

# TIMELINE The Civil Rights Era



## 1947 Baseball

Jackie Robinson joins the Brooklyn Dodgers, breaking the color barrier in Major League Baseball.

## 1948 The Military

President Harry S. Truman signs executive orders integrating the military and banning racial discrimination in federal employment.

## 1954 Public Schools

The Supreme Court rules in *Brown v. Board of Education* that segregated schools are unconstitutional, overturning the doctrine of "separate but equal."

## 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott

Rosa Parks is arrested in Montgomery, Alabama, for refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger, setting off a yearlong bus boycott led by Martin Luther King Jr.

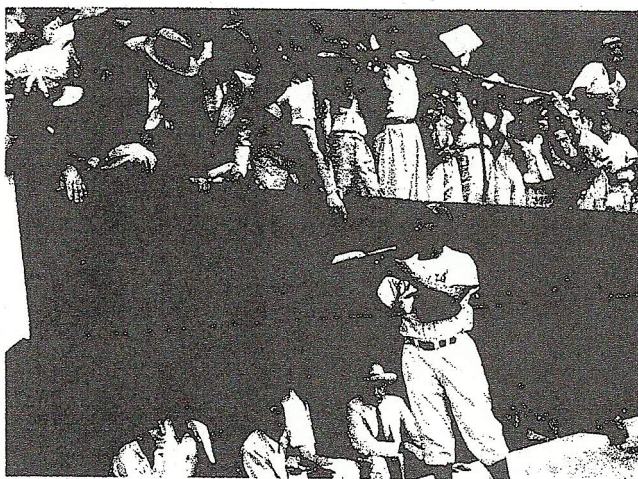
athletes, was Rickey's first choice. In 1945, he was invited to Brooklyn to meet Rickey.

### No Fighting Back

"I'm looking for a ballplayer with guts enough not to fight back," Rickey told Robinson, and he acted out situations Robinson might encounter: He pretended to be an opponent shouting racial epithets. He swung his fist at Robinson's head. No matter what happened, Rickey said, Robinson must not react.

Robinson signed a contract with the Dodgers and in 1946 joined a Dodgers farm team, the Montreal Royals, where he led the International League in batting. The team's manager, who initially opposed integrated baseball, told *Newsweek* that Robinson was "a player who must go to the majors."

But not all Dodgers were ready to accept Robinson: Some threatened to strike if he joined. By April 1947, Robinson was still playing for the Royals, and sportswriters were wondering whether he'd be promoted. "Only Rickey



Jackie Robinson signing autographs for fans in Havana, Cuba, before a spring training game in March 1947.

knows," wrote Arthur Daley in *The New York Times*, "and he ain't talkin'."

On April 10, days before the start of the 1947 season, Robinson got the call: He was now a Brooklyn Dodger.

A few of the Dodgers, especially shortstop Pee Wee Reese, supported and befriended Robinson. But many gave him the cold shoulder at first, prompting a sportswriter at the *New York Post* to call Robinson "the loneliest man I have ever seen in sports."

A few weeks into the season, the Philadelphia Phillies came to Brooklyn. The team and their manager, Ben Chapman, taunted Robinson with racial epithets. "Chapman did more than anybody to unite the Dodgers," Rickey later said. "When he poured out that stream of unconscionable abuse, he solidified and unified 30 men."

Robinson faced other hardships. On the road, he was often barred from staying in the same hotel as the rest of the

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