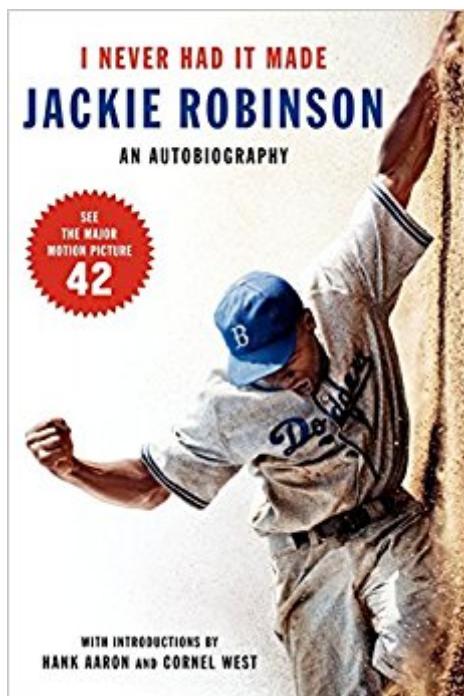


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# I Never Had It Made: An Autobiography Of Jackie Robinson



## Synopsis

The Autobiography of a Boy of Summer Who Became a Man for All SeasonsBefore Barry Bonds, before Reggie Jackson, before Hank Aaron, baseball's stars had one undeniable trait in common: they were all white. In 1947, Jackie Robinson broke that barrier, striking a crucial blow for racial equality and changing the world of sports forever. *I Never Had It Made* is Robinson's own candid, hard-hitting account of what it took to become the first black man in history to play in the major leagues. *I Never Had It Made* recalls Robinson's early years and influences: his time at UCLA, where he became the school's first four-letter athlete; his army stint during World War II, when he challenged Jim Crow laws and narrowly escaped court martial; his years of frustration, on and off the field, with the Negro Leagues; and finally that fateful day when Branch Rickey of the Brooklyn Dodgers proposed what became known as the "Noble Experiment"â "Robinson would step up to bat to integrate and revolutionize baseball. More than a baseball story, *I Never Had It Made* also reveals the highs and lows of Robinson's life after baseball. He recounts his political aspirations and civil rights activism; his friendships with Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, William Buckley, Jr., and Nelson Rockefeller; and his troubled relationship with his son, Jackie, Jr. Originally published the year Robinson died, *I Never Had It Made* endures as an inspiring story of a man whose heroism extended well beyond the playing field.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When I think about someone like Jackie Robinson, I think of someone who had an easy life of playing baseball and making lots of money. He was first the first African-American to play in the

professional Major League level and was highly respected by everyone. After having read his autobiography, I Never Had It Made, I realized that I was totally wrong. Besides the glory and the fame for having been the first African-American to play in the major leagues, Jackie had to go through many hardships to get where he got. Jackie uses this book to tell the reader of all the different trials and hardships he had to go through before, during, and after his professional career as the 1st and 2nd baseman of the Brooklyn Dodgers. Jackie also tells of all the other things that he did besides baseball. I didn't know it, but Jackie went to UCLA and while he was there, he did many great things. Not only was a great baseball star at UCLA, he was also a big star in football, basketball, and track. After college, he went into the Army and became a lieutenant for the U.S. Army before he signed with the Montreal Royals (a minor league baseball team) in 1945. Jackie gives a lot of the credit to Mr. Branch Rickey, the general manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers for having the guts to bring him into the team and making the transition as easy as possible. Jackie promised to take in any insults thrown at him while he was in baseball uniform and not to respond to them for two years. This was to pave the way for other black players to be brought into the major league. I personally don't think that I can play a game while people are yelling and making fun of me. Jackie describes what he had to go through in the book. Jackie also discusses the hate mail he got and even the threats people placed on his life.

This book provided interesting insight to the thinking of a man who made a mark on American history. We frequently hear about Jackie Robinson as the baseball icon who broke racial barriers in a segregated institution. We seldom hear of his many contributions to the business and political world. His autobiography gives personal insight to his life and the impact he had in the socio-political arena. Jackie was an outspoken advocate of his personal beliefs. He took on many challenges and sometimes suffered the consequences of those struggles. The reader gets to experience Jackie Robinson as a dynamic individual who is sometimes bitter, sometimes apologetic, sometimes sexist, sometimes full of pain, and sometimes proud. He discusses his views, his motivations, his reasoning, and his failures. The book reads as if the manuscript was typed verbatim from a tape recorded story of Jackie's life. As times, it lacks sufficient historical perspective that would provide greater information and understanding for the reader. One of the short comings of the book is the lack of footnotes. Jackie refers to a variety of documents including newspaper articles, but fails to provide footnotes so that the reader can refer to and research the source. Footnotes provide an excellent tool to look for and obtain more information on the subject. Due to the fact that there are many such references, they should have been available. It would have also been a plus to see

copies of some of the letters written to Jackie by Rockefeller, Nixon, and other historical figures that are discussed at length in the book. I would have also like to know more about Jackie's early years, such as, the schools he attended and how he entered UCLA.

This book tells of the struggles Jackie Robinson faced as he made a name for himself in the game of baseball. This is a wonderfully written autobiography that tells the emotion and physical hardships he faced not only in the major and minor leagues while playing baseball but also in his everyday life as well. While persevering through all this, he succeeded to a degree of breaking the color barrier in the United States. As a child he witnessed constant racism from neighbors, children, and many others that came into contact with him. His mother brought him up to be very strong and independent because when Jackie was about one or two his father went to the city and never returned. He left her with nothing but their five children who were all too young to work and support the family. Eventually after being forced to move, they went to live with Jackie's uncle in California. This book really showed me how hard he had it. Not only did he have the pressures of playing in the major leagues but also have to worry about prejudget on the field and in the stands. You will see how he didn't have a friend to talk to unless his wife, Rachel Robinson, would travel with him during the season. There was no one who even dreamed of having a black man in baseball until the Dodgers took on Jackie. Baseball has never been the same because of the influence this one man has had on the sport itself and many if not all other sports indirectly. "I Never Had It Made" tells Robinson's early years and influences such as his college experience at UCLA, where he became the school's first four-letter athlete; World War II, playing with the Negro Leagues; and when Branch Rickey of the Brooklyn Dodgers asked Jackie Robinson to play, which was known as the "Noble Experiment".

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