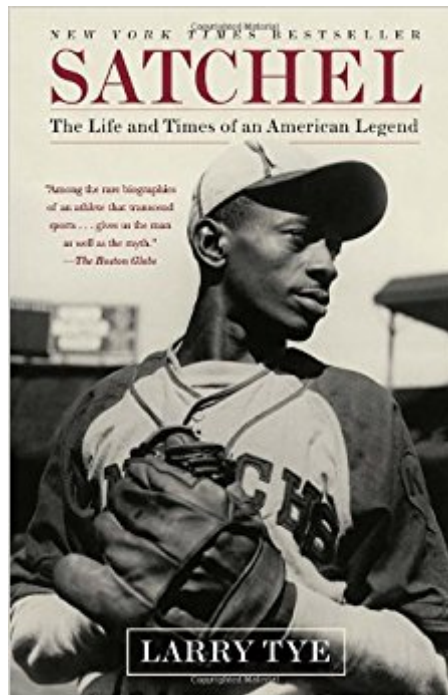




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Satchel: The Life And Times Of An American Legend



Synopsis

He is that rare American icon who has never been captured in a biography worthy of him. Now, at last, here is the superbly researched, spellbindingly told story of athlete, showman, philosopher, and boundary breaker Leroy "Satchel" Paige. Through dogged research and extensive interviews, award-winning author and journalist Larry Tye has tracked down the truth about this majestic and enigmatic pitcher. Here is the stirring account of the child born to a poor Alabama washerwoman, the boy who earned his nickname from his enterprising work as a railroad porter, and the young man who took up baseball on the streets and in reform school before becoming the superstar hurler of the Negro Leagues. In unprecedented detail, Tye reveals how Paige, hurt and angry when Jackie Robinson beat him in breaking the Major League color barrier, emerged at the improbable age of forty-two to help propel the Cleveland Indians to the World Series. ("Age is a case of mind over matter," he said. "If you don't mind, it doesn't matter.") Rewriting our history of baseball's integration with Paige in the starring role and separating truth from legend, Satchel is a story as large as this larger-than-life man.

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Customer Reviews

With impeccable scholarship and a meticulous understanding of American history, author Larry Tye delivers a definitive exploration of Satchel Paige in *Satchel: The Life and Times of an American Legend* (June 2009, Random House). Delving into the myths, legend and actual facts surrounding arguably the greatest professional pitcher ever, Tye paints an incredible portrait that began on July 7, 1906, when Leroy Robert Paige was born in Mobile, Alabama, and will forever be a part of

pop/sports culture, though he passed away on June 8, 1982, after battling emphysema for a number of years. "I ain't ever had a job. I just always played baseball," says Paige, which adeptly summarizes an amazing career on the diamond at a time when the only ball was white, through the re-integration of Major League Baseball to 1968, when the Atlanta Braves took a major step to right a wrong that would have left the superstar who gave so much without a pension. But before Paige became the iconic ace on the mound, he had early brushes with truancy, which did not destroy the care and concern from his mother, Lula Paige. Mentors like Edward Byrd, Alex Herman, Big Bill Gatewood brought him an understanding in the art of pitching. Paige went from being released from reform school (1923), to playing semi-pro ball in Mobile (1924) to signing his first pro contract in 1926. And it was then that Paige's cunning strategy on the field, quick wit and unique charm disarmed racists and made him one of the greats in the various manifestations of the Negro Leagues and barnstorming tours with MLB (white) players. The tours with Dizzy Dean became huge draws and fueled the growing fascination of the right-hander who was already larger-than-life.

Larry Tye delivers a wonderful story of the legendary Satchel Paige, perhaps the greatest pitcher of all-time, who was denied national adulation for the bulk of his professional career; toiling in relative obscurity in the Negro Leagues, before finally getting called up to the Big Leagues, with Cleveland in 1948. He was 42. It's difficult to imagine how many games Paige might've won had he been allowed to pitch in the Major Leagues during the peak of his physical abilities, with a good or bad team. It wouldn't have mattered. Just like Steve Carlton won 27 games for the Philadelphia Phillies in 1972---an otherwise moribund team---Paige may have done as well or better. The sad reality is he never had the chance. However, this was a man who didn't mourn his unfulfilled potential in the spotlight. His charismatic personality was infectious, and radiated a charm that made him a national icon during his brief Major League career. His "rookie" season, he won 6 out of 7 starts, with a 2.48 earned run average for the World Champion Cleveland Indians. It's doubtful they would've made it to the Series without Satchell Paige. Perhaps even more remarkable was the year Paige put together for the old St Louis Browns (a horrible team) in 1952, when he posted a 12 and 10 record with an e.r.a. slightly over three; at the tender age of 46. Just to prove how amazing this man was, he even pitched three innings of shut-out ball for the Kansas City A's, in 1965. He was only 59. I'll never forget reading that story in the newspaper as a youngster, thinking that anyone over 40 was half-dead; but 59? I became an instant fan of this gregarious celebrity.

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