



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1998 Volume I: The Use and Abuse of History in Film and Video

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## **Discrimination and the Struggle for Equality: African Americans in Professional Baseball: A Reflection of the Civil Rights Movement**

Curriculum Unit 98.01.09  
by Jean Sutherland

After having taught in the New Haven School System for a number of years, I have come to realize the importance of trying to help my pupils understand and appreciate the struggles that have taken place as this country attempted to rectify the many years of social, political, and economic inequity which existed here since the beginning of slavery in America. With African American students comprising the vast majority of my pupils, I feel that this area of United States history is of particular relevance. To help provide the material which I believe is vital to my students' development, I previously have written a number of units which attempt to clarify the events covering the time period from the introduction of slavery through Reconstruction, the backlash of Jim Crow Laws, and the drive for Civil Rights, culminating with the situation as it exists today. Though in these units I have approached the subject from a number of different angles, both general and specific, I primarily have focused on the areas of literature and poetry as vehicles to lead student toward my desired goal of developing an understanding and appreciation of this struggle for freedom and equality. As I continue in the same vein with this year's unit, I have added another ingredient, film, as well as another area of concentration, the Negro Leagues, both of which I feel will enhance and add meaning to the study of twentieth century African American history, making it easier for students to grasp the facts and feelings of this period, while providing them with detailed information on a relevant but often overlooked segment of United States history.

Though easily adapted for use with older and, to some extent, younger children, of similar or different backgrounds, this unit is designed for a third grade class which averages about twenty-five pupils ranging in age from eight to ten. They come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds and home situations. Their academic ability and the level of their general knowledge also vary considerably. A few children have considerable trouble reading on grade level, while a few qualify for New Haven's talented and gifted program. Generally, their basic academic skill level is below average, but many have potential well beyond this point. As in the school as a whole, over ninety percent are African American, a few are Latino, and there is seldom more than one white child in a classroom. Some students are members of families with multiple problems, Few of their lives are without difficulties. Though some might be reluctant to admit it, most enjoy school at this stage of their lives, but not just for the academics. Many, though not all, parents or guardians are supportive of the school in particular and education in general. Most want to be helpful but are not always sure of the best way to go about it. Often the struggles of everyday life thwart their efforts. Right now most of the children have lofty goals in life, but they soon will be facing the competition of more academically prepared peers, along with meeting the pressures which all children, especially those growing up in inner-city America, encounter.

Since the game of baseball is something to which most students, including girls, can relate, no matter what their age, race, socio-economic status, or ethnic background might be, much of the unit's content can be adapted to almost any type of classroom, at almost any grade level. This should allow the scope of this unit to be expanded well beyond the group of students for whom it was written.

## Why Use Film?

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There are a number of areas in our curriculum where my third grade students investigate material related to the history of segregation and discrimination as it has existed in the United States. This is particularly true in the areas of reading and social studies but also grows from discussions of current events or even something which has occurred in the life of an individual student. Though there is considerable written material which traces the history of segregation, the fight for African American Civil Rights, and the attitudes of people who lived during these times, I often find that it is difficult for students to establish a connection between events of the past and situations which exist today. For many students, the struggles faced and endured by African Americans during the first half of this century, though often interesting, seem remote and disconnected to the present. It seems obvious that much of this difficulty which pupils encounter in relating to events of the past is due to a lack of maturity and experience. It also seems clear that making the people who took part in these historical events more "real" will make their situations more understandable to eight or nine year olds, or even adults, for that matter.

While teaching a unit, which I wrote in 1996, on using film to teach about AIDS, I found the results dramatic. By incorporating movies and documentaries such as *The Ryan White Story* and *Common Threads* into my teaching, my pupils demonstrated a newly discovered understanding of this disease and a related empathy for those who live with it, an empathy and understanding which I had not been able to develop in previous years. In this years unit I hope to achieve the same positive results by employing a similar approach.

Specifically, this unit uses films which focus on the history of discrimination in professional baseball and the subsequent struggle to gain equality for African American athletes in this sport. These films will serve as a springboard leading to further historical study which will help students to understand the broader and often parallel presence of inequality existing in American society as a whole. "When Only the Ball Was White," "The Jackie Robinson Story," and Ken Burns documentary on baseball are just a few films which will spur this investigation. As with the unit on AIDS, I believe the inclusion of film will make the Civil Rights Movement a much more understandable, relevant part of United States history.

The films suggested for use include documentaries, historical fiction, and material that is largely fictitious. Together with written material, they will show how the discrimination against African American athletes in professional baseball fostered the development of a parallel structure, the Negro Leagues, which, despite considerable obstacles, allowed black players to maintain a presence in the field of baseball, a presence which, not always consciously, nudged and pushed, until black athletes had to be included in the larger picture. Coupled with movement in society as a whole, this persistent presence helped to hasten the time when the white power structure finally realized that moral, ethical, and economic pressures made the time right to break the color-line, a line which never should have existed.

## Getting to Work Early

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The unit lends itself easily to a number of curriculum areas. Reading activities will be an integral part of all topics. The same will be true of writing. There are a number of books and short stories which are grade level appropriate. Some will be read to the class, some read together, and some assigned for independent reading. There are also worksheets that develop specific academic skills based upon articles related to my unit's topic. This material, and similar skill sheets related to the needs of a particular class, can be easily developed and utilized. United related spelling words will be added to existing lists. There will be opportunities for pupils to develop research skills as they prepare reports and oral presentations. In social studies, much of our focus during African American History Month in February will be devoted to this unit. However, through oral reading to the class, related skill worksheets, writing topics, current events, and incidental discussion, the unit will be an ongoing part of our curriculum beginning in September.

In October, as the World Series dominates the sports headlines, we will develop an all-star roster of African American players who were outstanding participants in the Negro Leagues. Information on these men will be gathered through various references. Once the class is familiar with these athletes, in some way, this information will then be shared with other classrooms, especially those on the Beecher team, through displays and/or oral presentations.

As the year progresses, we will delve more deeply into the prejudice and discrimination which existed within the professional baseball structure and the effect this had upon the formation and existence of the Negro Leagues. This will be done through the use of both film and written material. We will begin by viewing films which depict conditions on a more basic, personal level. Films such as "Bingo Long and the Traveling All-Stars" and the "Jackie Robinson Story" will provide story lines which pupils can relate to more easily than the documentary material which will follow. These films will be laying a foundation of understanding upon which more factual materials, such as the Ken Burns documentary and "Only the Ball Was White," will build and perhaps contradict. The same approach will be taken with written works, beginning with fiction and historical fiction and moving toward nonfiction text and references. .

Simultaneously, as baseball during the first half of the twentieth century is being examined, students will be developing the larger picture of race relations in the United States during this time period. The approach will be similar to that used in studying the baseball scene: fiction, historical fiction, factual references, and film. A film such as "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman" can provide considerable background to the Civil Rights struggle. Mildred Taylor's *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry*, in both text and film, presents the plight of an African American Family living in Mississippi during the Depression through the eyes of a nine year old. There are also a large number of documentary films available to chronicle the Movement in a manner suitable for children of this age. Some are included in the unit's bibliography.

As these two facets of this unit, the quest for equality in professional baseball and the slow movement toward Civil Rights in the United States, develop and blend, we will integrate some works of poetry that reflect these struggles. "To Satch" by James Allen and "Merry Go Round" by Langston Hughes are poems which children seem to relate to easily. Examining works such as these sometimes articulate the emotions behind the facts.

## Some Important Information

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As is the case concerning the history of baseball as a whole, the history of the Negro Leagues and black baseball in general is dotted with colorful anecdotes whose accuracy is sometimes questioned. Due to the often unstructured conditions in which black baseball was played, documentation is frequently sketchy. As a result, there is sometimes disagreement regarding some of the statistics which have survived. It is important that children realize this. At the same time, there are numerous sources of authentic documentation which verify the history of the Negro Leagues and the exploits of the men who played there.

The interested teacher can find considerable references available in print and on film. These vary in the depth and possible overall accuracy of their presentation. Material for younger children is generally much more superficial and needs to be supplemented by material the teacher gains from more “adult” sources. To provide the baseball novice with some direction, I include a general guide to the historical development of Negro League baseball which can then be altered and enhanced to fit a specific classroom situation and grade level.

The first references to African American players in relationship to white players appears in records from games played by Union forces during the lull between battles during the Civil War. Baseball, unlike boxing, had not been encouraged by slave owners, while in the North some free blacks played on and against integrated teams. After the Civil War, the general interest in baseball increased, but, almost immediately, action was taken to ban blacks.

In 1867, the National Association of Base Ball Players voted to ban any team with colored members. Despite this action, some players managed to play on integrated minor league teams. Two such players were Bud Fowler and Fleet Walker. Walker actually played for Toledo, a member of the American Association, a less prestigious but, none the less, major league team. Walker is credited as being the first black major league player. As a result of owner pressure, he was let go after one season.

In 1885, Frank Thompson, a waiter at New York’s Argyle Hotel, organized the first professional Negro team. The Cuban Giants, composed largely of men who had been waiters. In an attempt to pass as Cubans, they spoke a gibberish which they hoped would be accepted as Spanish. As the century closed, a number of other eminent black teams were formed. The Boston Resolutes, the Lord Baltimores, the St. Louis Stockings, the Cuban X Giants, and the Page Fence Giants are just a few.

As the century turned and many blacks migrated to the North, outstanding teams developed in the larger cities of the area, and with them came new heroes like Oscar Charleston, Smokey Joe Williams, and Pop Floyd. Some teams, like the All-Nation club, were owned by white promoters such as J. L. Wilkinson.

In 1920, Rube Foster, owner of the Chicago American Giants, formed the first organized black league to last at least a full season. The league consisted of eight teams, including a traveling Cuban team, the Stars.

The Eastern Colored League was organized in 1923 and soon became rivals of the Negro National League teams to the west. A year later, the first colored World Series was held . The Kansas City Monarchs defeated the Philadelphia Hillsdales five games to four with one tie.

When Rube Walker became ill in 1926, The Negro National League was weakened. Without his leadership, the league collapsed in 1931, a few years after the Eastern Colored League had already failed.

During the Depression, teams and leagues were formed and dissolved. In 1932, the new Negro National League reorganized two of these floundering leagues into one organization which lasted until 1936.

During this period, Gus Greenlee, owner of the popular Pittsburgh Crawfords, organized the first East-West All-star game. By the early forties, this game's ability to outdraw the Major League's all-star game attracted the attention of major league owners such as Branch Rickey. Players like Satchel Page, Josh Gibson, Buck Leonard, and others began to receive wider recognition, despite a long history of black baseball being ignored by the white press.

Finally in 1945, Branch Rickey ended his search for an "appropriate" black player to break the color-line by signing Jackie Roosevelt Robinson to a contract with the major league Brooklyn Dodgers. After a year of minor league ball, Robinson played his first game in the majors, thus opening the gates to the talented players of the Negro Leagues, leaving black teams with little personnel with which to draw fans. As a result, in 1960, the Negro American League, with a few remaining barnstorming teams, officially closed their operations. The Negro Leagues had ended.

The success of African American players in the Majors was immediate, almost amazing. After Robinson won the Rookie of the Year Award, black players won eight of the next eleven awards, and nine of the eleven men who were voted National League Most Valuable Player between 1949 and 1959 were former Negro League players.

There is much more to the story of the Negro Leagues and their players than is recounted here. Further development of these events will bring the era alive, developing both understanding and appreciation.

## **Other Important Aspects of Black Baseball for Consideration**

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Of equal importance to this unit is an investigation of topics unavoidably tied to the history of black baseball and the Negro Leagues. Here are a few for your consideration.

**Barnstorming:** The amazing, sad, and even humorous exploits of players riding from town to town searching for a team to play and a crowd to please are an important part of black baseball.

**Family Event:** A black game was an event for the entire family. It provided both entertainment and a feeling of pride. It was a social event worthy of your finest attire and your best cooking.

**Segregation:** Endless tales of discrimination and blatant segregation on and off the field exist. A reflection of our larger society, this system must have taken a tremendous toll on black players.

**Hardships:** Rooted in a background of prejudice and its resulting segregation, the hardships faced by black players seem enough to discourage even the most ardent athlete. Inability to find proper food and lodging, sleeping in a bus or on the field, playing three games a day, and receiving grossly inadequate wages are but a few.

**Love of the Game:** It is amazing that players who suffered such physical, emotional, and economic assaults could speak so clearly and passionately about their love of the game and their ability to rise above its cruelties. Numerous quotes are available in print and on film.

Showmanship: Though the greatest display of showmanship was the way they played, many teams resorted to techniques of attracting fans through clowning and comedy routines. These performances were criticized by some as racially degrading and an insult to their ability.

The Black Press: Since the white press largely ignored black baseball, it was the responsibility of African American newspapers and magazines to fill the gap. Their coverage, not only brought real live heroes to the African American community, but also provided us with observations and statistics which form much of the foundation of black and Negro League baseball history.

All of these areas contain information that is vital to understanding black baseball and the Negro Leagues. They are intertwined in the films and printed material listed in the unit's bibliography. They are topics that students should relate to easily and should help to make events real.

## Relating to the Larger Historical Picture

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It is vital and almost unavoidable that the history of black baseball and the Negro Leagues be tied to historical events and movements experienced by the nation as a whole. The influence of these historical periods explains much of what happened as the history of the black game unfolded. An awareness of these larger historical periods also shows that black baseball and its leagues played a reciprocal role by exerting an influence of its own upon the larger picture.

Naturally, the degree to which students are exposed to these elements will vary according to grade level and the group involved. The same is true of the manner in which this material is presented. As I briefly mentioned previously, for my level, I will use films such as "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman," "Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry," (film and text), "The Vernon Jones Story," "The Story of Ruby Bridges," (film and text), the Ken Burns Documentary on the Civil War, (specifically, sections on black soldiers), and "Glory."

The historical periods I will focus on include: some consideration of slavery in order to develop a background of understanding, the Civil War, Reconstruction, the enactment of *Jim Crow* laws, *Clan* activities, *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, migration of African Americans to the North, the Depression, the Harlem Renaissance, World War II, and the gradual movement involving civil rights action, highlighted by *Brown vs. the Board of Education*.

Though guiding third graders through these periods, while studying about black baseball, may seem like an unmanageable task, the fact that films, stories, poems, worksheets, research, and even art and music activities related to these topics will be integrated with the basic curriculum throughout the year should make it easier to achieve. Even the area of arithmetic provides many opportunities to integrate material. ("If Jackie Robinson was born in 1919, how old was he when he signed with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1945?" Create and compare points on time lines representing major events in black baseball and influencing periods in United States history. Use the many statistics from the history of both black and white baseball to create your own word problems. Have pupils do the same.)

It must be remembered that in-depth knowledge is not always the goal, though it is always welcomed. Rather, understanding and appreciation is our major aim, along with developing the many academic skills that are an essential part of the third grade curriculum.

Although this unit does offer some specific suggestions regarding actual lessons and does present a

general outline of the material to be covered throughout the year, decisions on what to cover, how to cover it, and when it should be done rests with the individual teacher as she/he measures the needs and capabilities of her/his particular group of students. Available material is ripe for the development of a wide variety of individual lessons and related activities. Consulting the bibliographies of the references listed at the end of this unit should yield even more information. Black baseball and the Negro Leagues provide a fascinating, meaningful area of study, one which effortlessly leads both teacher and student into equally fascinating, meaningful, intertwining areas of United States history.

## People You Should Know

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The individuals listed below are people who played a major role in the history of black baseball. Some are familiar to even the most casual baseball fan, while others are probably known by relatively few. There are many more who deserve a place here, but space does not allow for their inclusion. Naturally, individual teachers should add or subtract as they examine their particular situation

### **MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME**

#### *Men Who Played Only In The Negro Leagues*

James "Cool Papa" Bell  
Oscar Charleston  
Ray Dandridge  
Martin Dihigo  
Andrew "Rube" Foster  
Josh Gibson  
William "Judy" Johnson  
Walter "Buck" Leonard  
John Henry "Pop" Lloyd

#### *Men Who Played In The Negro Leagues*

#### *And Then Played In The Majors*

Hank Aaron

Ernie Banks  
Roy Campanella  
Monte Irvin  
Willie Mays  
Leroy "Satchel" Paige  
Jackie Robinson

*Others Of Note*

Cap Anson  
Happy Chandler  
Bud Fowler  
Gus Greenlee  
Kenesaw Mountain Landis  
Effa Manley  
Branch Rickey  
Goose Tatum  
J.L. Wilkinson  
Smokey Joe Williams



## The Beecher Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute Team

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This unit is part of a seminar team of four L.W. Beecher teachers whose units all attempt to help students understand four important movements in United States history: the Westward Movement (Geraldine Martin), African American Migration (Renee McKinnon), the Civil Rights Movement (Jean Sutherland), and the Women's Movement (Jean Gallogly).

Though each unit will be written to stand independently, the teachers will work collaboratively to share ideas and materials as they work toward a culminating assembly and reception to be held in April of 1999. There will be some cross-grade teaching and sharing of activities. This sharing may also involve classrooms which are not formal members of the team. Attempts will be made to include parents, administrators, and other school personnel in activities throughout the year. Teachers examining this unit may wish to consult material from other Beecher team members for the possibility of developing a similar project in their school.

## LESSON PLANS

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The following three lesson plans are designed to illustrate the interdisciplinary nature of this unit. One focuses almost exclusively on information concerning black baseball, while another uses material from the unit's content as a means of developing reading skills, and the final plan links black baseball with the Civil Rights Movement. Hopefully, the information and suggestions given in the narrative portion of this unit will provide the teacher with many other avenues to approach learning in their particular classroom.

### **Lesson One: Our Own Baseball Cards**

Subject Matter Areas: Social Studies, Language Arts, Art

Vocabulary: Trading cards, logo

Objectives: To develop the ability to research individuals and summarize the basic information on that person's life.

To decide on material appropriate for printing on each player's card.

To design a logo and graphic setting for your particular set of cards.

To create your own set of trading cards of Negro League baseball players.

As pupils begin to realize that during their lifetime many superior baseball players were denied the respect and rewards they were due merely because they happened to be born black, they should be ready to do their small part to right these injustices. They will create their own set of baseball trading cards for members of the Negro Leagues which they have or will research.

Though there are some Negro League trading cards commercially available, the number is dwarfed by

representations of white players from the same time periods. In recent years a number of commercial sets have been created. I have obtained a relatively large set which I will show to the class, but these cards lack information on birth, death, and any available career statistics. If pupils chose to include statistics on their cards, it must be noted that most are estimates, since accurate records were not usually the rule.

When creating their own set each pupil will begin by selecting ten players they wish to represent on their cards. This number may be expanded if time and ability allow. Pupils will then decide what information each wishes to include on the back of each card. A number of formats are possible, but the setup will be limited by the available space and the means of reproducing the material. Typing by the teacher or student will provide the most order and clarity.

After students have researched and summarized the material they will include on their card, they will be ready to select an appropriate picture for each card. Besides those depicted on the set of commercially produced cards which I have, there are many small photos from information found on the Internet or in text books on the subject. These will be set in some type of boarder or logo which the student creates.

The actual means of producing the cards will vary depending on the materials available and the skill of the teacher. In simplest form, they could be produced on ditto paper and copied. To make them more substantial, they could be copied on thicker paper or pasted to oak tag or some other type of cardboard. Color might be added to the boarder or logo once the final product is available. The cards may then be shared with other pupils, classes, and/or displayed on a bulletin board. Students might even do what the cards' name indicates: trade them.

## **Lesson Two: Using Unit Content to Develop Degrees of Reading Power**

Subject Matter Areas: Reading, Social Studies

Vocabulary: Will vary with each lesson developed.

Objectives: To develop skill at using various context clues to identify unknown words and as a result to develop reading power.

To reinforce introduce or reenforce information related to the unit's content.

The goal of developing independent readers is a primary objective of the elementary school. One means of achieving this goal is through an approach which teaches pupils to look for various clues within the context of the material being read as a means of recognizing and understanding unfamiliar words which the student may encounter. Besides teaching these techniques for unlocking unfamiliar words, this approach trains pupils to read more carefully, resulting in an overall improvement in comprehension. All New Haven teachers are familiar with this program designed to increase each pupil's "degrees of reading power." There are a wide variety of materials available to use while working with students in such a program. Basically, these materials provide paragraphs where key words have been omitted. Students are asked to find the appropriate word from among four choices, all of which could "fit" within the sentence's structure, but only one makes sense within the context of the larger piece. Students learn to explore the context before and after the missing word in order to find clues which will help in identifying the missing word. The important skills developed here are

the procedures used to explore the context for clues and developing the ability to recognize and utilize these clues.

In this lesson plan, I suggest using material related to the unit's content to create original worksheets which may be used to develop the skills discussed above. This would have the advantage of serving as reading instruction material as well as a source and, even, review of information related to the unit. It's primary function, however, would be to improve the student's reading ability. Initially, the important procedure to follow would focus on the context that leads one to the appropriate missing word. Discussion relative to content could then follow. It is best to use material with information that pupils have not yet encountered, since this would eliminate the use of previous knowledge to identify the word. If, however, this happens to be the case, the experience of finding the context clues which unlock the missing word is still of considerable value. The completed worksheets could be saved in a folder for future reference related to this unit's content.

Here is a brief sample, related to the life of Jackie Robinson.

### *Jackie Robinson*

Read each section of these statements about Jackie Robinson. Select the appropriate missing word from the choices listed below. Be ready to identify the clues which lead to your selection. You may underline those word which helped you make your choice.

On the opening day of the 1947 baseball season, a new Brooklyn Dodger rookie stepped up to bat. It was his \_\_\_\_\_ year in the Major Leagues.

- a. last                      b. first
- c. only      d. third

After Jackie's father \_\_\_\_\_ the family, Jackie's mother moved to California with the children. On her own, she worked to keep the family together .

- a. worked    b. saluted
- c. left                      d. cooked

Jackie immediately boarded a ship for California. He didn't wait a second. He left \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. at once    b. later
- c. quietly    d. alone

Jackie ignored insults. He never fought. He always tried to hold his \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. bat                      b. hand  
c. glove   d. temper

Many fans liked the way Jackie played. When he came to bat, they would \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. boo                      b. cheer  
c. leave   d. sleep

Many people soon changed their opinion of Jackie. It \_\_\_\_\_ take a long time for them to appreciate his skills.

- a. will                      b. might  
c. didn't   d. did

### **Lesson Three: Compare and Contrast Jackie Robinson and Ruby Bridge**

Subject Matter Areas: Social Studies, Language Arts, Social Development

Vocabulary: Integrate, prejudice, separate but equal, segregate

Objectives: To be able to compare and contrast the experiences faced by Ruby Bridges and Jackie Robinson as they each integrated a previously all-white domain.

To be able to express, orally and in writing, the similarities and differences between these two situations and the individuals involved.

In the course of this unit, pupils will observe a number of films related to the life of Jackie Robinson. They will also read related material and see numerous photographs of Jackie taken at various times throughout his life. They should become relatively familiar with the events leading up to his hiring as the first African American in the Major Leagues, the struggles he was forced to endure, and the personal traits which characterized him as an individual.

As part of the student's investigation of related events in the area of Civil Rights, pupils will focus on school desegregation. After appropriate investigation and discussion, they will be shown the Disney film about Ruby Bridges, a six year old African American student who integrates an elementary school in New Orleans in 1960. The film clearly shows the trials which Ruby had to endure. It easily stimulates questions and discussion from students who are able to relate to Ruby in many ways.

Once pupils are familiar with both individuals and their role in integration, they should be able to make comparisons and contrasts between the two. Suggested areas to explore include the negative treatment they

both received, their courage, their temperament, how they may have felt at various points during their experiences, support from their family, support from positive white figures, and the value of their contributions, their legacy. Pupils might write letters to either or both Ruby and Jackie commenting of their lives and/or asking pertinent questions. They might also create diaries pretending that they are Jackie or Ruby reliving some important event they have just experienced.

Such discussion and writing could easily lead into examples of integration in the area of lunch counters, buses, other public facilities, and housing. There is also a film, "The Ernest Green Story," about the experiences of Ernest Green and others who integrated Little Rock's Central High School. This film would further reinforce the material covered in these activities.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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Due to the recent fiftieth anniversary of Jackie Robinson's historical breaking of the color-line in professional baseball, there has been an increased interest in black baseball and the Negro Leagues. As a result, there are many more books and films available to the public than could have been found as recently as five years ago. I have listed only those which I have used and found to have particular relevance to the topic. Others have been omitted because they mostly duplicated material appearing in those I have listed. I would predict that more fictional works, such as *The Bat Boy and His Violin*, will be available in the near future. I believe that all of the books I mention could be used in some manner with any grade level, though some are obviously too long or too difficult for younger children to handle independently.

The films which I have included vary greatly both in quality and content. If shown in their entirety, some are not suitable for young students. The variety of documentary and historical fiction included in my list provides an opportunity for the teacher to sharpen pupil ability to evaluate the accuracy and intention of various films.

### **Books**

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Chadwick, Bruce. *When the Game Was Black and White*. New York, N.Y.: Abbeville Press, 1992.

Almost 200 pages of interesting, informative text and photographs, many of which I have not found in other sources. Text is interspersed with quotes from various personalities associated with black baseball. Does an excellent job of covering the topic. Selected material could be read orally to younger students, some of whom could read portions of the text on their own. Photographs would appeal to any age level.

Curtis, Gavin. *The Bat Boy and His Violin*. New York, N.Y.: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1998.

Set in the 1940's, this fictitious children's story tells us about about a young boy, Reginald, whose love is the violin, not baseball. His father, manager of the Negro League Dukes, has little patience for his son's "fiddling." He persuades his son to act as team bat boy with the condition that Reginald be allowed to practice in the dugout. This arrangement forges a closer relationship between father and son while giving us an inside look at life in the Negro Leagues. Excellent for young children. Could be read by many third graders. Can provoke discussion on father-son relationships.

Fremon, David. Negro Baseball League. New York: New Discovery Books, 1994.

This book presents the history of the Negro Leagues, their changing structure, teams, and personalities. Some photographs. Could be read by some third graders.

McKissack, Patricia and Patrick, Jr. Black Diamond: The Story of the Negro Leagues. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1994. Small paperback containing considerable information and some small photographs. Player profile and time line can be quite helpful.  
O’Conner, Jim. Jackie Robinson and the Story of All-Black Baseball. New York: Random House, 1989.

Geared for the young reader, this book tell an adequate, but brief, history of black baseball and Jackie Robinson’s crossing of the color-line. Contains both photographs and illustrations.

Ribowsky, Mark. A Complete History of the Negro Leagues 1884 to 1955. Carol Publishing Group, 1997.

This book gives a detailed account of black baseball and the Negro Leagues. There are few pictures, but an abundance of information. Too difficult for most elementary student. Excellent resource for teacher.

Ritter, Lawrence. Leagues Apart-The Men and Times of the Negro Baseball Leagues. New York: Morrow Junior Books, 1995.

Vividly colored illustrations, especially those of Negro League stars, highlight this book. Text summarizes information on the League’s major stars. Could be read independently by many third graders.

Robinson, Rachel with Lee Daniels. Jackie Robinson An Intimate Portrait. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1996.

Narrated by Jackie’s wife, Rachel, this book presents us with an intimate, detailed look at the life of Jackie Robinson, both on and off the field. Though selected material would have to be read to younger students, people of all ages will appreciate the wonderful photographs which augment the text.

## Films: Baseball

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“Baseball.” Turner Home Video, 1994.

This lengthy PBS documentary produced, directed, and written by Ken Burns has some excellent footage on black baseball and the Negro Leagues, though you will have to put various sections together for class viewing. The film is too long for elementary pupils, but showing some excerpts from the games history could help pupils put black baseball in its general context. Excellent section on Jackie Robinson.

“The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars & Motor Kings.” MCA Universal Pictures, 1976.

Big name stars give us a picture of a barnstorming team attempting to break away from their own League. Some characters seem very loosely based on real personalities. Some sections are not appropriate for younger students. Rated PG.

“The Court-Martial of Jackie Robinson.” Turner Home Entertainment, 1991.

Using a well-known cast, focuses on Jackie’s stint in the army. Shows many of the racist individuals and practices he faced, the conflicts they created, and how Robinson was able to handle them. An incident which occurred on an Army bus and resulted in Jackie’s court-martial could be paralleled with Rosa Parks’ refusal to relinquish her seat in Birmingham, Alabama. Film is generally

appropriate for younger children but does contain some strong language and frequent use of the word “nigger.”

“Jackie Robinson.” A&E Home Video, 1991.

Following the A&E Biography format, this video combines narration, quotes, and representative film clips to tell us the story of Jackie Robinson. Quite appropriate for young children.

“The Jackie Robinson Story.” Eagle Lion, 1950.

Starring Jackie Robinson as himself, this low budget film despite its weaknesses is still able to give us a picture of the struggles and humiliation Robinson faced during the first years of his baseball career. The book, Jackie Robinson: An Intimate Portrait, contains a short section on the film, along with a number of interesting photographs.

“Only the Ball Was White.” MPI Home Video, 1992.

Narrated by Paul Winfield, this film features remembrances from stars of the Negro Leagues. It provides an opportunity for students to see and hear these players. Appropriate for young children.

“Soul of the Game.” HBO Pictures, 1996.

This film focuses on the friendly competition among Satchel Paige, Josh Gibson, and Jackie Robinson during the year before Robinson’s signing, which does not follow most written accounts. With a PG-13 rating it is not appropriate for young children. (Strong language and adult situations.) Sections might be excerpted for use. Gives a fairly good picture of Josh Gibson’s downfall.

## **Films: History of Civil Rights**

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There are many films appropriate for use here. The number and type used will vary depending on the age and experience of the students involved. I have included only the one I will use with my third grade students. They were chosen as tools to further students understanding of the background which created the environment that allowed segregated baseball to exist. At the same time, it is hoped that they will illustrate the emergence of the Civil Rights Movement as a movement that was necessitated by the same factors which created the color-line in baseball and had heroes who suffered and fought just like the stars of the Negro Leagues.

“The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman.” 1974.

“The Ernest Green Story.” 1993.

“Eyes on the Prize.” 1987.

“Glory.” 1989.

“The Story of Ruby Bridges.” 1989. (There is also an excellent children’s book with the same title by Robert Coles.)

## Internet Sources

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There is considerable information on black baseball and the Negro Leagues available on the internet if one is able and willing to search. Besides information, there are pictures, puzzles, interesting facts, and sources where other material may be obtained. The same is true of the history related to the Civil Rights Movement.

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