



Jackie signs autographs for fans during a Dodgers game.

While Jackie was playing for the Monarchs, Branch Rickey, the president of the Brooklyn Dodgers, learned about Jackie's amazing talent for baseball. He invited Jackie to meet with him in New York. There Rickey offered him the chance to become part of the Brooklyn Dodgers. As a Dodger, Jackie would earn a higher salary. Jackie accepted the job and became the first twentieth century black American to play on a Major League team.

After signing the contract with the Brooklyn Dodgers, Jackie married Rachel Isum. Rachel had graduated from UCLA and was working as a hospital nurse. Rachel and Jackie had three children together.



Did You Know...

Philip K. Wrigley, the owner of the Chicago Cubs, started the All American Girls Professional Baseball League during World War II because most male athletes were in the army. The All American Girls games were very popular and continued until 1954.

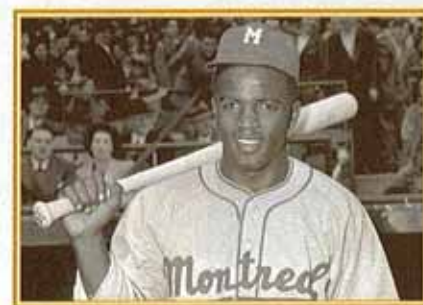
Counterpoint The Negro Leagues



Although Moses Fleetwood Walker and his brother were black Major League players in the 1880s, the league decided not to accept black players in the 1900s. So black Americans started the Negro Leagues. Although most blacks were happy when Jackie broke the color bar, some were afraid that integrated baseball would destroy the Negro Leagues. This would leave most of the talented black players, coaches, and managers without jobs because of ongoing racial discrimination in Major League Baseball. Some of their fears were correct. Few blacks were able to become coaches and managers at that time.



Jackie's career with the Brooklyn Dodgers started with Jackie playing on their training team, the Montreal Royals. Unlike the Dodgers, the Montreal Royals had other black players. Players on the Montreal Royals hoped they would be good enough to earn a place with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Jackie trained with the Montreal Royals in Florida. Then he played with them in Canada. He became very popular in Canada because he was an excellent batter and a very fast runner. Jackie quickly earned a place with the Brooklyn Dodgers.



Jackie in his Royals uniform