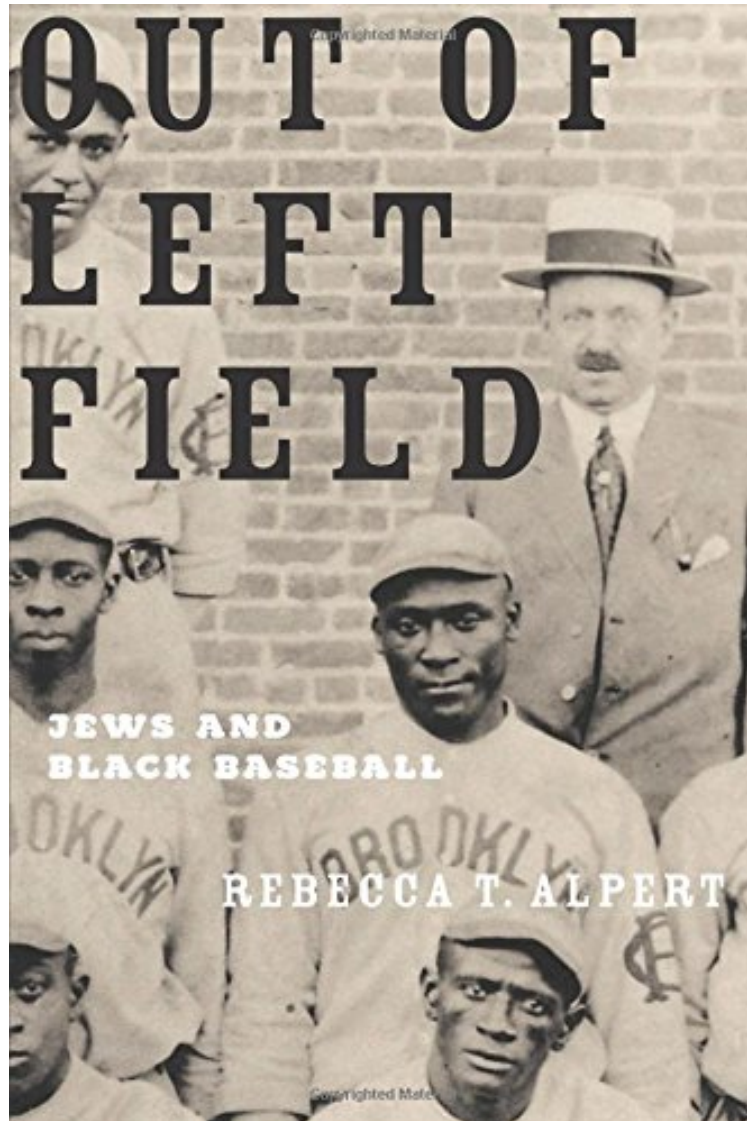


Out of Left Field: Jews and Black Baseball

Rebecca T. Alpert

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Rebecca T. Alpert : Out of Left Field: Jews and Black Baseball before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Out of Left Field: Jews and Black Baseball:

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Really? A Jewish team of Black baseball players?By Marsha WWhat a find! This book combines great writing, great research, and fascinating stuff about Baseball, Jews, and Blacks. The author-- Rebecca Alpert-- explains how race, ethnic stereotypes, racial prejudice, and Jewish concerns for social justice led to opening up baseball to Black players, despite Jim crow restrictions and mutual mistrust among blacks and Jews. I was fascinated by Alpert's tales of the complex relations between blacks and Jews in the early days

of Baseball, when both groups were seen as outsiders, yet both were passionate about playing ball. Here I found the explanation for Black Jews in America and how they played baseball. I learned much more surprising things. I learned about "comedy baseball" -- the Clowns-- the performed before and even during the era of Jackie Robinson. With the the Havana La Palomas as traveling partners, the Clowns has some pretty successful years. Despite their financial suggest, the Clowns were not uniformly beloved; and their Jewish owners were attached for putting on baseball minstrel shows. Was this comedy baseball an ultimate "uncle tom antic", or a way to help Negro Baseball continue to attract an audience in the late 40's after Jackie Robinson had signed with the Dodgers? How did Jackie Robinson relate to these Clowns? It's not an simple story, but the way Alpert tells it helped me understand better not only baseball, but the role of racism and anti-Jewish sentiment in the 20th century.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. DESERVING OF FIVE STARSBy ronald g stewartThe information compiled in your book from that era is awesome. I was born in 1939 anda member of the church of god and saints of christ, just about my entire life. I have heardmany stories of events and certain things connected to the sports teams, but your bookbrought that period front and center. I salute you and your book. thank you for the privilegeto adore you.RONALD G. STEWART2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Diamond GemBy MagooAlpert creatively assembles a well-documented history of the role Jews played in black baseball. Such notables as Abe Saperstein and Ed Gottlieb are featured as she navigates through the tricky relationships these Jews had with the black players, owners, and media during the pre-Jackie Robinson era. Among the highlights: she details the campaign waged by the sports writers for the Communist Party newspaper, The Daily Worker, to push for the integration of Major League Baseball, and of the conflict between writers for that paper and writers for the black press during that struggle. An interesting read for historians and fans alike!

Here is an eye-opening look at one of baseball's most intriguing and little known stories: the many-faceted relationship between Jews and black baseball in Jim Crow America. In *Out of Left Field*, Rebecca Alpert explores how Jewish sports entrepreneurs, political radicals, and a team of black Jews from Belleville, Virginia called the Belleville Grays--the only Jewish team in the history of black baseball--made their mark on the segregated world of the Negro Leagues. Through in-depth research, Alpert tells the stories of the Jewish businessmen who owned and promoted teams as they both acted out and fell victim to pervasive stereotypes of Jews as greedy middlemen and hucksters. Some Jewish owners produced a kind of comedy baseball, akin to basketball's Harlem Globetrotters--indeed, Globetrotters owner Abe Saperstein was very active in black baseball--that reaped financial benefits for both owners and players but also played upon the worst stereotypes of African Americans and prevented these black "showmen" from being taken seriously by the major leagues. But Alpert also shows how Jewish entrepreneurs, motivated in part by the traditional Jewish commitment to social justice, helped grow the business of black baseball in the face of the oppressive Jim Crow restrictions, and how radical journalists writing for the Communist *Daily Worker* argued passionately for an end to baseball's segregation. In fact, the campaign to convince manager Branch Rickey to integrate the Brooklyn Dodgers was initiated by *Daily Worker* sports writer Bill Mardo, in an open letter in the paper. Deftly written and meticulously researched, *Out of Left Field* offers a unique perspective on the economic and social negotiations between blacks and Jews in the first half of the 20th century, shedding new light on the intersection of race, religion, and sports in America.

"A major scholarly achievement... Alpert renders the material interesting, significant, and accessible... [A] compelling read."--*American Jewish History* "In retrieving the story of the Jewish role in black baseball, Rabbi Alpert fills in an illustrative and symbolic gap in history, offering an insight into the relations between blacks and Jews that strengthened during the Civil Rights era and subsequently became frayed."--*The Jewish Week* "Albert both tells their individual stories and fills in the larger canvas."--Michael Carasik "...an intriguing strand of inter-ethnic conflict and cooperation:the relationship between African and Jewish Americans."--*TLS* "Interesting, well-written, and thoroughly researched... Alpert's book succeeds as a vivid account of individuals navigating the landscape of ethnicity, race, and ideology in the first half of the twentieth century in America." --*The Journal of Religion* "Less told is the story of black baseball's entrepreneurs. Rebecca T. Alpert's *Out of Left Field* is a welcomed addition...[she] makes a compelling case for the impact of these Jewish figures in the black baseball world and, in so doing, illuminates the imaginings of Jewish identity through baseball and the workings of race in America's game."--*The Journal of American History* "Alpert has made great use of archival material, interviews, and secondary sources to explain the relationship between Jews and African Americans in baseball...Alpert, to her credit, has emphasized that Jews have played a major role in helping to bring about the integration of major league baseball."--*Black Ball* "Rebecca Alpert has mined a remarkable and little known world of Jews, blacks, and baseball--and American culture, in a dramatic period of the 20th century--and turned it all into gold for the reader."--Ira Berkow, winner of the Pulitzer Prize "Out of Left Field is a fascinating journey into the history of baseball--and America. Rebecca Alpert has dug deep to tell a story that will surprise and impress even the most knowledgeable baseball reader."--Jonathan Eig, author of *Opening Day: The Story of Jackie Robinson's First Season* "Like me, lots of authors have written about the alluring and tragic world of black baseball. Others have explored the fascinating universe of Jewish baseball. Rebecca Alpert shines an overdue spotlight on the intersection between those worlds, which turns out to be an important story in the history of baseball and the

history of America."--Larry Tye, author of *Satchel: The Life and Times of an American Legend*"*Out of Left Field* provides a fresh perspective on the complex history of interactions between blacks and Jews in the United States. Situating baseball as a crucible for the forging of American identity, Alpert examines the role of Jews--including a community of black Jews--in the business of black baseball. The result is a challenging and sensitive study of race, religion, recreation, and American identity."--Judith Weisenfeld, author of *Hollywood Be Thy Name: African American Religion in American Film, 1929-1949*"Alpert skillfully reconstructs the surprising story of Jewish involvement in black baseball...Clearly written and thoroughly documented, Alpert recovers this valuable story about baseball, race, and religion in America's midtwentieth century. Sports historians and baseball aficionados will appreciate this book, which would also work well in undergraduate and graduate classes."--*Religious Studies About the Author*Rebecca Alpert is Associate Professor of Religion and Women's Studies at Temple University and the author of *Whose Torah?: A Concise Guide to Progressive Judaism*.