



A Field of Dreams: The Jackie Robinson Ballpark

Who was Jackie Robinson, what was Jim Crow, and how can a baseball stadium explain both? What role does culture play in U.S. Civil Rights?



(Library of Congress: <https://www.loc.gov/item/97519505/>)



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Daytona Beach's City Island baseball stadium is a magical place. Not as large or new as other minor league parks, but on a steamy summer night, thousands revel in its cool ocean breeze, delight in twinkling marina lights, inhale the scent of ballpark hot dogs, and jump when *crack!* Bat meets ball.

Yet, what makes this historic field's baseball diamond shine brighter than any other in the United States is its heritage: it was at this place that the dream of racial equality in baseball took a great leap toward reality.

On March 17, 1946, African American rookie hitter Jackie Robinson played at City Island's ballpark on a mixed-race team against an all-white team. This was a first in professional baseball since the 1800s. There were thousands of spectators, including nearly a thousand African American fans seated in a segregated section. Robinson smashed a barrier for sports that day and was thrust into the nation's consciousness as a symbol of Jim Crow's demise.

Robinson went on to become Rookie of the Year in 1947 and a World Series player in 1955. He starred as himself in the dramatized version of his life, *The Jackie Robinson Story* (1950), played ball for 11 years, and became a Civil Rights era activist. He worked for that cause until his early death in 1972. In the 1990s, the ballpark was renamed in his honor and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



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Where this lesson fits into the curriculum

Time Period: Mid-20th Century, Civil Rights Era

Topics: This lesson can be in U.S. history, social studies, and other curricula that examine African American history and civil rights in the United States following World War II.

Relevant United States History Standards for Grades 5-12

This lesson relates to the following [National Standards for History from the UCLA National Center for History in the Schools](#):

US History Era 9

Standard 4A: The student understands the “Second Reconstruction” and its advancement of civil rights.

Relevant Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

This lesson relates to the following [Curriculum Standards for Social Studies from the National Council for the Social Studies](#):

Theme I: Culture

- Standard C: The student explains and gives examples of how language, literature, the arts, architecture, other artifacts, traditions, beliefs, values, and behaviors contribute to the development and transmission of culture.
- Standard E: The student articulates the implications of cultural diversity, as well as cohesion, within and across groups.

Theme II: Time, Continuity, and Change

- Standard B: The student identifies and uses key concepts such as chronology, causality, change, conflict, and complexity to explain, analyze, and show connections among patterns of historical change and continuity.
- Standard C: The student identifies and describes selected historical periods and patterns of change within and across cultures, such as the rise of civilizations, the development of transportation systems, the growth and breakdown of colonial systems, and others.
- Standard E: The student develops critical sensitivities such as empathy and skepticism regarding attitudes, values, and behaviors of people in different historical contexts.

Theme III: People, Places, and Environments



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- Standard B: The student creates, interprets, uses, and distinguishes various representations of the earth, such as maps, globes, and photographs.
- Standard G: The student describes how people create places that reflect cultural values and ideals as they build neighborhoods, parks, shopping centers, and the like.
- Standard H: The student examines, interprets, and analyzes physical and cultural patterns and their interactions, such as land uses, settlement patterns, cultural transmission of customs and ideas, and ecosystem changes.
- Standard I: The student describes ways that historical events have been influenced by, and have influenced, physical and human geographic factors in local, regional, national, and global settings.

Theme IV: Individual Development and Identity

- Standard C: The student describes the ways family, gender, ethnicity, nationality, and institutional affiliations contribute to personal identity.
- Standard E: The student identifies and describes ways regional, ethnic, and national cultures influence individuals' daily lives.
- Standard F: The student identifies and describes the influence of perception, attitudes, values, and beliefs on personal identity.

Theme V: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

- Standard B: The student analyzes group and institutional influences on people, events, and elements of culture.
- Standard E: The student identifies and describes examples of tensions between belief systems and government policies and laws.

Theme VI: Power, Authority, and Governance

- Standard H - The student explains and applies concepts such as power, role, status, justice, and influence to the examination of persistent issues and social problems.

Theme X: Civic Ideals and Practices

- Standard A: The student examines the origins and continuing influence of key ideals of the democratic republican form of government, such as individual human dignity, liberty, justice, equality, and the rule of law.
- Standard E: The student explains and analyzes various forms of citizen action that influence public policy decisions.
- Standard F: The student identifies and explains the roles of formal and informal political actors in influencing and shaping public policy and decision-making.



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About This Lesson

This lesson is based on the National Register of Historic Places registration files for [Jackie Robinson Ballpark](http://focus.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/nrhp/text/98001253.pdf) (<http://focus.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/nrhp/text/98001253.pdf>), formerly known as Daytona City Island Ballpark, (with [photos](http://focus.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/nrhp/photos/98001253.pdf) <http://focus.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/nrhp/photos/98001253.pdf>) and other sources. Jean West, an education consultant, wrote this lesson. It was edited by staff at the National Park Service Cultural Resources Office of Interpretation & Education. This lesson is one in a series that brings the important stories of historic places into classrooms across the country.

Objectives

1. To describe the effects of Jim Crow and explain how African Americans were discriminated against in the early 20th Century;
2. To explain how and why segregation in Daytona Beach might be seen as less severe than in other parts of Florida;
3. To describe who Jackie Robinson was and what he accomplished;
4. To compare and contrast the treatment of Jackie Robinson in Dayton with other ballparks in segregated towns.
5. To plan and conduct a local history project related to African American history and/or Civil Rights.

Materials for students

The materials listed below can either be used directly on the computer or can be printed out, photocopied, and distributed to students.

1. Two Maps showing Daytona Beach and City Island Ballpark in Florida;
2. Four Readings about Segregation in sports and American life, Daytona Beach, and Jackie Robinson;
3. Three Photographs showing an aerial view of City Island Ballpark circa 1930s, the ballpark in contemporary times, and a commemorative sculpture depicting Jackie Robinson with two children;
4. Two Illustrations depicting the interview of Jackie Robinson by Branch Rickey in *The Jackie Robinson Story* and depicting the cover of a comic book featuring Jackie Robinson.

Visiting the site

Jackie Robinson Ballpark and Museum is located at 105 E. Orange Avenue on City Island in Daytona Beach, Florida. Jackie Robinson Ballpark and Museum is open 9:00 to 5:00 daily. Plaques along its Riverwalk commemorate Jackie Robinson's athletic and civil rights accomplishments and may be visited for free. The ballpark is open to the public during ticketed games and special events. For more

Teaching with Historic Places

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



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information about times and dates for tours, contact the Daytona Cubs by calling (386) 257-3172, or visiting the ballpark's [website](http://daytona.cubs.milb.com/index.jsp?sid=t450) at <http://daytona.cubs.milb.com/index.jsp?sid=t450>.



Getting Started



What do you think is happening in this photo?



Photo Analysis Worksheet

Step 1:

Examine the photograph for 10 seconds. How would you describe the photograph?

Step 2:

Divide the photograph into quadrants and study each section individually. What details--such as people, objects, and activities--do you notice?

Step 3:

What other information--such as time period, location, season, reason photo was taken--can you gather from the photo?

Step 4:

How would you revise your first description of the photo using the information noted in Steps 2 and 3?

Step 5:

What questions do you have about the photograph? How might you find answers to these questions?



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Setting the Stage

At the beginning of the 20th century, in many communities across the nation, African Americans could not attend the same schools or be admitted at the same hospitals, borrow books at the public library or sit in the same section of the bus or movie theater as whites. They could not eat at the same restaurants or stay at the same hotels. They could not spend a day on the same beach or sit in the same bleachers at a ballpark or stadium. There were separate restaurants, hotels, and other public spaces, like standing-room-only sections at ballparks, for non-whites. This kind of segregation was called “separate but equal” or “Jim Crow.”

In 1919, African-American veterans of World War I hoped that their service to the United States would open the doors to first-class citizenship. Instead, over the course of the summer there were race riots from Chicago to Omaha, of white crowds and black, which violently reaffirmed segregation, the separation of the races in virtually every aspect of life. Jim Crow statutes made segregation a matter of law, but even on a personal level white and black Americans intermingled little.

This was the Jim Crow America into which Jack Roosevelt Robinson was born on January 31, 1919. Before he was a year old, his family moved to Pasadena, California where segregation was less pervasive than in Cairo, Georgia where he had been born. He grew up to be a gifted athlete, lettering in baseball, basketball, football, and track and field at UCLA. But opportunities for black athletes were limited in professional sports. Baseball leagues were segregated. The white leagues, which provided better salaries and training than the Negro Leagues, were not open to African-American athletes such as Jackie Robinson.

There had been a time when baseball was in its infancy between 1858 and 1867, that the National Association of Base Ball Players had admitted African Americans. In the 1880s, a few talented black players were signed, but none after 1887. When Moses Fleetwood Walker retired in 1890, professional baseball became entirely segregated. Barred from the larger salaries of the American and National Leagues, African Americans formed their own teams and Negro Leagues. Receiving a fraction of the pay of their white counterparts, they tolerated difficult travel, inferior fields and poorer equipment. Their superb play and flair helped to fill the ballparks and sustain the leagues.

With the outbreak of World War II, African Americans were again called on to serve their country. In 1942, Jackie Robinson was drafted into the U.S. Army. Along with boxer Joe Louis, he successfully challenged the military’s policy of refusing to promote African Americans from enlisted men to officers and was made a second lieutenant. When the war ended, however, he returned to a still segregated nation, signing to play baseball with the Negro American League’s Kansas City Monarchs.

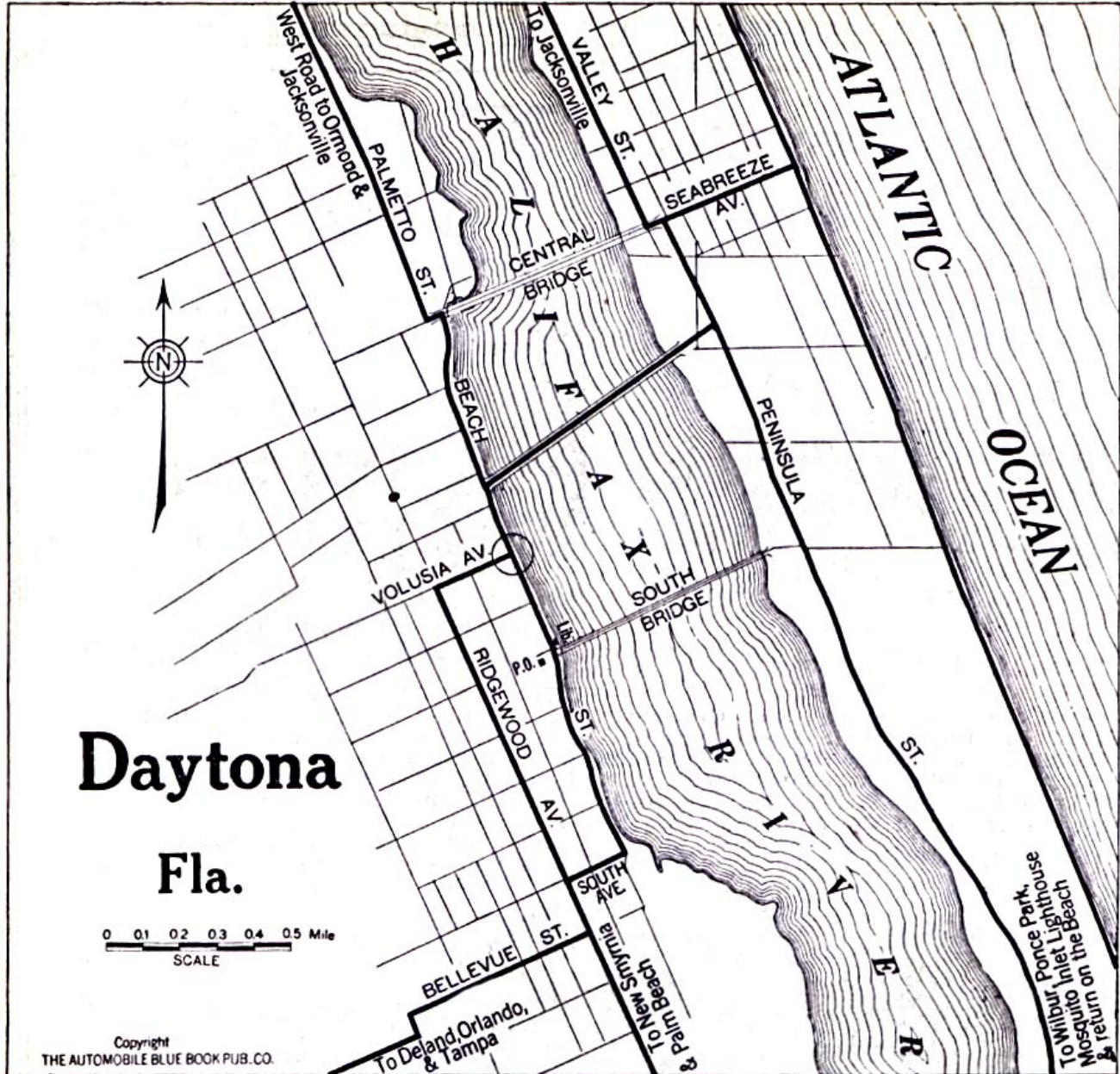
In the summer of 1945, Brooklyn Dodgers manager Branch Rickey contacted Jackie Robinson and asked him to travel to New York City for an interview to play with the Brown Dodgers, a black team he was forming. On August 28, 1945, Rickey and Robinson met.



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Locating the Site

Map 1: Daytona, Florida, Automobile Blue Book Publishing Company, 1919.



(Automobile Blue Book image Courtesy Perry Castañeda Library Map Collection, University of Texas Libraries:
<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/florida.html>)



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Questions for Map 1

- 1) What city does this map show? What part of the country is it in?

- 2) What recreational activities would the city's residences have, based on the map? Why do you think so?

- 3) If you were constructing a baseball stadium, where in this city would you build it? Why



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Locating the Site

Map 2: Aerial Photographic Map, Daytona Beach, Florida, March 13, 1958.



(State University Libraries of Florida, Publication of Library, Archival, and Museum Materials, Aerial Photography: Florida: <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00071789/00016/74?n=palmm>)



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Questions for Map 2

- 1) Where is the city's baseball stadium? How can you tell? Provide evidence to support your answer.

- 2) What role do you think baseball played in Daytona Beach's community?

- 3) Write down the name of a sports team in your community or state. Can you name a famous player? If so, who? In what ways might sports (teams, players, stadiums) play a role in your community?



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Determining the Facts

Reading 1: Jackie Robinson, Branch Rickey, and the “Noble Experiment”

The United States was divided along racial lines in the mid-20th century. Segregation laws were widespread. However, the sacrifices and service of black Americans and other minorities during World War II changed some white attitudes. A growing number of Americans of all racial identities felt the time was ripe to challenge segregation. One of the most visible and dramatic areas where racist laws and a racist culture could be challenged was in professional sports.

On August 28, 1945, a black professional baseball player and war veteran named Jackie Robinson met the team owner of the Brooklyn Dodgers in New York City. The owner-manager was a white man named Branch Rickey. Baseball was segregated at the time: there were white leagues and black leagues. At the time Robinson played baseball in the Negro League for the Kansas City Monarchs. The Monarchs players were talented and the game challenging, but Robinson was frustrated by low wages, inferior ballparks, and trouble finding hotels and restaurants during road games. These problems were the result of legal segregation, known as “Jim Crow.”

Jim Crow laws made it illegal for black Americans to compete on the same teams or sit in the same sections of ballparks and stadiums as white Americans. They barred black Americans from eating in the same restaurants as whites, sitting in the same sections of movie theaters, and resting at the same motels. Segregation was supposed to mean “separate but equal,” but African Americans received lower salaries and, in the case of athletes, competed in shabby sports facilities with poor equipment.

Black Americans, and some white allies like Branch Rickey, hoped that the color barrier could be torn down. Rickey saw a chance in his work to do something. Maybe in baseball the barrier could be broken and he hoped Jackie Robinson could do it. He knew Robinson had athletic prowess and an upright character. Making him a celebrity ball player with these qualities would challenge the racist support for segregation in sports.

Jackie Robinson did not meet Branch Rickey with much hope to improve his circumstances. He heard that Rickey was organizing another Negro League team, to be called the Brown Dodgers. But Rickey said he wanted Robinson to play for the white Brooklyn Dodgers organization, not the Negro Leagues. Robinson needed to play for their top minor league team, the Montreal Royals, and have a successful season with them to join the majors. Branch Rickey was offering to ignore segregation laws and traditions. He would judge Robinson by his talent, merit, and determination.

During the meeting, Rickey said, “I want to win the pennant and we need ball players! Do you think you can do it?” Baseball scout Clyde Sukeforth, who was at the interview, remembered Robinson “waited, and waited, and waited before answering.... We were all just looking at him. Then he said, ‘Yes.’”

An intense, emotional, three-hour interview followed Robinson’s response. Rickey revealed to Jackie Robinson that he ran a background check on him, investigating him for any criminal record or problems with the law. Rickey told Robinson that he had seen his college grades.



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Rickey knew Robinson regularly attended church and neither smoked cigarettes nor drank alcohol. Rickey also knew that Jackie Robinson had refused a racist order in the military when he was told to sit in the back of a Ft. Hood bus. Robinson was court-martialed for this act of defiance, but acquitted and discharged honorably from military service.

Branch Rickey then did something shocking: he pretended to be a series of foul-mouthed racist bigots, the types of people he knew would anger Jackie Robinson. He performed impressions of a spectator, headwaiter, hotel manager, sportswriter, ballplayers who would try to spike him with their cleats or hit him with a ball, and umpires who would make calls against him strictly because of his race. At last, a simmering Jackie Robinson demanded, "Mr. Rickey, do you want a ballplayer who's afraid to fight back?" Rickey replied, "I want a ballplayer with guts enough not to fight back. You will symbolize a crucial cause. One incident, just one incident, can set it back 20 years."

Years later, Jackie Robinson wrote in his autobiography that Branch Rickey ended the intense interview by saying, "We can't fight our way through this, Robinson. We've got no army, there's virtually no one on our side. And I'm afraid that many fans will be hostile. We'll be in a tough position. We can win only if I convince the world that I'm doing this because you're a great ballplayer and a fine gentleman. If you're a good enough man, we can make this a start in the right direction. But let me tell you, it's going to take an awful lot of courage."

Rickey then demanded, "Now, can you do it? I know you are naturally combative. But for three years – three years – you will have to do it the only way it can be done. Three years – can you do it?" Shouting and putting his fist in Robinson's face, Rickey demanded, "What do you do?"

"If you want to take this gamble, I'll promise you there will be no incidents," Jackie Robinson replied.

The stage was set for the "noble experiment" to break the hold of segregation on professional baseball. People with courage would bring their vision to reality but it would also require a special community, one willing to host and support the experiment, learn from it and change its own attitudes about racial segregation. That community was found in Daytona Beach and the place where Jackie Robinson made history was City Island Ballpark.



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Questions for Reading 1

1) What was “Jim Crow”? What barriers did all black Americans face and what specific problems did athletes deal with because of it?

2) Who were Jackie Robinson and Branch Rickey? How did they work together to fight segregation?

3) What was the “it” to which Branch Rickey was referring in “One incident, just one incident, can set it back 20 years”? Why do you think Branch Rickey investigated Jackie Robinson’s background and conducted such an unusual interview?

4) Why do you think Jackie Robinson hesitated when Branch Rickey offered him the job? Why do you think Jackie Robinson agreed to work with Branch Rickey?



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Determining the Facts

Reading 2: Jim Crow and Jackie Robinson

Segregation laws existed throughout the United States in the early 20th Century but they were not the same in every state and town. These oppressive “Jim Crow” policies were usually more severe in southern states, like Alabama and Florida. They affected people who needed to ride buses and trains, sleep in motels or rent homes, eat at restaurants, and go to sports games and movies. Public spaces were divided. Segregation was woven into the fabric of American society, culture, and law. This is what Jackie Robinson and millions of other Americans were up against.

He arrived in Daytona Beach to train for his first season with the Montreal Royals in 1946. The city was segregated, but its laws were considered less severe when compared to other Florida towns of that era. Some historians think this was because African American political activist Mary McLeod Bethune lived there. She fought for the rights of black women and black men. In the 1920s, Bethune worked with white residents to register African-American voters. They faced dangerous opponents, including white supremacist organizations like the Klu Klux Klan. By 1937, half of the adult black citizens of Daytona Beach were eligible to vote. The influence of the black voting bloc pushed white town leaders to relax segregation in Daytona Beach. Unlike in other southern cities, African Americans in Daytona Beach could try on shoes at stores (but not clothing) and some drove city buses. McLeod Bethune even founded a school for African-American girls in Daytona Beach in 1904.

Overt racism in Daytona Beach was also weakened by the winter season arrival of tourists and part-time residents from other parts of the country. Some were white Americans sympathetic to the struggle of African Americans. They supported local African-American causes, like Bethune’s school. This economic and moral boost ended with the Great Depression. Like the rest of the nation, Daytona Beach was devastated by bank failures during the Depression. The city depended on tourism and Americans did not have money to spend on vacations. The town’s economic problems continued during World War II because of restrictions on travel during the war. This kept the tourists from visiting. After the war, Brooklyn Dodgers manager Branch Rickey approached Daytona’s mayor with an idea to boost the economy. He wanted to bring his major league baseball team to the city for spring training and the mayor agreed to help. A major league baseball team and its City Island Ballpark games would create jobs for Daytona residents. It would also promote the city and attract tourists.

The city officials promised that Jackie Robinson and another black ballplayer, Johnny Wright, could play at the City Island Ballpark. Rickey agreed that they would not challenge any of the city’s segregation laws outside of the ballpark. These laws meant Robinson and Wright could not stay in the Riviera Hotel with their white teammates. They could not eat in the same whites-only restaurants or enjoy the city’s wide, sandy beach.



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Robinson was to report by noon on March 1, 1946 to the Daytona Beach, Florida spring training camp of the Montreal Royals. This was the minor league team of the Brooklyn Dodgers baseball team. He still had to prove himself to play with the majors, but he broke the “color line” in major league baseball the moment he reported. It had existed for over 60 years, since the last black professional ballplayer was released from the Toledo Blue Stockings in 1884. It was around that time the Jim Crow laws spread.

Jackie Robinson’s journey from California to Florida highlights legal discrimination African Americans faced. When Robinson and his wife, Rachel, boarded an overnight flight from California to Louisiana on February 28, they were bumped off their connecting flight to Florida. They finally boarded another flight to Daytona Beach the next night. It was March and Robinson was late. When the plane landed to refuel, they were bumped off again. They were told three passengers had to be taken off so the plane could carry extra fuel for an expected storm, but they saw two white passengers board in their place. The Robinsons were worried. There would not be another flight to Daytona until the next day and Robinson called Branch Rickey for advice. Robinson decided to take a 16-hour bus ride and Rickey told the press that his new player was delayed by bad weather.

Jackie and Rachel Robinson boarded the bus. When they sat down, the driver ordered them to move to the back of the bus. Robinson once went to court to fight a similar order, but he kept his promise to Rickey. He did not challenge the driver. The Robinsons moved to the uncomfortable back seat and tried to sleep. There was a rest stop when they changed buses, but they could not eat in a clean, safe restaurant like the white passengers. They bought snacks – apples and candy – instead of full meals.

The bus pulled into the station at Daytona Beach late in the day on March 2. When the Robinsons got off the bus, they were met by a racially mixed crowd. The crowd included a welcoming committee of three African-American men: two journalists and Johnny Wright. Branch Rickey had arranged for the journalists to drive, protect, and advise Jackie when he arrived. The crowd surged forward to get a better look at Jackie Robinson. Rachel Robinson said later, “I had never been so tired, hungry, miserable, upset in my life as when we finally reached Daytona Beach.”

There was very little peace or rest for the Robinsons. After they arrived in Daytona Beach, Branch Rickey decided to move the Montreal Royals workout to another town: Sanford, Florida. The players and their families relocated to Sanford. Finally, on March 4, Jackie Robinson put on his Royals uniform for the first time and reported to the park with Johnny Wright. Reporters were waiting for them at the park. The reporters stopped them and bombarded Robinson with questions about being an African American player in a white league. When they asked, “What would you do if one of these pitchers threw at your head?” Robinson replied, “I’d duck!”



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Within days, some of Sanford's white residents met with the mayor to demand that Robinson and Wright leave the town. Sanford officials told the Royals that black and white players would not be allowed on the same playing field together. Rickey misjudged how severe the segregation and racism was in Sanford. Rickey feared for his players' safety. He immediately sent Johnny Wright and the Robinsons back to Daytona Beach. Jackie Robinson talked about quitting and returning to the Negro Leagues, but his friends and allies persuaded him to hang on.

When they returned to Daytona Beach after the incident in Sanford, Jackie and Rachel Robinson lived with an African-American couple, Joe and Dufferin Harris, in the heart of the city's black community. They adjusted to their new living arrangements in the Harris household, began to eat out in the community's own restaurants, and mingled in downtown Daytona Beach. The Robinsons regarded it as a "haven filled with comfort." During this time, the Robinsons met Mary McLeod Bethune through the politically-active Harris family.



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Questions for Reading 2

- 1) List five examples of racial discrimination in this reading. Were you surprised by the discrimination? Why or why not?

- 2) Who was Mary MacLeod Bethune? How did she make Daytona Beach a better place?

- 3) Compare and contrast the experience of Jackie and Rachel Robinson in Daytona Beach and Sanford. What might account for the differences?

- 4) What did Branch Rickey do to try to help Jackie Robinson succeed? What do you think motivated him to help? Cite evidence to support your answer.



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Determining the Facts

Reading 3: City Island Ballpark: A Field of Dreams

The Spring 1946 integration of the Montreal Royals with two new African American ballplayers forced the whole minor league team to train at a field in Daytona Beach's black neighborhood. The still all-white Brooklyn Dodgers majors team trained on the white side of the segregated city. In training, the Royals coaches moved rookie Jackie Robinson from one position to the next: shortstop to second base, then to first base, and finally, back to second. He impressed them with how quickly he could adapt to and learn a new position. Rachel Robinson joined her husband at practice every day. She cheered him on and, because she was a trained nurse, could treat his sports injuries quickly.

The Montreal Royals and the Brooklyn Dodgers trained for two weeks before the City Island Ballpark hosted their first exhibition game. The afternoon of Sunday, March 17, 1946 had clear weather and the ballpark was filled to standing-room only. There were about 3,000-4,000 spectators and about a thousand were African Americans. They bought the same tickets but were required by law to view the game from a segregated "colored" area behind first base. The grandstand was "whites only."

But Jackie Robinson did not expect to play in that game. When he changed into his Royals uniform that day, he believed that the Daytona Beach authorities would stop him from playing. He was wrong: at City Island Ballpark, Robinson shone. He played five innings, coming to bat three times. He did not hit the ball that day, but he got on base once during a fielder's choice. Once there, he stole second base and subsequently scored for the Royals. He was solid competition for the Dodgers players, who would become his own teammates the following year. A few weak "boos" from the grandstand could be heard when his name was announced. They were drowned out by the loud cheer from the segregated section.

This was the day professional baseball's color barrier broke. This was the day when black and white players faced each other, on the field and in front of a paying audience, for the first time since Jim Crow. Baseball was integrated from then on. The Dodgers won, but it was a turning point for Jackie Robinson, for baseball, and for Americans.

Robinson once said of the day, "When I got home, I felt as though I had won some kind of victory. I had a new opinion of the people in the town. I knew, of course, that everyone wasn't pulling for me to make good, but I was sure that the whole world wasn't lined up against me. When I went to sleep, the applause was still ringing in my ears."

Many Florida newspapers ignored or downplayed Robinson's breakthrough, but the *Daytona Beach Evening News* acknowledged the historic importance of the game: "Playing under terrific pressure, Robinson conducted himself well afield during his five-inning stint. He handled two



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chances aptly.” National sportswriters reported both the score and the fact that Jackie Robinson was applauded by both races in the ballpark.

But one integrated Daytona Beach game did not end racism and segregation. On March 21, the executive secretary of the Jacksonville Recreation Department cancelled an exhibition game between the Montreal Royals and the Jersey City Giants in Jacksonville, Florida. He explained, “It is part of the rules and regulations of the Recreational Department that Negroes and whites cannot compete against each other on a city-owned playground.”

A week later, the city of Jacksonville cancelled a second game and padlocked the stadium. Another week later, Jacksonville cancelled a third game. Authorities in Savannah, Georgia, and Richmond, Virginia, also refused to let the Montreal Royals play against white teams in their cities with Jackie Robinson and Wright. Rickey would not send the team without its two black players, so the games were cancelled.

More troubles followed. The Montreal Royals returned to Sanford, Florida, on April 7 to play against the St. Paul Saints. Sanford’s police chief arrived at the field during the game. He told the Royals team manager that he would prosecute him unless Jackie Robinson and Johnny Wright walked away from the game. Under the threat of legal trouble, the manager pulled the two men from the game and they left the field. Officials in DeLand, Florida, cancelled the April 10 game, claiming the stadium lights were not working, even though it was a daytime game. The DeLand game was moved to Daytona, only 20 miles away. The Dodgers management moved several road games to Daytona Beach, where baseball’s integration was protected by the mayor.

Baseball historian Jules Tygiel described Daytona Beach as “an island of enlightenment in a sea of bigotry.” The city gave Jackie Robinson the opportunity to prove his talent. City officials kept their word and no baseball games were ever cancelled at City Island Ballpark, even though they enforced other segregation laws. The African-American community gave Jackie Robinson unconditional support. When he was in pain after being intentionally spiked by opponents’ cleats or hit with pitches, friends helped him relax over a game of cards. When he was successful on the field after a slump, the agricultural department at Bethune-Cookman College sent over chicken and vegetables to the Robinsons for a victory dinner at the Harris home. Rachel Robinson later observed, “It was a communal victory for sure.”

Branch Rickey cancelled the final games of the Montreal Royals’ spring training schedule, but both Jackie Robinson and Johnny Wright earned their way onto the team. On April 15, 1946, a chartered train left Daytona Beach, carrying Jackie and Rachel Robinson, along with the rest of the Montreal Royals, to other ballparks, a championship season, and a bright place in history.



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Questions for Reading 3

- 1) List five examples of racial discrimination in this Reading 3.

- 2) Who helped Jackie Robinson in Daytona Beach? What did they do to help him? What do you think motivated them?

- 3) How did the newspapers cover the story of Jackie Robinson's debut? How do you explain the different coverage by the Florida newspapers? Why do you think the national newspapers covered the story?

- 4) How did other baseball players treat Jackie Robinson?

- 4) Why do you think the color barrier was successfully broken at City Island Ballpark instead of elsewhere?



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Determining the Facts

Reading 4: Robinson's Legacy, On and Off the Field

The Jim Crow laws did not end in an instant at one powerful place during a single baseball season. However, Jackie Robinson's determination was fed by the unique support he got from Branch Rickey and Daytona Beach. These all worked together to advance the dream of racial equality in the United States. Courts ended Jim Crow laws in the decades to come and Robinson's courage that sparked a change in some Americans' hearts and minds.

Segregation in Daytona Beach started to crumble after Jackie Robinson made history at City Island Ballpark. The city desegregated the city auditorium in 1948. Laws that protected racial discrimination changed everywhere in the United States in the next two decades. The Supreme Court decided in 1954 that the idea of "separate but equal" and the laws that depended on that policy were unconstitutional. Many states and cities took years to change their own racist laws, but Daytona desegregated its bus system's seating and hiring practices in 1955. Daytona's beach also opened to everyone in 1955. The city desegregated local lunch counters, its parks and city golf course, the police department, grand juries, and the public Halifax Hospital in the early 1960s. City Island Ballpark ended segregated seating at its games.

There was a slow but real change in sports. Minor league teams from the deeply-segregated Southern cities started to integrate in 1952. Trailblazers from these teams included Percy Miller Jr., Nat Peeples, and Jim and Leander Tugerson. Most teams claimed they could not desegregate because hotels, restaurants, dressing rooms and showers operated under Jim Crow laws. Jacksonville, Florida, which cancelled all of Jackie Robinson's games in the city in 1946, held its first desegregated game in 1953. Three black players from the Jacksonville Braves played in the stadium. One of the three was Hank Aaron, the Hall of Famer who went on to break Babe Ruth's home run record by slamming 755 career home runs.

The national Civil Rights movements in the 1950s and 1960s challenged segregation with lawsuits, marches, protests, and boycotts. Along with other new laws, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ended discrimination in public places. Baseball's minor leagues fully integrated in 1964.

Daytona Beach's City Island Ballpark is evidence of Jackie Robinson's personal struggle against Jim Crow and discrimination. It is the exact place where Robinson did something dangerous: he played ball! Hurricanes damaged the original stadium and the city renovated it in 1951, but it is a historic place today because of his bravery and it is still a ballpark. Even though it has changed, Robinson would know baseball there.

City Island continues to honor Robinson and his work. It dedicated a bronze statue of him on September 9, 1990. The statue is at the entrance to the park and it depicts Jackie Robinson in his Montreal Royals uniform. He is not holding a bat, but talking with two young boys: one black



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and one white. The statue was created by Montreal Canadian artist Jules La Salle. City Island Ballpark was renamed Jackie Robinson Ballpark at the same time as the dedication. On October 22, 1998, the ballpark was added to the National Register of Historic Places. This helps protect and preserve it so people can learn and appreciate its history.

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of Jackie Robinson's 1946 debut game with the Montreal Royals, Rachel Robinson dedicated a memorial marker at the Jackie Robinson Ballpark in March 1996. She was honored on the playing field, seated center diamond, which was a happy contrast to the hours she spent in the Jim Crow section. During the memorial celebration at the ballpark, Bethune-Cookman College played and defeated another historically black college, Florida A & M University. Volusia County Public Schools brought 1,500 students to tour the ballpark and visit a photo exhibit about segregated baseball at Bethune-Cookman College.

Major league baseball dedicated its 1997 season to honor the 50th anniversary of Jackie Robinson's first season with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Many minor leaguers wore a "Breaking Barriers" commemorative arm patch, including the Daytona Cubs, which was the year's home team. In the same year, officials from Sanford, Florida issued an apology for their predecessors who had forced Jackie Robinson and the Montreal Royals to leave town 51 years earlier.

Jackie Robinson did not live to see these honors. Suffering from diabetes and poor health, he died of a heart attack in 1972. On his cemetery marker is one of his favorite mottoes: "A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives." Rarely has an athlete had the impact on others' lives that Jackie Robinson had on the people of the United States.



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Questions for Reading 4

- 1) How has City Island Ballpark honored Jackie Robinson?

- 2) When did the minor leagues desegregate? How many years had passed since Jackie Robinson's minor league debut? Why do you think it took so long?

- 3) What role did City Island Ballpark play in the end of Jim Crow? Name another important place in Civil Rights history.

- 4) Jackie Robinson changed peoples' lives. Name a sports player alive today who has helped change laws or inspired people. What was this person's cause? Who did he or she affect?



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Visual Evidence

Photo 1: Aerial view of City Island Ballpark, circa 1930s.



(Florida Photographic Collection, State Library and Archives of Florida:
<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/153612>)

A baseball field was part of City Island since 1915. The Daytona Town Council saw the recreational and economic value of having a ballpark. The island was artificially enlarged in the mid-1920s and a road circling the field was constructed. Two sets of wood bleachers and a grandstand were in place by 1924. The bleachers, press box, and grandstand have all been replaced or renovated since Jackie Robinson's era but the ballpark and its design is intact.



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Visual Evidence

Illustration 1: "Lobby Card" Advertisement for the Movie, *The Jackie Robinson Story*, 1950.



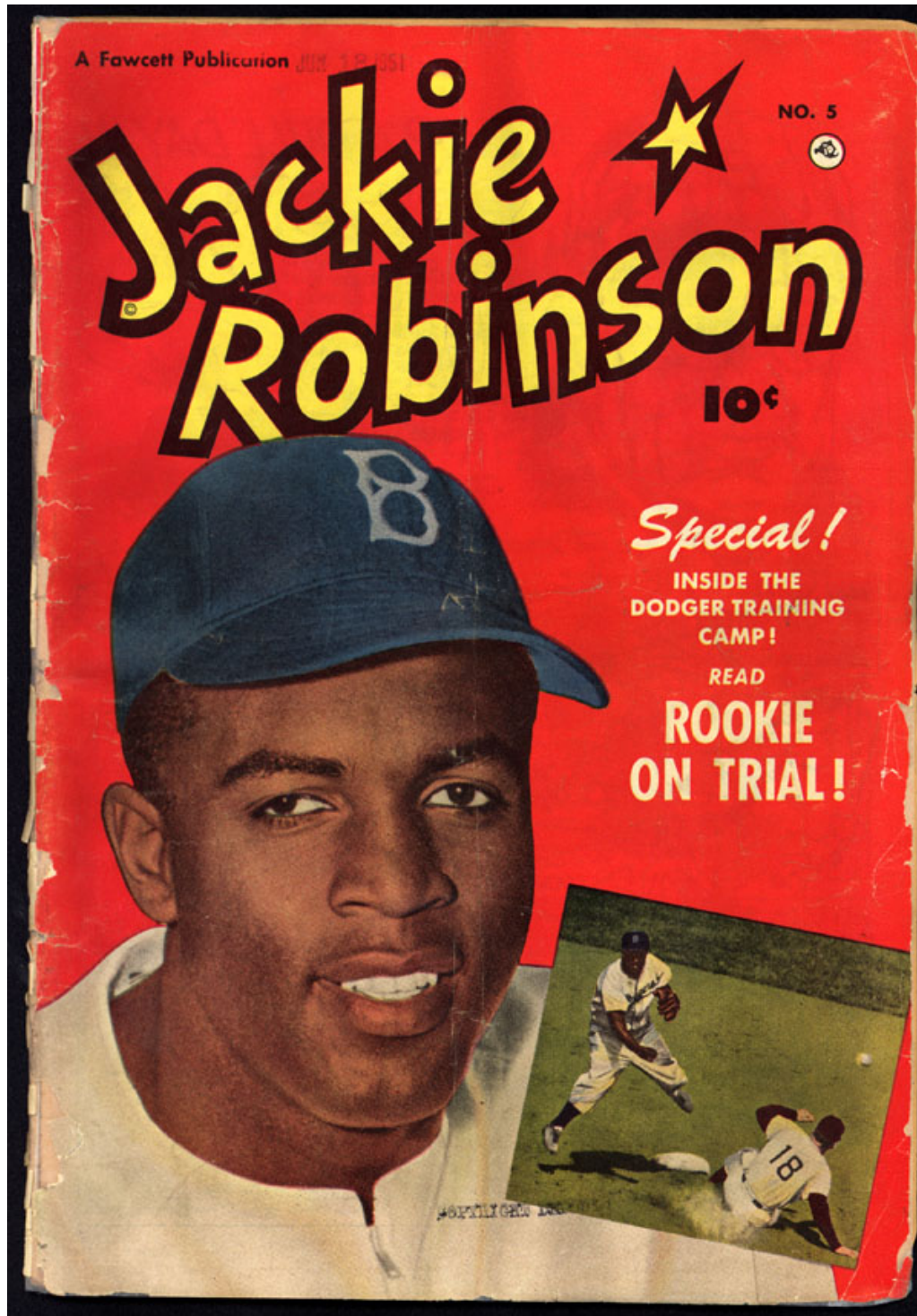
(Library of Congress)

In 1950, only four years after his spring training in Daytona Beach, Jackie Robinson played himself in the movie, *The Jackie Robinson Story*. At the time, lobby cards like this were distributed at movie theaters to promote new films.



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Illustration 2: Front Cover of *Jackie Robinson* Comic Book, 1951.



(Public Domain image courtesy Library of Congress: <https://www.loc.gov/item/97519504/>)



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Questions for Illustration 1 and 2

1) What kinds of documents are these two illustrations? Who do you think the audiences were for Illustration 1 and 2? Why do you think so?

2) Illustration 1 includes a photo still from the scene where Branch Rickey interviews Jackie Robinson. What is happening in the image? Why do you think the advertisement designers chose that scene for the lobby card?

3) Illustration 2 refers to "Rookie on Trial." What is a "rookie"? What kind of "trial" is this? What kind of information is in the comic book, based on the cover? Explain your answer.

4) In what ways might positive images of Jackie Robinson have affected Americans in the early 1950s? Why do you think so?



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Visual Evidence

Photo 2: Daytona Cubs vs. Brevard County Manatees, at Jackie Robinson Ballpark in Daytona Beach, April 6, 2013.



*(Photo courtesy Gamweb via Wikimedia Commons:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Daytona_Cubs_P4060021.JPG)*

During Jim Crow, white spectators sat in the shaded grandstand in the top-right and black spectators watched from the area with white tents behind First Base. The grandstand at the bottom of the image was built after Robinson's era.



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Questions for Photo 2

- 1) Who is using this place? What groups of people can you identify in the image?

- 2) Where would you want to sit to watch the game? Why?

- 3) How do you think segregated seating at this ballpark affected black and white Americans who attended games in the 1940s? Give one way it affected them in the park and one way it affected them outside of the park. Explain your answer.

- 4) A segregated ballpark was legally “separate but equal” until the Supreme Court decided separate was not equal in the 1950s. How might this policy be argued to be equal? How could it be seen as unequal? Use evidence from the photo and from Reading 2 to support your answers.



Visual Evidence

Photo 3: Statue of Jackie Robinson at Jackie Robinson Ballpark, 2007.



(Jean M. West)

Daytona Beach renamed the City Island Ballpark “Jackie Robinson Ballpark” and dedicated a bronze sculpture to honor Jackie Robinson in 1990. Montreal Canadian artist Jules La Salle designed the sculpture, which shows Robinson with a black boy and a white boy.



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Questions for Photo 3

- 1) Why do you think Daytona Beach changed the name of City Island Ballpark to Jackie Robinson Ballpark?

- 2) Why do you think the sculptor Jules LaSalle showed Jackie Robinson with two boys? Why do you think he chose to make one white and one black?

- 3) What is the body language of the figures in the sculpture? What does the author mean to say with this art?

- 4) Sketch your own statue to memorialize a Civil Rights leader like Robinson and include symbols from that person's life in the image. Write 1-2 sentences to explain what the symbols mean.



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Putting it All Together

Use the following activities to deepen your students' engagement with the topics and themes introduced in the lesson, and to help them develop essential skills.

Activity 1: Hold a Jackie Robinson Memorial Game

Ask students to write a prose or poetic description of Jackie Robinson's contribution to sport and society. Explain that they may be used at a ceremonial ballgame, either as part of opening remarks, in the program, or posted at the venue (or online.) Coordinate with the physical education teachers to schedule a commemorative baseball game on or close to March 17. Students may form teams from your own class and/or across classrooms.

Plan a pre-game ceremony where some of the students present their work. Collaborate with the art and music department to produce a commemorative program and arrange for a singer. Your own students may want to perform a song. You may also want to contact ROTC to arrange a color guard and the local media, including the school newspaper or television crew, to cover the game.

Chronicling of America: <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>



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Activity 2: Players for a Cause, in Your Community

The voices of Jackie Robinson, Rachel Robinson, and Branch Rickey provide an immediacy and detail to the struggle for civil rights that no textbook can match. Every community has individuals who have worked for justice in society and law. Ask your students to find someone from their community or families who has fought for a cause. Their experience could have happened anywhere: in an office, at a street protest, or in another country. Robinson's happened at a baseball game! Students may find that local civic organizations that serve senior citizens are a good resource, as well as their own community centers like churches, mosques, or synagogues.

Prepare students in the technique of conducting oral history interviews. The Library of Congress' Veterans History Project website offers in depth instructions on how to conduct an oral history and they include samples online. Students may want to interview a veteran who served in a humanitarian capacity.

It would be courteous for students to follow up by thanking participants, as well. After conducting the interview, students may report their findings to class in an oral form or through written transcription of the interview. Teachers may wish to offer the collected oral histories to a local library or historical society.

See the Veterans History Project [Website](http://www.loc.gov/vets/) [http://www.loc.gov/vets/] for more information about Oral Histories in general and interviewing veterans in particular.



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Activity 3: African American Heritage in Your State

Ask students to investigate the area in which you live and compile a list of historic places related to African American history. Divide the class into teams of three to five students. Each team should select one site, conduct research into its history, and prepare a report on the site. The format of the final report may be a written essay, an oral presentation, a poster or computer slideshow. If students are unsure about where to start their research, here are some possibilities:

- Interview the current resident and/or owner of the site, or someone who presently works there. Locate older members of the community who may be able to contribute recollections, old photographs, or vintage news clippings to the investigation.
- Check the school library, including vertical files, for information about the site.
- Go to the public library and check out the local history and genealogical resources there, as well as vertical files, local periodicals that may be on microfilm or microfiche, and Internet sources about the community.
- Contact the historical society or historical preservation commission in the community for information about the site.
- Public records, including old maps, available at the county courthouse or town clerk's office may help trace changes in ownership, subdivision of land, and building modifications.
- Determine if a nomination form for the National Register of Historic Places exists for your site. For more information, visit the [National Register of Historic Places web site](http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/) at [www. nps.gov/history/nr/].

When finished with their research, students may offer to make a presentation of their findings to the historical society or local architectural preservation group. They might want to send copies of their reports with these groups, especially if there is an ongoing effort to nominate the site to the National Register.



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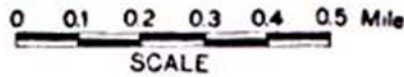
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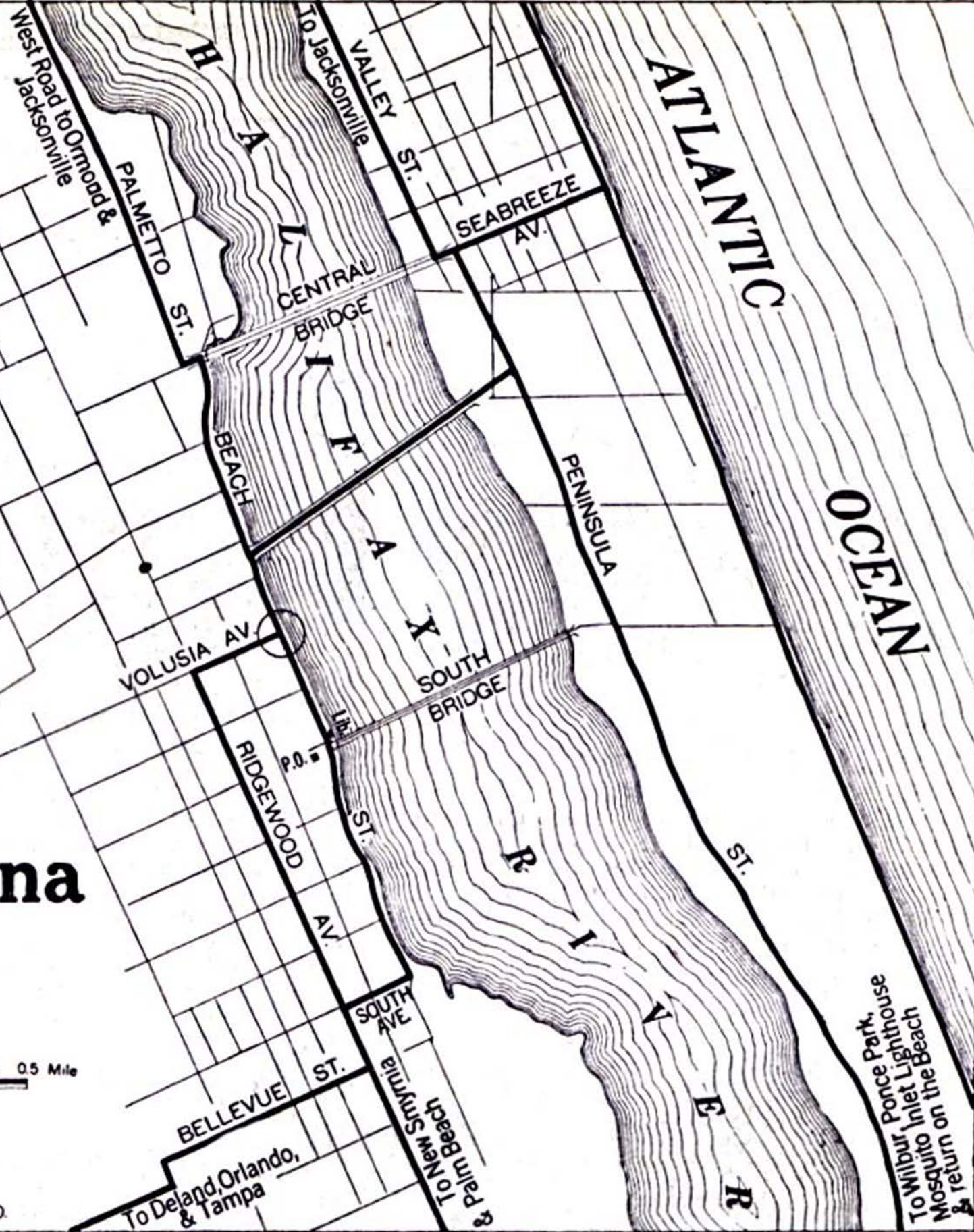
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Written by **FRANK Y. FORD** and **ALAN BRUCE**
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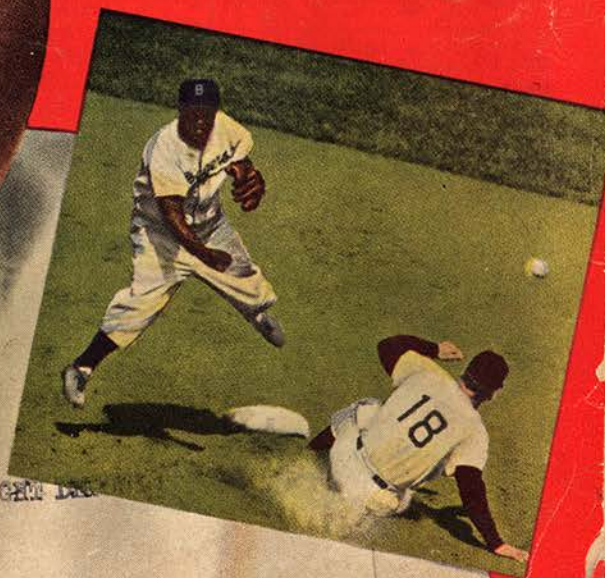
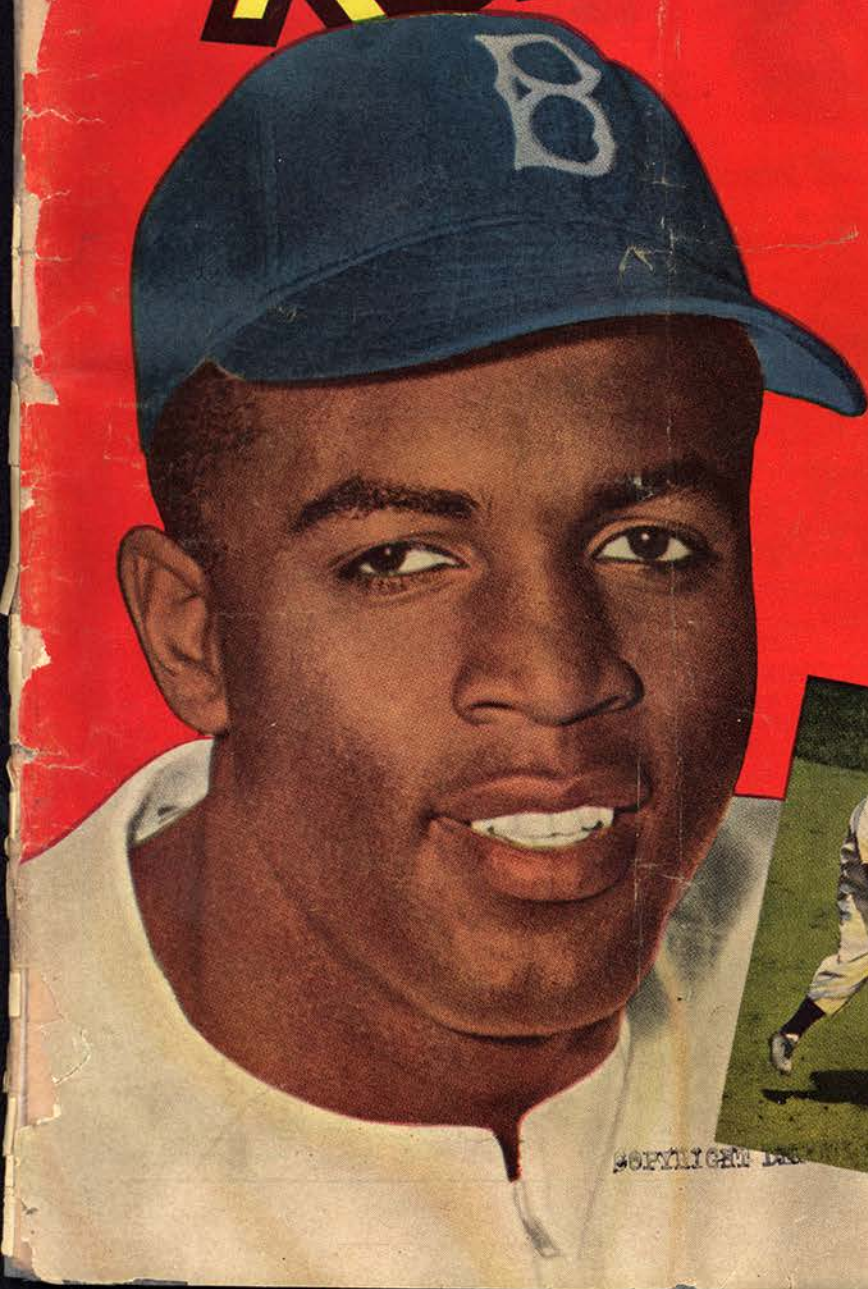
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