

activists who wanted much more aggressive tactics to bring about civil rights. She examines the local fight against discrimination in employment, public accommodation, and housing, along with the white backlash; and she does a good job of placing activism in one city and state in the national setting. In general, she supports the contention that the struggle for equality in many border states was a much easier task than in the South. Community, university, and business leaders in Wichita were not so determined to preserve segregation that they would stand by and allow violence on the scale of that in Mississippi.

Dissent in Wichita is an excellent book. Eick conducted prodigious research in primary documents and secondary sources, and interviewed more than eighty participants. She has made a significant contribution, for she is correct in claiming that historians who have written about the civil rights movement, including myself, have neglected the sit-ins in Wichita and Oklahoma City. Indeed, all historians who write about the movement will have to consult this valuable book.

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They Cleared the Lane: The NBA's Black Pioneers. By Ron Thomas. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002. Pp. xvii, 276. Illustrations, appendix, notes, index. \$29.95.)

Most sports fans and older Americans are familiar with Jackie Robinson's pivotal role in the integration of major league baseball. Except for a few hard-core basketball fans, however, almost no one knows the names of the first African Americans to compete in the National Basketball Association (NBA) or how professional basketball was integrated. Drawing almost exclusively on personal interviews with former players and coaches, sportswriter Ron Thomas has remedied this deficiency by providing valuable biographical sketches of these racial pioneers. Thomas's main conclusions are that basketball's integration proceeded "relatively smoothly" (p. 132) when compared to that of professional baseball but that subtle racial problems lingered in the NBA for several decades.

Although an occasional black player appeared on white professional teams before World War II, the primary outlet for talented African Americans during this period consisted of two all-black touring teams, the New York Rens and the Harlem Globetrotters. During and immediately after World War II, a few more black athletes joined clubs in the National Basketball League, but the other major professional league, the Basketball Association of America (BAA), completely banned African Americans. When the two groups merged in 1949 to form the NBA, the new organization initially continued the BAA's color line.

In 1950 an owners' revolt led by Ned Irish of the New York Knicks overturned this policy. As a result, three African Americans, Chuck Cooper, Nat "Sweetwater" Clifton, and Earl Lloyd, joined NBA clubs that fall. The tolerance that these three men encountered contrasted sharply with the hostility Jackie Robinson had faced three years earlier, when he joined the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. Thomas attributes this difference to the high educational level of white basketball players and the relatively low status of professional basketball. "If the NBA wanted to integrate, hardly anyone noticed," he observes (p. 20). Cooper, Clifton, and Lloyd rarely experienced racial problems and enjoyed solid, productive careers. Still, NBA owners did not immediately rush to sign black players, maintaining an informal quota system for at least a decade because of fears of alienating white fans.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s a new, more talented generation of black players entered the NBA. Superstars such as Bill Russell, Elgin Baylor, Wilt Chamberlain, and Oscar Robertson elevated the game to new heights. Off the court, they also brought change by refusing to tolerate racial discrimination on team trips, especially in the South. Thomas also examines the initial exclusion of African Americans from positions as head coaches in the NBA. He focuses in detail on the careers of Bill Russell, Lenny Wilkins, Al Attles, K. C. Jones, and especially John McLendon, the first black head coach in the rival American Basketball League.

This is a very readable book, and Thomas's conclusions seem balanced and reasonable. Most of the information is derived from his own personal interviews, however, which are not part of any oral history collection, and there are few footnotes to other sources. Nonetheless, the book makes a useful contribution to sport history and the history of race relations.

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The End of Baseball as We Knew It: The Players Union, 1960-81. By Charles P. Korr. Foreword by Bob Costas. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002. Pp. xviii, 336. Illustrations, notes, sources, index. \$34.95.)

To baseball's millions of fans, buffeted and angered over the last quarter-century by repeated, unfathomable strikes that shut down their game, the title of this book may seem to be a tipoff: here is another broadside against lawyer-union organizer Marvin Miller and his money-minded player-clients whose greed has made America's national pastime past tense. It is not. It is quite the opposite. Author Charles Korr, granted access to the files and correspondence of the