

## “Race” and Sport: A Critical, Historical Examination

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The original terms of this article called for a discussion of the literature on race and sport, international in scope and covering the 10 years since the first retrospective issue in 1983.<sup>1</sup> Little of that agreement has been honored in this essay. Not even the title is exactly the same, for the quotation marks around race symbolize the author's rejection of the term's common meaning. What the reader will find instead is an essay that primarily surveys the historical scholarship on African Americans and sport from the 1800s to the present. Why? First, an adequate treatment of race and sport would have to include all peoples. Second, even if the discussion were to be limited to blacks and whites, there is virtually no secondary literature on whites as a race. Although David Roediger's important book, *The Wages of Whiteness*, for example, attempts to define whites on their own terms, it really shows whites defining themselves as the opposite of others, whom they have defined.<sup>2</sup> In light of these comments, the chosen focus of this essay might seem inconsistent, illogical, and, perhaps even hypocritical, but the reality cannot be denied that individuals with known African ancestry have been classified black and treated accordingly. Thus, those so categorized—some even imperceptibly black in appearance—have assumed outgroup identities as a survival strategy or as a means of uplift. To refer to blacks as a race defines them as a problem, when this author wants blacks to be treated as people.

Moreover, the absence of treatment of this subject heretofore requires that this essay discuss the scholarship prior to 1983 when the previous retrospective volume appeared. In it, only one essay commented on blacks. Even then, Melvin Adelman's brief treatment, in an otherwise fine essay, seemed to suggest the marginality of blacks to sport history.<sup>3</sup> Thus this effort is

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1. *Journal of Sport History*, 10, no. 1 (Spring 1983).

2. David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991).

3. Melvin L. Adelman, "Academicians and American Athletic: A Decade of Progress." *Journal of Sport History*, 10, no. 1 (Spring 1983): 46-73.

inspired by distinguished historian Thomas C. Holt's charge that we put "black people back at the center of their history" as part of the process of "creating a complete history of the black experience." That end can only be reached through "a sustained effort to account for and place that experience in the larger context of external forces."<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, African American history provides, according to the venerable John Hope Franklin, "a very important context in which much if not the whole of the history of the United States can be taught and studied."<sup>5</sup> In the realm of sport history, African Americans offer a critical perspective from which to reexamine and rewrite that larger history, because their inclusion challenges "many of the basic questions posed, the methods and sources for responding to them, and the conclusions reached."<sup>6</sup>

This essay is divided into four parts. The first attempts to define race and expose the dangers of race-thinking to scholarship. As such, it is designed to stimulate a rethinking of attitudes and approaches to people's experiences and lives. This discussion of race is really essential to any scholarship on African Americans in sport or otherwise. For this author has no doubts that the scholarly production in sport cannot improve qualitatively without its creators coming to terms with race, by engaging the ideas of those outside the field, and extending the finished product in meaningful ways to them. The second part, a discussion of black intellectuals, addresses a deep concern of the author about the distance of African Americans from the scholarship of sport and the gap it creates in understanding the experiences of black people. Part three, based on a thorough review of the *Journal of Sport History*, attempts to assess the quantity and quality of the treatment of the black athletic experience by mostly white sport historians, many of whom happen to be members of the North American Society for Sport History (NASSH). There seems no better place to assess the state of the field than at home, where ideas, attitudes, debates, trends, strengths and weaknesses manifest themselves in concentrated and isolated form. A journal must be seen as the outward expression of the scholarly quality of the group it represents. The fourth and final part suggests future directions for scholarship. It addresses subjects, methods, and objectives that sport historians might consider if the field is to advance and become more relevant to the larger scholarship. Hence, this essay is simply an extension of my personal approach: a plea to those who remain insulated in the history of sport to move out into the larger scholarly arena, an encouragement to those who would shun and ignore sport scholarship to recognize that their own work suffers for it.

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4. Thomas C. Holt, "Introduction: Whither Now and Why?" in Darline Clark Hine, ed., *The State of Afro-American History Past, Present, and Future* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), 5-6.

5. John Hope Franklin, "On the Evolution of Scholarship in Afro-American History" in Hine, 22.

6. *Ibid.*

## Defining "Race" and Reaching Out

To pursue an essay on "race and sport" without questioning the assumptions inherent in the term is to undermine any attempt to expand understanding of sport history and attract others to the field. Thus, here, a lengthy discussion of the meaning of race becomes necessary. Race is at best a confusing, if not worthless term, and, at worst, a dangerous one. All too often it is used uncritically and unthinkingly by almost everyone, including academics. Race is like obscenity in that people believe they know "it" when they see it but when pressed for a definition cannot find an intelligent one.<sup>7</sup> Race is one of the most hotly debated topics among scholars and one which should be addressed openly, directly, and cautiously by historians of sport. David K. Wiggins's important, creditable, serious, and critical synthetic essay on athletic performance and race illustrates the opportunities and the dangers awaiting those who address the subject. Unfortunately Wiggins becomes trapped by divided loyalties between sensitivity and the search for "truth." For after recognizing the indeterminability of race and questioning its validity as a category of human difference, Wiggins urges more "research to determine if the success of black athletes is somehow the consequence of racially distinctive chromosomes." Why? Because the "spirit of science necessitates." Here is not the place for debating whether "the spirit of science" deserves such privilege.<sup>8</sup> What can be argued is that Wiggins's disconcerting conclusions would benefit from Jacques Barzun's telling admonition that race thinking is like the Hydra, "although repeatedly killed, it is nevertheless undying."<sup>9</sup> Even more, Wiggins's call alerts us that the most well-meaning can fall prey to the traps set by the misguided, sometimes malicious, intentions of race thinkers. The discussion will return eventually to heritability, but not before an attempt to suggest ways of rethinking race.

Although Barbara Fields' provocative and eloquent 1982 essay, "Ideology and Race in American History,"<sup>10</sup> has, perhaps, more than any single historical work, focused attention on and raised questions about the validity of race as biological category and analytic tool, I believe Barzun's *Race: A Study in Superstition* should be the starting point for any such discussion. Brilliant, insightful, and nothing short of a prescription for revolutionary thinking, it remains largely undervalued by historians. Originally published in 1937, as a response to nazism, and reissued in 1965, as a commentary on the

7. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," *Signs*, 17, No. 2 (Winter 1992): 253.

8. David K. Wiggins, "'Great Speed But Little Stamina': The Historical Debate Over Black Athletic Superiority," *Journal of Sport History*, 16, no. 2 (Summer 1989): 185.

9. Jacques Barzun, *Race: A Study in Superstition* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965, 1937). ix-xxii.

10. Barbara J. Fields, "Ideology and Race in American History," in J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson, eds., *Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward* (New York: Oxford, 1981). Although Fields modified and elaborated her views in a subsequent article, the original version is probably the one which most historians have read and used for teaching purposes. Thus, it is likely to have more influence and lasting effect. For the newer essay, see "Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the United States of America," *New Left Review*, 181 (May/June 1990): 95-118.

persistence and perniciousness of racism during that tumultuous period of our history, it is astonishing for its relevance and propiscience. Central to Barzun's thesis and purpose is a belief that no matter how race is defined it falls apart at the level of physical characteristic, gene pool, nation, language, common experience, and history. By following any of these paths on race, Barzun warns that the explorer will become "enmeshed at once in a tangle of quarrels, a confusion of claims, a knot of facts and fictions that revolt the intellect and daunt the courage of the most persistent."<sup>11</sup>

What Barzun makes so clear is the insidiousness of race—so seductive, enticing, convenient, and easy to accept. The following is the anatomy of race according to Barzun: Selective traits are observed, with varying degrees of objectivity and accuracy, in one or more people. The observer builds from these qualities a composite character, who becomes the model or archetype of the group. The result is a superstition or an idea which supersedes facts. Some distinguishing feature such as skin color, hair texture, language, diet, customs, and sex give power and permanence to the superstition. Thus, minor and superficial differences become justifications for chauvinism, patronization, exclusion, exploitation, abuse, and violence.<sup>12</sup> In our discipline, preoccupation with race need not be overt or ugly, for even the innocent and seemingly innocuous apology of a William Baker for writing *Jesse Owens: An American Life* is indicative.<sup>13</sup> Among other things, such an action wrongly injects "racial" identity as a criterion in scholarship, when interest, intelligence, hard work, and sensitivity should be the only "necessities" for the study of anyone and anything, as Baker himself concludes. Nonetheless, if he has to justify a study of Owens, must someone considered an African American do the same for a biography of Jack Nicklaus or a history of NASCAR? Such admissions serve only to undermine the author's credibility and draw unnecessary attention.

Fields implicitly agrees with much of Barzun, but uses race as a foil for class, which she regards as an actual condition and a more useful analytic tool. Fields maintains that race has been accorded "a transhistorical, almost metaphysical, status that removes it from all possibility of analysis and understanding."<sup>14</sup> To her, race is an ideological construct and historical product, the creature of human minds, taking shape in the context of power, purpose, position, circumstance, and time. Class, on the other hand, identifies a material condition: "the inequality of human beings from the standpoint of social power." Fields believes that the "reality" of class can assert itself independently of belief or consciousness and sometimes in direct opposition to them, "as when a salaried technocrat who thinks he is part of the bourgeoisie suddenly finds himself thrown out of work by the retrenchment of his enterprise."<sup>15</sup> Because of

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11. Barzun.

12. *Ibid.*

13. William J. Baker, *Jesse Owens: An American Life* (New York: Free Press, 1986), ix-xii.

14. Fields, 144.

15. *Ibid.*, 150-151.

this putative reality. class, according to Fields, occupies a different analytic space than race: therefore, the two cannot be considered as interchangeable and/or complementary explanatory devices. Thus, in Fields' view, what has been explained causally in racial terms is often without basis.<sup>16</sup>

I do not share Fields's views about the "reality" of class, for it seems to me that perception and consciousness remain attached to identity even when at variance with actual condition. On the other hand, what is the "reality" of class when racism might prevent the enjoyment of its privileges, as in the case cited by historian Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham of the black public official who can afford a first-class ticket but is relegated to a second class train car?<sup>17</sup> Moreover, Fields's analysis ignores status, which results from the subjective evaluation of a community's own members. Among blacks, status has often been a more meaningful category than class, as "professionals, railroad porters, skilled workers, barbers, headwaiters in white restaurants, and even some servants of wealthy white families" could be members of the same black elite in the not too distant past, according to sociologist Bart Landry.<sup>18</sup> Indeed there was considerable concern among elitist black scholars such as William Henry Jones, in his 1927 study of recreation and amusement among blacks in Washington, D.C., that African Americans had lost sight of the importance of status in their social organization. With the growing importance of money came the admission of "questionable individuals and anti-social cultural patterns" at the highest levels of black society.<sup>19</sup> Whether one agrees with Fields or not is beside the point. What matters is that her arguments reflect and inform those of a significant collection of scholars who rightly seek to dismiss race as a category of human grouping and wrongly seek to devalue it as a valid analytic concept.<sup>20</sup>

Despite the brilliance of their work, Barzun and Fields both tend to define race in the negative; they tell us what is not. Moreover, Fields in her eagerness to devalue race is preoccupied by what it cannot do. Higginbotham, however, in her balanced, carefully reasoned essay, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," positively defines race, recognizes its power and pervasiveness, demonstrates its effects, and challenges us to move beyond it.<sup>21</sup> The work is particularly valuable to historians of sport for its interdisciplinary approach, deft use of theory, and important insights into gender. Higginbotham maintains that the overpowering nature of race obscures and distorts the functions of class and gender and leads to

16. *Ibid.* 152-153

17. Higginbotham, 260.

18. Bart Landry, *The New Black Middle Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) 29.

19. William H. Jones, *Recreation and Amusement Among Negroes in Washington, D. C.* (Westport, CT: Negro University Press, 1970, originally published by Howard University Press, 1927), 122-123.

20. William H. Jones, *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); Steven Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Population* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); *Social Origins of the New South* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1978). These are just a few examples.

21. Higginbotham, 251-252.

analyses which accept monolithic entities, falsely representing reality. In the end, she defines race "as a social construction predicated upon the recognition of difference and signifying the simultaneous distinguishing and positioning of groups *vis-à-vis* one another."<sup>22</sup>

Higginbotham critically concludes that recognizing race as myth or ideology does not deny its real effects on people's lives. Borrowing from Barthes, she presents race as a "global sign," a "metalanguage," shaping outlook, defining reality, and ascribing value in terms of the colors black and white, which stand in binary opposition while delineating the gulf between.<sup>23</sup> Higginbotham believes that the overdeterminacy of race in Western culture, especially in the United States, allows it "to subsume other sets of social relations, namely, gender and class" while blurring and disguising, suppressing and negating "its complex interplay with the very social relations it overwhelms." As such, "race precludes unity within the same gender group but often appears to solidify people of opposing economic classes."<sup>24</sup>

Two examples from Higginbotham will clarify her meaning, one from women's history, the other from African American history. Feminist scholars, who in the recent past often ignored class in their own analyses, assumed a white homogeneity, and proceeded to universalize women's culture and oppression, while failing to see white women's own investment and role in the oppression of others. African American scholars, especially men, in their valorization of race, likewise have failed "to examine the differential class and gender positions men and women occupy in black communities—thus uncritically rendering a monolithic 'black community,' 'black experience,' and 'voice of the Negro.'" <sup>25</sup> Needless to say, such examinations have overlooked or downplayed the unacceptable oppression of women by black men. Sport history can make valuable and unique contributions to issues of domination and oppression by males in African American life and cultures because of the exaggerated chauvinism inherent in the sports world. Mike Tyson's abuse of women is exceptional only in respect to the resultant attention and penalty. Although not physically violent towards women, Muhammad Ali showed open disrespect for his wife. Instead of provoking censure, his actions added to his legend, while influencing countless other males to emulate him and women to accept what was "natural."<sup>26</sup>

As for overvaluing race, black women are not blameless. Even though they have consciously sought to identify the importance of gender relations and the interaction of race, class, and gender, the "totalizing impulse of race" makes old habits hard to break as reflected in concepts such as "black

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27 *Ibid.*, 253.

23 Higginbotham, 255.

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.*, 256.

26. Thomas Hauser. *Muhammad Ali: His Life and Times* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991); Jeffrey T. Sammons, "Rebel With A Cause: Muhammad Ali as Sixties Protest Symbol," in Elliot Corn. ed., *Muhammad Ali, The People's Champ* (tentative), forthcoming 1995. University of Illinois Press.

womanhood” which mask nuances of “class, status, color, regional culture, and a host of other configurations of difference.”<sup>27</sup> Gwendolyn Captain’s important essay on gender, sport, and the ideal of the African American is a promising first step in the right direction, but takes on too much in too little space, for while recognizing the effects of class and gender differences among blacks it does not develop them. The work focuses far more on how blacks of the middle-class (undefined) respond to racism and sexism and not much about how they interact with one another.<sup>28</sup>

Higginbotham’s following charge to feminist scholars is entirely applicable, by virtue of its universality, to historians of sport: “By fully recognizing race as an unstable, shifting, and strategic reconstruction, feminist scholars must take up new challenges to inform and confound many of the assumptions currently underlying Afro-American history and women’s history.”<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps the day will come when Elliot Gorn’s *The Manly Art* and his essays in the *American Historical Review* and *Journal of American History* will cease to be the exception and scholars broadly define, read and use sport historians for ideas, data, and trends.<sup>30</sup> That will not happen unless we, like Gorn, are aware of the cutting-edge scholarship and test it through our own research. On the other hand, if we are to attract the likes of Lawrence Levine and William Van Deburg, who have both treated sport as central to African American culture, then we must reaffirm the value of sport history in the service of the understanding of the larger past.<sup>31</sup>

## Sport and the Black Intellectual

With the exception of the scholarship on racial genetics and performance, no issue in the study of sport causes the author more concern than the reluctance of most contemporary black scholars to address seriously the athletic experience of African Americans. Considering the numbers of blacks involved in sports activities, the neglect is absurd. What are the reasons? As a scholarly subject, perhaps it remains beneath the dignity of those who seem

27. Higginbotham, 256

28. Gwendolyn Captain, “Enter Ladies and Gentlemen of Color: Gender, Sport, and the Ideal of African American Manhood and Womanhood During the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” *Journal of Sport History*, 18, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 81-102.

29. Higginbotham, 274.

30. Eliot J. Gorn, *The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Prize Fighting in America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1986); “Good-Bye Boys, I Die a True American”: Homicide, Nativism, and Working-Class Culture in Antebellum New York City,” *Journal of American History*, 74, no. 2 (September 1987) pp. 18-43; “Gouge and Bite, Pull Hair and Scratch”: The Social Significance of Fighting in the Southern Backcountry,” *American Historical Review*, 90, no. 1 (February 1985) pp. 388-410.

31. Lawrence Levine, *Black Culture, Black Conscience: Afro-American Folk Thought From Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); William Van Deburg, *A New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965-1975* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). Levine’s novel rendering and juxtaposition of mythical heroes with real athletic ones, Jack Johnson and Joe Louis, set a standard for approaching the subject that has not been surpassed. Vandenberg, whose premise is that the most important and lasting legacy of Black Power is its influence on culture, places sport centrally within that context. Unfortunately, his information is neither original nor representative.

to believe that already marginalized scholars of African descent working on the African American experience risk only further distance from the peaks of intellectual life if the academic low road is followed. Others, less motivated by snobbery or contempt, simply do not see the direct and central connection of sport to "the struggle" which black scholars, intellectuals, and artists have felt compelled to wage. On this subject there has been far too little change, for as historian Winthrop Jordan concludes, in reference to the work of Phillis Wheatley, "From the very first, Negro literature was chained to the issue of racial equality."<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, for many, especially men, it is a subject too familiar, mundane, and childish, one not easily mystified. In an academic culture which speaks to itself in terms few outside understand, sport remains too obvious, transparent. For women generally, sport, except in highly circumscribed roles, has been off-limits—a male preserve. To engage it as participant threatens femininity, to treat it as academic subject is to strain credibility. The negatives are compounded in African American women. Yet, sport, like jazz and the blues, is an integral part of African American life, serving a multitude of functions from psychic relief to cultural medium to vehicle of oppression. In the quest for standardization or a place in the mainstream, the black intellectual who dismisses sport erects another "racial mountain" standing in the way of discovering the many African American experiences.<sup>33</sup>

Recently, signs of change have begun to emerge. Promising is Henry Louis Gates's brief piece in *Sports Illustrated* concerning the contemporary sports scene and its critical meaning to the progress of blacks, especially the youth generation.<sup>34</sup> Arnold Rampersad's co-authorship of the Arthur Ashe memoir, *Days of Grace*, took considerable courage, considering the risks to scholarly reputation inherent in the genre and subject. Although seemingly out of character, the collaboration with Ashe was natural at a variety of levels, including biography, race, and sport.<sup>35</sup> Biographies of Hughes and Du Bois speak to the first two and his intellectual and participatory connection to sport explains the last. The inclusion of courses on sport and society in the American Studies and, most likely, African American Studies programs at Princeton demonstrates the seriousness of his interest. Moreover, his skills and sensitivity recommend him as the ideal choice to write a major biography of C.L.R. James, whose *Beyond a Boundary* stands as a classic account of sport's relation to individual and communal life.<sup>36</sup>

Among the very youngest leading black intellectuals, one can only hope

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32. Winthrop Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitude Toward Negro, 1550-1812* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 285.

33. Langston Hughes, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," *Nation*, 122 (June 23, 1926): 692-694, in Arnold Rampersad, *The Life of Langston Hughes: Volume 1: 1902-1941, I, Too, Sing America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 130-131.

34. Henry Louis Gates, "Delusions of Grandeur," *Sports Illustrated* (August 19, 1991), p. 78.

35. Arthur Ashe and Arnold Rampersad, *Days of Grace: A Memoir* (New York: Knopf, 1993).

36. C.L.R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (New York: Pantheon, 1983 [1963]).



that the magnificent voice of ordained minister, philosopher, culture critic, religion scholar, and university professor Michael Eric Dyson has only begun to join the cause. His eloquent and insightful essay on Michael Jordan in *Reflecting Black: African American Cultural Criticism* positions the basketball superstar and capitalist icon as a commodity of desire, directly in the center of both African American youth culture, specifically, and American mass culture, generally. Applying the latest in culture theory, performance studies, and historical scholarship. Dyson's considerable knowledge-base and gift of "compu-posing" enables him to express extremely complex issues in a compact, cogent, and clear manner. Although sometimes prone to overextension, his interpretations become original by virtue of style and form of presentation, expressing in one place, on a specific subject, views that have been presented in fragmented and inaccessible form by others. The following represents the essence of Dyson's contribution:

Black sports heroes transcended the narrow boundaries of specific sports activities and garnered importance as icons of cultural excellence. symbolic figures who embodied social possibilities of success denied to other people of color. But they also captured and catalyzed the black cultural fetishization of sport as a means of expressing black cultural style, as a means of valorizing craft as a marker of racial and self-expression, and as a means of pursuing social and economic mobility.<sup>37</sup>

Perhaps no single African American academic has risked and accomplished more by studying sport than Gerald Early, Professor of English and Director of African and Afro-American Studies at Washington University, whose range of interests extends from American and African American literature to autobiography to jazz and to contemporary race relations. but whose first and true loves are boxing and baseball. The former he sees as an allegory of American life and culture, broadly and inclusively defined. One of the most insightful of Early's numerous and fine essays is "The Black Intellectual and the Sport of Prizefighting," a must read for any serious scholar of blacks and sport.<sup>38</sup> Although it demonstrates his command of a

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37. Michael Eric Dyson, "Be Like Mike? Michael Jordan and the Pedagogy of Desire" in Michael Eric Dyson, *Reflecting Black: African American Culture Criticism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 67.

38. Gerald Early, "The Black Intellectual and the Sport of Prizefighting," *The Kenyon Review*, X, no. 3 (Summer 1988): 102-117; "The Unquiet Kingdom of Provence: The Patterson Liston Fight," *The Antioch Review* (Winter 1990): 44-65; "House of Ruth, House of Robinson: Some Observations on Baseball, Biography, and the American Myth," in *Openings: Original Essays by Contemporary Soviet and American Writers*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990), 221-249; "James Baldwin's neglected essay," *Antaeus* (Spring 1989): 162-176, accompanied by a reprint of James Baldwin's, "The Fight: Patterson versus Liston" (originally published in *Nugget*, February 1963), 150-161; "Batting Siki: The Boxer As Natural Man," *The Massachusetts Review* (Fall 1988): 451-472; "The Romance of Toughness: LaMotta and Garziano," *The Antioch Review*, 45, no. 4 (Fall 1987): 385-408; "Hot Spicks versus God's Spades: The Three Notes Toward a Cultural Definition of Prizefighting," *The Hudson Review*, 34, no. 1 (Spring 1981); *Tuxedo Junction; Essays on American Culture* (New York: Ecco Press, 1990); and *The Culture of Bruising: Essays in Literature, Prizefighting, and Modern Culture* (New York: Ecco Press, 1993). Early's last two books have original essays which this author was unable to discuss. One of them is a completely new look at sport and black intellectuals

wide range of American literature, what the piece does best is to place boxing in the context of social event—"the most metaphorical drama of male neurosis ever imagined in the modern world"—to which blacks contributed greatly. With their (and other sub-altern) involvement, the ring became a "place where ideas of order are contested."<sup>39</sup> Those ideas of order have meant a subordinate and, at most, secondary status for blacks. As such, Early seems to suggest that we ignore boxing at our own risk. Always exciting and daring, Early pithily captures the essence of the real battle black champions, including Johnson, Louis, and Ah, have fought—to be gifted and true to themselves. According to Early, "For a black person to be both gifted and true to himself is not automatic or, one should say, axiomatic, and it is bound to be subversive by extending the scope and expressive range of black humanity in mainstream culture."<sup>40</sup>

With such meaning embedded in the sport and the prominence of black boxers "in the social and cultural history of blacks in America," Early finds the near absence of book-length works by black writers puzzling. Thus, the rest of his essay surveys and critiques black intellectuals' under-treatment of the subject in an attempt to understand their ambivalence and/or remove. Although he cites and/or discusses James Weldon Johnson, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, John Williams, Amiri Baraka, Larry Neal, Eldridge Cleaver, Jervis Anderson, and Ishmael Reed, among others who have written about boxing, none according to Early has devoted an entire work to the subject in the manner of a Hemingway, Mailer, Schulberg, Plimpton, or Liebling.<sup>41</sup> Although Early's treatments of Ellison, Wright, Baraka, Cleaver, Williams, and Anderson are penetrating and revealing, sometimes brilliant, they tend to express his disappointment with their failure to do more. What Early finds is a constraining "ambiguity of the black in boxing"—one most fully developed in *Invisible Man's* battle royal scene, pitting blindfolded black boys against one another. Early explains:

The ambiguity here which I think is a crucial issue for the black fighter is an apolitical, amoral experience of individualistic esteem which the black fighter purchases at both the expense of his rival's health (and often his own) and his own dignity. For the black intellectual, boxing becomes both a dreaded spectacle and a spectacle of dread. The black fighter is truly heroic for the black masses and the black intellectual only when he is fighting a white fighter, or someone who has been defined as representing white interests.<sup>42</sup>

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39. Gerald Early, "The White Intellectual, The Black Intellectual, Prizefighting and the Racial Symbols of American Culture," unpublished paper, American Studies Association, Miami, FL, October 1990.

40. Early, "Black Intellectual," 111.

41. *Ibid.*, 107-109.

42. *Ibid.*, 114.

For all its value, Early's insistence on the "book standard" demeans the contributions of black intellectuals to our understanding of prize fighting. Neal, Baraka, and Reed among others have greatly added to this author's [Sammons's] appreciation of the "sport's" many meanings. In addition, Early's essay ignores other potential causes for the lack of book-length treatments. Practical considerations such as productivity, market potential, audience tastes, editorial intervention, and plain priorities might be as responsible as "ambiguity" for the absence of books. Interestingly, *The Culture of Bruising* was intended to be a series of integrated essays devoted entirely to boxing, but Early's editor insisted on a broader and more marketable product. Thus, Early, himself, ironically, remains without a book-length treatment of boxing, yet he is unsurpassed in the quality, volume, and range of his scholarship on the subject.<sup>43</sup>

Inexplicably shortchanged in Early's treatment—especially considering the inclusion of Floyd Patterson as an intellectual who receives extended treatment as a personification of ambiguity—is Al-Tony Gilmore, who at the time represented the singular exception to the "book standard."<sup>44</sup> Gilmore wrote a biography of Jack Johnson with the provocative and telling title, *Bad Nigger: The National Impact of Jack Johnson*.<sup>45</sup> Though not a literary figure, Gilmore as a trained historian and university professor has to be considered a black intellectual. And as the first African American historian to publish a dissertation on sport he deserves recognition as a trailblazer and influential figure. Despite David Wiggins's and others' questions about the originality and depth of the work, even the former finds value in Gilmore's "unprecedented use of black-and-white newspapers to chart Johnson's influence while champion."<sup>46</sup>

Gilmore also authored three major articles on Johnson and one more on Joe Louis.<sup>47</sup> The last, "The Myth, Legend, and Folklore of Joe Louis: The Impression of Sport on Society," is perhaps his best. Gilmore makes a very good case for his assertion that "the lives of few individuals in the nation's history either take on legendary characteristics or reveal more about the

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43. Early informed this author of that development. He has indicated a desire to gather his already published essays into a singly volume. It would be valuable contribution to the literature.

44. Early, "The Black Intellectual," 114-117. Also glossed over is José Torres, former light heavyweight champion and Ali victim, who wrote what Early calls (p. 107) a "fine biography of Muhammed Ali," *Sting Like a Bee: The Muhammed Ali Story* (New York: Abelard-Schumann, 1971). Subsequent to the publication of Early's article, Torres authored *Fire & Fear: The Inside Story of Mike Tyson* (New York: Warner Books, 1989).

45. Al-Tony Gilmore, *Bad Nigger: The National Impact of Jack Johnson* (Port Washington, NY: Kenniket Press, 1975).

46. David K. Wiggins, "From Plantation to Playing Field: Historical Writing of the Black Athlete in American Sport" *Research Quarterly for exercise and Sport*, 57, no. 2 (1986): 105-106.

47. Al-Tony Gilmore, "Jack Johnson and white women: The National Impact, 1912-1913," *Journal of Negro History*, 58 no. 1 (January 1973): 18-38; "Jack Johnson, The Man and His Times" *Journal of Popular Culture*, 6 (Spring 1973): 496-506; "Jack Johnson, A Magnificent Black Anarchist of the Early Twentieth Century," *Journal of Social Behavior Sciences*, 19 (Winter 1973): 35-42; "The Myth, Legend, and Folklore of Joe Louis: The Impression of Sport on Society," *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 82, no. 3 (Summer 1983): 256-268.

hopes, frustrations, and ambiguities of the American people than that of boxing champion Joe Louis.” Moreover, Louis becomes for Gilmore a vehicle “through which the past might be reexamined”—a past largely ignored by scholars as they considered Louis “the exclusive territory of journalists and popular writers.”<sup>48</sup> Gilmore uses newspaper accounts, popular songs, folklore, autobiographies, and archival materials to construct his powerful and resourceful article. Of all the sources employed by Gilmore, the most interesting to this author is E. Franklin Frazier’s *Negro Youth at the Crossways, Their Personality Development in the United States*. From it, Gilmore extracted opinions on Joe Louis from selected young people, across class lines. Though they saw Louis in different ways, all agreed that his fights and influence extended beyond the ring. In light of Frazier’s putative hostility to sports expressed in *Black Bourgeoisie*, there is considerable irony in these findings. The story will return to Frazier below.<sup>49</sup> As for Gilmore, had not personal problems interrupted a promising career, he might have become an imposing presence in the field.

Without making a value judgment, one has to admit that black book-length treatments on any sport have been limited. The only pure literary figure to produce a book of this sort prior to Early’s essay is Arna Bontemps, who, in 1964, wrote *Famous Negro Athletes* in the Dodd, Mead series for young people. Although easy to dismiss as fluff, it is of use to scholars—both for its sins and virtues. As for the former, it contributes to problematic myth making, stereotyping, and hero worship. But it also provides information such as the carefully worded warning of the ring announcer to the fans before the Louis-Camera fight as a precaution against rioting.<sup>50</sup> This author’s own research did not turn up such evidence. More intriguing perhaps are the questions the book raises about Bontemps. Why did he do it? Was it for money? Or did he also value sport and its meaning to blacks? These are questions for which this author has no answers. Equally interesting is the fact that out of the many categories covered, only four works in the series were dedicated to blacks, including one on music makers. Blacks apparently did not merit volumes on science, composers, medicine, statesmen, writers, humorists, soldiers, among others.<sup>51</sup>

Depending on one’s definition of intellectual, Harry Edwards can be considered the second African American to author a book on sports. As a

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48. Gilmore, “The Myth, Legend, and Folklore of Joe Louis.”

49. E. Franklin Frazier, *Negro Youth at the Crossways. Their Personality Development in the Middle States* (New York: 1967); *Black Bourgeoisie: The Rise of a New Middle Class in the United States* (New York: Collier Books, 1962 [1957]). There is something troubling about Gilmore’s essay and his use of sources. Although he was in possession of a paper since 1979 belonging to this author on the Southern reaction to Joe Louis, he never cited it despite remarkable similarities in some accounts and sources. See the references to Maya Angelou, Earl Carter, and C.C. Spaulding on p. 265 of Gilmore and p. 29 of Jeffrey T. Sammons, “Boxing as a Reflection of Society: The Southern Reaction to Joe Louis, *Journal of Popular Culture*, 16, no. 4 (Spring 1993).

50. Arna Bontemps, *Famous Negro Athletes* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1964), 14.

51. *Ibid.*, List of titles in series, *Famous Biographies for Young People*.

university professor, trained sociologist, and Ph.D., Edwards distinguishes himself from those who preceded him such as Edwin B. Henderson, author of *The Negro in Sports* (1939), who will be treated extensively below. With *The Revolt of the Black Athlete* (1969), Edwards established himself as a trendsetter. The work, which lacks footnotes and lists minimal sources, reflects Edwards the activist and his personal observations and experiences and, to a lesser extent, his formal training in sociology at Cornell University. Nonetheless, it seriously challenges the orthodoxy of athletics as the embodiment of the American dream of meritocracy and success. Edwards paints a vivid picture of athletic “shame” and “glory” representative of and influential to the changing mood of young people he hoped to reach.<sup>52</sup> He followed that book with the *Sociology of Sport*, a seminal work in the field which in his own words “is aimed at closing this gap in our knowledge and understanding of what is, sociologically speaking, perhaps the most ignored of America’s institutions.”<sup>53</sup> Recognizing the “interconnectedness of organized sports with other societal structures and processes,” Edwards set out:

[T]o present a comprehensive analytical profile of the institution of sport in America, its development, the complexities, of its contemporary functions for the individual and society, and its potential as a significant and influential factor in the future of what has come to be termed ‘the American way of life.’<sup>54</sup>

Although indebted to Gerald Kenyon and John Loy among others for some of his framework, Edwards’s treatment of the black athlete, comprising a relatively small section of the book, became the model for the discipline according to David K. Wiggins.<sup>55</sup>

Since, Edwards has produced many articles and even a 1980 autobiography in which he continues the assault on abuses of athletics and their relationship to the larger society.<sup>56</sup> In the debate on biology and performance, Edwards has always been on the right side—culture, economics, and individual characteristics.<sup>57</sup> Generally on the mark, his polemical style, repetitious rhetoric, and high public profile sometimes seem to substitute for serious scholarship. And Edwards remains a controversial and enigmatic figure, signified by his recent and current associations with Major League Baseball and the San Francisco Forty Niners, respectively. Relationships to both have raised questions about his commitment to revolutionizing sport.

52. Harry Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete* (New York: Free Press, 1969).

53. Harry Edwards, *The Sociology of Sport* (Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press, 1973), vii.

54. *Ibid.*

55. David K. Wiggins’ telephone conversation with Jeffrey T. Sammons, September 26, 1994.

56. Harry Edwards, *The Struggle That Must Be: An Autobiography* (New York: Macmillan, 1980); “The Sources of the Black Athlete’s Superiority,” *The Black Scholar*, 3, no. 3 (November 1971): 32-41; “The Olympic Project for Human Rights: An Assessment Ten Years Later,” *The Black Scholar*, 10, nos 6, 7 (March/April 1979): 2-8; “Sport Within the Veil: The Triumphs, Tragedies, and Challenge of Afro-American Involvement,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 445 (1979): 116-127.

57. Edwards, “The Sources of the Black Athletes Superiority.”

Whatever its sparseness, the history of black intellectuals and sport is intriguing and important. Indeed more exists than what one might have expected but much of that produced remains largely outside the mainstream. While many, this author included, have condemned the relative neglect of the subject, more positive light must be shed on what has been done. The treatment of sport by the likes of a J. Saunders Redding must be removed from footnotes and placed firmly within our analyses of his work.<sup>58</sup> Thus, the following will attempt to see a glass half full and not half empty by reviewing the scholarship by African Americans on their own sporting heritage, whatever its form including articles, essays, and the episodic.

Perhaps the first African American to view sport as a political, cultural, and social institution endowed with enormous potential to influence people's lives is Frederick Douglass. From his retrospective position as ex-slave, Douglass considered sport an oppressive instrument and diversionary device to occupy the minds and energies of slaves, thus preventing them from pursuing more useful activities and fully appreciating their horrible plight. If the message sounds familiar it should, for it is a clear expression of sport as form of social control. Even more, Douglass believed that the "sports and merriments" sanctioned by the slavemasters were among the most effective ways of "keeping down the spirit of insurrection."<sup>59</sup> Although one might disagree with Douglass's conclusions that the power of sport flowed in one direction, trapping blacks "into trivility and self degradation," he deserves praise for recognizing that sports extended far beyond the realm of leisure.<sup>60</sup> Unfortunately, his impressive reasoning served to stigmatize play and sport as dangerous and wasteful, perhaps setting the tone for the scholarly perception and representation of sport as trap or safety valve.

Douglass's message of sobriety and industry seemed to resonate in the black community, especially in the voice and teachings of his successor as "black leader," Booker T. Washington. Prayer, education, fundraising, and politics apparently left little time for sport or leisure in Washington's similarly Calvinistic and Victorian worldview, causing him to lament, "I think I would now be a more useful man if I had had time for sports."<sup>61</sup>

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58. Early, "The Black Intellectual," 108.

59. Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (New York: Signet, 1968 [1845]), 84-85. For a different reading of sport among slaves, see David K. Wiggins, "Good Times on the Old Plantation: Popular Recreations of the Black Slave in Antebellum South, 1810-1860," *Journal of Sport History*, 4, no. 3 (Fall 1977): 260-284.

60. Eugene Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon, 1974), 579-580. According to Genovese: "Douglass was right in thinking that the holidays and good times undermined the revolutionary impulse of the slaves, but he was wrong, I believe, in thinking that the cause lay in the slaves being trapped into trivility and self-degradation. Rather, it lay in the double sense of community inherent in these occasions which the slaveholders more fully appreciated, however much they twisted the meaning into self-justification. The slaves developed a sense of community among themselves and to a much lesser but vital extent, a sense of community with their white folks. Thus, the holidays weakened the slave's impulse to challenge the regime frontally while they contributed to an ability to create a healthy black community and to guarantee its survival." This is a view that Wiggins seems to accept without question. But the following might be worthy of consideration. Did slaves shape the games they played? Did they use them in transgressive ways? Were they means of simulating the dominant culture within their own spheres of influence?

61. Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery* (New York: Penguin, 1986, 1901), 5.

Nonetheless, sport played an important role in the mission of Tuskegee Institute before and, especially, after Washington's death. Although at first glance such an outcome might seem incongruous or inconsonant, a closer inspection might reveal a possible response to Theodore Roosevelt's updating of the Greek ideal of strong mind and strong body through rigorous sporting activity and, at the same time, a strategy for eventual entry into polite white American society as is suggested by the institution's promotion of tennis and golf, including the construction of a nine-hole course.<sup>62</sup> To what extent Washington might have quietly facilitated or sanctioned this development is not known to this author. Certainly his feelings suggest that playful physical activity might have better preserved his health. Moreover, A. S. Young reports that tennis had become popular with Tuskegee students and faculty by the 1890s. It is the strongest evidence yet that Washington must have, at least approved, if not initiated the activity, for he had complete control of his fiefdom. Frazier's *Black Bourgeoisie* provides another lead in the form of an admonition by Washington against card playing which he distinguished from the more acceptable games of dominoes and croquet.<sup>63</sup>

Indeed the views or perceptions of Douglass and Washington on sport and recreation have muffled the voice of the latter's chief rival for the attention and allegiance of African Americans, W.E.B. DuBois, who saw the need to address the relationship of leisure, recreation, and amusements to blacks. Writing on the subject in 1897, DuBois did not pretend that amusement was "one of the more pressing of the Negro problems, but it is destined as time goes on to become more and more so."<sup>64</sup> What DuBois saw in blacks was a tendency to "depreciate and belittle and sneer at means of recreation. to consider amusement [including sport] as the peculiar property of the devil. and to look upon even its legitimate pursuit as time wasted and energy mispent."<sup>65</sup> Although DuBois understood that too much of anything, including religion, could be intoxicating, he not only urged moderate participation but also analysis, for "proper amusement must always be a matter of careful reasoning and ceaseless investigation, of nice adjustment between repression and excess."<sup>66</sup> Thus DuBois not only exceeded his rival as a modern man, but also as a prophet. Unfortunately, DuBois's plea fell largely upon deaf ears.

To the author's knowledge, only William Henry Jones's 1927 monograph, *Recreation and Amusement Among Negroes in Washington D.C.*, systematically addresses the issue. It is a wide-ranging local study, exploring the social lives of the black community(s) from the poolroom to the bordello to

62. A. S., "Doc" Young, *Negro Firsts in Sport* (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Co., 1963), 164, 182-183.

63. E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie: The Rise of a New Middle Class in the United States* (New York: Collier, 1966 [1957]), 66. Patrick Miller should have much to add to this subject in his work-in-progress on historically black colleges.

64. W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Problem of Amusement," *The Southern Workman*, 27 (September 1898) in *On Sociology and the Black Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 226.

65. *Ibid.*

66. *Ibid.*, 231.

the golf course to the theatre and even to the world of "passing"—the game of blacks living parttime or fulltime as whites.<sup>67</sup> Although the study avows objectivity, it is a product of Washingtonian morality and class values, then-current theories of Robert Park and Ernest Burgess of "the Chicago School" of sociology, and a specific application of Thrasher's *The Gang*, Anderson's *The Hobo*, and Mowrer's *Family Disorganization*, to "the field of leisure-time activity." In fact it is the result of the research conducted by students in a course on "Social Pathology" at Howard University in 1925.<sup>68</sup> In the end the study denigrates all that is not high culture, morally correct, and carefully structured such as theatre, exclusive country clubs, and the competitive military drill. At the same time the study promotes class stratification and decries the destructive fluidity of social arrangements between blacks of different class and status groups.<sup>69</sup>

The only other then-contemporary black intellectual and academic to treat the subject seriously is James Weldon Johnson, described by Allan Spear as a "*haut-bourgeois* making a valiant . . . attempt to understand the *avant garde*." <sup>70</sup> In *Black Manhattan*, "a celebration, with reservations, of both the artistic renaissance of the era and the dream of a black metropolis," the "centrist" Johnson embodies the tensions between the primitivists and the elitists. While finding richness and charm in the "low culture," he still feels compelled to apologize for it. Nonetheless, he places sport in the middle of a shift in activism among blacks in the North. Until the last quarter of the twentieth century, blacks concentrated on "racial activities," but the Draft Riot of 1863 caused or marked a shift in direction toward the cultural and social. According to Johnson, "In New York the Negro now began to function and express himself on a different plane, in a different sphere," which had national implications.<sup>71</sup> To Johnson, the biggest contribution of blacks was in the "three great professional sports: horse-racing, baseball, and prize-fighting." Not only does he provide some context for the rise of certain sports along with obligatory mention of the contributions and achievements of outstanding individuals, he also seeks to interpret causes of inclusion and exclusion. Johnson attributes the decline of once dominant black jockeys to economic factors. With the rise of purses to riders, competition from previously disinterested whites worked against blacks. In baseball where there was far less black presence, Johnson cites the team concept as a barrier: The team, in his view, allows too much for racial prejudice to decide membership and at the same time militates against individual achievement. Interestingly, Johnson maintains that during the 1880s every major southern city had a black baseball team, which was invariably better than its white counterpart.

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67. Jones, *Recreation and Amusement*.

68. *Ibid.*, xi.

69. *Ibid.*, 84.

70. James Weldon Johnson, *Black Manhattan* (New York: Atheneum, 1968, [1930]). xi.

71. *Ibid.*, 59.



He sees in these and later black squads the development of parallel institutions. He even takes pride in the Cuban Giants for being the best at what they did—clowning—serving as models for all black clubs in his opinion. In boxing, Johnson finds the African American's "fairest chance" in all of the world of sports because of "the advantageous factor of sole dependence upon his own individual skill and stamina." This "skill" and "stamina" was tested not only in the ring but out: Johnson argued that Jack Johnson not only fought Jim Jeffries in 1910 but battled "psychologically the majority of the population of the United States."<sup>72</sup> Yet, true to form, Johnson celebrates Peter Jackson over "Li'l Artha," for the former "was the first example in the United States of a man acting upon the assumption that he could be a prize-fighter and at the same time a cultured gentleman." Johnson believes that had the latter possessed Jackson's demeanor the story of blacks in boxing "would have been somewhat different."<sup>73</sup>

James Weldon Johnson's work on the black athletic experience did not go unnoticed, for the black team of writers and researchers on the Federal Writers Project, which began in New York around 1935, borrowed heavily and directly from Johnson's treatment of sport in *Black Manhattan*, sometimes almost verbatim and without attribution as in "Johnson did more than meet Jeffries; psychologically he had to fight the majority of the white population of the United States."<sup>74</sup> Published as *The Negro in New York: An Informal Social History, 1626-1940*, this work edited by Roi Ottley and William J. Weatherby 27 years after the completion of the project does give sport an important role in late nineteenth-century black life in New York City.<sup>75</sup> Lacking the analysis and context of sport so prominent in Johnson's work, the effect of the treatment is diminished considerably. Not until a discussion of Joe Louis's victory over James J. Braddock for the heavyweight championship does the significance of sport reemerge, signaling the hope put in the achievements of the outstanding individual or exception. Louis's victory meant to the person in the street: "'Yes, life is worth living, for who can say now what's in store for black boys and girls with the rising of tomorrow's sun,'" discarding the reality that "a man born of a dark woman is bound to see dark days."<sup>76</sup> In that same discussion, we find that Louis also moved distinguished novelists such as Richard Wright to comment:

The eyes of these people were bold that night. Their fear of property, of the armed police fell away. There was in their chant a hunger deeper than that for bread as they marched along. In their joy they were feeling an impulse which only the oppressed can

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72. *Ibid.*, 66.

73. *Ibid.*, 71-73.

74. Roy Ottley and William J. Weatherby, eds., *The Negro in New York: An Informal Social History, 1626-1940* (New York: Praeger, 1969, [1967]) 152.

75. *Ibid.*, 145-164.

76. *Ibid.*, 291.

feel to the full. They wanted to fling the heavy burden out of their hearts and embrace the world. They wanted to feel that their expanding feelings were not limited; that the earth was theirs as much as anybody else's; that they could go where they wanted to and do what they wanted to, eat and live where they wanted to, like others. They wanted to own things in common and do things in common. They wanted a holiday.<sup>77</sup>

Although other blacks in the public sphere did value athletes' service to the cause, few were as equipped or disposed as James Weldon Johnson to articulate coherent or systematic views on the subject. Marcus Garvey, fire-brand mass leader, closely watched and publicly counselled Joe Louis. according to Wilson J. Moses. He even interrupted proceedings at a UNIA convention to allow participants to hear the broadcast of Louis's fight against Primo Carnera. as reported in the little known work on Garvey by black journalist and intellectual James Spady.<sup>78</sup> Walter White of the NAACP, an accomplished writer in his own right, befriended Joe Louis and carefully protected his image, as he saw in the champion an important ambassador and role model for African Americans. The use of athletes by black leaders for political ends took on new and clearer meaning with the association between Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali. Despite holding views on sport similar to those of Frederick Douglass, Malcolm understood that the young champion represented a weapon of enormous potential, who, under Malcolm's direction and influence, held tremendous promise for spreading of his views and the influencing of thousands—a revolutionary combination.

While black literary figures such as Baraka, Neal, Reed, and Jervis Anderson understood, appreciated, and commented on the connection, unfortunately most black intellectuals missed or ignored or shunned it.<sup>79</sup> In this regard, the views of E. Franklin Frazier might have measured and/or chilled the climate. The following quote from *Black Bourgeoisie* speaks volumes:

Once the writer heard a Negro doctor who was prominent "socially" say that he would rather lose a patient than have his favorite baseball team lose a game. This was an extreme expression of the relative value of professional work and recreation among the black bourgeoisie. At the same time, it is indicative of the value which many Negro professional men and women, including college professors, place upon sports. Except when they are talking within the narrow field of their professions, their conversations are generally limited to sports—baseball and football. They follow religiously the scores of the various teams and the achievements of all the players. For hours they listen to the radio accounts

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77. *Ibid.*

78. Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *Black Messiahs and Uncle Toms: Social and Literary Manipulations of a Religious Myth* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1982), 159; James Spady, *Marcus Garvey, Africa, and the UNIA* (Philadelphia: P. C. International Press, 1985).

79. Early, "Black Intellectuals."

of sports and watch baseball and football games on television. They become learned in the comments of sportswriters. Often they make long journeys in order to see their favorite team—white or Negro—play baseball and football games. Although they may pretend to appreciate “cultural” things, this class as a whole has no real appreciation of art, literature, or music.<sup>80</sup>

Clearly, sport has no “cultural” value in Frazier’s view. Its alleged hold on his least favorite class of blacks merely demonstrates their social, moral, and intellectual bankruptcy. The black bourgeoisie is as worthless as the activities it embraces.

Perhaps there is no coincidence to the fact that the preponderance of literature on the black athletic experience, especially in book form, has come from the so-called popularizer rather than the academic. Although a serious scholar, circumstances forced Henderson to pitch his works at a popular audience. A teacher of health and physical education in the District of Columbia public school system before becoming director of its Department of Health, Physical Education, and Safety for Negro High Schools, Henderson pioneered as an author and participant in the field of athletics. In 1939, Henderson’s *The Negro in Sports* appeared under the auspices of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH) founded by Carter G. Woodson in 1915 to counter the scholarly neglect and denigration of the black experience.<sup>81</sup> According to Charles H. Wesley, distinguished historian, protégé of Woodson, and editor of the new ASNLH series, Henderson’s first “book represents a serious effort to put to the youth of our country the story of the contributions of a few outstanding black athletes.”<sup>82</sup> That statement expressed the intended limits of the work—audience (youth), purpose (contribution), and scope (few outstanding athletes). It is guarded, possibly apologetic, reflecting the ambivalence with which this useful but marginal subject is approached. Yet, David K. Wiggins finds in Henderson much raw material for later studies, particularly in his coverage of the color line in baseball and the actions of black journalists in the crusade to integrate baseball.<sup>83</sup>

But almost 30 years later with the publication of the Henderson’s *The Black Athlete: Emergence and Arrival* little had changed in motive, substance, or style. This work, also published under the auspices of the ASNLH, with the involvement of *Sport* magazine, sought to counter racist views by honoring black achievement and uncovering discriminatory attitudes and practices in the sports establishment. As such, the essays did little to probe individual personalities and their traits or to contextualize them outside of sport and white racism.<sup>84</sup> Although Wiggins criticizes this and such works

80. Frazier, 172-173.

81. Edwin B. Henderson, *The Negro in Sports* (Washington: ASNLH, 1939).

82. Edwin B. Henderson, *The Black Athlete: Emergence and Arrival* (New York: Publishers Company, 1968), viii.

83. Wiggins, “Plantation to Playing Field,” 103.

84. Henderson, *Black Athlete*.

for—among other things—not exploring “the distinctiveness of black sporting patterns” emanating from cultural differences, this author finds that particular criticism unfair. First, in an age when integration was still the dominant objective among the leadership of the ASNLH and, perhaps, a majority of blacks, showing distinctiveness would have been perceived as counterproductive. Henderson’s own words reveal the predominant view and the philosophy guiding his approach:

It has been my feeling that athletics has done more to bring Negroes into the main stream of our American society than possibly any other medium. They create tolerance from the prejudiced, and then fellowship. To a large extent this carries over to the class rooms and into other life situations.<sup>85</sup>

Despite the Olympic protests, the treatment of Muhammad Ali, and the rebellions of black athletes across the nation’s campuses, Henderson still held onto the wishful view shared by many of his generation. Moreover, to suggest that Henderson and the others should have anticipated the scholarship of a 1981 work on black cultural styles, which built on preceding theory and method, expects far too much and imposes contemporary views and developments on the past.<sup>86</sup> Despite its limitations, Henderson’s work has much to recommend it, especially the bibliography, which should be of value to any scholarship on the subject. In fact, noted sport scholar Roscoe C. Brown, Jr., maintains that Henderson’s *Negro in Sports* profoundly influenced him as did a personal relationship with Henderson during his youth. Henderson even determined Brown’s decision to attend Springfield College, known for its outstanding physical education program. Although Brown’s doctoral studies focused on measurements of physical fitness, many of his articles and papers relate to African American athletic experiences.<sup>87</sup>

No matter the criticism, to ignore Henderson would be the biggest disservice, one for which I am afraid most black scholars bear guilt. Honoring him, for the most part, has been left to white organizations. A testament to his standing is his election as one of two honorary presidents of the North American Society for Sport History at its inaugural meeting in 1973. Two years before, at the age of 88, Henderson gave a paper on the black athlete at the Big Ten Symposium on the History of Physical Education and Sport, in recognition of his command of the subject.<sup>88</sup> One can only hope that Leon

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85. Edwin B. Henderson, “Physical Education and Athletes Among Negroes,” in Bruce L. Bennett, ed., *Proceedings of the Big Ten Symposium on the History of Physical Education and Sport* (Chicago: The Athletic Institution, 1972), 72.

86. Wiggling, “Plantation to Playing Field,” 103-104

87. Roscoe C. Brown, Jr. “The Black Gladiator—The Major Force in Modern American Sport,” *76th Annual Proceedings of the National Physical Education Association for Men* (January 1973), 43-50; “A Commentary on Racial Myths and the Black Athlete,” in *Social Problems in Athletics*, ed. Daniel M. Landers (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976), 168-173.

88. Bruce Bennett, “Remarks on the Occasion of the Dedication of the Plaque Honoring Edwin Bancroft Henderson at the Providence Recreation Center, Falls Church, Virginia, on April 25, 1982,” *Journal of Sport History*, 9, no. 3 (Winter 1982): 82-83.

Coursey's scholarship on Henderson will be extended as another form of recognition.<sup>89</sup>

One of the first among those taking Henderson's lead was sportswriter Andrew S. Young, better known as "Doc." Although his *Negro Firsts in Sports* suffers from some of the same limitations as Henderson's works, it moves away from the straight biographical approach and contextualizes sport in issues and institutions, while discussing lesser-known blacks individually and collectively.<sup>90</sup> His account of numerous legal actions taken by blacks to desegregate golf reveals the pervasiveness of the quest for blacks to be included in all aspects of American life, for exclusion anywhere denied blacks full citizenship everywhere.<sup>91</sup>

Less successful as scholarly products in this genre are Oceania Chalk's *Pioneers of Black Sport: The Early Days of the Black Professional Athlete in Baseball, Basketball, Boxing, and Football* and Art Rust's *Illustrated History of the Black Athlete* by Edna and Art Rust, Jr.<sup>92</sup> Published in 1975, *Pioneers of Black Sport*, according to reviewer John Behee, "often reads like a dictionary" and fails to tell the "gripping story" that such a topic deserves.<sup>93</sup> The Rusts, who also collaborated on biographies of Jackie Robinson and Joe Louis, deliver an equally encyclopedic work on the subject. Nonetheless, both works have value and should be consulted for the facts they reveal. Moreover, Art Rust is a fascinating story personally. A veteran New York sportscaster and host of his own radio show on WABC, Rust's insights are unique and fascinating, preserved perfectly in his airtight mind.

In a genre all of its own is George L. Lee's *Interesting Athletes: Black American Sports Heroes*, which is a collection of his illustrations syndicated in the black press from 1930 to 1980. Best known for his newspaper feature "Interesting People," Lee first published in the boxing magazine *Bang* in 1929.<sup>94</sup> His renderings and captions often stand in stark contrast to the stereotypical ones seen in the white press. Lee's work and his own story invite serious study in and of themselves or for comparative purposes.

Perhaps the best known and certainly most substantial of these popular histories of black athletics by African American authors is Arthur Ashe's *Hard Road to Glory: A History of the African-American Athlete*.<sup>95</sup> Motivated

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89. Leon Coarsey, "Pioneer Black Physical Educators," *Journal of Physical Education and Recreation*, 51, no. 5 (May 1980): 54-56.

90. Young, *Negro Firsts*.

91. Young, 162-174.

92. Oceania Chalk, *Pioneer of Black Sport: The Early Days of the Black Professional Athlete in Baseball, Basketball, Boxing, and Football* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1975) reviewed in *Journal of Sport History*, 5, no. 3 (Winter 1978) by John Behee; Art and Edna Rust, *Art Rust's Illustrated History of the Black Athlete* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1985).

93. Behee, 66.

94. George L. Lee, *Interesting Athletes: Black American Sports Heroes* (New York: Ballantine, 1993 [1976]).

95. Arthur R. Ashe Jr., *Hard Road to Glory: A History of the African-American Athlete* (New York: Warner Books, 1988).

by the desire to recognize the rich history of blacks and sports and to correct the paucity of scholarship on the subject, Ashe spent \$300,000 of his own money to explore the sources and write the work. The result is a three-volume history covering the years 1619 to around 1985, bringing unity to a fragmented subject. While avoiding the encyclopedic quality of its predecessors, it is largely narrative and thinly contextualized, reflecting the author's lack of historical training. Moreover, the three volumes as constituted and marketed are intimidating and inflated in terms of cost and size. This author has always believed that the work would be far more appealing and accessible to a wider audience if the narrative sections of the collection appeared in one volume. This could be accomplished by a slight reduction of print-size and removal of the tables to a separate volume.<sup>96</sup>

Another area in which African American productivity has been low is sport biography. Carl Rowan, journalist, statesman, writer, and activist wrote a biography of Jackie Robinson in 1960, which contains some new and insightful information about Robinson outside of baseball, where he also made considerable impact and faced insurmountable obstacles. Joe Louis Barrow, Jr., and Barbara Munder (not African American) authored *Joe Louis: 50 Years an American Hero* in 1988. Not having read the book, this author can only speculate that as a work written by his son and namesake it should reveal new insights about Louis's relationship to his family.<sup>97</sup>

The genre in which there is no shortage of treatments is autobiography. Most have been written with the assistance of white writers and are far too numerous to mention. Almost all black sports superstars have at least one autobiography and some, such as Jack Johnson, Bill Russell, Hank Aaron, Jim Brown, and others have two. The list extends from Major Taylor to Jack Johnson to Joe Louis to Satchel Paige to Bob Gibson to Muhammad Ali to Wilt Chamberlain and beyond. Of course these works vary in quality and usefulness, but none should be ignored as a source, even Chamberlain's sometimes fantastic ego trip masquerading as a book. Although many might dismiss it as bad science fiction considering its claims about Wilt's numerous conquests, even its fantastic qualities say something very important about the person who stands behind them.<sup>98</sup> Like all sources, autobiographies must be understood for what they are and intend to be. Arnold Rampersad calls them "projects in fiction, in which the autobiographer selects from memory such material as seems to him or her most alluringly totemic."<sup>99</sup> John Edgar Wideman believes autobiography may be as "reliable and unverifiable as dreams."<sup>100</sup> Nor are autobiographies the unmediated memory/voice of the

96. Ashe, *Hard Road to Glory*; Arthur Ashe and Arnold Rampersad, *Days of Grace*. 174-175.

97. Joe Louis Barrow, Jr., and Barbara Munder, *Joe Louis: 50 Years an American Hero* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1988).

98. Telephonic conversation with Elmo Wright, 1991.

99. Arnold Rampersad. "The Color of His Eyes: Bruce Perry's *Malcolm* and Malcolm's *Malcolm*," in Joe Wood, ed., *Malcolm X: In Our Own Image* (New York: St. Martin Press, 1991): 119.

100. John Edgar Wideman, "Malcolm X: The Art of Autobiography," in Wood, 102.

subject. One must understand that the actual writer has many allegiances, according to Wideman:

[T]o the man revealing himself to you; to the same man who will read and judge what you write; to an editor with an editor's agenda and maddening distance; to yourself, the demands of creating a text that meets your aesthetic standards, reflects your politics; to a potential publisher and reading public.<sup>101</sup>

Although intended as a description of the writing process, Wideman's account is most instructive to the reader trying to evaluate the usefulness of such a text. Gerald Early's wonderful anecdote about *The Greatest: My Own Story* is equally revealing. According to Early, the editor of the book, Toni Morrison, told him that Richard Durham—the non-Muslim editor of *Muhammad Speaks*, credited with writing the autobiography—actually delivered tapes to her office, from which a narrative had to be constructed with the oversight of Ali's manager, Herbert Muhammad, the son of Elijah Muhammad.<sup>102</sup> Although an extreme example, such is the nature of autobiography. As a source, it requires reader and researcher to go beyond the representation in search of another reality.

Two works which have tried to break out of the limitations of broad text (lack of depth and analysis) and biography (narrow focus on individual) are Ralph Wiley's *Serenity: A Boxing Quest from Sugar Ray Robinson to Mike Tyson*, and Nelson George's *Elevating the Game: Black Men and Basketball*.<sup>103</sup> Wiley, a gifted sportswriter and author of non-sport books on contemporary African American issues, offers, according to Gerald Early, a well-written, sensitive, and emotional account of the meaning of boxing to the men who did it, those who loved it, and to himself. Although focusing on individuals, as the title suggests, and lacking probing analysis, it is a useful and important work. George makes a worthy attempt to move away from "trap" and "safety valve" models and instead view basketball as representative of a distinct black culture(s), guided by a black aesthetic(s) or set of values, representing different ideas about language, style, and life.<sup>104</sup> Throughout the work George—known most for his *The Death of Rhythm and Blues*, which briefly discusses Negro League baseball—compares basketball to jazz in its nature and effect: "The 'new' ball was about putting one's personal stamp on any given contest, about using a team sport as a way to tell your story just as beboppers did on bandstands nightly."<sup>105</sup> "City ball [was]

101. *Ibid.*, 103

102. Gerald Early in comments after a paper on the autobiography of Muhammad Ali at the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History, Atlanta, October 15, 1994. The full essay, "Some Propositions on the Preposterous Heroism of Muhammad Ali: A reading of *The Greatest: My Own Story*," will appear in the tentatively titled *Muhammed Ali: The People's Champ* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, in 1995).

103. Ralph Wiley, *Serenity: A Boxing Memoir* (New York: Holt 1989).

104. Nelson George, *Elevating the Game: Black Men and Basketball* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992).

105. *Ibid.*

faster, louder, more stop-and-go, and like bebop defiant of established standards of performance.” While provocative and insightful at one level, these characterizations make George seem essentialist and reductionist despite the fact that he acknowledges differences in style according to region and over time. What is more troubling are George’s frequent flights of intellectual fancy, giant leaps of faith, reckless regard for fact, and total dismissal of doubt. On Patrick Ewing’s goaltending during the 1982 NCAA championship game between Georgetown and UNC, George observes:

It was a wildly assertive physicalization of the Black ball ethos and, in this context it was silly. When Jordan hit the game-winning basket he won the game—but if Ewing hadn’t provided North Carolina with those free points early on the outcome would have been different.<sup>106</sup>

Unfortunately, such assertions and the book’s abundant mistakes are representative, casting doubt upon the author’s judgment even when he seems to make valid assessments and offer novel interpretations. The work does, however, suggest interesting and important ways of viewing sport, especially in its movement beyond biography and bipolar frameworks.

The only other book-length study of sport authored by an African American academic and published by a mainstream press is Jeffrey T. Sammons’s *Beyond the Ring: The Role of Boxing in American Society*.<sup>107</sup> Criticized, among other things, for concentrating too much on blacks, especially famous ones, its purpose is to locate boxing within the larger historical framework and societal context by focusing on the heavyweight division. Such a focus responded to the author’s concern that familiarity was necessary to ensure that a devalued subject attract attention. It is a work shaped by the author’s group identity, individual personality, and academic training in African American history. Nonetheless, the work strives to be more than about black boxers. For that, the author has neither regrets nor apologies. Future works from this author, however, promise to be more cultural, analytical, and discursive but only to the extent that they remain accessible, not falling victim to excessive jargon and dense theory.

There are, to this author’s knowledge, only four other books on sport produced by African American academics. They include: *Sport in America: New Historical Perspectives*, edited by Donald Spivey; *Student Athletes: Shattering the Myths and Sharing the Realities*, edited by Wyatt and Sarah Kirk; *Racism in College Athletics: The African-American Athlete’s Experience*, edited by Dana D. Brooks and Ronald C. Althouse (not African American); and *Black Women in Sport*, edited by Alpha Alexander, Nikki Franke,

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106. *Ibid.*, 212-213.

107. Jeffrey T. Sammons, *Beyond the Ring: The Role of Boxing in American Society* (Champaign: University of Illinois, 1988).



Tina Sloan Green, and Carol Oglesby. All but Oglesby are African American.<sup>108</sup> Spivey's book contains many fine essays, three of them on the African American experience in sport, but only one of which is by a black author—his own. Except that the Kirks belong to the faculty of North Carolina A & T. there is nothing further to report on their book, for it came too late to this author's attention. More on *Black Women in Sports* will follow. *Racism in College Athletics: The African-American Athlete's Experience* by Brooks and Althouse. features an outstanding array of scholars, writing on a variety of subjects, ranging from an historical analysis of racism to graduation rates to black female athletes to prospects for the future. The African American contributors are, in addition to Brooks. Othello Harris, Audwin Anderson. Robert Sellers, Doris Corbett, William Johnson, and Tina Sloan Green. Dr. Corbett of Howard University is current president of the International Council of Health Physical Education Recreation and Dance (ICHPERD) and past president of the American Association of Health Physical Education Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD). Dr. Green, Professor of Physical Education at Temple University, is President and founder of the Black Women in Sport Foundation, which was "established in 1992 to increase opportunities for African American women, in all aspects of sports, from participation to lifetime careers." In 1993 the Foundation produced the video "Amazing Grace: Black Women in Sport."<sup>109</sup> For more about the contributors, please consult the anthology, which includes capsule biographies of each.<sup>110</sup>

There is no question that, if held to the book standard, black productivity in the realm of sport is extremely limited. Yet a thorough survey of the *Journal of Sport History (JSH)*, numerous conversations with colleagues, and extensive readings of non-sport works reveal considerably more contribution than one might assume but far less than is warranted and necessary considering the impact of blacks on sport, it on them, and both together on the larger society. Of the 166 articles abstracted in *JSH* focusing on blacks, 78 were authored by blacks. The numbers are deceiving, however. Thirty-nine of the total number of articles came from *Black Sport*, a short-lived popular magazine, and *Negro History Bulletin*, the popular and youth-oriented organ of the ASNLH. With the exception of the 1951 issue edited by Edwin B. Henderson, most articles in the latter run no longer than two pages.<sup>111</sup>

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108. Wyatt and Sarah Kirk, eds., *Student Athletes: Shattering the Myths and Sharing the Realities* (Washington D.C.: American Counseling Association, 1993); Donald Spivey, ed., *Sport in America: New Historical Perspectives* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985); Dana D. Brooks and Ronald C. Althouse, eds., *Racism in College Athletics* (Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology, Inc., 1993); and Tina Sloan Green, Carole Oglesby, Alpha Alexander, and Nikki Franke, eds., *Black Women in Sport* (Reston, VA: American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance, 1981).

109. For more information, contact Black Women in Sport Foundation, P.O. Box 2610, Philadelphia, PA 19130.

110. Brooks and Althouse, eds, *Racism in College Athletics*.

111. Edwin B. Henderson, "The Negro in Sports," *Negro History Bulletin*, 15, no. 3 (December 1951). Issue includes blacks in Olympic Games, basketball, baseball, golf, boxing, tennis, and Negro women in sports.

Of the remaining 39 articles, a sizeable number appear in journals of physical education and are very short. Seven of the 39 appeared in *Black Scholar*, five in *The Journal of Black Studies*, six in *The Journal of Negro Education*, two in the *Journal of Negro History*, and two in *Phylon: A Review of Race and Culture* founded by W.E.B. DuBois.<sup>112</sup> Although the above findings are neither scientific nor exhaustive, they do suggest that the much younger, more radical publications reflect a different attitude toward sport than the old line publications and its pool of authors. (The *Journal of Negro Education* is an exception because its articles are old and relate to recreational activities at black colleges or physical education and recreation issues generally.) Of the 16 articles on blacks published in *JSH* only three are authored by blacks, beginning in 1988.<sup>113</sup> Of the 32 books on blacks reviewed in *JSH* only five are by blacks and three of those are autobiographies written with a white author.<sup>114</sup> Of the 14 dissertations listed in *JSH* about blacks, 10 are by blacks, of whom four are African and most are not very recent and suggest the continuance of a sparse supply.<sup>115</sup>

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112. Articles in *Black Scholar* include: Michael Govan, "The Emergence of the Black Athlete in America," 3, no. 3 (November 1971); Harry Edwards, "The Sources of the Black Athlete's Superiority," 3, no. 3 (November 1971): 32-41; Nathan Hare, "A Study of the Black Fighter," 3, no. 3 (November 1971): 2-8; Harry Edwards, "The Olympic Project for Human Rights: An Assessment Ten Years Later," 10, nos. 6, 7 (March/April 1979): 2-8; Muhammad Ali, "Muhammad Ali," no. 8 (1970): 32-39; Terry Jones, "Foul Ball in the Front Office: Racial Practices in Baseball Management," no. 3 (1987): 16-24; Harold D. Weaver, Jr., "Paul Robeson, Beleguired Leader," 5, no. 4 (December 1973-January 1974): 23-32. In *The Journal of Black Studies*: Art Evans, "Joe Louis as Key Functionary: White Reaction Toward a Black Champion," 16, no. 1 (September 1985): 95-111; John C. Gaston, "The Destruction of the Young Black Male: The Impact of Popular Culture and Organized Sport," 16, no. 4 (June 1986): 369-384; Gary Sailes, "Myth of Black Sports Supremacy," 21, no. 4 (June 1991): 480-487; Jomills Henry Braddock, II, "Television and College Football: In Black and White," 8, no. 3 (March 1978): 369-80; Marshall H. Medoff, "Racial Segregation in Baseball: The Economic Hypothesis versus the Sociological Hypothesis," 6, no. 4 (June 1976): 393-400.

113. William H. Wiggins, "Boxing's Sambo Twins: Racial Stereotypes in Jack Johnson and Joe Louis Newspaper Cartoons, 1908 to 1938," 15, no. 3 (Winter 1988): 242-254; "End Jim Crow in Sports: The Protest at New York University," 15, no. 3 (Winter 1988): 282-303; Gwendolyn Captain, "Enter Ladies and Gentlemen of Color."

114. Ocania Chalk, *Black Pioneers in Sport*; Jeffrey T. Sammons, *Beyond the Ring*, 18, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 288-290; Bill Russell with Taylor Branch, *Second Wind*, 7, no. 2 (Summer 1980): 90; Leroy Satchel Paige, as told to Hal Lebovitz, *Pitchin' Man: Satchel Paige's Own Story*. Revised with introduction by John Holway (Westport, CT: Meckler Publishing, 1992 [1948]), 20, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 77-79; Wilmer Fields, *My Life in the Negro Leagues, An Autobiography* (Westport, CT: Meckler Publishing, 1992), 20, no. 1 (Spring 1993), 79-80.

115. The Africans are Eleyae Awoture, "A Comparative Assessment of the Central Organizations for Amateur Sports in the United States of America and in Nigeria" (University of Illinois, 1974); Daniel Ogungbenjo Ogunbiyi, "The Development of Nigeria's Participation in International Sport Competition and its Effects on the Nation" (Ohio State, 1978); Udodiri Paul Okafor, "The Interaction of Sports and Politics as a Dilemma of the Modern Olympic Games" (Ohio State, 1979); Kwasi Opoku-Fianko, "The Growth and Development of Physical Education and Sport in Ghana" (Ohio State University, 1985). African Americans: Jeffrey Thomas Sammons, "America in the Ring: The Relationship Between Boxing and Society Circa 1930-1980" (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1982); Leon Wright Bey, "Impact of Desegregation on Selected Aspects of the Athletic Programs of the Traditionally Black Institutions in the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association" (Temple University, 1985); Earl Henry Duval, Jr., "An Historical Analysis of the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association and Its Influence on the Development of Black Intercollegiate Athletics: 1912-1984" (Kent State University, 1985); Linda Damette Williams, "An Analysis of American Sportswomen in Two Negro Newspapers: *The Pittsburgh Courier*, 1924-1948 and the *Chicago Defender*, 1932-1948" (Ohio State University, 1987); Raymond Hughes (deceased), *Desegregating the Holy Day: Football, Blacks, and the Southeast Conference* (Ohio State University, 1991); James Roland Coates, Jr., "Recreation and Sport in the African-American Community of Baltimore, 1890-1920" (University of Maryland College Park, 1991).

The only young African American scholars in sport history known to the author are Gwendolyn Captain, Linda D. Williams, James Coates, and Michael Lomax. All four come out of departments of physical education. Captain is published, having authored the aforementioned work on class and gender in black sport. Coates won the 1987 NASSH Graduate Student Essay competition for his fine paper, "Racial Segregation of the Baltimore Parks System 1890-1917." Unfortunately, there is no evidence of its publication. Williams, whose dissertation analyzes the treatment of American sports-women in two black newspapers, has shifted her attention to black women and golf. Lomax, a student of Melvin Adelman's, is studying black baseball in three major cities. A promising young scholar in the sociology of sport is Othello Harris of Miami University (mentioned above), who specializes in the conflict between athletics and academics, and has published in the *Sociology of Sport Journal* among other places.<sup>116</sup> Another recent Ph.D. in sociology is Michael Banks of the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York. His two-volume dissertation focuses on the media's treatment of black athletes, mostly boxers.<sup>117</sup> Banks is not in the academy and time constraints might limit his publication of the work in full or part.<sup>118</sup> Also based in physical education is Yevonne Smith, who focuses on African American leadership, especially female, from a sociological perspective. She is considered a rising star in the field in part because of her 1992 *Quest* article, "Women of Color in Society and Sport."<sup>119</sup> In literature, Grant Farred, a graduate student at Princeton from South Africa, is writing on C.L.R. James and Muhammad Ali in a dissertation on post-colonial intellectuals.<sup>120</sup> If these numbers are any indication, progress in this area will come slowly.

This paucity reflects the fact that the best known African American scholars both old and young have, for the most part, stayed away from the topic. Their dismissal will not encourage students. Those of high reputation who have engaged the subject, treat it marginally, infrequently, and quietly. There is, for example, no African American equivalent of C.L.R. James, who has made the study of cricket by distinguished scholars of color respectable, fashionable, and even necessary. Even basic texts on African Americans have all but neglected sports. John Hope Franklin and Alfred Moss's *From Slavery to Freedom* has only begun, in its seventh edition, to recognize sport as an

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116. Othello Harris, "Sport and Race: A comparison of the Social and Academic Worlds of Black and White Student-Athletes" (University of Maryland College Park, 1989); "Race, Sport and Social Support," *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 11, no. 1 (1994): 40-50; "African American Predominance in Sport," in Brooks and Althouse, eds., *Racism in College Athletics*, 51-74; "Athletics and Academics: Contrary or Complementary Activities?" in Grant Jarvie, ed., *Sport, Racism, and Ethnicity* (London: Falmer Press, 1991), 124-149.

117. Michael Banks, "Black Athletes and the Media" (Graduate Center City University of New York, 1993).

118. Telephone conversations with Stanley Aronwitz, Banks' thesis advisor, October 4, 1994.

119. Yevonne Smith, "Women of Color in Society and Sport," *Quest*, 44 (1992): 228-250.

120. Telephone conversation with Bruce Simon, graduate student, Princeton University, Department of English, October 1, 1994. Farred is also a member of the English department at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

important cultural institution, although pictures of athletes consume nearly as much space as text.<sup>121</sup> A better example of sport's inclusion in the assessment of the black experience can be found in *Africana Studies: A Survey of Africa and the African Diaspora* edited by Mario Azevedo.<sup>122</sup> The situation among black women's texts is worse. Although Marianna Davis's *Contributions of Black Women to America* does contain a section on black women in track and field, it is encyclopedic and lacking in context and interpretation.<sup>123</sup> None of the other major texts or historical encyclopedias on black women by black authors treat sport at all. Of the few scholars who have established their reputations outside of sport and who treat it frequently and seriously, three stand out: Donald Spivey, William H. Wiggins, Jr., and Nathan Hare.

Spivey, chair of the Department of History at the University of Miami, a respected historian of the African American experience, is best regarded for his works on black education. Little known to those outside of sport history is the fact that Spivey, a former collegiate football player, has authored four articles on sports, edited an important anthology, *Sport in America: New Historical Perspectives*, and is near completion of a biography of Satchel Paige. Spivey's work has been characterized by frankness and fairness. Finding wrong and exposing it, Spivey is not afraid to criticize sacred cows whether they be Jimmy Carter or Harry Edwards. Spivey is one of the first to view the sports arena as a highly circumscribed area of racial attitudes, finding that breakdowns in racist behavior and attitudes in sport are temporary and localized. In other words, Spivey believes that after the game ends, the status quo remains.<sup>124</sup>

Wiggins, a folklorist, has written articles on Jack Johnson and Joe Louis and is in the process of completing a book on the latter for which he received a Guggenheim fellowship. He also organized a major conference on the press and Joe Louis at Indiana University and has reviewed books for *JSH*. Wiggins's "Boxing's Sambo Twins: Racial Stereotypes in Jack Johnson and Joe Louis Newspaper Cartoons, 1908 to 1938," reveals how everything and nothing changes over time. Despite obvious differences between the two

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121. John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*, Seventh Edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994).

122. Mario Azevedo and Jeffrey Sammons, "Contributions in Science, Business, Film, and Sports," in Mario Azevedo, ed., *Africana Studies: A Survey of Africa and the African Diaspora* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 1993), 353-360.

123. Marianna Davis. *Contributions of Black Women to America* (Columbia, SC: Kenday Press, 1982, c1981).

124. Spivey's non-sport books include: *The Politics of Miseducation: The Booker Washington Institute of Liberia, 1929-1984* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1986), and *Schooling for the New Slavery: Black Industrial Education, 1868-1915* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978). His sport-related works are: *Sport in America: New Historical Perspectives*, contributing editor (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1985); "'End Jim Crow in Sports': The Protest at New York University, 1940-1941," *Journal of Sport History*, 15, no. 3 (Winter 1988): 282-303; "Sport, Protest, and Consciousness: The Black Athlete in Big Time Intercollegiate Sports, 1941-1968," *Phylon*, 44, no. 2 (1983): 116-125; with Thomas A. Jones, "Intercollegiate Athletic Servitude: A Case Study of the Black Illini Student-Athletes, 1931-1967," *Social Science Quarterly*, 55, no. 4 (1975): 939-947; "Black Consciousness and Olympic Protest Movement, 1964-1980" in *Sport in America*, 279-262.

men—ranging from the eras in which they fought and lived to their own personalities—cartoonists painted them with the same Sambo's brush. Wiggins argues that not until Louis's value to a larger cause became clear did the standard stereotypical images of him recede.<sup>125</sup>

Nathan Hare, sociologist and psychologist, deserves considerable credit for his contribution to the field. Although his personal output in sport scholarship has been small, this author found his two articles on boxing to be invaluable, especially "A Study of the Black Fighter." Written from the perspective of former participant, it strikes a proper balance between the closeness and authenticity associated with experience and the detachment and science accompanying scholarship. It and the work of Weinberg and Arond reveal boxing's exploitation in the most credible terms.<sup>126</sup> What is more, as publisher and editor of *Black Scholar*, Hare has encouraged scholarship by African Americans in sport and contributed to the wider acceptance of it by scholars and the public alike.

Other well known scholars outside of sport who have written at least one article on the subject include: Ali Mazrui, Orlando Patterson, Manning Marable, and Manthia Diawara. Diawara and Mazrui are from Africa and Patterson is from Jamaica. "Boxer Muhammad Ali and Soldier Idi Amin as International Political Symbols: The Bioeconomics of Sport and War" is Mazrui's daring and important look into Pan-African culture, symbolism, and, what he calls bioeconomics, through a comparison of these two bombastic heavyweights and the reaction to them.<sup>127</sup> Patterson, a provocative and controversial Harvard sociologist with questionable opinions about Anita Hill, Clarence Thomas, and African American culture, suggests, according to Australian scholar Brian Stoddart, in a 1969 article on cricket, that as long as West Indians hold onto the game they will never escape the shackles of colonialism.<sup>128</sup> Marable, Director of African American Studies at Columbia and professor of political science, is best known for his *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America*. But in 1973 he ventured briefly into the field of sport with "Black Athletes in White Men's Games." The article, which found application in this author's own work, revealed the threat that successful black athletes posed for whites in and out of sport. As such it showed that black success, instead of engendering respect, often created envy

125. William H. Wiggins, Jr., "Jack Johnson as Bad Nigger: The Folklore of His Life," in *Contemporary Black Thought: The Best of the Black Scholar*, eds. Robert Chrisman and Nathan Hare (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc. 1973); "Boxing's Sambo twins: Racial Stereotypes in Jack Johnson and Joe Louis Newspaper Cartoons, 1908 to 1938," *Journal of Sport History*, 15, no. 3 (Winter 1988): 242-254.

126. Nathan Hare, "A Study of the Black Fighter," *Black Scholar*, 3, no. 3 (November 1971); S. Kirson Weinberg and Henry Arond, "The Occupational Culture of a Boxer," *American Journal of Sociology*, (March 1952).

127. Ali A. Mazrui, "Boxer Muhammad Ali and Soldier Idi Amin as International Political Symbols: The Bioeconomics of Sport and War," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 19, no. 22 (April 1977): 189-215.

128. Orlando Patterson, "The Ritual of Cricket," *Jamaica Journal*, 3 (March 1969): 23-25, in Brian Stoddart, "Cricket, Social Formation and Cultural Continuity in Barbados: A Preliminary Ethnohistory," *Journal of Sport History*, 14, no. 3 (Winter 1987): 322.

and resentment.<sup>129</sup> Diawara, director of Africana Studies at New York University and professor of comparative literature, is a film and culture critic who sees in cricket empowering and totalizing discourses dependent upon situation, subject, and object. In "Englishness and Blackness: Cricket as Discourse on Colonialism," a close textual reading of *Beyond a Boundary*, Diawara argues that the language of the Shannon club redefined blackness without degrading whiteness by going "beyond binary constructions of civilized and primitive, religious and idolatrous, English and West Indian." Diawara is to be praised for including sport in an analysis of West Indian culture, for so many in his field have dismissed or ignored this largest of mass and popular institutions. The work is strong on theory, language, and formula but less substantial on evidence about cricket and West Indian history, relying on James for the former and limited secondary sources for the latter.<sup>130</sup>

Another foreign-born writer, Jervis Anderson from Jamaica, most known for his *New Yorker* essays and *This Was Harlem*, has also written about cricket and boxing.<sup>131</sup> While on the subject of cricket, which seems as privileged among British Commonwealth intellectuals as baseball is among white American intellectuals, Keith A.P. Sandiford deserves recognition as one of the leading scholars of African ancestry writing on the subject of cricket. An historian at the University of Manitoba, Sandiford's first book is on nineteenth century British diplomacy. In 1994, he published *Cricket and the Victorians*, which followed his 10 full-length articles on cricket.<sup>132</sup> Other Afro-Caribbeans and/or Afro-Britons studying cricket are: Trevor Bailey. Gordon O. Bell, Ernest Eytel, Charles Griffith, Michael Manley, W. K. Marshall, Trevor Marshall, Torrey Pilgrim, L.O.B. Thompson, Clyde

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129. W. Manning Marable, "Black Athletes in White Men's Games 1880-1920," *Maryland Historian*, 4 (Fall 1973): 143-119.

130. Manthia Diawara, "Englishness and Blackness: Cricket as Discourse on Colonialism," *Callaloo*, 13 (1990): 830-844.

131. Jervis Anderson, *This Was Harlem: A Cultural Portrait, 1900-1950* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 1981); "Cricket and Beyond. The career of C.L.R. James," *The American Scholar*, 54 (Summer 1985): 345-359; "Black Heavies," *The American Scholar*, 47 (1977-78).

132. Keith A.P. Sandiford, *Great Britain and the Schleswig-Holstein Question, 1848-64: A study in Diplomacy, Politics, and Public Opinion* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975); *Cricket and the Victorians* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Press, 1994); "Victorians at Play: Problems in Historiographical Methodology," *Journal of Social History*, 15 (Winter 1981): 271-288; "Cricket and the Victorians: A Historiographical Essay," *Historical Reflections*, 9 (Fall 1982): 421-436; "English Cricket Crowds During the Victorian Age," *Journal of Sport History*, 9 (Winter 1982): 5-22; "Amateurs and Professionals in Victorian County Cricket," *Albion*, 15 (Spring 1983): 32-51; "Cricket and the Victorian Society," *Journal of Sport History*, 17 (Winter 1983): 303-318; "Victorian Cricket Technique and Industrial Technology," *The British Journal of Sports History*, 1 (December 1984): 272-285; "The Professionalization of Modern Cricket," *The British Journal of Sports History*, 2 (December 1985): 270-289; "Cricket and the Barbadian Society," *Canadian Journal of History* 21 (December 1986): 353-70; with Wray Vamplew, "The Peculiar Economics of English Cricket Before 1914," *The British Journal of Sports History*, 3 (December 1986): 311-326; with Brian Stoddart, "Cricket and the Elite Schools in Barbados: A Case Study in Colonial Continuity," *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 4 (December 1987); and "The Birth of the Professional Cricketers' Benefit Match," *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 8 (May 1991): 111-123. Sandiford has also written popular articles on sport, including ice hockey, for *Australian Cricket Journal*, *the Barbados Nation*, *Caribe*, *Our Vice*, the *Winnipeg Free Press*, and the *Winnipeg Tribune*.

Walcott, and John Wickham.<sup>133</sup> Moreover, Hilary Beckles, Dean of Arts and historian on the Cave Hill Campus, is editing a series of texts on cricket. Two of the anthologies are scheduled to appear shortly.<sup>134</sup> This attention to cricket by these scholars and intellectuals and the lack of attention to baseball by their African American counterparts raises some interesting questions about the relation of West Indians and African Americans to their sports, cultures, and societies. It suggests yet another area of investigation for Atlantic and comparative studies.<sup>135</sup>

Other African Americans who have written scholarly pieces on sport include Gary Sailes, Art Evans, John Gaston, Wornie Reed, and Finley McRae.<sup>136</sup> The last two are of particular interest to this author for their work on blacks and golf. Reed, director of the William Monroe Trotter Institute, editor of its *Review*, and chair of the Black Studies Department at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, is clearly troubled by the decline in black professional golfers since the mid-1960s and poses the question: "Why is it that as more African Americans are becoming involved in other aspects of American life, the opposite trend is happening in golf—at least on the PGA Tour?" It is far too complex a question to answer in the space he allows the discussion and with the sources he relies upon. Out of 23 footnotes, 14 cite Ashe's *Hard Road to Glory*.<sup>137</sup> Moreover, the premise of the question might be false. Are blacks in fact moving into other aspects of American life? If true, the how and who must be investigated. Rather than see golf as an anomaly, one might look at it as part of an interlocking directorate of exclusionary forces. Criticisms notwithstanding, Reed's entry into the field is reassuring. McRae's "Hidden Traps Beneath the Placid Greens: A History of

133. Identification with help of Keith A.P. Sandiford, telephone conversation, October 6, 1994, and follow up letter of same date. Gordon O. Bell, *Sir Garfield Sobers* (London: 1978); Ernest Eytel, *Frank Worrell: The Career of a Great Cricketer* (London: 1964); Charles Griffith, *Chucked Around* (London: 1970); Michael Manley, *A History of West Indies Cricketer* (London: 1964); Trevor Marshall, "Race Class and Cricket in Barbadian Society, 1800-1970," *Manjack*, November 11, 1973; Woodville Marshall, "Gary Sobers and the Brishane Revolution," *New World Quarterly*, 2 (1965): 35-42; Torrey Pilgrim, *The Sir Frank Worrell Pictorial* (New York: 1992); L. O'B. Thompson, "How Cricket is West India Cricket? Class Racial and Colour Conflicts" *Caribbean Review*, 12 (1983): 23-25, 50-53; Clyde Walcott, *Island Cricketers* (London: 1958); John Wickham, "Herman," *West Indies Cricket Annual* 1980.

134. Letter from Keith A. P. Sandiford to Jeffrey T. Sammons, October 6, 1994.

135. Sandiford's view of the scholarly attention to cricket is: "Especially in Barbados, cricket has long been more than just another sport. It has been a much stronger driving force than ethics or religion, and I think you can only just begin to understand this phenomenon when I tell you, by way of mild understatement, that the Barbadians take cricket far more seriously than the Brazilians take soccer, the Canadians ice hockey, the Scots curling, or the Americans baseball." He goes on to discuss the recent decline in the quality of Barbadian cricket in terms seemingly in jest but which are, in reality, absolutely serious: "This slump has been seen by many, including Dr. Hilary Beckles, as a sure sign that the society is on the verge of moral, physical and intellectual decay. Hilary, of course, is one of the leading Caribbean historians. He was moved to write a most telling piece, 'Barbados Cricket and the Crisis of Social Culture,' for the BCA's *100 Years of Organised Cricket in Barbados 1892-1992*, which I helped to write and to edit two years ago. The very title of that article is instructive." In letter from Keith A.P. Sandiford to Jeffrey T. Sammons, October 8, 1994.

136. Gary Sailes, "Myth of Black Sports Supremacy"; Art Evans, "Joe Louis As Key Functionary"; John Gaston, "Destruction of the Young Black Male"; Wornie Reed, "Blacks in Golf," *Trotter Institute Review*, 5, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 1991): 19-23; F. Finley McRae, "Hidden Traps Beneath the Placid Greens: A History of Black in Golf," *American Vision* (April 1991): 26-29.

127. Reed, "Blacks in Golf."

Blacks in Golf' is a more substantial work using primary sources, including interviews, to construct a useful narrative. Particularly original is McRae's presentation of Maggie Hathaway, who focused her considerable energy on ending segregation in Los Angeles public golf.<sup>138</sup>

In addition to oversight, by trying to err on the side of caution, no doubt some African Americans deserving of inclusion have been omitted. In such matters, wrongful exclusion seems the lesser of two evils, for this author does not want to risk accusations of essentialism or authenticity. Yet, on the following names some degree of speculation seems justified in light of subject matter and source of publication. Thus, other authors of articles on sport and/or recreation who might be African American include: Jomills Henry Braddock, II, Michael Govan, Monroe Little, Rufus E. Clement, Terry Jones, Harry Beamon, and Bernard Mackler.<sup>139</sup>

Even article production does not tell the whole story of blacks' attention to sport, for sometimes hidden in works on larger subjects is some of the most insightful and useful treatments of sport. Wilson J. Moses's *Black Messiahs and Uncle Toms* contains a brilliant interpretation of Joe Louis as "symbolic messiah." By fitting Louis squarely into American and black cultural and religious and nationalistic traditions, it does more than any single discussion for elevating a sport figure into a general leadership role.<sup>140</sup> Moses's Louis is a symbol of black America, of its own latent nationalism and ethnic chauvinism, like Garvey before him.<sup>141</sup> But the most apt comparison of messianic leaders that Moses makes is of Louis to King:

Like Joe Louis, he represented at once the militancy of black people and their willingness to get along with whites; he symbolized not only the rising aspirations of blacks, but the democratic ideals that all Americans associated with their national destiny. As Joe Louis, during the Depression, had been seen as "leading the nation" in some mythic way "back to prosperity," so was King viewed as leading the nation towards fulfillment of the American Dream.<sup>142</sup>

The similarities were not lost on King, as he understood the meaning of Joe Louis even when trying to distance himself from the old-time leadership Louis represented—one to which he was linked. According to Moses, King employed an anecdote to illustrate the heightening radicalness of blacks and his own recognition, if not embrace, of it. As the story goes, King recounts the last words of a condemned young black man, as the gas pellets drop into the cylinder: "Save me, Joe Louis. Save me, Joe Louis. Save me, Joe Louis . . ."

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138. McRae, "Hidden Traps."

139. Braddock, "Television and College Football": Gown, "The Emergence of the Black Athlete"; Jones, "Foul Ball in the Front Office"; Clement, "Racial Integration in the Field."

140. Moses, *Black Messiahs*. 155-182.

141. *Ibid.*

142. *Ibid.*, 180.



They set up King's response to his audience "that this 'bizarre and naive cry' had been replaced by 'a mighty shout of challenge,' and that the 'loneliness and profound despair of Negroes in that period' had been 'replaced by confidence.'"<sup>143</sup>

As important as this treatment is, Moses makes a further point that I believe suggests the potentially most fruitful and important trend in sport scholarship—a search for the meaning and consequences of integration. Joe Louis, Jesse Owens, and Jackie Robinson among others are part of a movement which climaxed in Martin Luther King, Jr., leading Moses to conclude:

The success of Martin Luther King's crusade has ironically facilitated the diversification of black leadership roles. No longer are educated black people confined to careers in education and the ministry. The secularization of black leadership has led to a deemphasizing of the church and church-related colleges as centers of black artistic and intellectual life. In the process of modifying its religious character, black artistic and intellectual behavior has lost much of its distinctively black quality. Black politics, too, are losing their traditional missionary and moral character and fast becoming a mere variety of American ethnic politics. The old prophetic traditions no longer occupy a central position in Afro-American life. Like other twentieth-century peoples, the blacks of the United States are being inundated by post-industrial culture, losing their folk traditions, being deprived of their illusions, and, ultimately, of their values as well.<sup>144</sup>

Gerald Early already addresses the same issue in "Baseball and African American Life," an essay in *Baseball* by Geoffrey Ward and Ken Burns.<sup>145</sup> There Early draws upon the opinions of intellectuals Amiri Baraka and Nelson George concerning baseball before integration. Both lament the loss of such important black institutions as the Negro League teams, but Baraka, predictably, seeks to outrage by calling Jackie Robinson a traitor for helping to turn out the light on "laughter and self-love," which the Negro Leagues projected and embodied.<sup>146</sup> This is a subject of enormous importance that sport scholars must engage. The undertaking will require the following: deep investigation into the literature on integration such as William Cross's *Shades of Black: Diversity in African American Identity* and Columbia historian Darryl Scott's work on liberal scholars and the creation of theories about segregation and the damaged black psyche; an examination of thriving all-

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143. *Ibid.*, 182.

144. *Ibid.*, 15.

145. Gerald Early, "Baseball and African American Life," in Geoffrey C. Ward and Ken Burns, *Baseball: An Illustrated History* (New York: Knopf, 1994), 412-417.

146. *Ibid.* 414.

black institutions such as the church, colleges, YMCA, and the press; and careful analysis of peripheral institutions to black sports.<sup>147</sup>

Although some might cringe at the next example of the scholar who has employed sport in the context of a larger analysis, this author believes even outlandish or repugnant views must be considered, if only to be challenged and refuted. Sometimes, surprisingly, they provide material that is of positive value. Dr. Frances Cress Welsing, a former Howard University psychology professor and psychiatrist, is often associated with the farthest fringes of Afro-centric scholarship. She is best known for her "Cress Theory of Color Confrontation," which asserts that skin pigmentation among humans is normal. Thus, Europeans upon coming into contact with pigmented peoples, recognized their own abnormalcy, projected their own feelings onto the people they really regarded as superior, and attempted to exterminate the object of their projection of their own inferiority. This and other questionable theories, including the mental and physical advantages of melanin, are put forth in a collection of essays, *The Isis (Yssis) Papers*.<sup>148</sup> Two of the pieces directly treat sport—"The Symbolism of Boxing and Black Leather" and "Ball Games as Symbols: The War of the Balls." In what can only be described as vulgar Freudianism and reductionist essentialism mixed with her own twisted and simplistic analyses, sport becomes nothing but sex, insecurity, and racism. The following reveals her mindset clearly:

Interestingly, golf, the most "elite" of all of the ball games in the white supremacy culture, is played with a long dark-colored stick or "iron" held between the legs. The iron is smashed against the side of a very small white ball. The object is to knock this small white ball into a hole in the black earth (black mother earth—the Black female?). By attempting to place his small white ball in the black earth, using a long dark stick, again the white male is attempting to identify with the possession of the genital equipment

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147. William E. Cross, Jr., *Shades of Black: Diversity in African-American Identity* (Philadelphia Temple University Press, 1991); Darryl Scott, "The Damaged Black Psyche: The Liberal Creation and Use of Social Science Imagery, 1890-1970" (Stanford University, 1994). Cross, among other things, takes aim at the motivations, methods, and findings in Dr. Kenneth Clark's famous "doll studies," which helped to influence the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Scott maintains that the prevailing social science scholarship before *Brown* found that proximity to the oppressor damaged blacks and self-hate theory is premised on that assumption. Also see Nina Mjagkij, *Light in the Darkness: African Americans and the YMCA, 1852-1946* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994). Dr. Mjagkij (not African American) ignores the role of sport in the black YMCAs. In a telephone conversation on October 4, 1994, with this author, Dr. Mjagki maintained that sport was not actively promoted because the black Ys were more concerned with development of character and masculinity in the form of upstanding men. In response to this author's expression of astonishment that sport would not be integral to reaching such objectives, she offered that sport was not necessary to the process. In response to a follow-up question on Muscular Christianity, she responded that blacks rejected the concept as racist. Moreover, she added that inferior facilities limited the development of athletic programs. With all due respect, the explanations simply do not seem tenable. According to Patrick Miller and Susan Rayl, many of the Y directors were athletes, hired, in part, for their athletic backgrounds. Furthermore, the adoptive and adaptive practices of blacks and other oppressed groups does not support claims for a wholesale rejection of Muscular Christianity. Last, inferior facilities have been a constant throughout the black experience in America, which have limited but not precluded black participation in sport.

148. Frances Cress Welsing, M.D., *The Isis (Yssis) Papers* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1991).

and privilege of the Black male, whose rightful partner is the Black female. If this pattern of play in golf does not qualify as the very essence of male genital symbolism and neurotic conflict in the white male psyche, as formulated in this discussion, then nothing does.<sup>149</sup>

For all their outlandishness, some of Welsing's ideas find support from textual and other analyses. Few could deny that, in part, sports are often "theatres" of war, sites where masculinist, racist, and nationalist identities, prejudices, and values are "played" out. Even she seems on much firmer ground when language guides her thoughts: "Again, is it only coincidence that the major event in golf competition should be called the *Master's Tournament*? Is this not a fitting title for the most elite of all ball games played by the masters of the 'master race'?"<sup>150</sup> Regardless of her conclusions, which resonate with many who have resented being the objects of the same kind of racist thinking from white sources, she deserves credit for seeing in sport larger psychological meanings and for undertaking that which has been reserved almost exclusively for men.

Although African American women, like white women outside of physical education, have been reluctant to engage sport intellectually (those mentioned above excepted), there are some areas which beg for attention and seem necessary to a fuller understanding of black female experiences, especially as they relate to black men, Mike Tyson, despite (or because of) rumors of homosexuality and impotency, certainly poses serious questions about relations between black women and men and the role of athletics in matters of masculinity, violence, and female objectification—specifically women as spoils of war and entitlements. O.J. Simpson, in addition to many other things, has made almost everyone see sport and athletic heroes in a different light. One such person is UCLA professor Brenda E. Stevenson, an historian, specializing in the slave family. According to Stevenson, the handling of O. J. Simpson drama—black former football star accused of killing his white ex-wife—by the media has upset her equilibrium as a race-conscious feminist by presenting "a false choice between women and African Americans."<sup>151</sup> Stevenson argues, that as a result of media coverage of O. J. as prime suspect and as quasi-fugitive: "Simpson's public image had taken on two of our most potent and perverse images of black manhood—the black beast and the emasculated, infantile black male." To Stevenson, the simultaneous and equally perverse stereotyping of Nicole Simpson as either battered wife or blonde playgirl by the media shows how deeply embedded these images are "in a cultural past that has excluded the plausibility and morality of biracial sex and love." Although Stevenson finds associations with King Kong, she need

149. *Ibid.*, 140.

150. *Ibid.*

151. Brenda E. Stevenson, "A Case of Caricatures," *Asbury Park Press*, June 28, 1994, A 17, prepared for Knight-Rider-Tribune's Progressive Media Project.

not look to fiction, for Jack Johnson's portrayal by some evinces similar overtones. For the questions implicitly asked of Jack Johnson's white lovers come from the same "two inane poles" as those about Nicole Simpson: "What happens to Snow White when she marries King Kong? And what kind of white woman marries a black anyway?"<sup>152</sup> For all its probing insights, missing from Stevenson's analysis and obscured by the media coverage is O. J. as athletic hero cum self- and media-created popular icon, who had crowds of people, mostly white, along a highway participating in his "flight" with cheers of, "Run, O.J., Run." Implicit within the signs of support was, "Who are they, Nicole Simpson and Ronald Goldman, to bring down our hero?" But even more, these instruments of ideology(s), would not let O.J.—football hero, celebrity, and re-invented man—escape his "race" or his place. Some would argue that O.J.'s biggest failure was his inability to transcend "race." In the end, black people, not only black men, cannot be understood if sport remains absent from scholarly analyses. This author's own work on Muhammad Ali makes this point in considerable detail.<sup>153</sup> Needless to say, the potential for explosive, transgressive, and revolutionary scholarship on this subject is unlimited.

A truly encouraging sign emerged during the most recent ASALH conference in Atlanta, which saw three sessions on sport. Two of those featured African American scholars unknown to this author including Jimmy Gordon of Kentucky State University's department of history, Stan Arnold, a Ph.D. candidate in history at Temple University, and Clark E. White of Northeastern University. Gordon is writing about popular recreation and sport in the slave community and Arnold and White on black baseball at the community and semi-professional levels. Unfortunately, none of the panels included black women as presenters, although as many as half of the audience for the session on Muhammad Ali was female.

## The Journal and Blacks and Sport

If viewed narrowly (through the quantity and quality of articles), the record of the *Journal of Sport History* in regard to blacks is at best uneven. In the 20 years of the *Journal's* life, only 16 articles have appeared on the subject, including those on the 1936 Olympics, which focus on anti-Semitism and politics as much as, if not more than, racism. Moreover, of those 16 articles, more than a third (six) were written by one person, David K. Wiggins, whose scholarly production on the subject is unparalleled in its volume and variety.<sup>154</sup> Last, some of those essays, Wiggins's excluded, lack the quality expected of such in a refereed, professional journal. That view, which influenced this author's relative neglect of the *Journal* in the past, is

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152. *Ibid.*

153. Jeffrey T. Sammons, "Rebel With A Cause."

154. See Wiggins's many works cited throughout this article.

very misleading. First, one must be careful to assess the *Journal* over time. For it has done much better recently than in its earlier period. Second, one must look beyond the publication of articles to evaluate attention to the subject, including: listings and abstracts of articles about or closely related to blacks and sport appearing in other journals; dissertation abstracts; book, media, and museum reviews; book notes; and letters to the editor. Considered in this way, the *Journal* is an invaluable bibliographic resource. Nonetheless, a professional journal must strive to be an equally attractive source of ideas, methods, and representation. For that, judgments must be made on the basis of book reviews and articles.

For anyone studying blacks and sports, a thorough review of the "Journal Surveys" is a must. Many of the listings include abstracts, which provide valuable information about the content of the essays and their relevance. Although the listings focus primarily on the productions of historians and physical educators, they occasionally extend to those in other disciplines, especially sociology. One glaring omission is in the area of sport and literature, and, as a result, not one citation for Gerald Early appeared in the run of the *Journal*. No discussion of blacks and sport could be relevant without serious treatment of Early. While extensive, the surveys are not comprehensive and must be used in conjunction with other bibliographic sources.

Another valuable service provided by the *Journal* is the review of film, media, and museums. In a 1991 review of three African American/Canadian museums in the Windsor-Detroit area, Vicky Paraschak describes the near absence of sport in all of them. She notes that museum space is a factor, but even more problematic is the lack of awareness of the significance of sport to the history of African Americans. While recognizing that sport historians have something to offer the museums and the communities they serve, she also understands the need for sport historians "to highlight the black thread in the North American cultural tapestry, a thread largely ignored at present in sport history."<sup>155</sup> This author is pleased to report that the Detroit Museum of African American History is moving to a large and modern facility and plans to have permanent and temporary exhibits on sport. As consultant to the project, this author intends to promote a qualitatively and quantitatively meaningful inclusion of sport. Moreover, what Paraschak observes in the specific can be extended to the general, and sport historians must play an active role in the affairs of these institutions. Unfortunately, Paraschak's contribution is the only one of its kind on blacks. In addition, filmography must pay far more attention to the subject.

The record on book reviews is both more substantial and revealing. Through their choices, one learns what scholars in the field see as important, and how they respond to them provides critical insights about the state of the field. Reviews can reveal the breaking of new ground, ideological biases, methodological preferences, and theoretical awareness. Moreover, a

155. *Journal of Sport History*, 18, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 300-302.

discussion of reviews of books which this author has himself read will allow for an expression of his long-held but largely unpublished views about the books. Thus, what follows is, in some respects, a review of reviews.

In a wonderfully poetic style rendering review as art, David Q. Voight, one of the deans of baseball scholarship, reviewed the first book on blacks to appear in *JSH*, K. Wagenheim's *Clemente*.<sup>156</sup> Cautioning the reader about the fluff that packed the bookshelves, in the form of hero worshipping, romanticizing, and flattering biographies, Voight places *Clemente* in a different category of the candid, realistic, and contextualized treatments stirred by Jim Brosnan and further agitated by Roger Kahn, Jim Bouton, Curt Flood, and Len Schecter. Voight credits Wagenheim, a former *Times* writer and quasi ex-patriot, with a deft touch for comparative cultural history, treating Roberto Clemente's impoverished childhood in rural Puerto Rico to the ethnic prejudice and discrimination he faced in the United States as a major league baseball star. Clemente comes through this narrative as a willing and able representative of all Latin-American major leaguers and a constant battler for the cause of equality for blacks and Latinos. Wagenheim's marriage to a Puerto Rican woman and residence in that commonwealth contributed to his sense of its history and people.<sup>157</sup>

In the same issue but in a drastically less poetic and entertaining style, John A. Lucas reviewed Anthony O. Edmonds's *Joe Louis*, the first academic book on that remarkable American hero.<sup>158</sup> As Lucas points out, Edmonds, a Ball State University historian, wants more of his subject than others have demanded. Edmonds is concerned with the image of Louis which he finds far more powerful than the man himself. Although Edmonds clearly places Louis in an important sociopolitical context, Lucas is disappointed that so little about Louis the man emerges. Nonetheless, he calls it "informative and thought-provoking sport biography."<sup>159</sup> While this author consulted Edmonds's work and found it valuable, one cannot forget that Alexander "Sandy" Young's unpublished dissertation on Louis contributed heavily to Edmonds's and this author's own understanding.<sup>160</sup>

John Behee's *Hail to the Victors! Black Athletes at the University of Michigan* is the first non-biography on blacks to have been reviewed in the *Journal*.<sup>161</sup> Published in 1974, the work, according to reviewer Guy Lewis, provides subtle answers to what seems to be an obvious question of why only 12 blacks won varsity letters up to World War II and 159 lettered from World

156. K. Wagenheim, *Clemente* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), reviewed by David Voight, 1, no. 2 (Fall 1974): 166-168.

157. Voight, 166-167.

158. Anthony O. Edmonds, *Joe Louis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973), reviewed by John A. Lucas, 1, no. 2 (Fall 1973): 168-170.

159. Lucas, 170.

160. Alexander Young, Jr., "Joe Louis, Symbol" (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland, 1968).

161. John Behee, *Hail to the Victors! Black Athletes at the University of Michigan* (Michigan: Swenck-Tuttle Press, Inc., 1974) reviewed by Guy Lewis, 2, no. 2 (Fall 1975): 199-201.

War II through the fall of 1972. Lewis does not indicate whether Behee gives authority to the athletes themselves. If he does not, his work lags behind the slave studies of the late '60s and early '70s which endowed these most oppressed victims with agency. Nor is there any indication that oral history methods were employed to evoke the voices of the athletes.<sup>162</sup> Nonetheless, the book established Behee as NASSH's leading authority on blacks and sport until David K. Wiggins overtook him in the early 1980s. Behee's important presence extends across all components of the *Journal* including "journal surveys," abstracts, and book reviews.

Much more judgmental and ideological is the review by Maxine Grace Hunter of Richard E. Lapchick's *The Politics of Race and International Sport: The Case of South Africa*. There is little question about Lapchick's opposition to apartheid, and, as an activist and protege of Denis Brutus, Lapchick does leave detachment aside. Yet, Hunter appears unduly critical of the author and far too sympathetic to South Africans who were operating behind ruses and euphemisms as disguises for real and fundamental change which only came with ANC insurgency, massive civil disobedience, and subsequent sanctions—all of which made the nation "ungovernable." She cites "tiresome" and "unfair" comparisons to Nazi Germany, limited and biased sources, and simplistic analyses among the negatives.<sup>163</sup> As if in need of more ammunition against Lapchick, Hunter in the summer of 1978 reviewed Richard Thompson's *Race and Sport*, a pamphlet-sized book on the same subject. Although dated since its publication in 1964, the work was in her words "thoughtful and unemotional." Once again, the reviewer sees unsubstantiated changes in South Africa, and the evidence does not support her characterization of liberalization of policies, including integrated teams.<sup>164</sup> She fails to define integration and the terms on which it existed. This author believes that the balance she seeks in Lapchick's work was neither possible nor desirable under the circumstances in 1975. A visa for research was denied the author and political concerns outweighed purely academic ones.

Unlike most academic journals, this one often reviews works done by non-academics who intend to reach a non-academic audience. This tendency is clearly a byproduct of the overabundance of popular works as compared to scholarly ones. Steven Riess's review of John Holway's *Voices from the Great Black Baseball Leagues* is quite common and, indeed, necessary.<sup>165</sup> Riess, one of the toughest and most astute critics, believes that this discussion of black major league baseball seeks to fill a much needed gap in

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162. Lewis, 199-201.

163. Richard Lapchick, *The Politics of Race and International Sport: The Case of South Africa* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975), reviewed by Maxine Grace Hunter, 3, no. 1 (Spring 1976): 105-108.

164. Richard Thompson, *Race as Sport* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964) reviewed by Maxine Grace Hunter, 5, no. 2 (Summer 1978): 100-102.

165. John Holway, *Voices From the Great Black Baseball Leagues* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1975), reviewed by Steven Riess, 6, no. 1 (Spring 1979): 72-74.

the literature on the sport. It complements other popular books such as Robert Peterson's *Only the Ball Was White* and William Brashler's *Bingo Long's Traveling All-Star and Motor Kings Show*, a novel which relied heavily on the real-life experiences of ball players through interviews. Riess credits Holway for getting at little known inside information about attitudes of other players toward Satchel Paige, Gibson, and James "Cool Papa" Bell. As popular works go, *Voices from The Great Black Leagues* seems to make a positive contribution to the scholarship. Some, on the other hand, do tremendous damage.

Riess's toughness and the dangers of popular studies come through in his review of Brashler's *Josh Gibson*. Riess finds in it many of the shortcomings one would expect of a non-academic—"limited understanding of black history, American history, and sport history." Moreover, he regards the work as "often inaccurate, redundant, and not insightful."<sup>166</sup> As such, Riess's comments point to one of the most serious problems that historians of sport face in the quest for respectability and acceptance. Too much of the available and accessible literature on sport comes from non-professionals. On the one hand, it is what the popular audience comes to expect and accepts as truth and on the other it is what serious scholars point to as fluff. While sport need not be mystified by metaphysical approaches and presentations, it is a subject which like any other is as important as the questions asked of it, which presumes a certain quality of mind, training, and vision capable of asking them.

Yet, the popular genre cannot or should not be easily dismissed. Whereas these works require our attention in order to correct the wrongs committed, at the same time they can be valuable sources of information and insight. One such work is *Second Wind: The Memoirs of an Opinionated Man* by Bill Russell and Taylor Branch. *Second Wind* classically renders the player who transcends sport while sensitively probing his interior spaces. Russell comes across as a multidimensional, extremely complex man—one who is the product of many environments. Racism, unfortunately, pervaded most. Reviewer Lee Lowenfish highly recommends it "for its moving evocation of the roots and the achievements of that remarkable individual"—one considered by many to be the greatest force ever in basketball and at the same time one of its most difficult and disagreeable characters.<sup>167</sup> The latter view is shaped in part by Russell's refusal to defer or accommodate.

If the popular work is ambiguous in its value, so is the general study, which also cannot be ignored for its exclusion or inclusion of information related to the subject under discussion. While space precludes an extended treatment of such works, a few examples indicate their value and drawbacks. Two such works are *Women's Tennis: A Historical Documentary of the*

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166. William Brashler, *Josh Gibson: A Life in the Negro Leaguer* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), reviewed by Steven Reiss, 6 no. 3 (Summer 1979): 68-69.

167. Bill Russell and Taylor Branch, *Second Wind: The Memoirs of an Opinionated Man* (New York: Random House, 1979), reviewed by Lee Lowenfish, 7, no. 2 (Summer 1980): 90.



*Players and Their Game* by Angela Lumpkin and *Sports in Modern America* by William J. Baker and John M. Carroll. As for the first book, reviewer Virginia Evans credits Lumpkin for introducing the American Tennis Association as a parallel institution to the all-white United States Lawn Tennis Association and for mentioning some of its star players. Unfortunately, Evans finds the discussion too shallow and brief to do the subjects service. Only the well known Althea Gibson receives in-depth coverage.<sup>168</sup> *Sports in Modern America* is a brief anthology, surveying sport through issues ranging from violence to big business to women. Perhaps no essay is as provocative as the late William W. MacDonald's "The Black Athlete in American Sports," which repeats almost every canard about "black dominance" in sport ever uttered—many of them coming from black athletes.<sup>169</sup> Even more disturbing is the nod to scientific racism in which the studies of Dr. Eleanor Metheny conducted in the 1930s are cited by MacDonald as possible evidence of "measurable differences between whites and blacks that might account for the black dominance in American sports."<sup>170</sup> Although discussing other possible factors, MacDonald's reliance on old science and ignorance of the new contributed yet more fuel to a subject which should be extinguished but might never be, as will become more evident below.

Although the next work under consideration takes on the issue of race and performance, the subject is not central to the story or terribly disruptive to it. David Halberstam's *Breaks of the Game* is, in this author's opinion, one of the best books on sport and arguably the best on basketball. It is a remarkable achievement on many counts, for Halberstam, a non-academic, has tackled a sport which few have felt merits serious treatment. The best literature on sport has been written about baseball and boxing. Each, for very different reasons, has a privileged status among intellectuals, academics, journalists, and the layperson. Baseball is characterized as uniquely American, steeped in a frontier mythology of distinctiveness. It represents American institutions and practices that often never were and never should have been. Filled with ritual and superstition, defying time and space, having action in inaction, baseball takes on mystical qualities which lend themselves to metaphysical treatments. It is the cerebral game in which anticipation often supercedes action. Boxing on the other hand is elemental, supremely masculine yet often homoerotic and homosocial, raising questions about the nature of males and answering ones about women, indirectly, through their exclusion. It is violent, sordid, glorious, and noble, appealing to our most basic instincts and/or conditioning. Basketball, by contrast, is considered a city game in a society

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168. Angela Lumpkin, *Women's Tennis: A Historical Documentary of the Players and Their Game* (Troy, NY: Whitson Publishing Co., 1981), reviewed by Virginia Evans, 9, no. 3 (Winter 1982): 76-77.

169. William W. MacDonald, "The Black Athlete in American Sports," in William J. Baker and John M. Carroll, eds., *Sports in Modern America* (Saint Louis: River City Publishers, 1981) 88-98. Reviewed by William M. Simons, *JSH*, 9, no. 3 (Winter 1982): 77-80. All of the comments on the MacDonald essay belong to this author. The review spoke in general terms.

170. MacDonald, 91.

which romanticizes the pastoral. It has no Ruth, Gehrig, Cobb, Dimaggio, or Matthewson, icons of a white athletic dominance of years gone by. Although basketball is probably far more American than baseball in its pace of play, constant action, and undeniably urban foundations, no enabling mythology has been created for or seen in it historically. Moreover, it is now a black game in numbers, superstars, culture, and symbols. Halberstam—through a tracking of a relatively unknown journeyman player, Billy Rae Bates, on a small market team, the Portland Trailblazers, during one very rough season—unlike others, finds much value and relevance in this world in which the American order is at one level turned upside down—where affirmative action applies to whites and where blacks create and perpetuate stereotypes. Reviewer Randy Roberts, who has a fondness for well written popular works, calls it “journalism at its best” and recommends it for classroom use despite the absence of footnotes and other documentation. “Nowhere is Halberstam better,” according to Roberts, “than when discussing the implications of race in basketball and America.”<sup>171</sup>

To be sure, Roberts is no stranger to “race” or good writing. His own *Papa Jack: Jack Johnson and the Era of White Hopes* is considered by many to be the finest work on Johnson and probably the most cited. Nonetheless, it is not without serious problems, one of which reviewer William H. Wiggins finds in Roberts’s “making white women the central, driving force in Johnson’s life.”<sup>172</sup> To Wiggins, freedom was the “central, driving force,” which included “the freedom to associate with whomever he chose.”<sup>173</sup> What Wiggins does not mention is that Roberts characterizes each and everyone of Johnson’s white lovers and wives as prostitutes, which comes back to the point about “interracial” love that Brenda Stevenson makes. In a generally positive review, Wiggins also criticizes Roberts’s failure to “explore Johnson’s link to a certain black culture in which boasting was a part.”<sup>174</sup> Of course, Roberts believes that Johnson deliberately broke ties with his black past, voided himself of black consciousness, and sought white prerogatives, typified by an affinity or preference for white women. Perhaps a closer and fuller examination of the black press would have shed different light. Yet, to appreciate fully how Roberts treats Johnson, one must read his earlier biography *Jack Dempsey: The Manassa Mauler*.<sup>175</sup> When this author posed the question of why had he treated Dempsey so sympathetically and Johnson so

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171. David Halberstam, *Breaks of the Game* (New York: Knopf, 1981) reviewed by Randy Roberts, *JSH*, 10, no. 3 (Winter 1983): 82. Always insightful and often forthright, Halberstam opens his work with quotes from an exchange between O. J. Simpson and Al Cowlings: “‘Fame,’ O.J. said, walking along, ‘is a vapor, popularity is an accident, and money takes wings. The only thing that endures is character.’ ‘Where’d you get that from?’ Cowlings asked, ‘Heard it one night on TV in Buffalo,’ O.J. said, ‘I was watching a late hockey game in Canadian TV and all of a sudden a guy said it. Brought me right up out of my chair. I never forgot it.’” Halberstam cites Paul Zimmerman, *Sports Illustrated*, November 26, 1979.

172. Randy Roberts, *Papa Jack: Jack Johnson and the Era of White Hopes* (New York: Free Press, 1983), reviewed by William H. Wiggins, Jr., 11, no 2 (Summer 1984): 88-91.

173. *Ibid.*

174. *Ibid.*

175. Randy Roberts, *Jack Dempsey: The Manassa Mauler* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979).

harshly, he responded unabashedly. "I liked Jack Dempsey: I did not like Jack Johnson."<sup>176</sup> The revelation is important not in so much for what it says about Roberts, but for what it signifies about scholarship generally. Although perhaps an extreme example, Roberts' admission alerts the reader to the fact that no one's scholarship is created in a vacuum devoid of formative experiences and subjective views.

Perhaps one of the two finest scholarly works read by this author on the subject of baseball is Jules Tygiel's *Baseball's Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy*.<sup>177</sup> (The other, *Playing For Keeps*, by Warren Goldstein, has almost nothing to say about blacks, except that they were excluded.)<sup>178</sup> Reviewer David K. Wiggins gives Tygiel's study high praise for its beautiful writing and contextualization, which includes a clear understanding of larger societal issues, careful consideration of personalities, and a deromanticization of institutions and individuals.<sup>179</sup> This author agrees with much of Wiggins's praise but challenges the book's major premise that racism's continued existence resulted from indifference and that the attendant publicity from Robinson's breakthrough produced the awareness necessary for meaningful change. Tygiel's most important contribution is his treatment of Robinson off the field where he used his celebrity status as an effective rostrum for integration and against discrimination. What should become clear is that no matter what one might think of Robinson or his influence, he was his own person—undeniably proud, resolute, and independent.<sup>180</sup>

Although Tygiel's work does treat the Negro Leagues, it is a book about and enamored with the "goodness" of integration. For a view from the other side of the fence. Donn Rogosin's *Invisible Men: Life in Baseball's Negro Leagues* is essential.<sup>181</sup> Whether accidental or planned, the close positioning of the review served the purpose of comparison between it and *Baseball's Great Experiment*. Although not of the same quality, *Invisible Men* is an important work, according to Don Roper, for contextualizing black baseball, presenting it as a business and parallel institution. Moreover, the work questions the motives of Branch Rickey and the results of his experiment. Although somewhat romantic in its treatment of the players, the book is less kind to some of the owners who had shady ties and few scruples.<sup>182</sup> Not

176. Conversation between Randy Roberts and Jeffrey T. Sammons.

177. Jules Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

178. Warren Goldstein, *Playing for Keeps: A History of Early Baseball* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989). Goldstein's major contribution is the attention he pays to language from which he finds sources for his interesting conclusion that baseball was work from the earliest stages of its existence and fit squarely in an American Business tradition.

179. Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, reviewed by David K. Wiggins, *JSH*, 11, no. 2 (Summer 1984): 93-95. Also see review by Jeffrey T. Sammons, *Journal of Southern History*, 50, no. 2 (May 1984): 343-344.

180. *Ibid.*, 343.

181. Donn Rogosin, *Invisible Men: Life in Baseball's Negro Leagues* (New York: Atheneum, 1983), reviewed by Don Roper, *JSH*, 11, no. 3 (Winter 1984): 113

182. Roper, 113-115.

without serious problems—no theory and careless factual errors— *Invisible Men* nevertheless set a standard for studies of black baseball that was not always followed. One such example is *The Kansas City Monarchs: Champions of Black Baseball*. David K. Wiggins finds the book very disappointing. He calls it “a cursory examination of black baseball’s most famous team,” failing to show adequately “the relationship between the Monarchs and Kansas City’s black community.” According to Wiggins, it breaks no new ground and has few insights.<sup>183</sup> This author, who had little knowledge of the Monarchs before reading the book, does find the work of value, albeit limited.

In what appears to be almost a cyclical or seasonal phenomenon, the next three books reviewed are about boxing. Two are admittedly popular and the third aspires to be academic. *Empire of Deceit* is about Harold Smith, a boxing promoter, who masterminded the scheme, which reduced the coffers of Wells Fargo Bank by \$21 million. According to Randy Roberts, it “reads like a crime thriller, yet provokes thoughts about the future of boxing.” Although aimed at a general audience, the work is, according to him, useful in classrooms.<sup>184</sup> His praise is even higher for Thomas Hauser’s *The Black Lights: Inside the World of Professional Boxing* as seen through the experiences of former champion Billy Costello distinguished by his Afro-Italo American descent.<sup>185</sup> It is yet another work highly critical of Don King, everyone’s favorite whipping doll. Despite that tired but popular obsession, the book is in Roberts’s opinion “more insightful than Liebling’s *The Sweet Science* and more broadly based than Nagler’s *James Norris and the Decline of Boxing*.” For these reasons he encourages every student of sport history and the state of contemporary sport to read it.<sup>186</sup> Although Hauser is a fine writer, having to his credit the bestselling *Missing* and more recently *Muhammad Ali: The Man and His Times*, this author does not share Roberts’s extraordinarily high regard for *The Black Lights*. Even Roberts notes that it is too ambitious, attempting to detail the modern world of professional boxing in 250 pages.<sup>187</sup> More troubling is its failure to inspire this reader, for there is nothing particularly revealing or appealing in Costello’s story.

The more scholarly work of the boxing trilogy is *Champion: Joe Louis, Black Hero in White America* by Chris Mead.<sup>188</sup> To give credit where credit is due, the work is quite an accomplishment for its modest beginnings as a Yale senior thesis. Mead, who became a lawyer, produced this work with no

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183. Janet Bruce, *The Kansas City Monarchs: Champions of Black Baseball* (Laurence: University Press of Kansas, 1985), reviewed by David K. Wiggins, *JSH*, 13, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 50-52.

184. Dean Allison and Bruce B. Henderson, *Empire of Deceit* (London: Columbus Books, 1985), reviewed by Randy Roberts, *JSH*, 13, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 161.

185. Thomas Hauser, *The Black Lights: Inside the World of Professional Boxing* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1986), reviewed by Randy Roberts, *JSH*, 13, no. 3 (Winter 1986): 272.

186. Roberts, 272.

187. *Ibid.*

188. Chris Mead, *Champion: Joe Louis, Black Hero in White America* (New York: Charles Scribner Sons, 1985), reviewed by David K. Wiggins, *JSH*, 13, no. 3 (Winter 1986): 272.

formal training but considerable guidance from his father who worked as a sportswriter and in the publishing business. Moreover, the book had to find a niche in one of the most heavily mined biographical fields. (The works on Louis are so numerous that references to them have been compiled in a book-length bibliography by Lenwood G. Davis.)<sup>189</sup> David K. Wiggins sees little to praise in the book, finding it a rehash of previously explored aspects of Louis's career, with few original conclusions and little interpretation of "the vast material he had at his disposal." Wiggins goes on to call it a "public reaction study rather than interpretive biography," which "does not treat Louis as a thinking man."<sup>190</sup> There is no doubt that the most valuable contribution of the book is in the extensive quotes, which speak for themselves.

Whether by simple coincidence or thoughtful design, the figure most associated with Joe Louis because of individual performance, location in momentous events, transcendence of sport, and assumption of mythical status. James Cleveland Owens, better known as Jesse Owens, is the subject of the very next book reviewed about a black in the *Journal*. A notoriously tough critic, Allen Guttman finds little wrong with William J. Baker's *Jesse Owens: An American Life*, largely because "Baker has overcome the problem of what to do with the humdrum decades after the great athlete's great moment."<sup>191</sup> This author agrees with Guttman on that score but less so on his more general assessment that Baker's is a fine biography. It is important and valuable but also seriously flawed by a cuteness of style and penchant for one-liners such as the reference to Joe Louis that "white Americans happily recognized him as 'a credit to his race,' which simply meant that he kept his mouth shut and his girlfriends black."<sup>192</sup> For that and other reasons, the work warrants considerably more criticism than Guttman wishes or is prepared to give. Although himself a biographer of a related figure, Avery Brundage, Guttman is, in some ways, a strange choice to review a work on Owens.<sup>193</sup> For equally, if not more, important than understanding Owens the athlete is understanding the context of his life as an African American. Neither Baker nor Guttman has particular expertise in African American history nor race relations, which reveals itself in Baker's treatment and Guttman's lack of criticism. Baker's reductionist description of the Detroit riot, which omits conditions, catalysts, and constituencies is just one example of the book's thin context.<sup>194</sup> Even on the subject of baseball and integration, Baker oversimplifies a very complex situation by stating that Robinson, Larry Doby,

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189. Lenwood G. Davis, *Joe Louis: A Bibliography of Articles, Books, Pamphlets, Records, and Archival Material* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983).

190. Wiggins, 272.

191. William J. Baker, *Jesse Owens: An American Life* (New York: Free Press, 1986), reviewed by Allen Guttman, 14, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 120.

192. *Ibid.*, 169.

193. Allen Guttman, *The Games Must Go On: Avery Brundage and the Olympic Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

194. Baker, 166-167.

Don Newcombe, Roy Campanella, and Satchel Paige represented a "trickle" that "would soon become a flood at the forefront of a new era of black-white relations in the United States."<sup>195</sup> Not only is that too big a claim for baseball players' impact outside their sport, it distorts their influence within the game, for 10 years after Robinson's breakthrough only 17 blacks played in the major leagues. Even then, numbers only tell part of the story of exclusion and marginalization. Above all, it is the patronizing, apologetic tone that proves troubling, which comes through in Baker's early broaching of the "race" issue. If the thought had to exist, it would have been better left unsaid.<sup>196</sup>

Three books which deserve some treatment, although outside of the American context, are *Sport in Africa: Essays in Social History* by William J. Baker and James A. Mangan, *Aborigines in Sport* by Colin Tatz, and *The Politics of Sport* by Lincoln Allison. *Sport in Africa*, according to the reviewer Joseph L. Arbena, looks at resistance, hegemony, and transgression models and includes an essay by Ali Mazrui.<sup>197</sup> Tatz's *Aborigines in Sport* uses a comparative approach to understanding the oppressed native peoples of Australia. Informed by works about African Americans, Tatz asserts that inclusion in some sports as gladiators and entertainers might be as racist as exclusion from others. Nonetheless, he concludes that "Aboriginal sporting success, no matter how brief or tragic, has given Aborigines more uplift, more collective pride, more Kudos than any other single activity."<sup>198</sup> It is a conclusion at direct odds with that of Richard Broome's on the same subject which assert that gains are shortterm, diversionary, and, ultimately, destructive. reinforcing the Aborigines' "basic oppression."<sup>199</sup> What emerges from the two opinions is, perhaps, a classic ideological, theoretical, and methodological debate regarding victimization. It involves concerns ranging from individual and collective psyche to pathology to internalization to saliency to materialism to resistance to hegemony. In the end, both sides ask the same question: How is success measured? (For a hyperexaggerated example of this debate, consult the works of Loic Wacquant, who, among other things, writes from the "native's" point of view.)<sup>200</sup>

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195. *Ibid.*, 168

196. *Ibid.*

197. William J. Baker and James A. Mangan, eds., *Sport in Africa: Essays in Social History* (New York: Africana Publishing Co., 1987). reviewed by Joseph L. Arbena, *JSH*, 15, no. 2 (Summer 1988): 179-181.

198. Colin Tatz, *Aborigines in Sport* (Bedford Park, South Australia: Flinders University, 1987). reviewed by Scott A.G.M Crawford, *JSH*, 15, no. 2 (Summer 1988): 181-184.

199. Richard Broome. "Professional Aboriginal Boxers in Eastern Australia. 1930-1979." *Aboriginal History*, 4, no. 1 (1980): 49-71.

200. Loic Wacquant, "A Sacred Weapon: Bodily Capital and Bodily Labor Among Professional Boxers," in Cheryl L. Cole, John Loy, and Mike A. Messner, eds., *The Making and Remaking of the Body* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993); "Pugs at Work," *The Body and Society*, 1 (Fall 1993); and "From the Natives' Point of View: How Boxers Think and Feel About Their Trade," (unpublished manuscript, December 1993). The last is a fragment from a broader study in progress on the culture and economy of boxing as a ghetto craft. Also see John Sugden, "The Exploitation of Disadvantage: The Occupational Sub-Culture of the Boxer," in J. Horne, D. Jary, and A. Tomlinson, eds., *Sport, Leisure, and Social Relation* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987) 187-209.

Unfortunately, this author has little comment on Allison's *The Politics of Sport* other than it deals with South Africa and Anglophone Africa.<sup>201</sup>

The summer 1988 issue of *The Journal of Sport History* set a record for works reviewed related to blacks. Rounding out the list are *Jackie Robinson: A Life Remembered* by Maury Allen and *Fractured Focus: Sport as a Reflection of Society* by Richard Lapchick. Neither book moved its reviewer to praise. Larry Gerlach discovers little in Allen's work of value to the academic reader.<sup>202</sup> J. Thomas Jable criticizes Lapchick for using the "overwrought 'mirror model' to show the negative impact of sport on society." Jable believes it is an attempt at counterbalancing the mythical notions of sport that goes too far with too heavy a hand.<sup>203</sup>

In the very next issue, the special one on blacks and sport, only three books on blacks were reviewed. The contrasts are remarkable, revealing the limitations and potential within the field. The first is *Pride Against Prejudice: The Biography of Larry Doby*, by Joseph Thomas Moore. Doby, already hampered as a symbol by being the second black to make the majors in the modern era and the first to play in the American League, was neither Robinson's equal as ballplayer nor personality. Although he became one of the early black major league managers, Doby never transcended sport or captured attention in ways that command a compelling story. Reviewer Anthony J. Papalas questions whether there is enough in Doby's life for a full-blown biography. His implicit answer is no.<sup>204</sup>

One of the few books on football reviewed in *JSH* is Richard Pennington's *Breaking the Ice: The Racial Integration of Southwest Conference Football*.<sup>205</sup> "A Texas journalist with an interest in sports and civil rights, Richard Pennington has written a brief but valuable book which combines both interests," writes reviewer Thomas G. Smith, himself an expert on the subject. Although pointing out that the work lacks footnotes and size, contains considerable sports jargon, and becomes preachy on the subject of black athletic superiority, Smith calls it "successful." Pennington's sense of history, writing style, and sensitivity win Smith over. Although this author has no basis on which to pass judgment on the book, he does find Smith's caution about using "desegregation" and "integration" as interchangeable terms to be quite instructive.<sup>206</sup>

If Moore's work is limited by sport, genre, and subject matter and

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201. Lincoln Allison, ed., *The Politics of Sport* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1986), reviewed by Allen Guttmann, *JSH*, 15, no. 2 (Summer 1988): 199.

202. Maury Allen, *Jackie Robinson: A Life Remembered* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1987), reviewed by Larry R. Gerlach, *JSH*, 15, no. 2 (Summer 1988): 199.

203. Richard E. Lapchick, ed. *Fractured Focus: Sport as a Reflection of Society* (Lexington, MA: D.C., Heath and Co., 1986), reviewed by J. Thomas Jable, *JSH*, 15, no. 2 (Summer 1988): 201.

204. Joseph Thomas Moore, *Pride Against Prejudice: The Biography of Larry Doby* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1988), reviewed by Anthony J. Papalas, *JSH*, 15, no. 3 (Winter 1988): 375-377.

205. Richard Pennington, *Breaking the Ice: The Racial Integration of Southern Conference Football* (Jefferson NC: Mc Farland, 1987), reviewed by Thomas G. Smith, *JSH*, 15, no. 3 (Winter 1988): 382-383.

206. Smith, 382-383.

Pennington's by a lack of scholarly conventions, then Rob Ruck's *Sandlot Seasons: Sport in Black Pittsburgh* makes a valiant effort to break out of those constraints by using "sport as a lens to look at all aspects of black life in Pittsburgh," writes reviewer William H. Wiggins, Jr. He considers Ruck "particularly good when looking at class interaction."<sup>207</sup> There is no question that Ruck must be commended for removing sport from the periphery of community studies and locating it much closer to the center as an important social, economic, cultural and, even, political institution. This author, who read the book very carefully, found much to recommend the work. Its background on Pittsburgh is excellent. Moreover, few if any have explored the black underground economy and sport as well as Ruck. His attempt to let the subjects speak for themselves is admirable. Ruck seems to ask important questions and employ useful methods that should make a great history, but, ultimately, he falls short for there is, perhaps, a failure on his part to construct a convincing larger story from the constituent parts that he has worked so hard to find and select. The work becomes bogged down in the details of sport's development and lacks the clarity and force to reveal the impact or effect of sport consonant with the claims he makes. His oral histories, for example, reveal personalities but little about socially or politically significant issues. One learns from them much more about the organizations and players but little about societal implications. Similarly, Ruck does not make a convincing case for the Garfield Eagles as an important community institution. The work is often stronger on national and systemic forces than it is on local ones. In fact one of the book's most promising discussions is about capitalization of white and black sport, linking disadvantages there to conditions and trends in the larger society. Unfortunately, the dissipation of momentum undercuts his argument that:

In the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, sport offered black Pittsburgh a cultural counterpoint to its collective lot, one that promoted internal cohesion and brought together both the Pittsburgh-born residents and the southern migrants in the context of a changing black consciousness. Moreover, sport helped the scattered black Pittsburgh community to gain a sense of itself as part of a national black community.<sup>208</sup>

Ruck takes on a very difficult assignment in trying to show the political/social significance of sandlot athletics in the formation of a black consciousness. Establishing the significance of sport at that level presents serious problems that are only compounded by his questionable premise of a single black consciousness either locally or nationally.

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207. Rob Ruck, *Sandlot Seasons: Sport in Black Pittsburgh* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), reviewed by William H. Wiggins, Jr., *JSH*, 15, no. 3 (Winter 1988): 394.

208. Ruck, 114.



Perhaps Ruck should be given more credit than this author is willing, considering the less critical opinions of far less serious and probing books. It could be the price one pays for being an academic or coming to the attention of the wrong reviewer. For whatever reason, popular writer John B. Holway has escaped the scrutiny to which others have been subjected. Ron Briley's review of *Blackball Stars: Negro League Pioneers* comments on the thinness of context but praises the interesting issues and questions the book raises. Holway, who has been on a crusade to obtain deserved recognition for black ball players, makes his case with some provocative and unanswerable questions such as whether Ty Cobb should have been called the white Oscar Charleston.<sup>209</sup> Cleverness can be very appealing.

One of the more important popular books about blacks and sport is *Necessities: Racial Barriers in American Sports* by Phillip Hoose.<sup>210</sup> Author of *Hoosiers: The Fabulous Basketball Life of Indiana*, Hoose makes no pretense of academic detachment and follows no scholarly rules of evidence: nonetheless his powers of analysis are keen and penetrating. Contrary to reviewer Adolph H. Grundman's harsh criticism that Hoose breaks no new ground and is overly negative, this reviewer finds the book refreshingly honest and hardhitting. Grundman has no patience with Hoose's engagement in the debate about the contribution of sport to racial harmony in the United States, one which he believes leads nowhere.<sup>211</sup> This author could not disagree more with that assessment, for the myth of sport as racial harmonizer is one of the most prevalent and misleading notions of our time, which requires address at every opportunity. Particularly interesting are Hoose's impressionistic findings on relations between Latin and African American baseball players, which, among other things, raises the need for comparative studies.

Not long after the publication of *Necessities* came one of the most controversial sports books in memory, *Friday Night Lights*, by H. G. Bissinger. Its exclusion from *The Journal* is odd, considering its impact and quality. Although many question Bissinger's ethics, especially those who took him into their trust and believed he betrayed them, few could deny that through the lens of football he has rendered a classic portrait of middle America. By insinuating himself into the cultural and familial life of Odessa, Texas, home of the Permian Panthers, a perennial football powerhouse, Bissinger reveals the values that drive a community, unite it, and divide it. Few issues of importance to human existence escape Bissinger's scathing judgment, including matters of race, gender, conformity, exploitation, education, and crime. And just when the reader believes that Bissinger's expose applies only to West Texas whites, he turns to Dallas and reveals a different but equally obsessive and disturbing investment of a black community in football. *Friday*

209. John B., Holway, *Blackball Stars: Negro League Pioneers* (Westport, CT: Meckler, 1988), reviewed by Ron Briley, *JSH*, 16, no. 2 (Summer 1989): 308-310.

210. Philip M. Hoose, *Necessities: Racial Barriers in American Sports* (New York: Random House, 1989), reviewed by Adolph H. Grundman, *JSH*, 17, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 101-103.

211. *Ibid.*

*Night Lights* is a must read for anyone seriously interested in the relationship between sport and society.<sup>212</sup>

Also bypassed was *Sport, Racism, and Ethnicity*, a collection of essays edited by Grant Jarvie. This wide-ranging anthology attempts to bring new insights to sport scholarship in its scope and variety, covering a broad array of topics from Asian male youth culture to England's Afro/Caribbean Soccer and rugby Union Players to African American college athletes.<sup>213</sup> One of its objectives, an admirable one, is to expand "race" as an analytic tool. The results are mixed, owing to an unclear definition of ethnicity and very uneven quality in the essays, which often do not fit together. The book does challenge assumptions about sport as trans-group harmonizer and socioeconomic mobilizer. One essay in particular stands out for criticism—"Sport and the Black Experience" by Jose and Noel Parry. It is an ambitious and well-intentioned attempt to link the plight of black athletes across national boundaries. Unfortunately, the treatment of black Americans reflects little understanding of African American history generally or the athletic experience of blacks, specifically. As such, it should be read with extreme caution and skepticism.<sup>214</sup>

Even the author's own book, *Beyond the Ring: The Role of Boxing in American Society* remained among the excluded for almost four years after its publication in 1987. That curious oversight was corrected in 1991, coinciding with appearance of the paperback edition. The fact that a "trans-Atlantic" historian Dennis Brailsford, an expert on boxing's early history, wrote the review indicated that the finding of a detached reviewer required extensive search over time and distance. The choice was fortunate, for Brailsford evenhandedly addresses the work's strengths and weaknesses. Concerned that the work does not, for the most part, go beyond "sport as reflection of society," Brailsford wishes that the author could have probed constitutional, federal, and political issues more thoroughly. References to occasional uninspired prose and inaccuracies about the British boxing scene complete Brailsford's criticisms of the book. In the end, he praises the work for filling "a gap in recent sporting history which called for attention."<sup>215</sup> Although somewhat tepid, it is a fair and reasonable assessment, falling somewhere between the extremes of reactions to the book.

A more fitting conclusion to this discussion could not have been created than that independently provided by Steven W. Pope in his review of *Fritz Pollard: Pioneer in Racial Advancement*. Although not without

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212. H.G. Bissinger, *Friday Night Lights: A Town, a Team, and a Dream* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991 [1990])

213. Grant Jarvie, ed., *Sport, Racism, and Ethnicity* (London: Falmer Press, 1990), 150-174.

241. Jose Parry and Noel Parry, "Sport and the black Experience," in Jarvie, 150-174.

215. Jeffrey T. Sammons, *Beyond the Ring: The Role of Boxing in American Society* (Urbana University of Illinois Press, 1990, 1987), reviewed by Dennis Brailsford, *Journal of Sport History*, 18, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 288-290. If there is one thing that this author wishes to correct in a work that has many things wrong, it would be the neglect of the black press. Although no one has made the comment in print, it is perhaps the book's most glaring methodological weakness.

problems, Pope's comments are revealing and ominous, considering the recent appearance of Carroll's book and the highly regarded press that published it. By design they speak not only to Carroll's scholarship, but to the larger community of scholars working in this area.<sup>216</sup> In unemotional but deeply judgmental terms, Pope writes:

Biography has been the dominant scholarly trend for historians of the African-American sporting experience. Most historians of race and sport have internalized the traditional paradigm introduced a generation ago by John Hope Franklin and August Meier which interprets the relations between races in a linear, evolutionary fashion, and showcases the contributions of important African-Americans to the national culture. Working within this tradition. John Carroll has chronicled the life of a heretofore under-recognized great African-American athlete. Carroll's story enhances our knowledge of the most successful pre-World War II black athlete and sports statesman, but unlike Rob Ruck's study of Pittsburgh black's involvement in sport as social process. Carroll's study breaks no new conceptual ground in exploring the range, diversity, and complexity of the race issue in American sport history.<sup>217</sup>

Pope's praise of Carroll for his "impressive research and cautious documentation" is quickly undermined by criticisms related to the author's failure to broach "current historical debates on memory and race." Their absence limits explication "on the dynamics of racial injustice and its significance to our limited understanding of the African American sporting experience." Pope argues.<sup>218</sup>

Pope's criticisms of the literature generally might be too severe and demanding, perhaps the product of some generational vendetta or new Ph.D. zealotness. Treated as such, remarks about Carroll's work can provide the context for appropriate assessment. First, Pope simultaneously heaps too much blame and credit on Franklin and Meier. Neither created the kind of scholarship he attributes to them nor is either's own work as narrow and constricted as Pope would have us believe. Moreover, the lumping of Franklin and Meier together is unfair. The reasons could easily be the subject of another essay and should be. Last, although biography is overused, it is not the sole or, perhaps, not even the most prevalent form employed in treating blacks and sport.

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216. John M. Carroll, *Fritz Pollard: Pioneer in Racial Advancement* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), reviewed by Steven W. Pope, *JSH*, 19, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 266-268. In actuality two other relevant book reviews appeared in *The Journal* after Pope's, *They are of Pitchin Man: Satchel Paige's Own Story* by Satchel Paige as told to Hal Lebowitz and *My Life in the Negro Leagues, An Autobiography* by Wilmer Fields. Charles Fruehling Springwood writes a very thorough review of the Paige book, a 1992 reprint of a 1948 publication. He includes other sources and makes clear that age was more than a jocular story teller. See 20, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 77-79. Far less revealing is Leslie Heaphy's review of Field's autobiography. What seems most intriguing is the reference to the author's service in the war. This reader does not remember any treatments which discuss the impact of war on the Negro Leagues. See 20, no. 1 (Spring 1993).

217. Pope, 266.

218. *Ibid.*, 268.

Nonetheless, Pope makes some very valid and instructive points that must be considered if the quality of scholarship in the field is to improve. He finds race, apropos Barbara Fields, to be analytically insufficient. He urges scholars "to think about how variously socially constructed categories have influenced the black experience." Class, gender, and color dimensions of racial inequality must be considered, according to Pope, if sport is to be understood properly "as both metaphorical activity and class drama," simultaneously revealing and obscuring the complex cultural relations among individuals and groups in American history.<sup>219</sup>

Certainly the books on blacks and sport have been overwhelmingly narrative, largely devoid of theory, rarely pathbreaking, and often behind the curve. These works have, perhaps by necessity, had to play a game of catch-up in order to establish links between sport and the larger society. They have also struggled to erase the conception of sport as fun and games and its histories as discussions of statistics, facts, and personalities. It has until recently been a field dominated by more traditional physical educators who have been removed from the mainstream and forefront of historical scholarship. Moreover, American historians are, for the most part, far less sophisticated in theory than are Europeanists. Last, books are always concerned with the marketplace. Dense analysis and theory are limited in their marketability. Although Patrick Miller's works in progress on athletics and institutions of higher education do approach the subject in many of the ways Pope suggests—one hopes that David Zang's forthcoming book on Moses Fleetwood Walker will do the same—final judgment of the field's standing can come only after an examination of articles.<sup>220</sup> They are the form of scholarly production aimed at peers and designed to advance the field.

The first two articles focusing on blacks appeared in the winter of 1976, some two years after the creation of *The Journal*. It was not an auspicious start. D. A. Kass's "The Issue of Racism and the 1936 Olympics" is, in his own words, "An attempt to evaluate the arguments that supported or opposed the United States' boycott of the Games."<sup>221</sup> As such, although Jesse Owens plays a prominent role in the essay, it is about anti-Semitism in Europe and the United States. Unfortunately, Kass does not do either racism or anti-Semitism justice. The article is largely devoid of context and makes no mention of Nazi attitudes, theories, and policies about and toward others. The conclusion is even less satisfying: "After all the dust had settled, America's decision to participate may have been the forecast of Hitler's eventual downfall when Jesse Owens, a Black American, won four gold medals,

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219. *Ibid.*, 268.

220. Patrick Miller, *The Playing Fields of American Culture: Athletics and Higher Education, 1850-1945* (tentatively titled, forthcoming, Oxford University Press) and David Zang, *Fleet Walker's Divided Heart: The Life of Baseball's 's First Black Major Leaguer* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, forthcoming). Also see Gerald Robert Gems "Sport and Culture Formation in Chicago, 1890-1940" (University of Maryland 1989). According to the abstract it seems to be a promising blend of social and sport history, along the lines of Lizabeth Cohen's *Making a New Deal* and Kathy Piess's *Cheap Amusements*.

221. D. A. Kass, "The Issue of Racism at the 1936 Olympics," 3, no. 3 (Winter 1976): 223-235.

which shattered the myth of Aryan racial supremacy.” This is myth perpetuation at its worst. It defies logic and ignores obvious evidence such as the treatment of Jewish athletes on the German and American teams and the subsequent Holocaust. Moreover, it seems totally uninformed by Richard Mandell’s *Nazi Olympics*, which, five years earlier, debunked much of the mythology surrounding the event.<sup>222</sup> For Kass to assert as he does that “Aryan Supremacy was dealt a severe blow by the Americans,” therefore proving that their attendance “was essential,” is at best naive. Moreover, the article raises serious questions about the state of the field, historical knowledge, and standards of scholarship. One wonders how the article passed peer review and/or editorial discretion. Fortunately, it would not be the last word on the subject that deserves and receives much better treatment in subsequent articles, books, and comments.

The second article, “Negro Professional Baseball Players in the Upper South in the Gilded Age,” by G. B. McKinney is a better effort. Although not very interpretive, it uses reactions of whites to black baseball players as a way of gauging heightened racism within sport and the larger society. The work also attempts to speak to the character of the men. It provides information on this little known aspect of black sport and can and should be built upon.<sup>223</sup>

Within the space of one year, *The Journal* made considerable progress as two events coincided—Jack Berryman’s editorship and the appearance of David K. Wiggins, then a graduate student in physical education at the University of Maryland. Wiggins’s “Good Times on the Old Plantation: Popular Recreations of the Black Slave in Antebellum South, 1810-1860,” marks a new standard for research, documentation, and contextualization of sport in the larger society.<sup>224</sup> Although the essay is largely narrative, its employment of a wide variety of sources outside of sport positions it within the new scholarship on slave communities. As such, it extends Blassingame, Rawick, and others who treat slaves as humans and not just victims. This author wishes, however, that Wiggins would have asked more questions of his sources and evidence. There is a tendency for him to rely on the opinions of others such as Eugene Genovese, who takes on Frederick Douglass’s interpretation of sport’s value to slaves and its use by masters. Wiggins, himself, might have tried to raise questions of both Douglass and Genovese. This author is not so sure that Douglass was not more correct than wrong in his analysis. Questions which Wiggins’s might have considered include: What role did slaves have in shaping and controlling their games? Did they use sport and amusement to get back at masters? Or were these activities less transgressive and more strategic devices for simulating, if not imitating, the dominant culture?

222. Richard Mandell, *The Nazi Olympics* (New York: Macmillan, 1971).

223. G. B. McKinney, “Negro Professional Baseball Players in the Upper South in the Gilded Age,” 3, no. 3 (Winter 1967): 273-280.

224. David K. Wiggins, “Good Times On the Old Plantation.”

Wiggins built upon that auspicious start to establish himself quickly as the foremost authority on the subject of blacks and sport and as one of the few working on the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, Wiggins found himself constantly treading in new territory, largely without guides of any sort. Thus, any assessment of Wiggins's work must take into account that he has not had the benefit of expert mentoring in his subject area or the opportunity of learning from and sharing with a large community of scholars. As a result, Wiggins has not always asked the questions that would elevate his work beyond its already high level. Considering the volume and range of his intellectual productions, why they have not been built upon by others is a mystery and a shame. Although a departure from chronology, Wiggins's body of work in *JSH* should be discussed largely without interruption. Keep in mind that what follows is not intended to be a comprehensive assessment of Wiggins's scholarship. That should and must be the task for a collection of scholars, looking at various elements in his work. This author simply intends to jumpstart the process by giving Wiggins some fraction of the attention he deserves.

In the summer of 1980, Wiggins followed and built upon his study of adult slave recreation by focusing on children, which drew heavily as did the first article from his dissertation. "The Play of Slave Children in the Plantation Communities of the Old South, 1820-1860," unlike his first article, asks many very important questions and seeks to establish that, through play, "cultural traits were preserved from one generation to the next."<sup>225</sup> Although a model to be emulated in its blend of secondary and extensive primary sources—largely the slave narratives compiled by George Rawick, characterized by problems that Wiggins understands—it does not quite support its claims. The continuity between children's play and community values seems to break down in the discussion of the play of children and of that detailing adult attitudes toward work and play. Moreover, Wiggins's conclusion that an analysis of play makes clear that adult slaves had a different attitude toward work is not convincing. Nonetheless, Wiggins opens up an important line of inquiry and raises some important points about white children and their promotion of style over winning—finding "it necessary that they achieve their desired results in a deliberately stylized way."<sup>226</sup> Ironically, a major criticism of today's black athletes is their concern with style, articulated by Woody Harrelson's character in the feature film "White Men Can't Jump," that blacks value looking good over winning.

In his next journal article, Wiggins continued a move out of the nineteenth century that began with an essay on the 1936 Olympic Games

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225. Wiggins, "The Play of Slave Children in the Plantation Communities of the Old South, 1820-1860," 7, no. 2, (Summer 1980): 21-39.

226. *Ibid.*, 33. My reading of Wiggins's essay is not necessarily shared by others, as is evident from the fact that five years later it was reprinted in Ray Hiner and Joseph P. Hawes, eds., *Growing Up in America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

published in the *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*.<sup>227</sup> “Wendell Smith, the *Pittsburgh Courier-Journal* and the Campaign to Include Blacks in Organized Baseball, 1933-1945” demonstrates Wiggins’s broad interests and considerable versatility. Wiggins argues that Smith saw important links between sport and the larger society, especially regarding civil rights. As a representative institution, baseball reflected national attitudes and practices. Without inclusion in baseball, which provided opportunities for distinguishing themselves in a highly visible and competitive environment, blacks could not expect full citizenship. It is this reader’s sense that Wiggins agrees with Smith.<sup>228</sup> Yet, baseball has unique internal dynamics that make it both more and less than Wendell Smith claims for it. Baseball is circumscribed above, and removed from the larger society. Jackie Robinson could be the National League’s Most Valuable Player and a paragon of virtue, but was not able to join country clubs in New York or Connecticut. Thus, victory and distinction there did not always transfer into other arenas. More than anything, Robinson gave blacks a heightened sense of self which they could use to press for their own rights. Moreover, the essay might have considered larger questions such as: What is integration? What are its implications? Criticisms aside, Wiggins deserves credit for putting an African American and the black press in the forefront of the struggle for integration in baseball. It is an important issue often lost in the attention to Branch Rickey.

In his next contribution to the scholarship, Wiggins returned to the nineteenth century with “Peter Jackson and the Elusive Heavyweight Championship: A Black Athlete’s Struggle Against the Color Line.”<sup>229</sup> In the process, he took on new challenges in subject (boxing) and genre (biography), with mixed results. The article attempts to answer several questions based on the fact that Jackson never fought for the heavyweight championship: “How did Jackson respond to having color-line drawn against him? Was the racial discrimination faced by Jackson any different than that endured by other black athletes during the latter half of the nineteenth century? Was Jackson treated differently in America than he was in Australia and England?” Wiggins answers these questions with varying degrees of success. Jackson is a very difficult subject, requiring extensive contextualization. Wiggins does not provide enough context. He undertakes no serious discussion of racism in Australia and England. Moreover, a rendering of the treatment of black athletes by the press, populace, and public officials is essential. One might ask whether Jackson’s treatment as a foreigner distorts the image of England as racially tolerant. Wiggins links the favorable treatment to Jackson’s class pretensions, but does not address how other blacks were treated in England.

227 Wiggins. “The 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin: The Response of America’s Black Press,” *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 54, no. 3 (September 1983): 283-292.

228. Wiggins. “Wendell Smith, the *Pittsburgh Courier-Journal* and the Campaign to Include Blacks in Organized Baseball, 1933-1945,” 10, no. 2 (Summer 1983): 5-29.

229. Wiggins. “Peter Jackson and the Elusive Heavyweight Championship: A Black Athlete’s Struggle Against the Late Nineteenth Century Color Line,” 12, no. 2 (Summer 1985). 143-168.

Although largely narrative and descriptive, the article does contribute considerably to an understanding of Jackson and his milieu. Perhaps most important, it shows Jackson as someone making his own decisions, not all of which served his best interests. Rather than blame outside forces completely for Jackson's futile quest for a shot at the title, Wiggins finds the stubborn and proud Jackson partly responsible for his fate.<sup>230</sup> Wiggins's deromanticization of his subjects became both a personal trademark and a scholarly crusade, foreshadowed in an article for *Quest*, "Clio and the Black Athlete in America: Myths, Heroes, and Realities." There, Wiggins urges scholars of sport to connect their work to larger societal issues, to see athletes as heterogeneous, to avoid hyperbole, to confront ethical questions, and to account for the "humor characteristics of black culture."<sup>231</sup>

Wiggins's standing in the field became clear in 1987 with his selection as guest editor for a special issue of *JSH* dedicated to the black athlete in sport published in winter 1988.<sup>232</sup> It also signaled a new albeit tardy appreciation for blacks and sport by the forces in NASSH. Preceding this special issue were ones on ancient sport, German sport, and Hispanic sport. Only the special issue on gender and sport came after. "The African American Athlete" contains articles by William H. Wiggins, Thomas G. Smith, Donald Spivey, and David K. Wiggins and an interview by David Zang.<sup>233</sup> Wiggins's introduction to the special issue foregrounded the study in a little known tradition—one which owed much to Edwin Henderson. From there, Wiggins traces the evolution of the field, which was largely characterized by popular, romantic, and descriptive works until the 1970s. Wiggins's knowledge of the literature is demonstrated even more conclusively in an invaluable historiographical essay, "From Plantation to Playing Field: Historical Writings on the Black Athlete in American Sport," which appeared in the *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, a source lost on most historians. In fact, Wiggins's contributions to the scholarship will not get the attention, recognition, and scrutiny they deserve until he compiles them in an anthology, which

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230. *Ibid.*

231. David K. Wiggins, "Clio and the Black Athlete in America Myths, Heroes, and Realities," *Quest*, 32, no. 2 (1980): 217-225, abstracted in *The Journal of Sport History*, 9, no 3 (Winter 1982): 55.

232. *The Journal of Sport History*, 15, no. 3 (Winter 1988).

233. William H. Wiggins, Jr., "Boxing's Sambo Twins": Thomas G. Smith, "Outside the Pale: The Exclusion of Blacks from Organized Football, 1934-1916"; Donald Spivey, "'End Jim Crow in Sports': The Protest at New York University, 1940-1941"; David K. Wiggins, "'The Future of College Athletics Is At Stake': Black Athletes and Racial Turmoil on Three Predominantly White University Campuses, 1968-1972"; and David Zang, "Calvin Hill Interview".



will position them for purposes of distribution, access, and comparison.<sup>234</sup>

Always going above and beyond the call of duty, Wiggins contributed to the special issue "'The Future of College Athletics is at Stake': Black Athletes and Racial Turmoil on Three Predominantly White University Campuses, 1968-1972." In typical Wiggins' style, the essay is detailed, meticulously documented, and intelligent. As usual Wiggins reveals little-known facts and insights about events for which most scholars have only vague and superficial understandings. Yet, there are larger questions, which Wiggins might have taken on more directly. In part, the structure of the article precludes certain interrogations. As in scientific experiments, a control seems necessary for optimal results. Thus, Wiggins, in addition to making comparisons between white schools where black athletes rebelled and black schools where they did not, a close inspection of at least one school with high levels of black student activism, coaching authoritarianism, and no athletic rebellion is necessary. Such a control might help this author resolve doubts about Wiggins's assertion that peer pressure alone led to the newfound activism of black athletes. There is no mention of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Muhammad Ali, who must have served as role models and inspirations to these athletes. Neglect of this dimension strips them of a certain autonomy and agency and ignores the possibility of personal awakenings and self-discovery. Moreover, a troubling dimension to Wiggins's work reaches clearer focus in this essay. His well-meaning desire to deromanticize his subjects leads to overreaction and misplaced blame. There is no doubt that there are always opportunists, malcontents, whiners, and shirkers in every human grouping, but to paint, in such broad strokes, black athletes as "scapegoaters" of their racist and militaristic coaches seems excessive, even if Harry Edwards agrees. Although extremely close to the subject, Edwards cannot speak for all black athletes. Unfortunately, Wiggins does not allow them to speak for themselves, which raises the issue of oral history and

234. Wiggins, "From Plantation to Playing Field: Historical Writings on the Black Athlete in American Sport," *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 57, no. 2 (June 1986): 101-116. Other research publications by Wiggins include: "Issac Murphy: Black Hero in Nineteenth Century American Sport, 1861-1896," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education*, 10 no. 1 (May 1979): 15-33; "Sport and Popular Pastimes: Shadow of the Slavequarter," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education*, 11, no. 1 (May 1980): 61-88; "Clio and Black Athlete in American Sport: Myths, Heroes, and Realities," *Quest*, 32, no. 2 (1980): 217-225; "Prized Performers, But Frequently Overlooked Students: The Involvement of Black Athletes in Intercollegiate Sports on Predominantly White University Campuses, 1890-1972," *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 62, no. 2 (June 1991): 164-177; and "The Year of Awakenings: Black Athletes, Racial Unrest, and the Civil Rights Movement of 1968," *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 9, no. 2 (August 1992). His essays in books include: "Leisure Time on the Southern Plantation: The Slaves' Respite from Constant Toil, 1810-1860," in Donald Spivey, ed., *Sport in America: New Historical Perspective* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 25-50; "Critical Events Impacting Racism in Athletes, in Brooks and Altouse, eds., *Racism in College Athletes*, 23-49; "The Notion of Double Consciousness and the Involvement of Black Athletes in American Sport," in George Eisen and David K. Wiggins, eds. *Ethnicity and Sport in North American History and Culture* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), 133-155; "Victory for Allah: Muhammed Ali, The Nation of Islam, and American Culture," in Elliot Gorn, ed. *Muhammad Ali, The People's Champ* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 1995). Wiggins has many other articles on non-African American topics. In addition to the collaboration with Eisen, he is editor of *Sport in America: From Wicked Amusement to National Obsession* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Publishers, 1994).

sources. Without them, only part of the story can emerge, a distorted one at that. This neglect of oral sources is perplexing in light of Wiggins's reliance on slave narratives in his earlier work. Perhaps more light could have been shed on Fred Milton's Vandyke as possible "racial" signifier of pride, independence, and militance. Or maybe it was simply a matter of style. Whatever, it is an important issue in need of exploration. Wiggins's last *JSH* article will be taken up below, the highly regarded and controversial, "'Great Speed But Little Stamina': The Historical Debate Over Black Athletic Superiority."

Although Wiggins is the most productive scholar in the field, one of the two finest articles belongs to Ronald A. Smith, a professor of physical education at Pennsylvania State University. In 1979, his highly contextualized, meticulously researched, clearly written, and completely convincing "The Paul Robeson-Jackie Robinson Saga and a Political Collision" set a standard that has not been surpassed in *The Journal*.<sup>235</sup> Although never cited by Martin Duberman in his biography of Robeson, Smith's treatment of the "confrontation" and its aftermath is nearly identical to that of Duberman's which came 10 years later. With the exception of some information from correspondence and a greater emphasis by Duberman on black support for Robeson, Smith's work stands up and out.<sup>236</sup> Smith demonstrates how Robeson worked for the integration of baseball, how Robinson's comments about Robeson were blown out of proportion, and how Robinson expressed regrets some years later about his testimony. There is very little to criticize in the Smith account except his failure to address the fervent anti-communism in Brooklyn and its baseball team. Historian Carl Prince, author of a forthcoming book on the Dodgers, maintains that no team was as political and none more overtly nationalistic. Branch Rickey, its general manager, set the tone from the top down. Prince recounts a story about the Dodgers brass's banning of Edward R. Murrow from the Dodgers' clubhouse, for his exposure of Senator Joseph McCarthy. In open disregard of his superior's actions, Robinson invited Murrow to be his guest. It is just another example of Robinson's fierce independence, humanism, and/or "contrarianism."<sup>237</sup>

With the exception of Wiggins's contributions, four years passed before another article on blacks appeared in *The Journal*. It was "Multifarious Hero: Joe Louis, American Society, and Race Relations During World Crisis, 1935-1945" by Dominic J. Capeci, Jr., and Martha Wilkerson, neither a sport historian.<sup>238</sup> The essay was also the first of only two articles which treated Joe

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235. Ronald A. Smith, "The Paul Robeson-Jackie Robinson Saga and a Political Collision," 6, no. 2 (Summer 1979): 5-27.

236. Martin Bauml Duberman, *Paul Robeson* (New York: Knopf, 1988). Duberman also quotes from a letter to Robinson from Robeson in which he informs Robinson that the comments attributed to him about blacks not fighting against the Soviet Union had been distorted.

237. Carl Prince, "The Brooklyn Dodgers, Team and Town," Lecture, New York University, October 20, 1994, based on forthcoming book from Oxford University Press.

238. Dominic J. Capeci, Jr., and Martha Wilkerson, "Multifarious Hero: Joe Louis, American Society and Race Relations During World Crisis, 1935-1945," 10, no. 3 (Winter 1983): 5-25.

Louis: William Wiggins' "Sambo Twins" was the other. The shortage probably occurred because most of the scholars working on Louis had published articles elsewhere, including Anthony Edmonds, Al-Tony Gilmore, and Jeffrey Sammons.<sup>239</sup> Capeci and Wilkerson's breadth of knowledge distinguishes their essay. According to David Wiggins:

Capeci and Wilkerson examine Louis's transition from race champion to national idol amidst both the Great Depression and Second World War. The study is distinguishable from many other works on the black athlete because it reveals changes that took place in Louis's career over a 10-year period of time, combines insights from various disciplinary perspectives, and clearly shows the interplay between sport and society.<sup>240</sup>

The fact of their interest in a sport figure—an interest temporarily indulged—points to the transcendent nature of Joe Louis, who so easily facilitates the link between sport and society.

Although not technically on blacks, the next article returns to the subject of the 1936 Olympics. George Eisen's "The Voices of Sanity: American Diplomatic Reports from the 1936 Berlin Olympiad" is a huge improvement over the first article on the subject in its originality, documentation, contextualization, and conclusions.<sup>241</sup> Instead of raising the same old question of whether there should have been a boycott, Eisen explores the reasons the boycott failed—Washington did nothing to help it. Eisen reveals that William E. Dodd (Ambassador), George S. Messersmith (Consul General), and Raymond H. Geist (Consul), none Jewish, were acutely aware of Hitler's intentions for the games and "as well acquainted observers, they not only perceived the underlying German rationale for organizing the Games in Berlin, but were unanimously vocal in their belief that the holding of the festival would constitute a disaster for the free world."<sup>242</sup> Other evidence supports their findings and interpretations. Interestingly, in a note to *The Journal*, William J. Baker revealed that new research found that the Olympic Village was actually a training site for the Nazi Condor Legion.<sup>243</sup>

The 1936 Olympics represents one of the few topics addressed in *The Journal* which seems to build upon itself. There is an incremental character in which essays relate and speak to one another. Stephen R. Wenn's "A Tale of

239. Anthony O. Edmonds, "The Second Louis Schmeling Fight: Sport, Symbol, and Culture," *Journal of Popular Culture*, 7 (Summer 1973): 42-50; Gilmore, "The Myth, Legend, and folklore of Joe Louis Sammons, "Boxing as a Reflection of Society: The Southern Reaction to Joe Louis."

240. Davids K. Wiggins, "From Plantation to Playing Field," 106.

241. George Eisen, "The Voices of Sanity: American Diplomatic Reports from 1936 Berlin Olympiad," 11, no. 3 (Winter 1984): 56-78.

242. *Ibid.*, 57.

243. William J. Baker, "New Light on the Nazi Olympics," *Journal of Sport History*, 8, no. 2 (Summer 1981): 120. Baker also told the story of a German wrestler with communist sympathies who intended to embarrass the Nazis after winning a medal: unfortunately he did neither at the time, but later died for his beliefs revealing: "At the back side of Hitler's public orchestrations were shadows dark and deep wherein fascist ambition bore ill for Germans such as Werner Seelenbinder as well as for the rest of the world."

Two Diplomats: George S. Messersmith and Charles H. Sherril on Proposed Participation in the 1936 Olympics" won the NASSH best graduate student essay contest and extends Eisen by exposing the contending forces in the United States diplomat corps with regard to Germany. Wenn's essay was later built upon by Wendy Gray and Robert Knight Barney in "Devotion to Whom? German American Loyalty on the Issue of Participation in the 1936 Olympic Games." David Wiggins also contributed to the literature, but in another journal. His article, "The 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin: The Response of America's Black Press," raised two major questions. They were: "What was the position of the black press relative to the proposed boycott of the Games? What effect did the success of the black athletes have on the black community?" The black press supported participation and gained heightened racial pride and more white awareness of racial discrimination, according to Wiggins.<sup>244</sup> Of course, John Hoberman, Allen Guttmann, and William Baker all address the Olympics in book form.<sup>245</sup>

The only other topic in which there is obvious interaction is Jackie Robinson. William Simons' "Jackie Robinson and the American Mind: Journalistic Perceptions of the Reintegration of Baseball" is representative of what an article should strive for.<sup>246</sup> It analyzes the works of others and contributes in a concise and focused way to the understanding and explication of a subject. Simons recognizes the valuable contributions of Roger Kahn and Jules Tygiel, but also their limitations: "Kahn's vantage point is the individual and personal sensibilities, public events and their societal consequences form Tygiel's point of reference," Simons argues.<sup>247</sup> He goes on to point out that "important phenomena defy definitive treatment" with new questions and alternate approaches emerging. He asks, by way of example, what "did the controversy surrounding Robinson reveal about ideology, assumptions, values, and perceptions of that era?" Simons cites Al-Tony Gilmore's and Richard Crepeau's examination of press images.<sup>248</sup> He also praises Wiggins's piece on Wendell Smith and criticizes William Kell's "brief and disappointing piece" on the press and Robinson and sees lots of promise in Bill Weaver's examination of the black press coverage of baseball,

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244. David K. Wiggins, "The 1936 Olympic Gamer in Berlin: The Response of America's Black Press," *Research Quarterly Exercise and Sport*, 54, no. 3 (September 1983): 278-292, abstracted by John Neville, *Journal Sport History*, 12, no. 3 (Winter 1985): 289; Stephen R. Wenn, "A Tale of Two Diplomats: George S. Messersmith and Charles H. Sherrill on Proposed Participation in the 1936 Olympics," 16, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 27-43; Wendy Gray and Robert Knight Barney, "Devotion to Whom?: German-American Loyalty on the Issue of Participation in the 1936 Olympic Games," 17, no. 2 (Summer 1990): 214-231.

245. John Hoberman, *The Olympic Crisis: Sport, Politics and the Moral Order* (New Rochelle: Aristide O. Caratzas, 1986); Guttmann, *The Games Must Go On*; and Baker, *Jesse Owens*. The reviewer of Hoberman's book, Hugh Murray, concludes that participation was the right thing because the Olympics were really Olympic and not the Nazi Olympics. Regressions are uncontrollable. See *Journal of Sport History*, 16, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 104-108.

246. William Simons, "Jackie Robinson and the American Mind: Journalistic Perceptions of the Reintegration of Baseball," 12, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 39-64.

247. Roger Kahn, *The Boys of Summer* (New York, 1971); Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*.

248. Gilmore, *Bad Nigger*; Richard Crepeau, *Baseball: America's Diamond Mind* (Orlando: University Presses of Florida, 1980).

which does not exhaust the subject.<sup>249</sup> Simons focuses on media attention to the signing of Robinson by the Dodgers and hopes to show that the tenets of Myrdal's American creed significantly shaped contemporary press coverage of the reintegration of baseball. In the end, this reader is not convinced that Simons's ambitious effort to bring new insights completely succeeds.

The discussion of Robinson ends with Jack E. Davis's "Baseball's Reluctant Challenge: Desegregating Major League Spring Training Sites, 1961-1964."<sup>250</sup> Davis, at the time, a graduate student in American Civilization at Brandeis, provides much valuable information but does not advance the subject as far as one would expect. He shows the limited impact of baseball integration on larger society. Specifically, the "white power structure" of the South does not follow baseball's example and continues to apply segregation to seating, housing, and eating. But Davis does not completely absolve baseball teams of responsibility for the problem. Neither does Davis make the mistake of treating the South as monolithic. Some cities openly competed for the Dodgers for economic reasons. Moreover, fans seemed receptive when leadership often did not. Davis also explores the ambiguity of integration and the compromises it necessitated. The account of the civil rights activists who profited from segregated housing arrangements demonstrates the dilemma. In large part, the breaking down of discrimination is locally initiated and directed by blacks independently of the NAACP. In this drama, the players themselves were reluctant to act collectively and/or openly.<sup>251</sup> This reader hoped for but did not get an analysis of integration and what it does to black institutions, community life, and state of mind.

Overshadowed and overwhelmed by the attention to baseball, football has not been accorded a high place in *JSH* literature. Thomas G. Smith, historian at Nichols State, has been the prime mover in the quest for its elevation. In his first article, "Civil Rights on the Gridiron: The Kennedy Administration and the Desegregation of the Washington Redskins," Smith uses the Kennedy administration's actions against the "Redskins" to examine the deep divisions in American society over the struggle for black equality and to facilitate insights into the New Frontier's Civil Rights programs. Smith sets the historical context by explaining why football, once integrated, became all white from 1933 to 1946. He sees the policies of baseball and the Depression as key reasons. He credits changing attitudes after World War II and black pressure for the reopening in 1946. Smith puts Washington, D.C., in context of times and region, a pre-civil rights Southern city. The article is smart in looking at the administration's motivations. Symbolism played an important part in Kennedy's civil rights strategy and Washington football

249. Wiggins, "Wendell Smith," ; William Kelley, "Jackie Robinson and the Press," *Journalism Quarterly*, 53 (Spring 1976): 137-139; Bill L. Weaver, "The Black Press and the Assault on Professional Baseball's Color Line," October 1945-April 1947," *Phylon*, 40 (Winter 1979): 303-317.

250. Jack E. Davis, "Baseball's Reluctant Challenge: Desegregating Major League Spring Training Sites, 1961-1964," 19, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 144-162.

251. *Ibid.*

was a highly embarrassing, visible, circumscribed, and vulnerable soft option for attack. Smith concludes from this that the action against the national capital's team "was more than a political ploy and civil rights tokenism" but an important step in a long-term strategy.<sup>252</sup> Yet, another question could be asked: "Why could such vigorous action be taken in that arena and so little in others such as housing?" This is to say nothing of all the ironies embedded in a racist team, based in the nation's capital, identified by the even then-offensive name, Redskins.

Smith's next effort on the subject, "Outside the Pale: The Exclusion of Blacks from the National Football League, 1934-1946," is less successful. Rehashing much of the context of the earlier article, it is largely descriptive and linear with statistics and descriptions of play dominating the essay. Smith does not draw many conclusions of his own and allows statements of others to go without analysis or mediation. The essay does provide useful information on players who never got the breaks or recognition they deserved.<sup>253</sup>

Between Smith's two articles came Ronald Marcello's, "The Integration of Intercollegiate Athletes in Texas: North Texas State College as a Test Case. 1956." Largely descriptive, the essay asks one question: "Did the integration of sport reduce prejudice and discrimination at North Texas State College?" Marcello's answer is "probably yes insofar as it significantly affected the success of the team." He reaches this conclusion despite his own understanding that team success did not demand interaction beyond the playing field.<sup>254</sup>

In his first and only essay in *JSH*, an invited one, Donald Spivey clearly outshines the field. His "'End Jim Crow in Sports': The Protest at New York University" (1988) is the second of the two best articles on blacks and sport to appear in *JSH*, sharing the honor with the aforementioned Ronald Smith piece.<sup>255</sup>

Spivey brings all of his considerable historical skills and instincts to elevate an important chapter in racism which lacks the national and popular drama associated with the likes of Louis, Owens, Robinson, and Robeson. He accomplishes his objective through a clear and entertaining style, a considerable knowledge base, a judicious use of sources, and a precise interrogation of his material. Finding a racial analysis to be insufficient, Spivey recognizes "the importance of social stratification and class as determinants of an individual's or a group's social philosophy and political and policy formulations."<sup>256</sup> Through this story of student protest against the "gentleman's

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252. Thomas G. Smith, "Civil Rights on the Gridiron: The Kennedy Administration and the Desegregation of the Washington Redskins," 14, no. 2 (Summer 1987): 189-208.

253. Smith, "Outside the Pale: The Exclusion of Blacks from the National Football League, 1934-1916," 15, no. 3 (Winter 1988): 255-281.

254. Ronald E. Marcello, "The Integration or Intercollegiate Athletics in Texas: North Texas State College as a Test Case, 1956," 14, no. 3 (Winter 1987): 286-316.

255. Spivey, "'End Jim Crow in Sports.'"

256. *Ibid.*, 286-287.

agreement" in which northern schools with black players would agree to hold them out of competition with southern schools, Spivey finds much larger meaning and consequences. He asserts that the reaction to one athlete's plight, that of Leonard Bates, signaled the civil rights movement.<sup>257</sup> It is a risky claim, but Spivey's deft intersecting of football, campus protest politics, and larger societal structures and conditions makes it credible.<sup>258</sup>

Last in the treatments of football is David Zang's important and revealing interview of Calvin Hill.<sup>259</sup> As a product of preparatory school and Yale University, Hill raises questions in Zang's mind about his appropriateness as a representative black athlete. But Zang backs off, realizing that such thinking assumes some sort of black authenticity. What becomes clear from the interview is that Hill is a product of a certain kind of moral and striving black outlook. Zang also recognizes that structural forces only tell part of the story of a person's or a group's development. In fact the guiding forces in Hill's life were very personal—his father, Martin Luther King, Jr., and William Sloan Coffin. The interview is a marvelous document about black student life at Riverdale School and Yale University. It shows the successful student-athlete caught between athletic codes of behavior, peer expectations, and a community in turmoil. Black students even wanted to make an issue of the coach's decision to switch Hill from quarterback to linebacker and fullback. They understood the significance of the quarterback as leader and the trend toward positionality or exclusion of blacks from those positions. Hill's narrative opens up an important window into sixties' campus life, in which black students compartmentalized their different interests and identities ranging from protests to fraternities. Yet, there are questions that the interview never really explores satisfactorily. What was Hill's football experience at Yale really like? The same can be asked of his career with the Cowboys. There are only hints about the authoritarian atmosphere that Tom Landry, a staunch supporter of Jesse Helms, presided over. Moreover, Hill's statements about the prophetic accuracy of the "Moynihan Report" are very problematic. Most troubling, however, is the section of Zang's introduction in which he describes Hill's views on a genetically-based black athletic superiority. It is very misleading, for Hill's then-current assessment of the phenomenon cites only environmental factors related to role models, opportunities, and racism.<sup>260</sup> One can only hope that this raw material on Hill will find further use in an interpretive and elaborated framework.

Although outside of the African American context, Brian Stoddart's important work, "Cricket, Social Foundation and Cultural Continuity in Barbados: A Preliminary Ethnohistory," deserves attention. Stoddart, by immersing himself in Barbadian cricket culture, hopes to analyze cricket's

257. *Ibid.*, 303

258. For another view on the subject, see Patrick Miller. "Harvard and the Color Line: The Case of Lucien Alexis," *Sport in Massachusetts: Historical Essays* (Westfield, MA: 1992).

259. David Zang, "Calvin Hill Interview," 15, no. 3 (Winter 1988): 334-355.

260. *Ibid.*

meaning for the people of that small island. Stoddart finds cricket to be a complex and ambiguous element in Barbadian life both enabling and disabling in its effects on class, nationalism, community, and "race."<sup>261</sup> Unfortunately, any scholar who takes up the subject of cricket must face comparison to James. In that respect, Stoddart's work only shows how far ahead of his time James was.

Even further afield from African Americans in time and place but so relevant in other respects is Scott T. Carroll's "Wrestling in Ancient Nubia."<sup>262</sup> No article in *JSH* has disturbed this author more than it, largely because definitive refutation requires appropriate linguistic skills. Nonetheless, the essay just does not ring true. First, Carroll seems influenced by standard assumptions on race, which makes the Egyptians something radically different from their black neighbors to the south. On top of its ahistoricity, it applies anachronistically racial language. His translation of one hieroglyph, for example, reads: "Woe to you, O Negro enemy! I will make you take a helpless fall in the presence of the Pharaoh." It is followed by references equating "kinky-haired" with the name "Negro."<sup>263</sup> One can infer from these characterizations that the Egyptians not only saw themselves as different but also superior on the basis of "race." According to Ivan Hannaford, Howard University classicist Frank M. Snowden, Jr. concludes, from painstaking study of the historical evidence, that racism is a very modern concept and even the Greeks and Romans "did not link skin color and other physical and physiognomical traits to assessments of a man's worth."<sup>264</sup> Carroll provides no evidence to prove that the Egyptians did as he seems to imply or leads one to infer. Moreover, power relations receive little attention in his rendering.

Before returning to "race," the issue which opened this essay, a discussion of gender, especially black women, must take place. The only *JSH* essay that focuses on athletics and black females is Gwendolyn Captain's "Enter Ladies and Gentleman of Color." The criticisms of this author notwithstanding, it is an important contribution, which Roberta Park makes clear in her fine introduction to the special issue on gender.<sup>265</sup> The essay's placement in a comparative context suggests new and important ways of viewing, considering, and integrating black women into the mainstream of sport scholarship. It is an essay which answers the question of whether black attitudes toward sport, exercise, and recreation mirrored those values pervading American thought. In examining the aspirations and achievements of men and women

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261. Brian Stoddart, "Cricket, Social Foundation and Cultural Continuity in Barbados: A Preliminary Ethnohistory," 14, no. 3 (Winter 1987): 317-340.

262. Scott T. Carroll, "Wrestling in Ancient Nubia," 15, no. 2 (Summer 1988): 121-137.

263. *Ibid.*

264. Ivan Hannaford, "The Idiocy of the Race," *The Wilson Quarterly*, 28, no. 2 (Spring 1994): 8-35. In addition, see Frank M. Snowden, Jr., *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience* and The Menil Foundation's *Image of the Black in Western Art*.

265. Roberta Park, ed., *JSH*, 18, no. 1 (Spring 1991): Gwendolyn Captain, "Enter Ladies and Gentlemen of Color," 18, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 81-102.



who saw themselves as leaders of an emerging middle-class African community, Captain's answer is largely affirmative. As Park notes:

Deeply disappointed by the failed promises of Reconstruction, Black Americans were forced to establish their own churches, businesses, colleges, Y.M.C.A.'s and sporting organizations. For the most part, these replicated—to the extent possible—those of the dominant society. Whereas white women were obliged to struggle for educational, social, and political emancipation, black women were faced with the double burden of struggling for both their sex and their race. Black men were confronted by the burden of being deemed “inferior” in a culture which placed extreme importance on male superiority. In sport they faced a particular paradox. If they excelled athletically (a salient Victorian value), they were seen as a threat. Moreover, their successes could be—and frequently were—diminished by attributing these to “baser, less-evolved” nature.<sup>266</sup>

Park's comments expose some of the strengths and weaknesses of Captain's scholarship. First, the expansive conceptualization allows for considerable breadth of treatment, but limited depth. Second, the notion of replication suggests that blacks were imitative and not creative in erecting parallel institutions. Such a premise does not allow for willful and intentional adaptations to a certain aesthetic or cultural style based on regional, class, and gender preferences. Third, more recent scholarship has raised questions about an exclusive double burden borne by black women. As gender studies become more concerned with masculinity, the black male is being considered as a creature defined by “race” and sex simultaneously.

### Recent Contributions

Captain's contribution is an important step in the right direction toward defining and developing a field, evidenced by references to her work by others. Susan Cahn's *Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Women's Sport* builds upon and extends Captain by focusing on the treatment and images of black women athletes within and without their communities.<sup>267</sup> Cindy Gissendanner (nee Himes) has also learned from and expanded upon some of the same information in her “African American Women and Competitive Sport, 1920-1960.”<sup>268</sup> Gissendanner, has also been a pioneer in her own right, especially in the treatment of black women physical educators. Her much anticipated book on women and sport will certainly

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266. *Ibid.*, 87.

267. Susan K. Cahn, *Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Women's Sport* (New York: The Free Press, 1994).

268. Cindy Gissendanner, “African American Women and Competitive Sport, 1920-1960,” in Susan Birrell and Cheryl Cole, eds., *Women, Sport and Culture* (Champaign: Human Kinetics Publishers, 1993): 81-92.

advance the scholarship. Only one male, Michael B. Davis, appears to have contributed significantly to the subject. His *Black American Women in Olympic Track and Field* is cited by Cahn.<sup>269</sup> In the vanguard of this new and small movement is Yevonne R. Smith. Discussed above as one of the promising African American scholars, Smith has produced exciting, holistic, and inclusive scholarship by intersecting feminist, gender, race, class, and sociological theory and personal experience. Finding evidence in the observations of Carole Oglesby and Susan Birrell, among others, Smith argues that race has been neglected by sport studies scholars or misrepresented and distorted. This situation has led her on a heartfelt and mind-driven mission to correct these oversights and inaccuracies. In her valuable 1992 article "Women of Color in Society and Sport," Smith surveys the scholarship on women of color, mostly black, in and out of sport being careful to establish linkage between the two domains.<sup>270</sup> In a comprehensive review of the literature, she concludes that:

Only by breaking the silence and beginning discourse and critical analyses at the intersections of gender, race, and class can contraindications and misrepresentations be exposed. This will give validity, meaning, and comprehensive understanding to what it means to be both a woman and a person of color in American society and sport.<sup>271</sup>

What impresses this author even more than the substantive qualities of Smith's work is the methodology. Although she is somewhat behind in the latest scholarship on Sojourner Truth and relies too heavily on bell hooks, Smith is representative of a sea change in the quality of scholarship in physical education. In large part, the advance seems closely related to progressive women scholars who are much more theory-oriented than their male counterparts. Moreover, they have left sport historians, who remain wedded to the narrative and descriptive and social and political, behind as well. A quick review of *Quest* should convince the staunchest skeptic that physical educators, particularly women, cannot be ignored or written off as marginal academics. Three titles suggest the thrust: Alison Dewar's, "Would All the Generic Women in Sport Please Stand Up? Challenges Facing Feminist Sport Sociology"; Nancy Theberge's, "Reflections on the Body in the Sociology of Sport"; and Pat Griffin's, "Changing the Game: Homophobia, Sexism, and Lesbians in Sport."<sup>272</sup> An obvious reason for the advance is that many female scholars recognize the oppressive features of traditional subjects and approaches and are discussing new topics in more adventurous ways that require methodological, ideological, and theoretical

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269. Michael B. Davis, *Black American Women in Olympic Track and Field* (Jefferson, N.C.: Macfarland and Co., 1992).

270. Yevonne R. Smith, "Women of Color in Society and Sport," *Quest*, 44 (Summer 1992): 228-250.

271. *Ibid.*, 250.

272. Alison Dewar, "Would All the Generic Women in Sport Please Stand Up? Challenges Facing Feminist Sport Sociology," *Quest*, 45 (1993): 211-229; Nancy Theberge, "Reflections on the Body in the Sociology of Sport," *Quest*, 43 (1991): 123-134; and Pat Griffin, "Changing the Game: Homophobia, Sexism, and Lesbians in Sport," *Quest*, 44 (1992): 221-265.

departures from the old. Structural factors also play a part, namely, the interdisciplinary organization of physical education departments—composed of research scientists, anthropologists, philosophers, kinesiologists, sociologists, etc.—which has produced an incredible atmosphere for cross fertilization. Historians suffer from isolation and elitism—the one unproductive and the other unwarranted. Both must be overcome if the discipline in or out of sport is to be taken seriously. Now this is not an argument for the willy-nilly adoption of that which is trendy, for there is much to be questioned in the new directions and outputs. Nonetheless, without reading and studying the new and different, revitalization and growth cannot occur.

### Return to Race

On August 14, 1990, John M. Hoberman, linguist and leading sport scholar, addressed the American Psychological Association in Boston, Massachusetts, about race and performance. His comments focused on the feeble attempt by NBC News to explore the subject reasonably in its “open” forum—“Black Athletes—Fact and Fiction.”<sup>273</sup> Hoberman called it a “flawed and inherently problematic attempt to address purported racial differences for the benefit of a predominantly white American audience.” Nothing disturbed Hoberman more than the failure of the producers and/or its host, network star Tom Brokaw, to put the issue in historical context. Its avoidance of centuries of anthropological discourse on race; its “specimenizing”, “fetishizing”, and “aestheticizing” of the black body and black athletes; and its conclusion that “blacks do appear to have a genetic edge”; all led Hoberman to render this harsh verdict on the show:

The appeal of presenting inconclusive biological data as a form of tabloid science to a mass audience proved to be too strong. The alternative to racial biology would have been confronting a white audience with its own racial obsessions. So the public was offered yet another examination of the black body rather than an examination of white fantasies about black bodies. Ignorant of its antecedents, this program was condemned to a corresponding ignorance of its own motivations. In the process, the producers forfeited a rare opportunity to engage an enormous audience in a self-reflective examination of its own racial fantasies.<sup>274</sup>

The proverbial cat was out of the bag again and Hoberman would be joined independently by David K. Wiggins—who had anticipated the need in advance of the Brokaw show—in an effort to explain and contain. In “‘Great Speed But Little Stamina’: The Historical Debate Over Black Athletic Superiority,” his best work to date, Wiggins demonstrates superior research skills, a remarkable work ethic, and a considerable analytic ability.<sup>275</sup> Although the essay covers

273. John Hoberman, “‘Black Athletes—Fact and Fiction’: A Racist Documentary?” (Unpublished lecture, American Psychological Association, Boston, August 14, 1990).

274. *Ibid.* For a fuller discussion of this history of racial science and sport, see Hoberman’s *Mortal Engines: The Science of Performance and the Dehumanization of Sport* (New York: The Free Press 1992).

275. David K. Wiggins, “‘Great Speed but Little Stamina’: The Historical Debate Over Black Athletic Superiority,” *JSH*, 16, no. 2 (Summer 1989).

some old ground, it more than compensates by combining it with new and little known information in a clear, detailed, and unemotional style. Wiggins reveals the political, scientific, and ideological bases for the many theories, suppositions, and observations about race. Perhaps most important, he contextualizes the physical against its putative opposite, the mental, in establishing the perceived links between physical characteristic, athletic performance, and intelligence. Moreover, his introduction of the outstanding African American physical anthropologist W. Montague Cobb to the sport history literature suggests a subject for future detailed study. Cobb conducted studies and produced results which refuted prior and extant claims that "race" determined athletic success. Yet, Cobb could not solve the issue, even among African Americans, for as Wiggins points out they too have been responsible for the perpetuation of myths about race and athletic superiority. The debate in the long run is not about fact and science but control and dominance. It is a point which Wiggins understands entirely. Yet, in the end, he undermines a remarkable piece of scholarship with a confusing and confused conclusion that tips the balance of power in favor of "racial" science. To avoid the appearance of distortion, it follows in full:

The continued overrepresentation of black athletes in particular sports will certainly continue to draw attention from academicians and various other people in society. Let us trust that these people will not treat black athletes as though a stereotype were sufficient and as though the individual could be ignored. This would only contribute to a continued escape from the consideration of the effect of social and economic inequities upon black sport participation and insistence on attributing the outstanding performances of black athletes to inherent racial differences. The spirit of science necessitates, however, that academicians continue their research to determine if the success of black athletes is somehow the consequence of racially distinctive chromosomes. The worst thing to happen would be for researchers to refrain from examining the possible physical differences between black and white athletes for fear that they would be transgressing an established political line or be labeled a racist. Like all areas of research, the topic of black athletic superiority needs to be examined from a broad perspective and not from a preconceived and narrowly focused vantage point. If the truth is to be known about outstanding black athletic performance scholars need to investigate the topic from a bio-social perspective while at once recognizing the inequities in our pluralistic society and acknowledging that the overrepresentation of black athletes in certain sports had its counterpart among white athletes who excelled in their own activities without fear of being branded as genetic freaks.<sup>276</sup>

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276. Wiggins, "'Great Speed.'" 185.

Without belaboring the issue, one all too familiar now, “science” has been and remains a major villain in the problem. Accorded a privileged place because of its relationship to “provable” and tangible “facts” discovered through “rigorous” experimentation conducted by “objective” and “brilliant” operatives, science is most difficult to undo. Moreover, John Hoberman asserts that far from the best scientists are working in this field, for the real action is in the Human Genome Project. Whatever its objective, the search for athletic genes does not seem to be a priority. (There is, however, a Human Diversity Genome Project, which has a decidedly racial and highly suspect agenda.) Even those who accept race as a biological fact believe that “race accounts for only a miniscule .012 percent difference in our genetic material,” writes Paul Hoffman.<sup>277</sup> All told, questions about the spirit of science, the science of science, and the fact of racial difference suggest that the search for distinct racial chromosomes related to athleticism is likely to be futile and, in the end, counterproductive. Recent studies in medicine have demonstrated just how dangerous race-based science can be. Instead of assuming human similarity, medicine has often based therapies or a lack of them on sexualized and racialized presumptions. As a result, black people and women, for example, have been undertreated for heart disease, because of perceived low risk. Similarly, the insidious bugbear of genetically/racially based intelligence has reared its ugly head in *The Bell Curve* by the late Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray, author of the Reaganite bible, *Losing Ground*. Now social policy might be based on heritability. Likewise, this author believes that only bad things can come from research into “racially” based sport performance. Let us call off the search and get about the business of addressing those things that will make a difference—namely identifying and attacking biases based on perceived difference.

Although sport historians have given discrimination impressionistic and empirical treatment, few have systematically explored the subject. For the most part, historians have left a wide opening for social scientists who pride themselves in approaching the issues “ahistorically.” Yet, these “ahistorical” findings often wend their way into historical scholarship without the least concern for or understanding of methodological quality. This is a prescription for disaster. Lawrence Kahn’s “Discrimination in Professional Sports: A Survey of the Literature” is an extremely valuable summary and evaluation of the field.<sup>278</sup> It provides an excellent bibliography, which includes works on employer, consumer, hiring, wage, endorsement, pre-labor market, and positional discrimination. Kahn points out problems from the outset, even in terms of defining discrimination. Whereas the standard definition is “unequal treatment of equally qualified workers,” others have proposed an alternative definition, which deals with hiring discrimination: “the setting of unequal

277. Paul Hoffman, “The Science of Race,” *Discover*, 15, no. 11 (November 1994): 4.

278. Lawrence M. Kahn, “Discrimination in Professional Sports: A Survey of the Literature,” *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 44, no. 3 (April 1991): 395-418.

standards in allocating job opportunities or pay levels.”<sup>279</sup>

Beyond that, Kahn points to the contradictory findings of many of the researchers on racial discrimination. He concludes that methodology is behind the differing conclusions.<sup>280</sup> Thus, without being able to analyze the methods, historians, in large, are beholden to others for the answers to the quality of methodology and research. Most striking in these articles is the complexity of the methodology, especially that of the economists. The instruments, variables, samples, controls, and statistical applications exceed this author’s reach, let alone grasp.

What is clear and comprehensible is the use to which these studies are put and the need for textured, nuanced analyses, which take into account intangible factors and important contexts that cold calculations cannot measure or account for. As for the former, these studies are not confined to sport, instead sport is seen as an ideal laboratory in which the measured performance lessens the chances for hiding discriminatory practices under the guise of equal pay or equal opportunity based on nebulous productivity standards, which were heretofore handled by using inaccurate wage regression variables such as education and experience as proxies for productivity. Yet, even in sport not all productivity is measured, and unmeasured productivity will have some effect on results. Nevertheless, scholars believe that studies on sport can confirm, revise, and, even, refute studies on discrimination in the larger society.<sup>281</sup>

Some of the findings which might carry over, according to Kahn, concern consumer discrimination. The racial attitudes of consumers in sport might be relevant to contact between producers and consumers in the areas of law, medicine, and a variety of other services.<sup>282</sup> As for the much-studied positional segregation or stacking, it is suggestive of the persistence of racial stereotypes or unequal access to training facilities. The presence of retention barriers confronting blacks in sport is consistent with the reasons for high employment mortality within the larger arena.

In the end, Kahn calls for more research on consumer discrimination and his call has been answered by at least two studies on attendance and team racial composition with conflicting results. Also since the appearance of his article, another addressed baseball card values and racial preferences. Kahn would like to see more on football, which does not have the performance measurements of other sports, but that problem is counterbalanced to some extent by the absence of free agency until recently. Coworker discrimination is also undertreated as is gender discrimination. The latter could be explored more fully through tennis which also provides an international perspective. Post-playing career employment opportunities in sport demand fuller

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219. *Ibid.*

280. *Ibid.*, 416.

281. *Ibid.*

282. *Ibid.*, 415.

exploration as well. Last, Kahn suggests a look at collective bargaining and discrimination.<sup>283</sup> One area that seems profitable and in need of far more study involves comparisons between the treatment of whites, blacks, and Hispanics.

By focusing on the most recent articles available, the following will address some of the problems and possibilities this research presents. The first and seemingly least problematic is the novel study of economists Clark Nardinelli and Curtis Simon on "Customer Racial Discrimination In The Market For Memorabilia: The Case Of Baseball."<sup>284</sup> Nardinelli and Simon approach their study with some basic assumptions. One is that discrimination is more likely to be found among consumers than at the level of employer or co-worker, for in competitive labor markets discrimination is highly unlikely to persist. Moreover, they argue that increased mobility of workers is likely to make co-worker discrimination disappear in the long run. Thus, they suspect that a more likely source of wage discrimination is consumer prejudice. Recognizing that consumer discrimination can reduce productivity, there is a problem determining whether differential productivity is the effect of discrimination or of differential ability. The authors believe that detailed performance data permit the separation of consumer discrimination from ability. To be sure, consumer discrimination exists and probably plays a larger role than has been accorded it heretofore, but the discounting of employer and co-worker discrimination seems suspect. Nardinelli and Simon then extend their conclusion that consumer discrimination exists in the market for baseball cards to the general problem of consumer discrimination, believing sport is part of the entertainment industry and that card collectors represent a better informed consumer than the average. Yet, their most significant finding concerns the lack of personal contact, arguing that "race enters only as a picture on a piece of cardboard, and should, therefore, have minimal effect."<sup>285</sup> That inference combined with the assumption that previous studies are accurate lead Nardinelli and Simon to conclude that the absence of personal contact should have reduced the potential for consumer discrimination. They find that lack of contact did not.

While unable to evaluate their methods or results on their terms, this author cannot accept the assertion that "race is only a picture on a piece of cardboard," for it seems to underestimate the symbolic value of the card and its representational meaning while removing it from a host of important cultural signifiers. The card is not valued in the absence of a cultural context or an historical one. With the increasing importance of media in shaping modern views and opinions, personal contact is far less important than it might once have been. One need only see and read about Rickey Henderson or Reggie Jackson to understand how media messages substitute in powerful ways for

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283. *Ibid.*, 416.

284. Clark Nardinelli and Curtis Simon, "Customer Racial Discrimination in the Market for Memorabilia: The Case of Baseball," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 105, no. 3 (August 1990): 575-595.

285. *Ibid.*, 594.

personal contact. The picture on the card thus becomes a still portrait of the undesirable "other" we know through often distorted mediated contact. In fact, many fans of baseball believe that Reggie Jackson did not deserve a place in the Hall of Fame. Others were willing to give grudging approval in exchange for Pete Rose's induction. There is no logical explanation for the *quid pro quo*, except racism: Reggie dared to be himself, which was unacceptable behavior for a black man. Although the purpose of the authors is to challenge the Becker thesis that racial consumer discrimination is more likely to occur in contexts where personal contact is prevalent, their narrow definition of contact seems invalid and, thus, their claims of revising Becker unsupportable.<sup>286</sup>

One of the most intriguing but alarming essays on the subject of customer discrimination is by Paul T. Schollaert and Donald Hugh Smith.<sup>287</sup> Before Nardinelli and Simon, they entered the debate on the declining significance of race. They noted with skepticism studies that concluded that whites wished to avoid contact with blacks, especially if blacks were social and economic equals. Their study is an attempt to challenge this long-held assumption. Although their findings that "racial composition has no discernible impact upon the level of attendance" has been challenged by others, it is less questionable than the premise upon which the study is based: "The study of sports attendance allows us to examine the effects of race in a rather ahistorical context, for attendance is determined only by immediate factors such as team performance and regional market characteristics."<sup>288</sup> If Barbara Fields and Evelyn Higginbotham are correct about race and racism being historical products, how can one examine the effects of race in a "rather ahistorical context"? Needless to say, people do not make decisions on race in a historic vacuum. Values developed over time must play a role in attitudes and actions of fans about race. Thus one must view with grave concern their conclusion about the error of the "assumption that whites will eschew participation in social groups characterized by sizeable black percentages. Such a premise may be another example of a factually incorrect belief or myth that supports the ideology of racism."<sup>289</sup>

Regardless of whether an early sample period might have skewed their results, the sweeping indictment Schollaert and Smith level at scholars is irresponsible in light of the micro-level of their own analysis. Extending findings beyond the narrow confines of sport and suggesting closer examination of givens is one thing, but making such large claims for one study is frightening.

The last area in this treatment of discrimination studies deals with racial

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286. Gary M. Becker, *The Economics of Discrimination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971).

287. Paul T. Schollaert and Donald Hugh Smith, "Team Racial Composition and Sports Attendance," *The Sociological Quarterly*, 28, no. 1 (1987): 71-87.

288. *Ibid.*, 85.

289. *Ibid.*



inequality in baseball at two levels—position segregation and retention barriers. What distinguishes these studies from others and at the same time relates them to each other is the inclusion of Hispanics in the analysis. In the first, Satya R. Pattnayak and John Leonard revisit Loy and McElvogue's study on positionality or "stacking" which was inspired by Grusky's theory of formal structure.<sup>290</sup> Taking it and subsequent studies one step further by including Hispanics they add a third tier to the two-tier system of playing positions. They find that blacks occupy the least central positions (outfield), whites the most central (pitcher/catcher), and Hispanics the middle (infield). The "stacking" along these lines constitutes inadequate training opportunities for blacks, in that their distance from leadership positions hurts post-career opportunities. Moreover, they conclude that this type of segregation might lead to negative stereotypes about racial minorities, i.e. blacks may lack the "necessities" for managerial or front-office responsibilities.<sup>291</sup>

Yet, Pattnayak and Leonard make the remarkable leap in judgment that the emerging three-tier system should have positive effects in diffusing "the otherwise potentially polarizable racial situation between Whites and Blacks on and off the playing field."<sup>292</sup> Using Barthes and Giddens concerning the tendency of exclusion to lead to ethnocentrism and closed group boundaries, they speculate that the racial ambiguity of Hispanics might cause some diffusion of racial prejudice against racial minorities.<sup>293</sup> The conclusion might work at the level of logic and theory, but the actual suggests another reality. Instead of diffusion, the racial ambiguity of the Hispanic might even further alienate and isolate the North American black and obviate the need for including them. A more likely outcome than diffusion is a "playing off" of a partially included or coopted group against an outsider. Thus judgments about the effects of such configurations must be studied in the context of group and individual identities and relations between them. Albeit anecdotal, Phillip Hoose's findings in *Necessities*, based largely on interviews, suggest considerable tension between non-Latino and Latino blacks in the major leagues.<sup>294</sup> Indeed, someone who appears black but has different values and culture might be more difficult to relate to than someone of a different color. When factors of skin tone are considered, all kinds of results are likely to emerge.

What is surprising is that Pattnayak and Leonard do not reach a different conclusion based on their reading of Robert M. Jiobu, who finds that non-Latino blacks, once productivity is factored out, have shorter playing careers than whites or Latinos of identical playing ability. His conclusion is that an

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290. Satya R. Pattnayak and John Leonard, "Racial Segregation in Major League Baseball, 1989," *Sociological and Social Research*, 76, no. 1 (October 1991): 3-9.

291. *Ibid.*, 4.

292. *Ibid.*, 4-5.

293. *Ibid.*

294. Hoose, 90-122.

"invisible ceiling" or quota is imposed on non-Latino blacks.<sup>295</sup> The question left unanswered is whether the inclusion of Latinos insures, by disguise, the unequal treatment of other blacks.

To Jiobu it is "ironic that a group can perform better, have a longer career, and earn more money than the majority group, yet still suffer from racial discrimination."<sup>296</sup> Irony is not the proper term, for there is nothing ironic about actions that have been taken historically to preserve and protect white dominance. Such actions might be hypocritical in light of professions concerning meritocracy and equal opportunity, but not ironic. What seems most surprising and possibly ironic is that sport scholarship can be used to combat those who support the myth of meritocracy and who reject the necessity of affirmative action. Moreover, the frequent argument that black achievement under affirmative action produces feelings of resentment among the majority group and self-doubt and insecurity among those beneficiaries loses much of its force, when the record in sport reveals discrimination against and resentment towards even those who clearly outperform members of the majority group. Thus, one might conclude that without affirmative action qualified blacks would not get opportunities and would be resented anyway for being in positions and places where people believed they did not belong.

These criticisms of the discrimination literature are not intended to discourage use, only to caution against the dangers. Although problematic, they have much to offer. Nothing seems more instructive in them than their designed intent to reach beyond sport and find application to larger sociopolitical and economic matters.

### Future Directions

The historical scholarship on the black athletic experience, for all its progress, still lags far behind the most interesting and exciting intellectual productions inside or outside of sport. Although often treating non-traditional subjects, the scholarship remains wedded to dated methods, limited theory, and narrative structure. Quantification, sociological and feminist theory, and

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295. Robert M. Jiobu. "Racial Inequality in a Public Arena: The Case of Professional Baseball." *Social Forces*, 67, no. 2 (December 1988): 524-534.

296. *Ibid.*, 533.

textual criticism offer interesting and fruitful options.<sup>297</sup> Moreover, the history of African American sport is treated in largely social and political terms even though sport is, in part, a cultural phenomenon. Thus the cultural dimension must be fully explored and explicated, making sure to analyze internal dynamics and cultural styles. Although culture critics largely ignore the subject, their treatments of music, film, and other forms of popular culture can be instructive.<sup>298</sup> Indeed, film, television, and literature remain virtually untapped as subjects and sources for the sport historian.<sup>299</sup> Comparative studies also hold much promise for improved quality of scholarship. Multi-ethnic primary research into black, white, and Hispanic baseball players, for example, can certainly reveal more about intergroup dynamics and the nature of

297. See footnotes 278 to 296 for quantification. For sociological theory see *Theory, Culture, and Society: Explorations in Critical Social Science*, 3 (1986): 1-165. Mitchell Duneier, *Slim's Table: Race, Respectability, and Masculinity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992); Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning, *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986); Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Ellen Carol DuBois, Gail Paradise Kelly, Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy, Carolyn W. Korsmeyer, and Lillian S. Robinson, *Feminist Scholarship* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Hazel V. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Barrie Thome, Cheris Kramarae, and Nancy Henley, eds., *Language, Gender, and Society* (Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1983); Jennifer Coates, *Women, Men and Language: A Sociolinguistic Account of Gender Difference in Language* (London: Longman, 1993 [1986]); Ian Angus and Sut Jhally, *Cultural Politics in Contemporary America* (New York: Routledge, 1989); E. Ann Kaplan, ed., *Postmodernism and its Discontents: Theories, Practices* (London: Verso, 1988); Warren Goldstein, *Playing for Keeps: A History of Early Baseball* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989); Michael Oriard, *Sporting with the Gods: The Rhetoric of Play and Game in American Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991) and *Reading Football: How The Popular Press Created An American Spectacle* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

298. Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, University Press of New England, 1994); Lisa Lewis, *Gender Politics and MTV* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990); George Lipsitz, *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990); Andrew Ross, *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1989); David Borwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristen Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1985); Stephen Heath, *Questions of Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981); William Rothman, "Against the System of Suture," *Film Quarterly*, 29 (Fall 1975): 45-50.

299. Michael V. Oriard, *Dreaming of Heroes: American Sports Fiction, 1868-1980* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1982); Harley Henry, "'Them Dodgers is My Gallant Knights': Fiction as History in *The Natural* (1952)," *Journal of Sport History*, 19, no. 2 (Summer 1992). Both Oriard and Henry teach in departments of English; historians of sport have almost completely neglected fiction in their analyses. More contact with the Sport and Literature Association and better use of its journal, *Arete*, could prove helpful. An approach toward film scholarship is also necessary if sport historians are to take advantage of a rich source of raw material.

discrimination than a focus on a single group.<sup>300</sup> Atlantic studies of African American and West Indian relations and responses to sport could reveal much about the nature of resistance, coping, and accommodation.<sup>301</sup>

Yet, sport historians must not just follow and remain behind the curve, using superficial understandings and examples of the latest theory or approach to seem current and fluent. Sport history can lead the way and change directions in important areas such as integration, gender, and violence to name a few. The last two should be of particular interest to women scholars, whose association with sport history has been virtually non-existent.<sup>302</sup> To take advantage of the opportunity to progress, old ways of thinking must be shed. The framework has been laid, a rich body of material has been mined, now is the time for taking risks, becoming adventurous. If we do not, we will only keep talking to and among ourselves.

To facilitate an opening up and reaching out, this author will pursue the possibility of organizing a major conference on "Blacks and Sport: Experience and Scholarship." It should serve as a major site of introduction, dialogue, cross fertilization, and recognition. Such a result can only come if it is completely interdisciplinary and open to the public. Create a forum and they will come.

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300. Although blacks, Latins, West Indians and other ethnic groups have been studied in relation to sports, their histories have not been interconnected. This failure to find similarities and divergences through overlapping and parallel activities prevents a fuller understanding of ethnic identities, coping strategies, and inter- and intra-group communication. The works of Alan M. Klein, Rob Rock, Gary R. Mormino, Pat Adachi, and Samuel Regalado among others should become the foundation for comparative studies of sport and ethnicity. See Alan M. Klein, *Sugarball: The American Game. the Dominican Dream* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); Rob Ruck, *The Tropic of Baseball: Baseball in the Dominican Republic* (Westport, CT: Meckler, 1991); Gary R. Mormino, *Immigrants on the Hill: Italian-Americans in St. Louis, 1882-1982* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); Pat Adachi, *Asahi. A Legend in Baseball* (Don Mills, Ontario: Japanese Canadian Culture Centre, 1992); Samuel Regalado, "'The Special Hunger': Latin Americans in Professional Baseball, 1871-1970" (Unpublished dissertation, Washington State University, 1987); "'Image is Everything': Latin Baseball Players and the United States Media," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture*, 13 (1994): 101-114; "Sport and Community in California's Japanese American 'Yamato Colony,'" *Journal of Sport History*, 19, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 130-133; "The Minor League Experience of Latin American Baseball Players in Western Communities, 1950-1970," *Journal of the West* (January 1987): 65-70; "'Baseball in the Barrios': The Scene in East Los Angeles Since World War II," *Baseball History* (Summer 1986): 47-59. Peter Laine briefly discusses similarities and differences between the athletic experiences of Jews and blacks. It is only intended to be suggestive and is useful as such. See Peter Levine, *Ellis Island to Ebberts Field: Sport and the American Jewish Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

301. See footnotes 131-135.

302. Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986). It is the only mainstream book on women and leisure, but it does not work well in the context of sport because Peiss does nothing with organized play or games. See J. A. Mangan and Roberta J. Park, eds., *From 'Fair Sex' to Feminism: Sport and the Socialization of Women in the Industrial and Post-Industrial Eras* (London: F. Cass, 1987); Kathleen McCrone, *Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women, 1870-1914* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988).