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**NEW TITLES**

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*History*

**BASEBALL'S GREAT EXPERIMENT: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy**  
by Jules Tygiel  
Oxford, 1983  
392 pp. \$16.95

**INVISIBLE MEN: Life in Baseball's Negro Leagues**  
by Donn Rogosin  
Atheneum, 1983  
283 pp. \$14.95

Baseball, the all-American game, was once, like so many other all-American pastimes, all-white on one side and all-black on the other. How the barrier fell is the subject of Tygiel's book: an intelligent history of the events leading up to and following the dramatic moment on April 18, 1946, when Jackie Robinson stepped onto the field of Jersey City's Roosevelt Stadium as a batter for the Brooklyn Dodgers' farm team, the Montreal Royals. Tygiel, a historian at San Francisco State, tells how Dodger president Branch Rickey went about finding a black ballplayer who could match exceptional skill with an unflappable temperament. It is hard to imagine a better choice than Robinson: Ambitious, talented (he had a .349 batting average his first season, despite injuries and a long slump), quietly determined, he endured racial insults and jeers from crowds whenever he walked onto the field. While Robinson battled "Jim Crow," Rickey won influential sportscasters, such as Red Barber, to the cause of integration.

Robinson's career before 1946 has usually been scanted, but Rogosin, a Texas public television executive, reminds us that the "dark destroyer" was once one of baseball's "invisible men," a player in the forgotten Negro leagues. Founded in Kansas City in 1920, the Negro leagues fielded up to 15 teams and nurtured such outstanding players as Satchel Paige, Monte Irvin, and Willie Wells. These talented teams won "over 60 percent of their encounters with white major-league opponents," writes Rogosin. Poor, they were frequently forced "to barnstorm," traveling from town to town in search of audiences and opponents, sometimes playing as many as three games a day. After Robinson's success in 1946, attendance at Negro league games fell drastically, and soon the enterprise folded. Rogosin's elegiac account is studded

**LOW CITY, HIGH CITY:**  
**Tokyo from Edo to the**  
**Earthquake, 1867–1923**  
 by Edward Seidensticker  
 Knopf, 1983  
 302 pp. \$20



with the personal reminiscences of several star players from the defunct leagues, athletes who finished their careers "cheering on the youngsters they trained, never tasting what they most coveted," a chance at the major leagues.

From a feudal capital in 1867 to a modern metropolis leveled by the Kanto earthquake in 1923, Tokyo underwent a profound transformation that altered neighborhoods and a long-established way of life. Seidensticker, a professor of Japanese at Columbia, explains how strict class lines divided Edo (ancient Tokyo) during the Tokugawa shogunate (1603–1867). Commoners, including a growing mercantile class, occupied the flatlands of the east and north—the Low City. The High City, an area of temples and aristocratic dwellings, filled the hills to the west and south. Liveliest was the Low City, where Kabuki theaters and geisha establishments thrived next to lumberyards, fishmarkets, and brothels. Aristocrats from the High City, "slumming" in grand style, shopped the stores and supported the popular arts. But this arrangement began to break down with the accession of Emperor Meiji in 1867 and his introduction of Western ideas and technology. Merchants, no longer checked by social barriers, began moving into the High City; the rich, both new and old, turned from traditional entertainments and experimented with imports—operas and masked balls; baseball arrived triumphantly upon the scene, though, unaccountably, anglophile Tokyo spurned cricket. New forms of transportation, including the steam locomotive, allowed businesses and ordinary folk to move outside the Low City, further diluting the old neighborhood life. The 1923 earthquake dealt Low City culture its death blow. But Seidensticker has admirably re-created the vibrant, even tumultuous, spirit of those days when kimonos, parasols, and topknots were first traded for trousers, derby hats, and horn-rimmed glasses.