



Negro League Baseball: The Rise and Ruin of a Black Institution

By Neil Lanctot

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The story of black professional baseball provides a remarkable perspective on several major themes in modern African American history: the initial black response to segregation, the subsequent struggle to establish successful separate enterprises, and the later movement toward integration. Baseball functioned as a critical component in the separate economy catering to black consumers in the urban centers of the North and South. While most black businesses struggled to survive from year to year, professional baseball teams and leagues operated for decades, representing a major achievement in black enterprise and institution building.

Negro League Baseball: The Rise and Ruin of a Black Institution presents the extraordinary history of a great African American achievement, from its lowest ebb during the Depression, through its golden age and World War II, until its gradual disappearance during the early years of the civil rights era. Faced with only a limited amount of correspondence and documents, Lanctot consulted virtually every sports page of every black newspaper located in a league city. He then conducted interviews with former players and scrutinized existing financial, court, and federal records. Through his efforts, Lanctot has painstakingly reconstructed the institutional history of black professional baseball, locating the players, teams, owners, and fans in the wider context of the league's administration. In addition, he provides valuable insight into the changing attitudes of African Americans toward the need for separate institutions.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Prodigiously researched and thoroughly unsentimental, Neil Lanctot's history of organized black baseball from 1933 through the early 1960s provides an enormously important historical corrective to feel-good versions of baseball integration."--*New York Times*

"Lanctot takes us beyond the ball field where the Paiges and Gibsons played in forced segregation, and into the commercial and social realities of baseball in black communities. . . . Lanctot offers a rich array of facts that history lovers can feast on."--*Washington Post*

"A fact-filled and thought-provoking book that should be of interest and use to scholars and lay readers interested in sports history, business history, and African American history."--*Enterprise and Society*

"A meticulously researched history that explores the economics, strengths, shortcomings, and legacy of the Negro Leagues."--*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

"Without nostalgia, Lanctot offers a careful and balanced judgment on the Negro leagues, one that is likely to stand for some time."--*New York Times*

"Neil Lanctot has accomplished something I long thought impossible. He has produced an overview of the institution of black baseball as a business. . . . I doubt that there is a better researched and more exhaustive history of the Negro Leagues out there."--Rob Ruck, author of *Sandlot Seasons: Sport in Black Pittsburgh*

"This is a superb historical analysis of the Negro Leagues. . . . Lanctot provides, in my opinion, the most detailed and sophisticated examination of black baseball ever written."--David K. Wiggins, author of *Glory Bound: Black Athletes in White America*

From the Publisher

Neil Lanctot teaches history at the University of Delaware. He is the author of *Fair Dealing and Clean Playing: The Hilldale Club* and *The Development of Black Professional Baseball, 1910-1932*.

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