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Black Heritage Stamp Series: Jackie Robinson

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Issue Date: August 2, 1982
First Day City: Cooperstown, New York
Designer: Jerry Pinkney
Croton-on-Hudson, New York
Modeler: Frank J. Waslick
Press: Gravure
Colors: Yellow, magenta, cyan, black
and ochre

Image Area: .84 × 1.44 inches or
21.33 × 36.57 millimeters
Plate Numbers: One group
Stamps Per Pane: 50
Selvage: U.S. Postal Service 1982[®]
® Use Correct ZIP Code
® Mr. ZIP

Jackie Robinson Commemorative Stamp

A 20-cent commemorative stamp honoring Jackie Robinson, the famed American black baseball player, was issued August 2 in Cooperstown, New York. The first day of issue ceremony was held at the Baseball Hall of Fame, prior to the annual Hall of Fame baseball game at Doubleday Field.

Jackie Robinson was the first black man to play major league baseball. The pioneer athlete broke major league's baseball color barrier in 1947, when Branch Rickey brought him to the Brooklyn Dodgers. Robinson led the National League in stolen bases and was voted rookie of the year in 1947 and the National League's most valuable player in 1949. In 10 seasons with the Dodgers, Robinson's timely hitting and aggressive base running helped the team win six pennants and one World Series.

Jackie Robinson retired from baseball after the 1956 season and engaged in political, business and civil rights activities. He also worked extensively with black youth, as does the foundation that bears his name. He was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962.

The Jackie Robinson stamp is the fifth issue in the Black Heritage USA Series which was begun in 1978. Robinson was honored in this Series because of his overall lifetime contributions rather than his athletic skills alone. Previous stamps in this Series have honored Harriet Tubman, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Benjamin Banneker and Whitney Moore Young, Jr. All of the stamps were designed by Jerry Pinkney.



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

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AMERICAN COMMEMORATIVES

JACKIE ROBINSON



Wherever the history of baseball is recorded, there inevitably appears an image of one of its most unforgettable figures — Jackie Robinson.

Born in Cairo, Georgia in 1919, Jackie Robinson seemed destined to break records and the color barrier of the sport he loved. After settling with his family in Pasadena, California, he earned high school and college honors in football, basketball, baseball and track. He was the first four-letter man in UCLA history.

Robinson began his career in the early 1940's with the Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro American League. In 1945 his skill with a bat netted him an outstanding .345 average and a coveted position on the league's all-star team. Branch Rickey, President and Manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, signed Jackie Robinson to play with the Montreal Royals (the Dodgers' Farm Club). In his first season with Montreal, Robinson led the minor leagues with an impressive .349 batting average.

In 1947, Robinson's skill, agility and versatility earned him a berth on the Brooklyn Dodgers. He was the first black man ever to play on any American major league baseball team. With this outstanding achievement came the taunts and threats of racial



bigotry. This hostility came not only from those who observed baseball but also from those with whom Robinson played the game. Several major league teams threatened to boycott the Dodgers because Jackie Robinson played on the team.

Throughout these trying times Robinson played with the talent, consistency and tenacity of a true professional. He was voted Most Valuable Player of the National League in 1949 with a batting average of .342 and a runs-batted-in tally of 124. His ten-year batting average was .311 and, along the way, he set several fielding records as a second baseman.

Robinson retired from baseball in 1956 and was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962. He continued his passionate involvement in civil rights and with young people until his death in 1972.

The Jackie Robinson stamp was unveiled by Assistant Postmaster General Gordon C. Morison and Mrs. Rachel Robinson, his widow. The stamp was issued on August 2, 1982, at The Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York.





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*Jackie Robinson
Black Heritage Series*



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

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Jackie Robinson

Black Heritage Series

First Day of Issue: *August 2, 1982*

First Day City: *Cooperstown, New York, site of the
Baseball Hall of Fame*

Stamp Designer: *Jerry Pinkney
Croton-on-Hudson, New York*

In 1947, Jackie Robinson (1919-1972) broke the color barrier in baseball, becoming the first black man ever to play on a major league team. He was the protégé of Branch Rickey, owner of the Brooklyn Dodgers, who believed that excluding blacks from baseball was harmful to the sport.

Rickey had discovered Robinson playing for the Kansas City Monarchs, an all-black team, in 1945. He checked out the background of the young athlete to ensure that he had the talent, temperament and personal courage to stand up to the inevitable heckling and abuse. Satisfied that Robinson was the right man, Rickey signed him to play on the Dodgers' Montreal farm team in 1946. His outstanding perform-

ance earned him a promotion to the Brooklyn team the following year.

By the time he began his major league baseball career, Jackie Robinson was older than most of his teammates. He had been born 27 years before, the son of a sharecropper, in Cairo, Georgia. His natural athletic ability began to develop as a teenager and, while attending UCLA, he became the first man in the history of the university to earn varsity letters in four sports — baseball, basketball, football and track.

In his first year in Brooklyn, Robinson was, as Rickey predicted, subject to many challenges and slights by fans and fellow ballplayers. Still he did not retaliate, preferring to let his ability on the field speak for itself. Robinson was elected the National League Rookie of the Year in 1947 and its Most Valuable Player in 1949. In 1962, he was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame.