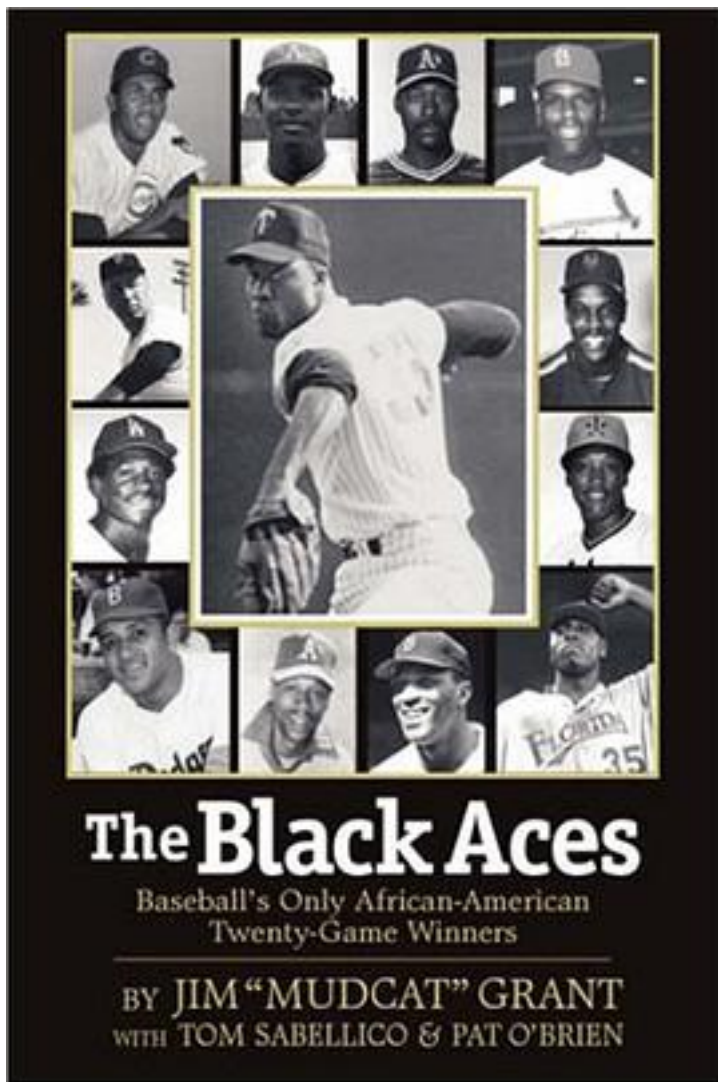


THE BLACK ACES



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For most of the first half of the twentieth century, African-Americans were excluded from Organized Baseball. But their love of the game, and their desire to play could not be denied. Despite that ban, "blackball" was being played in just about every cow pasture and field available throughout the country. Black players criss-crossed the country in Negro League games and on barnstorming tours, bringing baseball to places where the Major Leagues never dreamed of going. Many gifted athletes never got the chance to compete in the Majors, until the door was finally opened in 1947 with the signing of Jackie Robinson and Larry Doby. Once given that chance to compete, African-Americans showed the country that they were deserving of the opportunity. Many became superstars, but, on the mound, only 13 African-Americans ever reached the magic plateau of twenty wins in a season. This book tells the story of those thirteen men and a few of their predecessors, the obstacles they faced, and the determination they showed to succeed. But it is a story about so much more than just baseball. Against the backdrop of their grit and determination, it reflects the story of all African-American baseball players through the creation of the Negro Leagues, the evolution of the game, and the parallel integration of baseball and America.

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