons in front of their Montreal apartment. See Tygiel, 124. Upper right, July cartoon from Montreal Gazette. At bottom right, Delorimier Stadium, Montreal.

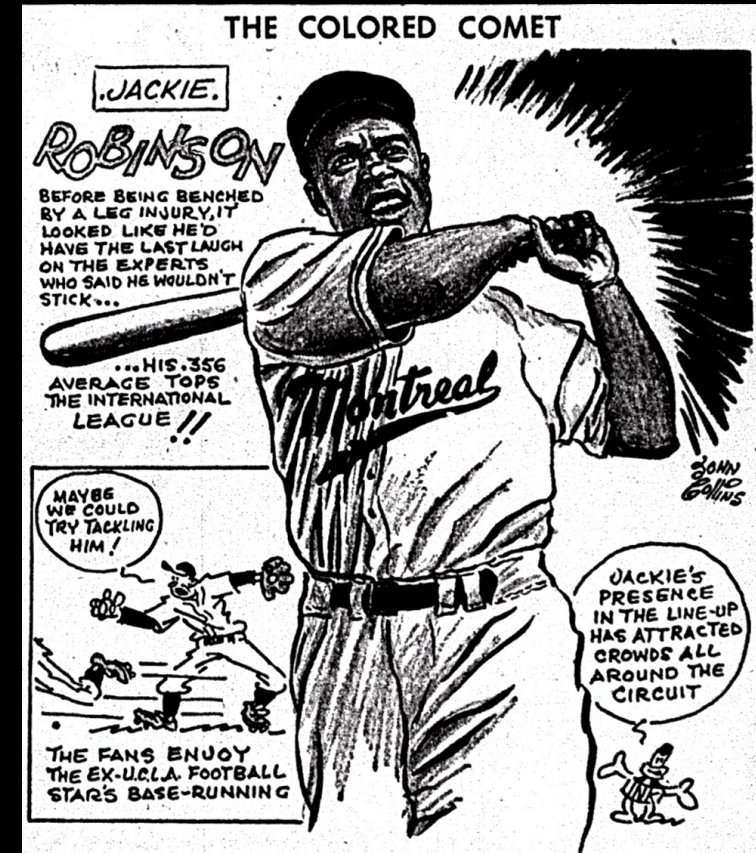


Robinson with John Wright and, below, Roy Partlow.



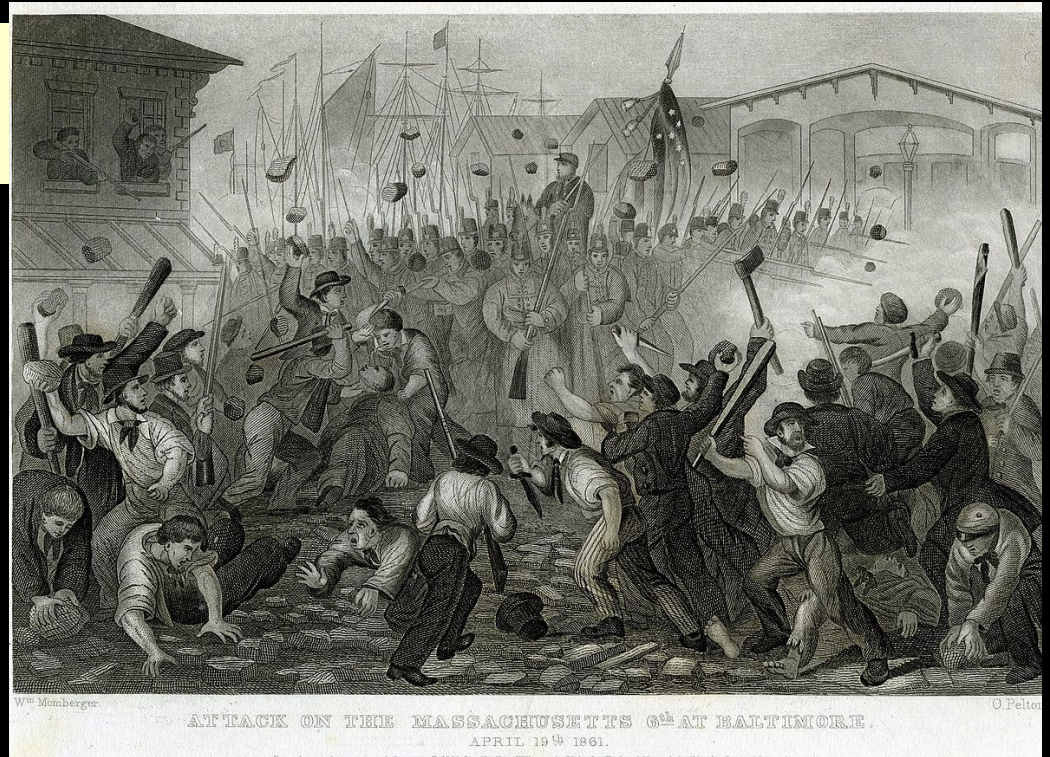
"Robinson has proved that there is nothing he can't do on the diamond with a fair amount of eclat, not to mention elan." Sportswriter Lloyd McGowan, recanting his earlier skepticism. Tygiel, 125.

"The Canadian people loved him," shortstop Al Campanis recalls. He'd be on first base and he hear that chant 'Allez! Steal that base.'" Tygiel, 125





A Long Season: Baltimore again (Lincoln), HBP, double play, black press (131) and fans, and teammates.



Robinson hit by pitches and targeted on double plays. Bottom right, Al Campanis and Tom Tatum, Robinson's teammates. Tygiel, 134-136

The "Bloody Tubs" tried to assassinate Lincoln in 1861. See Tygiel, 129





# Jackie and Rachel Robinson: the pressure and the Little World Series



*Courtesy of Rachel Robinson and the Estate of Jackie Robinson.*

## Royals Win Little World Series As 19,000 Cheer

**MONTREAL (CP)** — Nineteen thousand satisfied sport fans filed out of Delorimier Park last night after watching Montreal Royals win their first Little World Series baseball championship. Royals defeated Louisville Colonels 2 to 0 in the sixth game of the best-of-seven series, taking the set four games to two and winning the last three games in Montreal.

"Ol' Coonskin' Curt Davis tossed a neat nine-hitter while his mates supported him with some nifty fielding.

Harry Dorish of the Colonels limited the Royals to a mere six blows, but the big second inning robbed him of victory when the Royals pushed two runs across the plate. Montreal's Lew Riggs walked and Dixie Howell smashed out a double scoring Riggs with the first Royal run. Howell advanced to third, Earl Naylor grounded out and short-stop Al Campanis singled pushing Howell home with the second run.

### ROBINSON SERIES STAR

Dixie Howell with his timely second-inning double, Jackie Robinson, Royals series star, with two singles and Burge with a triple, paced Montreal batters



**JACKIE ROBINSON**  
... Royals' series star.

contributed \$78,302 for the six games of the series. Of this, \$29,030 goes to the players' pool.

|            |   |   |   |
|------------|---|---|---|
| Louisville | 0 | 9 | 1 |
| Montreal   | 2 | 6 | 0 |

Batteries: Dorish and Walters; Davis and Howell.

(Montreal wins series, 4 to 2).



1946 Montreal Royals: a mix of veteran and rookies, the team won the Little World Series against Louisville and was perhaps the greatest minor league team of all time.



Il a gagné ses épaulettes

