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Lost Champions: Four Men, Two Teams, and the Breaking of Pro Football's Color Line, By Gretchen Atwood (2016) New York: Bloomsbury, 288 pages. ISBN 978-1-62040-600-7

Braham Dabscheck

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[See table of contents](#)

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ces nationales, tant en matière de règles et de lois, qu'au niveau de l'action patronale.

Chaque chapitre présente des enjeux économiques et sociaux auxquels les organisations patronales et la société sont confrontées. Toutefois, il importe de mentionner que, pour le lectorat nord-américain, sa lecture aurait été facilitée si les auteurs avaient fourni des définitions davantage explicites des différents types d'organisations. Ainsi, parfois, des recherches ailleurs sont nécessaires pour savoir si l'organisation à laquelle les auteurs réfèrent est une organisation patronale, étatique ou non patronale. Il s'agit, selon nous, de la plus importante lacune de cet ouvrage collectif, lacune qui sera surtout ressentie de ce côté-ci de l'Atlantique.

Yasmine Mohamed

Doctorante

Département des relations industrielles

Université Laval

Lost Champions: Four Men, Two Teams, and the Breaking of Pro Football's Color Line

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Both baseball and American football operated systems of segregation, which barred African Americans from playing for their respective teams. Jackie Robinson has been lauded for his role in civil rights struggles when he played his first game for the Brooklyn Dodgers, in April 1947, in a Hall of Fame career. He was signed by the Dodgers in 1945 and spent 1946 with the AAA team, the Montreal Canadiens, helping them to win the 'Little World Series'. Dodgers' management correctly surmised that the environment in Montreal would be more conducive in aiding his preparation for the majors.

Football, however, was integrated a year earlier. The Los Angeles Rams signed Kenny Washington and Woody Strode (Strode's ancestry also included Native Americans);

both former teammates of Jackie Robinson when they were at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). The Cleveland Browns also signed Bill Willis and Marion Motley in 1946. Washington played three years for the Rams. Strode played one year and then spent two years with the Calgary Stampeders, who he helped win Canada's Grey Cup in 1948. Upon retiring he had a successful acting career. Willis played with the Rams for eight years. Motley also played with the Rams for eight years and one year with the Pittsburgh Steelers in 1955. Both were elected to Pro Football's Hall of Fame.

Gretchen Atwood, a former sports journalist, stumbled across these pioneers of football integration by chance and was perplexed about her ignorance of this phenomenon. She asks: "If these guys came before Jackie, why do we know so little about them? This book is my answer" (p. ix). Unfortunately, the answer she provides is unsatisfactory. The major reason for this is that Atwood had other objectives in mind and her narrative is poorly structured.

Atwood's major (unstated) goals were, first, to provide accounts of the football careers and major games of the four players at high school, college, the army and professionally, and of a clash between the Rams and Browns for the 1950 National Football League Championship. Second, she provides a chilling account of major examples of racist hatred and segregation which occurred in America at this time of sporting integration. They are murders/shootings (what Atwood calls lynchings) of African Americans in Georgia and how the good "ol boys" made sure no one was held accountable; attempts to integrate an amusement park in Cleveland where, amongst numerous examples of violence, senior police failed in their duty of care to African American police officers who were beaten up by so called park police in trying to maintain order; and the trajectory of racially restrictive housing covenants in America with a particular focus on devel-

opments in Los Angeles. In examining both the sports and broader segregation issues, Atwood wants to draw attention to the numerous activists who became involved in such struggles.

The structural problem is that the book jumps backward and forward in time and within chapters, often mixes and matches the 'pure' football narrative with broader segregation issues. A more successful and engaging approach would have been to provide a conventional chronological account of developments with separate and lengthy chapters for the substantive segregation and race hatred issues. Especially with respect to the latter, a more straight forward presentation of material would have more successfully driven home the perfidy of America's sad racial past.

Atwood's explanation of why Jackie Robinson has been afforded a prominent place as a civil rights champion and the four footballers not is linked to what she regards as an uncritical acceptance of a "Great Man Theory of History" (p. 228). According to Atwood, Robinson's success in overcoming racial barriers has seen him as being virtuous. She goes on to say that: "The association of success with virtue leads to a backlash against those who don't succeed in the same way...Kenny Washington and Woody Strode's stories cannot be framed in the same way as Robinson's" (p. 229).

This is somewhat confusing. Washington and Strode, like Robinson, broke their respective sports' color bars. Should not they be celebrated in the same way? Or is the problem that Robinson had a more successful career than his two former UCLA team mates? Note above how Atwood ignores Willis and Motley. They, like Robinson, found their way into their respective sports' Halls of Fame. Washington and Strode were not so fortunate. Willis and Motley (as did Washington and Strode) broke the colour bar in football before Robinson did in baseball. Why have they been ignored as civil rights champions?

The hypothesis that will be advanced here is that the answer lies in the personality and character of Jackie Robinson, in comparison to the four football players. Atwood says: "The Robinson who attended UCLA was described as sometimes sullen and other times fiery and confrontational" (p. 142). As a child, as a student, in the army, as a ball player and in his post playing career, Robinson spent his life fighting racism and segregation. He was an outspoken critic of racist America and lent his name and time to various civil rights struggles. His activism off the field added to the lustre that he had established with his endeavours on the field in ending segregation in that game spruiked as America's national pastime. This is what has afforded him his special place in American history.

Despite the critical comments above, Gretchen Atwood is to be congratulated for bringing attention to these four champion African American players who ended segregation in American football. In addition, her accounts of the murders in Georgia, segregation in amusement parks in Cleveland, and racially restrictive residential covenants make for chilling reading.

Braham Dabscheck

Senior Fellow
Melbourne Law School
University of Melbourne