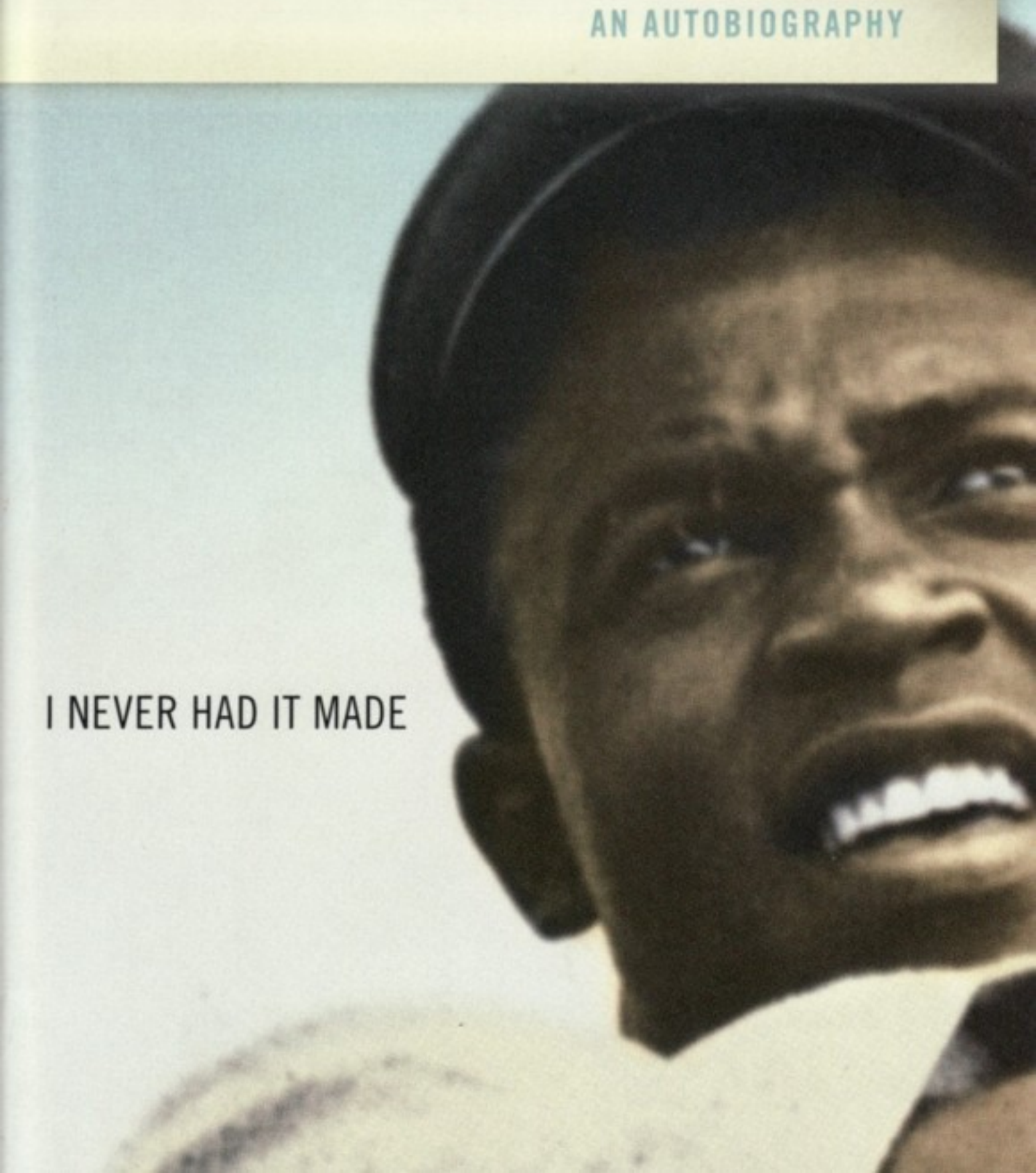
1952	33	BRO	NL	149	510	104	157	17	3	19	75	24	7	106	40	.308
1953	34	BRO	NL	136	484	109	159	34	7	12	95	17	4	74	30	.329
1954	35	BRO	NL	124	386	62	120	22	4	15	59	7	3	63	20	.311
1955	36	BRO	NL	105	317	51	81	6	2	8	36	12	3	61	18	.256
1956	37	BRO	NL	117	357	61	98	15	2	10	43	12	5	60	32	.275
10 Seasons				1382	4877	947	1518	273	54	137	734	197	30	740	291	.311

WITH INTRODUCTIONS BY HANK AARON AND CORNEL WEST

(42) JACKIE ROBINSON

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY



I NEVER HAD IT MADE

I

A Dream Deferred

My grandfather was born into slavery, and although my mother and my father, Mallie and Jerry Robinson, lived during an era when physical slavery had been abolished, they also lived in a newer, more sophisticated kind of slavery than the kind Mr. Lincoln struck down. My parents were married in 1909, and my father worked on a plantation for twelve dollars a month. My mother encouraged him to confront his boss and ask for a better deal. Since he didn't want to lose him, the boss agreed to let my father become a "half-cropper." That means that, instead of working for a flat sum, he would get half the profits from whatever he produced from the earth. My father began to make more money and to provide a better living for his family—my mother and five children. Six months after I was born in 1919, my father told my mother he was going to visit his brother in Texas. I learned as a grown man he had been complaining that

he was tired of farming and he had been spending an increasing amount of time in Cairo, the city closest to the plantation. My mother was afraid that my father would not come back, and her fears were justified. Later she learned that he had left home and gone away with a neighbor's wife.

To this day I have no idea what became of my father. Later, when I became aware of how much my mother had to endure alone, I could only think of him with bitterness. He, too, may have been a victim of oppression, but he had no right to desert my mother and five children.

After my father left, my mother had the choice of going home to live with her people or trying to pacify the irate plantation owner. He had never forgiven her for forcing my father to ask for more money, and he felt that she had somehow had a hand in my father's leaving the plantation. When she refused to admit this, he ordered her off the land. She decided then that she would sell what little she had and take her family out of the South. She had a brother, Burton, in California, and she planned to take us there.

My mother was thirty when we started out for California. I remember nothing about it, since I was only sixteen months old at the time. I was the youngest child and had three brothers—Edgar, eleven; Frank, nine; Mack, seven—and one sister, Willa Mae, five.

As I grew older, I often thought about the courage it took for my mother to break away from the South. Even though there appeared to be little future for us in the West, my mother knew that there she could be assured of the basic necessities. When she left the South, she also left most of her relatives and friends. She knew that her brother in California would help all he could, but he, too, had heavy responsibilities.

After a long, tedious train ride across the country, we were generously received by Uncle Burton. He took us in, but my mother made arrangements to move soon after we arrived

because we were too crowded. Almost immediately, she found a job washing and ironing. She didn't make enough, however, to support herself and five children and she went to welfare for relief. Her salary, plus the help from welfare, barely enabled her to make ends meet. Sometimes there were only two meals a day, and some days we wouldn't have eaten at all if it hadn't been for the leftovers my mother was able to bring home from her job. There was other times when we subsisted on bread and sweet water. My mother got up before daylight to go to her job, and although she came home tired, she managed to give us the extra attention we needed. She indoctrinated us with the importance of family unity, religion, and kindness toward others. Her great dream for us was that we go to school.

While my mother was at work, my sister Willa Mae took care of me. I went to school with Willa Mae, but I was too young to be enrolled in the school and my mother asked the teacher to allow Willa Mae to leave me in the sandbox in the yard while classes were going on. Every morning Willa Mae put me into the sandbox, where I played until lunchtime, when school was dismissed. If it rained, I was taken into the kindergarten rooms. Everyone was very nice to me; however, I certainly was happy when, after a year of living in the sandbox, I became old enough to go to school.

I have few early school memories after graduating from the sandbox, but I do remember being aware of the constant protective attitude of my sister. She was dedicated on my behalf.

We lived in a house on Pepper Street in Pasadena. I must have been about eight years old the first time I ran into racial trouble. I was sweeping our sidewalk when a little neighbor girl shouted at me, "Nigger, nigger, nigger." I was old enough to know how to answer that. I had learned from my older brother that, in the South, the most insulting name you can call a white person is "cracker." That is what I called her, and her father stormed out of the house to confront me. I don't remember who threw the

The Autobiography of a Boy of Summer Who Became a Man for All Seasons

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Before Barry Bonds, before Reggie Jackson, before Hank Aaron, baseball's stars had one undeniable trait in common: they were all white. In 1947, Jackie Robinson broke that barrier, striking a crucial blow for racial equality and changing the world of sports forever. *I Never Had It Made* is Robinson's own candid, hard-hitting account of what it took to become the first black man in history to play in the major leagues.

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