



Under One Roof: The Yankees, the Cardinals, and a Doctor's Battle to Integrate Spring Training

Adam Henig

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Jackie Robinson may have smashed Major League Baseball's color ceiling in 1947, but segregation in the sport had not been entirely eliminated.

The preseason ritual of spring training in Florida remained racially restrictive. Black players could not room, eat, or socialize with their white teammates. The only time teams were fully together? On the diamond.

By 1961, pressure mounted for complete integration. Despite demands from the influential black newspaper columnist Wendell Smith, it appeared another year would pass dictated by Jim Crow policies. Then, two weeks before players reported to spring training, Dr. Ralph Wimbish announced that it was time for a change. The feisty, 40-year-old black physician from St. Petersburg was known locally for his central role in the integration of the city's schools, beaches, and lunch counters. Major League Baseball, however, wasn't exactly a five-and-dime operation; it was the economic lifeblood of St. Pete and for most of the other host cities in Florida.

Drawing on personal interviews, newspaper accounts, archival documents, and memoirs, Adam Henig painstakingly etches a portrait of the troubled era and weaves into it an unforgettable tale of a little-known civil rights activist who risked it all to achieve racial justice.

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