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ARTICLES

Earl Mann Beats the Klan

Jackie Robinson and the First Integrated Games in Atlanta

KENNETH R. FENSTER

At 1:30 p.m. on April 8, 1949, Earl Mann, the president of the Atlanta Crackers of the Class AA Southern Association, had his regular monthly meeting with Hughes Spalding, the chairman of the Crackers' board of directors. Spalding did not record in his desk diary what he and Mann discussed, but surely a major topic of their conversation was the game scheduled for that evening at venerable Ponce de Leon Park.¹ The game pitted the all-white Crackers against the integrated Brooklyn Dodgers, with their two black players, Jackie Robinson and Roy Campanella. The Dodgers-Crackers contest would be the first mixed-race baseball game in Atlanta and the first in a major city of the Deep South.

THE SETTING: ATLANTA IN 1949

In 1941 Atlanta was known for a soft drink, Coca-Cola, and a novel about the Lost Cause made into a movie, *Gone With the Wind*. World War II changed that image and transformed Atlanta from an overgrown village into a bustling major city. The war stimulated explosive economic and population growth that continued throughout the decade. The federal government made Atlanta the military supply center for the Southeast and the area headquarters for all military personnel stationed in the region. The war effort pumped millions of dollars into the local economy, and thousands of servicemen passed through the city. Atlanta also became the regional seat for more than fifty government agencies, so many that the city became known as the "Little Washington of the South." In September 1943 the huge Bell Bomber plant began operations in nearby Marietta, Georgia. It employed between thirty thousand and forty thousand workers and had a weekly payroll of \$1.5 million. Shortly after the war, the Ford Motor Company and the General Motors Corporation built large plants on the outskirts of the city. These manufacturers employed tens

of thousands of workers and had an economic impact in the tens of millions of dollars. Between 1945 and 1950 the number of factories in Atlanta increased by 75 percent, and many national corporations established branch offices in the city. Retail business thrived with net sales exceeding \$500 million in 1947. Atlanta was the banking, communications, and transportation center of the region. The city was home to the Federal Reserve Bank for the region. Its telephone exchange was the largest in the South and the third largest in the world. Delta Air Lines, which moved to Atlanta in 1941 and began operating commercial flights connecting the cities of the South, built a \$1 million hub in the city in 1947. In 1948 the Atlanta airport serviced more than five hundred thousand passengers, and during certain months of the year it was the busiest in the country. In the fall of 1948 construction began on a \$40 million expressway system. At the same time, Atlanta became the site of the first southern television station, Welcome South Brother (WSB). The population of Atlanta rose from 302,288 in 1940 to 331,314 in 1950, while the population of the metro area increased from 518,100 to 664,033. Many soldiers who had trained in or visited Atlanta during the war settled there after their discharge from the military. By 1949 Atlanta had emerged as the undisputed capital of the South.²

The war also had a tremendous impact on race relations in the city, and in the years immediately afterward, Atlanta experienced tumultuous racial upheaval. African American servicemen returning from the fight against fascism overseas demanded greater equality and democracy at home. They would not obsequiously return to the inferior status that society had previously assigned to them. Some whites resisted, resorting to violence to maintain the racial status quo of strict segregation and white supremacy. African Americans constituted slightly more than one-third of Atlanta's population.³ They exerted their political power for the first time in decades in a special election in February 1946 when they provided the margin of victory to Helen Douglas Mankin, a liberal white woman, in her race for the US Congress.⁴ The role of the African American electorate in her triumph over the establishment candidate, who had the support of three-term governor Eugene Talmadge's powerful political machine and fifteen other influential white men, received national press attention.⁵ Contemporary African American leaders viewed her win as "a landmark in the history of Negroes in Atlanta politics."⁶ It marked the birth of African American political participation. Henceforth, the African American voter would be a force to reckon with in the city.

Whites keenly felt this change in the city's political dynamics. Many of them reacted to Mankin's victory with disbelief and fear. Talmadge, Georgia's most infamous racist demagogue and the gubernatorial candidate for a fourth term, spewed forth vitriolic diatribes against her. In his newspaper, the *States-*

man, and in campaign speeches, Talmadge generally made Mankin the issue, ignoring his opponent, James Carmichael, the highly successful manager of the Bell Bomber plant. Talmadge ranted and railed against her in vulgar, vituperative, and racist descriptions and innuendos. He made ugly references to the role of African Americans in her election, excoriating Mankin as “that woman from the wicked city of Atlanta,” as “Ashby Street’s contribution to the Georgia delegation to Congress,” and most commonly as “the Belle of Ashby Street.” He condemned her win as “the Ashby Street incident.” Talmadge mocked Mankin as “the lady politician of recent but none too fragrant memory [who] campaigned with colored folks under the cognomen of ‘Madame Queen’ and won the Darktown votes in a canter.” Talmadge accused her of being a “nigger lover” and a lackey of Jews, Communists, and organized labor. He decried the “spectacle of Atlanta negroes sending a Congresswoman to Washington.” In his unabashedly white supremacist platform and campaign, Talmadge stirred up racial tensions to such hysteria that people throughout the state feared an outbreak of race riots.⁷

Mankin’s victory motivated the city’s African American leaders to launch a voter registration drive. Along with the US Supreme Court’s ruling outlawing the white-only Georgia Democratic primary in April 1946 and the backlash from Talmadge’s racist gubernatorial campaign, the voter registration drive spurred more than 14,000 African Americans to register to vote, tripling the size of their electorate. As of February 1946, 6,876 African Americans were eligible to cast ballots; by May that number had swelled to 21,244. African Americans now constituted more than 25 percent of Atlanta’s voters.⁸

HATE GROUPS

While African Americans used the ballot to exercise their political influence, some whites resorted to violence. In the immediate postwar years, Atlanta had more racially-charged hate groups than perhaps any other city in the nation.⁹ Moribund since its heyday in the 1920s, the Ku Klux Klan revived under the leadership of an Atlanta obstetrician named Dr. Samuel Green, a frail, slightly built, bespectacled middle-aged man with a Hitler-like moustache. Green had been active in the Klan since the 1920s and became the Grand Dragon of Georgia in the 1930s. He was a powerful, persuasive speaker and an excellent organizer; by 1949 Green had established Klan chapters in every county of Georgia. On October 10, 1945, just two months after the Japanese surrender, Green presided over a spectacular cross burning atop nearby Stone Mountain, the first in the country since the attack on Pearl Harbor. Green and his fellow Klansmen stretched out hundreds of barrels of fuel oil mixed with sand to

create a three-hundred-foot cross across the mountain. When lit, the flames could be seen sixty miles away. Approximately seven months later, on May 9, 1946, Green led the Klan in another cross burning at Stone Mountain. This event was a direct response to Helen Douglas Mankin's victory, the end of the white-only primary, and Eugene Talmadge's white supremacist campaign for governor. It was also a mass initiation, as three hundred people, including many Atlanta police officers, joined the hooded order; and another one thousand showed up to watch the spectacle. At the end of the ceremony, Green formally announced the Klan's revival. The flames could be seen for miles and ominously signaled the rebirth of this notorious hate group. The war was over; the Klan was back.¹⁰

Once active, the Klan unleashed a brutal campaign of intimidation against Atlanta's African American population. The Klan terrorized, beat, and murdered an African American cab driver because he accepted white women as fares, attacked an African American World War II veteran at the airport, and assaulted an African American bellboy as he returned home from work. The Klan's special whipping squad flogged numerous African Americans for registering to vote, for voting, and for encouraging other African Americans to vote. An eyewitness to these events describes them as "one of the worst reigns of terror ever to be inflicted upon any land at any time." Klan violence and intimidation remained rampant for the rest of the decade. Every time the group reared its ugly head, the nation's press pummeled Georgia for its bigotry and intolerance.¹¹

Another band of hatemongers took form in the spring of 1946. Calling themselves the Columbians, the group attracted between two hundred and five hundred members, most of whom were young, poorly educated, impoverished, working-class men. To join, a prospective member had to answer three questions affirmatively: "Do you hate Niggers? Do you hate Jews? Have you got three dollars?" The first neo-Nazi group in the country, the Columbians wore Nazi-style uniforms and insignia, organized themselves into paramilitary units, practiced paramilitary drills in public, greeted each other with the fascist salute, held regular party rallies, and goose-stepped through the streets of Atlanta. They believed that a violent messianic struggle would culminate in the expulsion or extermination of African Americans and Jews. The organization decorated its shabby downtown headquarters with a portrait of Robert E. Lee and a copy of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. The Columbians, who claimed they were "forty times worse than the Klan," had an ambitious plan and an equally ambitious schedule for fulfilling it: they wanted to take control of the city in six months, the state in two years, the South in four years, and the nation in ten. The group obtained dynamite, intending to tar-

get police headquarters, the offices of the newspapers, and city hall with the goal of assassinating the chief of police, the liberal editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, and the mayor. The Columbians also planned to bomb a conference of several hundred African American ministers. The Columbians patrolled neighborhoods with increasing African American populations. They terrorized African Americans with racist signs, demonstrations, and verbal threats. Usurping police power, the Columbians interrogated and assaulted African Americans on the streets. The Columbians also threw stones, fired guns, and detonated bombs into African Americans' residences.¹²

The immediate political goals of the Klan and the Columbians were the defeat of Mankin and the election of Green's close friend Talmadge. In July 1946 Mankin had to defend her congressional seat against Judge James Davis, a Talmadge appointee to the bench and an avowed white supremacist who admired Hitler, had belonged to the Klan, and had links to the Columbians. Because this election was the Democratic primary and not a special election, the Democratic Party restored the county unit system of voting, a device designed to marginalize the urban and African American electorate. Although Mankin won the popular vote decisively, she carried only Atlanta-based Fulton County, receiving six unit votes. Davis won rural DeKalb and Rockdale counties, giving him eight unit votes and the election. In the governor's race, the Klan used intimidation and violence to prevent blacks from visiting the polls. Carmichael received sixteen thousand more popular votes than Talmadge, but Talmadge won the county unit vote in a landslide, 242 to 146. He captured the governorship because of his staunch support for white supremacy. The national press simultaneously censured and offered condolences to the people of Georgia for electing Talmadge.¹³

In the days immediately following Talmadge's victory, racial violence reached its peak. In rural Taylor County four whites murdered an African American World War II veteran because he had had the audacity to vote.¹⁴ In Walton County, about fifty miles east of Atlanta, white outrage and fear converged to cause the Moore's Ford Bridge Massacre, the last mass lynching in the country. The lynchers acted in response to the near-fatal stabbing of a popular white farmer by an African American tenant; the registration of eight hundred African American voters in Walton County; the inflammatory, racist rhetoric of the Talmadge campaign; and reports that African American men had been flirting with white women in Monroe, the county seat of Walton. The mob of approximately twenty unmasked white men terrorized and murdered two African American men and their African American wives. According to the county coroner, the mob shot the four victims at least sixty times at close range with rifles and shotguns, mutilating their faces and bod-

ies nearly beyond recognition. The crime horrified the nation, and once again the national press expressed indignation over events in Georgia. For three days, the nation's newspapers made the massacre their headline story. The day after the murders, NBC's nightly radio news program reported, "One hundred forty million Americans were disgraced late yesterday, humiliated in their own eyes and in the eyes of the world by one of the most vicious lynchings to stain our national record in a long time." The outgoing governor, Ellis Arnall, commented at a press conference, "This mass murder is one of the worst incidents ever to take place in our state. Civilization is incensed over this atrocity." Governor-elect Talmadge simply dismissed the murders as "regrettable." Tens of thousands of people in New York City, San Francisco, Boston, and Washington DC protested the lynching. The Kansas City Monarchs interrupted one of their games with a moment of silence to honor the victims. President Harry Truman ordered the Justice Department to investigate the crime. The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation swarmed the county, gathering evidence and conducting interrogations, but failed to identify the guilty individuals. These murders remained fresh in the national consciousness for years.¹⁵

ANOTHER TALMADGE

Although he won the election, Eugene Talmadge did not become Georgia's next governor. He died in late December 1946 before taking the oath of office. His passing set off a bizarre series of political events that for the third time in recent months brought Georgia infamy from the national media. For the next two months, confusion, commotion, and chaos reigned at the state capitol as three men claimed the governorship. These contenders were the newly elected lieutenant governor, racial moderate Melvin Thompson; Eugene Talmadge's white supremacist son, Herman Talmadge; and the anti-Talmadge outgoing governor, Ellis Arnall. The national press expected a bloodbath among the rival factions. The three antagonists engaged in verbal confrontations with one another, and fistfights erupted between supporters of the younger Talmadge and those of Arnall in the rotunda of the state capitol. One Arnall loyalist suffered a broken jaw in the fracas. Meanwhile, two of Talmadge's men battered down the exterior doors to the executive offices. Armed with a .38-caliber Smith & Wesson, Talmadge barricaded himself in the governor's office and changed the locks on the doors to prevent his opponents from entering. He and his family also occupied the governor's mansion for more than two months. The national press accused him of staging a palace coup. This deplorable fiasco ended in March 1947 when the Supreme Court

of Georgia made Thompson acting governor until a special election could be held in September 1948. The court's ruling restored order at the state capitol but not before Georgia's already tarnished image had been sullied further in the eyes of the nation.¹⁶

Talmadge accepted the court's decision and immediately began campaigning for the September 1948 gubernatorial election. With the ardent support of his close friend Samuel Green, he easily defeated Thompson. Under Green's leadership, the Klan intimidated African Americans throughout Georgia to prevent them from voting. The Klan held motorcades, cross burnings, and parades. Green's men dropped leaflets from an airplane and placed miniature coffins on the porches of African American citizens. Talmadge acknowledged Green's contribution to his victory by making the Grand Dragon a lieutenant colonel and an aide-de-camp on his staff. In rural Tooms County the Klan celebrated Talmadge's triumph by lynching an African American man in front of his wife and cousins. Once again, the nation's media expressed its outrage.¹⁷

Green, his fellow Klansmen, the vast majority of Atlanta's police officers, and many of the city's white residents vehemently opposed the hiring of African American policemen, something the African American community had wanted since the 1930s. African American police officers constituted a direct assault on white supremacy; the idea of African Americans licensed to carry guns and invested with the authority to arrest people of all races was truly terrifying to many whites. But after two hundred African Americans, many of them World War II veterans, marched on city hall demanding African American police, and as the strength of the African American electorate increased, Atlanta officials could no longer ignore the issue. With the support of the city council, Mayor William Hartsfield, Police Chief Herbert Jenkins, the *Atlanta Constitution* (but not the *Atlanta Journal*), the Atlanta Bar Association, and various other civic groups, the city hired eight African American police officers in April 1948. For the sake of propriety, the African American policemen changed into their uniforms in the basement of the Butler Street YMCA, not at police headquarters, and they were not allowed to arrest whites. But Chief Jenkins gave them confidential authority to prevent any crime in progress regardless of the race of the perpetrators. Moreover, the African American police officers wore the same uniform, swore the same oath, underwent the same training, carried the same equipment, including guns, and most importantly, received the same salary as their white counterparts.¹⁸ On their first day on the job, Mayor Hartsfield exhorted them, "Do the kind of job that Jackie Robinson did in Brooklyn."¹⁹ African Americans in Atlanta responded to the instatement of the new police with exuberance and pride. Hundreds of African Americans lined the streets to greet the new officers, cheering and follow-

ing behind them as they began their patrols. The hiring of African American policemen accomplished a long-sought goal of the African American community and was the first real breach in the wall of segregation in Atlanta.²⁰ Earl Mann's hosting integrated baseball games at Ponce de Leon Park was the second.

INTEGRATED GAMES IN ATLANTA

In the midst of this racially volatile environment, Earl Mann boldly initiated negotiations with Branch Rickey, the president of the Brooklyn Dodgers, to bring his integrated team to Atlanta for a series of exhibition games against Mann's Crackers. The two baseball executives discussed this idea for about a year. Before agreeing to the Dodgers' visit, Mann consulted with local leaders about African Americans playing alongside whites at Ponce de Leon Park. Mayor William Hartsfield, who disliked baseball and never attended a game, advised against it, fearing a race riot. Fulton County Commissioner Charlie Brown, who was an avid, lifelong baseball fan, encouraged Mann. Brown predicted that a Dodgers-Crackers exhibition featuring Brooklyn's African American star, Jackie Robinson, would set an all-time attendance record in Atlanta. On January 14, 1949, in his first press conference of the year, Rickey officially announced that the Dodgers had scheduled three games against the Crackers for April 8, 9, and 10. Rickey added that Mann had specifically insisted on the appearance of Robinson and the Dodgers' other African American star, Roy Campanella, in the Brooklyn lineup. The story broke in Atlanta on the same day that Mann confirmed that the Dodgers, with Robinson and Campanella, were expected to perform at Ponce de Leon Park. These games would be the first interracial sporting event in Atlanta.²¹

Mann's announcement of the games received no opposition from local or state officials, not even Governor Herman Talmadge, but it provoked immediate outrage from Samuel Green, who vehemently challenged the legality of mixed-race athletic competition. The Grand Dragon snorted, "You can bet your life I'll look up the segregation law and investigate thoroughly. In my opinion it is illegal." Green added in a telephone interview with Jimmy Cannon of the *New York Post*, "Colored players will bring ill will or ill good in the South." African Americans and whites playing baseball together, he told Cannon, was "breaking down the traditions of Georgia." Paul Webb, the Fulton County solicitor, quickly thwarted Green's hopes of preventing the games on legal grounds when he declared, "I don't know of any law covering such a situation." Three days later, Jack Savage, the city attorney of Atlanta, emphatically asserted that no city statute prohibited integrated sports. Georgia Attor-

ney General Eugene Cook acknowledged that the state had laws mandating segregation in the school system, public transportation, and marriage, but no laws forbidding African Americans from playing baseball against whites.²² To maintain the racial purity of Ponce de Leon Park, Green needed to unearth some obscure statute that had fallen into disuse or have the state legislature pass a new one banning the games.

DEFIANCE AND RIDICULE

The Klansman's outburst brought forthright defiance from Branch Rickey, Jackie Robinson, and Earl Mann. Rickey did not intend to break any laws, but he threatened to cancel the exhibitions in Atlanta if any circumstance, legal or otherwise, barred Robinson and Roy Campanella from playing in them. In response to Samuel Green's claim that integrated sports violated the law in Atlanta, the Dodgers' president imperiously fulminated, "Nobody can tell me anywhere what players I can or cannot play. If we are not allowed to use the players we want to play or are informed that by using certain players we are violating a law, why, the Dodgers simply won't play there, and that is all there is to that." Speaking on his nightly radio program in New York, Robinson was equally resolute: "I will play baseball where my employer, the Brooklyn Dodgers, wants me to play." He expressed the hope that fans in Atlanta would not allow Green's objections to cancel the games. Campanella expressed a similar sentiment. Mann brushed off the Grand Dragon's howling: "We will play whatever team the Dodgers put on the field. Since Robinson and Campanella are rated as Brooklyn regulars we expect they will be in the Dodger line-up." The following day he reiterated his unwavering resolve to host integrated games at Ponce de Leon Park: "We scheduled the first string teams in order to give the Cracker fans the tops in entertainment. We knew this meant Robinson and Campanella would be in the Dodger line-up as they are regulars."²³

Newspapers throughout the South endorsed and supported the integrated exhibition games between the Brooklyn Dodgers and local teams.²⁴ Sportswriters and editorialists in Atlanta and elsewhere scorned and ridiculed Green. They represented Green as hopelessly obsolete, with no place in post-World War II America, and suggested that his venomous objections to integrated sporting events were hateful, malicious, and the height of absurdity. The editors of the *Sporting News* contemptuously described Green as the "Supreme Megoozelum" and the "Grand Goofus." Integrated games were so commonplace that the *Sporting News* averred, "Nobody gives a hoot what color a ball player may be. Only his skills and abilities measure his degree of desirability." Arthur Daley, sports editor of the *New York Times*, denounced

Green and his fellow Klansmen as “small-minded ignorant men.” According to Daley, Jackie Robinson was just another ballplayer, and southerners would get beyond his race and accept him. “This,” Daley concluded, “is as inevitable as death and taxes.” Jack Tarver, associate editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, viciously caricatured the Grand Dragon as a jackass in a column acerbically titled, “Green the New White Hope?” A lifelong Georgian who was known as a social critic with a caustic sense of humor, Tarver sarcastically admitted to the reader,

Well, sir, I am certainly glad to see that old Doc Green has come charging to my rescue and is going to protect me from having to watch Jackie Robinson perform with the Brooklyn Dodgers when they play three exhibition games here this spring. It sure would be a terrible thing for me, sitting in the bleachers, to be contaminated by that darkey out there playing second base. Not only that, but it might make me wonder a little about white supremacy, comparing Robinson’s batting average with those of some bush-league Aryans who have appeared at Ponce de Leon from time to time.

In his daily column, Ed Danforth, the sports editor of the *Atlanta Journal*, the dean of Atlanta sportswriters, and a native southerner, condemned Green and “his sheeted playmates”:

They can now rush out to defend us white folks from the threat to our supremacy as manifested in the sight of Jackie Robinson and a boy named Campanella playing on the same lot with several dozen paler men of varied racial origins. . . . The two Negroes are considered paid entertainers. . . . Men of good will have no earthly objections to the Dodgers playing their full team. Those to whom the sight would be offensive may stay at home. There is no compulsion to attend.

Aware of the negative press that Georgia and the city of Atlanta in particular had recently received over racial issues, Danforth warned his readers that the national media was eagerly waiting to pummel the city and the state once again with “ripe adjectives. . . . Meanwhile most folks will writhe over the sorry press Georgia already has reaped over the incident. When the full treatment is given us, we will wonder why the game was scheduled in the first place. We are not yet ready for a senior membership in the community of states. We must wait until our voice changes.”²⁵

The press campaign against Green peaked with the *Sporting News* issue of January 26, 1949. The secondary headline proclaimed, “Atlanta Fandom Okays Jackie’s Visit.” In the accompanying article, John Bradberry, sports editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, summarized the major developments concerning the games since Rickey had first announced them on January 14, 1949. A large cartoon titled “Over the Fences of Prejudice” occupied most of the front

page, reinforcing the sentiment expressed in the headline. In the background of the cartoon, a huge crowd of fans in a southern ballpark cheers wildly for Jackie to hit a home run. The foreground shows two Klan robes and hoods abandoned on a bench just outside the ballpark while a white man, presumably a Klansman, has bought a ticket and passes through a turnstile to watch the game. His hand gesture, a raised forearm with a clenched fist, indicates his excitement and eagerness to see Robinson perform. Two young boys—one white, the other African American—stand side by side outside the ballpark peering at the game through knotholes in the outfield fence. The sight of Robinson coming to bat enralls them equally.

In addition to the lead editorial, eight other articles in this issue of the *Sporting News* directly related to the upcoming Dodgers-Crackers series. A majority of these articles appeared on either page one or two, the others on page four. They repeat the themes the Atlanta and New York writers delineated at the beginning of the controversy. Arthur Daley once again censured Green and his fellow Klansmen as “a disgraced and impotent bunch of bigots who childishly like to play cops and robbers while wearing bed sheets, disowned and scorned by their own communities.” He again insisted that southerners would accept integrated play just as northerners had. Jimmy Cannon of the *New York Post* condemned Green’s actions and opinions as reminiscent of Nazi Germany. After finishing his lengthy telephone interview with the Grand Dragon, Cannon felt covered in filth: “I hung up and took a bath. I stayed in the tub a long time.” Bradberry dismissed Green’s objections as meaningless hullabaloo and concluded that most Atlantans would accept the games as exhibitions featuring major- and minor-league baseball teams “without emphasis or concern that a couple of the big timers happen to be Negroes.” Bradberry added, “Just for the record, I am just as much a Southerner as anybody. . . . But Providence willing, I’m going to see those three Dodger-Cracker games and am glad of the opportunity.”

Bradberry judged popular opinion correctly. People in Atlanta overwhelmingly supported the games. The vast majority of the letters Earl Mann received at his office approved of them; very few opposed. Unofficial and unscientific surveys found broad popular support for the precedent-setting series. The Associated Press chose fifty people from the Atlanta telephone directory at random and asked their opinion of allowing Robinson and Campanella to play against the Crackers at Ponce de Leon Park. Forty unhesitatingly approved, four declared indifference, and only six expressed mild opposition. One man proclaimed, “If the Klan is against it, I’m for it. It’s a swell idea. I haven’t seen a ball game since I was kid. I’ll see one of these.” The *Atlanta Constitution* queried ten people on the streets about the upcoming games. Eight wanted Rob-

inson and Campanella to play, while only two opposed. By the end of January 1949, excitement about the Dodgers-Crackers contests had reached fever pitch, and it remained high throughout the spring. Crackers Vice President Jasper Donaldson and several sportswriters predicted that each game would draw capacity crowds and that the exhibition scheduled for Sunday, April 10, might attract the largest attendance in franchise history. Already the railroad had arranged to add extra cars to the Nancy Hanks passenger train to bring African American fans to Atlanta from Savannah. By the middle of February, fans had besieged the Crackers' front office with requests for tickets, and the railroads had scheduled special trains to bring baseball enthusiasts to Atlanta from all over Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama. By the end of March, African Americans had deluged the office of Atlanta's African American newspaper, the *Atlanta Daily World*, with requests for tickets to the games. The *World's* sports editor, Marion Jackson, believed that the series "should be the biggest sports event ever carded here during springtime."²⁶

At the same time that fans were manifesting their excitement about the games, a bill before the state legislature threatened to prohibit Robinson and Campanella from competing against the Crackers in Atlanta. In mid-February, four rural lawmakers introduced a bill in the Georgia House of Representatives and the Georgia Senate that would make interracial athletic events illegal. Atlanta newspapers editorialized against this proposed law. Perhaps remembering the failed bomb plots of the Columbians, Danforth sarcastically commented that this legal attempt to ban the games was "better than dynamiting the ballpark." In his regular column Jackson angrily interpreted the bill as fighting the Civil War and Reconstruction all over again while the rest of the nation moved forward. He warned that passage of the law would have dire consequences for the state: "The major league clubs will shun Georgia like it has the Black Plague. . . . It is quite sad that the world will move on without us, and that in the backwash of its departure, we will fume and fuss because people look at us as an alien and strange race for which there is no hope. Yet Georgia is asking for it and unquestionably will get it." The *World* reprinted most of Jackson's column as its lead editorial a few days later under the title "Don't Re-Fight the Civil War." Although the bill cleared the Senate's State of the Republic Committee and had the strong support of the Talmadge administration, it failed to become law, removing the last legal obstacle to the playing of the unprecedented series.²⁷

With the holding of the games apparently assured, the *Atlanta Daily World* shifted its focus from condemning efforts to prevent the games to making sure that the games were played without incident. The paper's staff expected fans from all over the southeast and sportswriters from across the country to attend

the series. Neither the city nor the state could afford any more negative publicity over racial issues. Jackson advised his readers, "It behooves Atlanta to be on its best behavior for it seems as though some folks are expecting 'a racist-like cause celebre' over a routine three-day exhibition between the Crackers and the Dodgers." Jackson continued to emphasize this concern, writing two weeks later that the national press coverage of the Dodgers-Crackers games would provide racists, rabble-rousers, crackpots, and troublemakers of any stripe an excellent opportunity to bring national and even international opprobrium and infamy to the city. He asked rhetorically, "Wouldn't it be the worst publicity in the world for any hate mongers in this state to make trouble for Jackie Robinson? Especially since he was born in Cairo, Ga. Wouldn't the tabloids love this angle and the gazettes behind the Iron Curtain in Russia jump with glee?" Less than a week later and only five days before the first Dodgers-Crackers game, the sportswriter penned two separate articles in the same issue informing his readers that the eyes of the nation would soon fix on Atlanta and that all citizens had a duty to prevent untoward incidents. In this same issue, the *World* published an editorial titled, "Let's Hang Out the Welcome Mat." It argued forcefully that the series offered Atlanta and Georgia an excellent opportunity to overcome the negative press they had received in recent years over racial issues. The games, the editorial opined, allow

Georgia to dispel the fog of prejudice and intolerance which has surrounded this state.

It can give the lie to much of the publicity in the newspapers and magazines circulated over the nation which pictures Georgia as a backward state in which lynchings, masked hoodlums, and lawbreakers abound and in which gleeful lawlessness is sanctioned with legal and governmental support.

A tolerant and sportsmanlike view of the two players can restore us unto the fellowship of states which make up the United States—and in which we have developed the Great American Pastime of organized baseball.

We in Atlanta and Georgia know that much of that which is written and said about Georgia is untrue. We know that the Ku Klux Klan spirit is in the minority and that the majority of citizens are fair and law abiding. Unfortunately the good is seldom written and the evils of the state are glamorized in stories and features—it is this in which the characterizations of us have been obtained. . . .

We welcome Jackie and Roy in Atlanta. We commend the management of the Atlanta Crackers for giving us a chance to see them in baseball, sportsmanship, dignity, and in honor.²⁸

Earl Mann, Branch Rickey, Police Chief Herbert Jenkins, and others expected no disturbances or racial incidents at the games. Local and state officials, sportswriters and editorialists, ordinary citizens, and the Crack-

ers' players all approved of them. Rickey predicted that the only mob Robinson might confront would consist of exuberant fans wanting his autograph.²⁹ Dodgers radio announcer Ernie Harwell, who had grown up in Atlanta and had a longstanding affiliation with the Crackers, thought the Klan was a gang of publicity-seeking cowards who would not dare cause any trouble during the series. On the three game days, Chief Jenkins stationed extra officers to handle traffic outside the ballpark, but he was so convinced that no untoward incidents would occur inside Ponce de Leon Park that he assigned only the regular detail of policemen to work the white grandstand. Because he and Mann expected a large crowd of African Americans to attend the games, Jenkins assigned seven African American officers to patrol the segregated African American bleachers. They were not there to squelch enthusiasm or pride; they were on hand for crowd control. The chief assured Mann that this police presence was sufficient to handle any situation that might arise and that his officers would prevent disorder. Mann, in turn, warned ticket purchasers that the police would eject troublemakers and drunks from the ballpark. He informed Jackson that out of the metro area's population of nearly six hundred thousand, fewer than eight had telephoned his office to object to integrated play. He received one such call while discussing traffic control with Jenkins. Mann handed the telephone to the chief. After Jenkins identified himself, the caller immediately hung up and the phone went dead. According to Jackson, who discussed arrangements for the visiting black press with Mann at Ponce de Leon Park on April 6, the Crackers' president "insisted that the game was a landmark in race relations but it had the complete acceptance by the press and public."³⁰

BOYCOTT

As the games approached, Samuel Green acknowledged that all legal attempts to ban them had failed. Nevertheless, he persisted in his efforts to prohibit integrated play at Ponce de Leon Park. The Klan leader now invoked southern custom to prevent the Dodgers-Crackers series from occurring. On Friday, April 8, the day of the first game, Green told a *New York Times* reporter, "There is no law against the game. But we have an unwritten law in the South—the Jim Crow law. The Atlanta Baseball Club is breaking down traditions of the South and the club will pay for it." The Grand Dragon threatened a permanent boycott of Crackers games, warning, "10,000 persons have signed a pledge never to enter the Atlanta baseball park again if a game is played there by players of mixed races. The Atlanta Baseball club will lose thousands of dollars if the game is played tonight as scheduled."³¹

Several researchers have accepted the existence of this petition as fact.³² However, the only evidence for its existence are the statements Green made to a *New York Times* reporter and the subsequent brief article based on those statements on page thirteen of the April 9 issue of the *Times*. Since mid-January, the three Atlanta dailies—as well as the *Baltimore Afro-American*, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, and the *Sporting News*—had provided extensive coverage and commentary about the Dodgers-Crackers series and Green's opposition to it. They would continue to do so for several days after the games had been played. None of them ever mention this petition. Moreover, the three Atlanta newspapers, especially the *World*, reported regularly on the various activities of Green and the Klan. For example, on the same day that the *Times* carried the article about the petition, the *Atlanta Constitution* published a story about Green's speech scheduled for that evening in Langley, South Carolina. In its April 10 issue, the *World* printed a front-page story about the Grand Dragon's complaint that the US Navy and the Marine Corps barred Klan members from enlisting. But these two newspapers had nothing in them about any Klan petition.³³ If this petition had existed, it is inconceivable that the three Atlanta dailies would have ignored it. In the forty-one years between 1949 and his death in 1990, Earl Mann never mentioned this petition to his son Oreon or his wife Myra. Norman Macht, who worked for the Crackers' radio announcers in 1949 and as an office boy for Mann in 1950, also never heard Mann refer to this petition. A teenager in 1949, Charles Pettett traveled by himself from nearby Marietta to Atlanta to attend one of the Dodgers-Crackers games; he insists that his parents would never have allowed him to do so had they heard of any Klan petition.³⁴ In 1952, Furman Bisher, sports editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, published a highly laudatory article about Mann's life and baseball career in a popular national magazine. Bisher began the article praising Mann's defiance of Green and the Klan in 1949, but he did not mention any Klan petition.³⁵ A petition signed by ten thousand persons committed to a permanent boycott of Crackers games would have negatively affected attendance at Ponce de Leon, especially in the early part of the 1949 season when the offensive events were still fresh in the minds of the signatories. In spite of inclement weather that cancelled four games and a crippling strike by the city's transit workers, attendance at Crackers games soared in April, May, and June. Atlanta baseball fans flocked to Ponce de Leon Park in such great numbers that as of June 22, 1949, the Crackers were on pace to establish new franchise and league attendance records.³⁶ The evidence is not conclusive, but it strongly suggests that the petition with ten thousand signatures existed only in Green's twisted imagination. A desperate man, Green in

all likelihood invented the petition as a last-ditch effort to preserve a way of life that was inevitably vanishing before his very eyes.

The threat of a boycott—even one based on a nonexistent petition—could have had serious repercussions for Mann and the Crackers. As the Crackers' president, Mann worked for the Coca-Cola Company, which owned the team, and its chief executive officer, Robert W. Woodruff.³⁷ Woodruff did not like baseball and never attended Crackers games.³⁸ The baseball team was an insignificant appendage of his vast soft drink empire.³⁹ As a businessman, Woodruff's chief concern was selling soda and making a profit. On race issues, he was the ultimate pragmatist: he opposed racism because it was bad for business. The Coca-Cola executive wanted people of all races to buy his product. He could not afford to offend or alienate either, but especially whites, people like Green and the putative ten thousand who signed the petition, because they were the company's best customers. A white boycott of Coca-Cola was a possibility as a backlash to the Dodgers-Crackers series.⁴⁰ The easiest way for Woodruff to solve this dilemma would have been to order Mann to cancel the games. Woodruff had several opportunities to do so. Mann never met personally with Woodruff, but he had regular monthly meetings with Hughes Spalding, the chairman of the board of directors of the Atlanta Crackers, the senior partner of the law firm that represented Coke, and a member of Woodruff's inner circle of friends and confidants.⁴¹ Mann met with Spalding at the lawyer's office on the afternoon of April 8, 1949, the same day that the Grand Dragon announced his boycott of Crackers games.⁴² To his credit, Woodruff did not interfere, the games were played as scheduled, and they drew record crowds.

THE GAMES

Just prior to the first game of the series on the night of Friday, April 8, 1949, Dodgers manager Burt Shotton gathered his players in the clubhouse and read aloud a letter in which the author threatened to shoot Jackie Robinson if he took the field against the Crackers. According to Dodgers pitcher Carl Erskine, the atmosphere in the clubhouse became so tense that the players, who were accustomed to rowdy and angry fans, were dumbstruck and numb. They found the threat on their teammate's life inexplicable; everyone was at a loss for words and no one knew what to say or do. Outfielder Gene Hermanski broke the tension in the morbid locker room with comic relief. He suggested that all Dodgers players wear Robinson's uniform, number forty-two, so that the assassin would not know whom to target. Robinson and the rest of the team laughed heartily at this joke. The good humor continued when the Dodgers

took the field for pregame warmups. Shortstop Pee Wee Reese asked Robinson to move further away from him just in case the shooter's aim was poor.⁴³

The Dodgers and the Crackers played the three games before 49,309 fans, a record for a three-game series in the Southern Association. Brooklyn won the first contest, 6–3, and Atlanta prevailed in the next two, 9–1 and 8–4. Whatever fear or anxiety Robinson may have felt dissipated quickly. Before the first game he told Associated Press sportswriter Joe Reichler, “Believe me, this is the most thrilling experience of my life. It’s the most wonderful thing that ever happened to me. . . . The strain is over now, but I don’t mind telling you I was plenty worried. . . . I didn’t know what to expect. . . . Deep down in my heart, though, I knew nothing would happen.” Robinson played a full nine innings in each of the three games and performed well at bat, in the field, and on the bases. In the third game he stole home on the front end of a double steal, one of the most rare and thrilling plays in baseball. Roy Campanella appeared only in the first game of the series. He warmed up Dodgers pitchers between innings in the other two contests. No one shot at Robinson (or Campanella), and only two untoward incidents marred the three games. In the first game, two men got into a scuffle over a foul ball hit into the grandstand down the third-base line. During the fourth inning of the same game, two portly white men engaged in fisticuffs behind the home plate. Two policemen immediately separated and escorted the pugilists from the ballpark.⁴⁴

In their accounts and descriptions of the series, eyewitnesses, researchers, the *Sporting News*, and the three Atlanta newspapers emphasize the importance of the third game played in perfect baseball weather on Sunday afternoon, April 10, 1949. This game is significant and memorable because of the record-setting attendance. It drew 25,221 fans, including 13,885 African Americans, to Ponce de Leon Park, which seated only 14,500. Baseball enthusiasts had taken every seat in the ballpark long before game time. African American fans had occupied every inch of the left-field bleachers before noon, three hours prior to the start of the game. Thousands more formed a deep semicircle in the outfield that extended from the left- to the right-field bleachers. Still others perched on the branches of the stately magnolia tree that stood in deep right-center field about 450 feet from home plate. At 2:30, standing-room-only signs went up at all the entrances to the ballpark. Earl Mann estimated that more than 5,000 persons turned away at the gate when they learned that only standing room remained. This crowd was the largest ever to attend a baseball game at Ponce de Leon, shattering the old record of 21,812 set on opening day in 1948 when the Crackers hosted the Birmingham Barons.⁴⁵ It was also the largest in the history of the Southern Association. An excited Earl Mann told a *New York Times* reporter, “Nothing like this has ever happened

before.” He also commented that the throng was one of the most orderly he had witnessed in his two decades as a minor-league executive. The *Constitution* and the *World* made the game and especially the record-breaking attendance front-page news. The *Journal* also emphasized the enormous crowd but relegated its coverage to the sports pages. In addition to the usual game summary, the three Atlanta dailies and the *Sporting News* published large photos of the jam-packed ballpark. The *Journal* printed a panoramic view of the crowd that extended across the entire width of the newspaper. The *World* published a panoramic photo that is even more dramatic: it is a shot of the crowd taken five minutes before game time that stretches across the entire width of the top of the front page. The caption eloquently and powerfully captures the vastness of the crowd, its sense of anticipation and excitement, and the feeling that it was about to watch history unfold: “When this photo was made the left-field and right-field bleachers were packed; thousands were lined from foul line to foul line; hundreds were sitting and standing on the steep terrace behind center field; some were comfortably seated atop sign boards; and others were still streaming into the park.”⁴⁶

Actually, the first game of the series, not the third game, made history. The first game established an unequivocal acceptance of integrated play in Atlanta and by extension the South. Bumper-to-bumper traffic choked Ponce de Leon Avenue an hour before game time. An overflow crowd of 15,119, including about 6,000 African Americans, attended the game.⁴⁷ The contest also drew the largest press corps to cover a baseball game in the history of Ponce de Leon Park. The press coverage may have been the largest ever for a spring exhibition game anywhere in the country. Sportswriters from the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the *Baltimore Afro-American*, the *Birmingham World*, the *Chicago Defender*, the *Savannah Herald*, and papers from New York, Brooklyn, and Atlanta were on hand to witness and report on the first integrated game in the city. Each of Georgia’s leading dailies, the Associated Press, the United Press, and the International News Service dispatched representatives to report the game. *Time* magazine recalled its correspondent from the prestigious Masters Golf Tournament in Augusta, Georgia; *Life* magazine sent a photographer and a feature writer; and *Newsweek* sent a reporter to cover the game. Many of them expected Klan riots, mob violence, and a racial blood bath, but nothing happened except a baseball game. The high drama of a confrontation between Samuel Green and Earl Mann, Branch Rickey, and Jackie Robinson was over before it even started. The only story from Ponce de Leon Park that night was racial tolerance and goodwill. When Robinson came to bat in the first inning, he received a thunderous ovation from African American and white fans alike that quickly overwhelmed a few scattered, sophomoric boos. After he lashed

a hard ground-ball single past the second baseman to drive in the first run of the game, Robinson received another round of deafening applause and a standing ovation. "The reception," wrote sportswriter Sam Lacy of the *Baltimore Afro-American*, "was something to behold; something that had to be seen to be believed." When the top of the first inning ended, Robinson took the field, and for the rest of the game, he was just the Dodgers' second baseman. After the game, Robinson told sportswriter Joe Reichler, "I wouldn't change shoes with any man in the world. . . . It's great to feel that I am playing a part in breaking down the barriers against the people of my race. I was afraid it would never be in my lifetime." But it did happen and it happened on the night of Friday, April 8, 1949 at Ponce de Leon Park in the heart of Georgia's capital. "Atlanta," wrote Ed Danforth, "double-crossed them. Not a cross was burned. If any of Doc Green's boys were there, they left their nightshirts at home and paid \$1.10 for a grandstand seat. Jackie Robinson and Roy Campanella . . . were not molested. They . . . promptly were put in their places at second base and catcher respectively." Marion Jackson interpreted the game similarly: "The fans—all Georgians—forgot that Negroes and whites were competing for the first time in Georgia and rejoiced in the Great American Pastime of Baseball." Lacy agreed, writing, "The Klan and its hooded despots were never more thoroughly repudiated." When the game ended and fans left the ballpark to return home, they "felt no contamination after having watched two Negroes play baseball with and against white people. The Atlanta players didn't feel any either."⁴⁸

The second game, played the following afternoon, attracted a crowd of 18,969 fans and built on the foundation of racial tolerance established the previous night. Interviewed after the game, both Robinson and Roy Campanella told a *Constitution* reporter that the best treatment they had received from whites came in Atlanta. Dodgers radio announcer Ernie Harwell agreed, commenting that whites in Atlanta gave Robinson louder and longer applause than anywhere else. Before and after the game, white children besieged Robinson for his autograph. The *Constitution* and the *Baltimore Afro-American* thought these incidents were so poignant that they published photographs of them in their sports pages. The only editorial about the series written in Atlanta's white dailies appeared in the *Constitution* following the second game. The editors emphasized the large crowds and lauded the orderly behavior of both white and African American fans at the first two games. They aimed an especially sharp barb at the four state legislators who had attempted to ban the series back in February. "No law," the editorial opined, "is needed to protect us." Although the attendance at the second game at Ponce de Leon Park was smaller than Earl Mann and several sportswriters had predicted, thousands

of people watched the game on the new medium of television and even more listened to it on the radio. This vast exposure to integrated play was, according to Marion Jackson, a “democratic gesture [that] meant something towards tolerance in this state.”⁴⁹ The first two games—with their absence of violence; their large, orderly, and enthusiastic crowds; and the exuberant and gracious reception the fans gave to Jackie Robinson—made possible the record-setting attendance of the third game.

The Dodgers-Crackers series had far-reaching consequences for the city of Atlanta, the African American community, Earl Mann, and organized baseball in the South. The press lauded Atlanta for its racial tolerance, repairing the soiled image that it had garnered following World War II. In his first regular column after the games, Marion Jackson argued that the record-breaking crowds that attended the series and the lack of untoward incidents struck a powerful blow for racial harmony and democracy. He compared the city’s and the state’s virulent racial hatred of the immediate postwar years with the racial goodwill displayed during the games: “The State of Georgia which has often been the ‘testing ground’ for new schemes of bigotry and intolerance likewise did a complete about face in welcoming home Georgia-born Jackie Robinson.” Jackson returned to this theme in a column penned nine days later. “The only good publicity that Georgia has sent to the nation in recent years,” he wrote, “was the news of Jackie Robinson and Roy Campanella in action with the Brooklyn Dodgers against the Atlanta Crackers. The *Sporting News*, baseball’s bible, devoted several pages to the story that Georgia had rejoined the United States in fellowship and Democracy in welcoming the two Negro stars. Likewise the nation’s newspapers devoted reams of copy and space to the story. “This ought to be a lesson to Georgia!!!” In the only editorial published in its April 14 issue, the *World* praised the people of the city and the state for their spirit of interracial tolerance. Fans at Ponce de Leon Park treated Robinson and his teammates with sportsmanship and respect. “The series,” the editorial concluded, “was played without incident and Atlanta and all Georgia are better for it in the eyes of the nation.” Lacy attended all three games in Atlanta, and he too emphasized the shift in racial attitudes from bigotry to tolerance. In the *Sporting News*, Lacy eloquently—almost poetically—informed the nation’s baseball aficionados, “The State of Georgia accepted its inter-racial baptism with grace and bearing. Immersed in the waters of liberalism, its head anointed with the oil of democracy, Georgia came up smiling. The Great experiment is over and none of the principals is any the worse for wear.”⁵⁰

Robinson’s appearance in Atlanta received widespread publicity in the nation’s newspapers. A resident of Seattle, Washington, named Lloyd Thorpe was so moved by the game accounts and descriptions in his local paper that

he wrote a letter to the *Constitution*. Thorpe believed that the racial tolerance Atlanta fans demonstrated during the games set an example for the rest of the country to emulate:

From this far corner of America I would like to pay my respects to the broad-minded sportsmanship of Atlanta citizens for the reception they accorded baseball player Jackie Robinson on the occasion of his recent appearance in your city.

Our local press gave prominent space to the superbly written wire story which very fittingly, it seemed to me, to place but minor interest on the game and instead dealt with great understanding of the significance of Robinson's being there.

Certainly the ultimate solution to America's great problem draws nearer more quickly and with less pain when people act as did Atlanta men and women in your ballpark that day.⁵¹

The games electrified the African American community in Atlanta and elsewhere. According to Jackson, the Dodgers-Crackers series was the biggest sports story in the nation's African American newspapers in the winter and spring of 1949. Only the inauguration of President Harry Truman received more coverage. As Jackson traveled around the state attending high school and college athletic events, people bombarded him with questions about the games. The Atlanta sportswriter observed that by early April, African American sports fans throughout the South were so excited about the games that they talked nonstop about them. Atlanta's African Americans reacted to the series in the same way that they had responded to the integration of the city's police department a year earlier. They "came [to the games] dressed in their finest wear and created in the ballpark's colored section a gala, a picnic, a carnival, and a party atmosphere all in one. It was indeed a weekend to remember." Robinson replaced heavyweight champion Joe Louis as the African American community's sports hero, and baseball replaced boxing as the community's favorite sport. Robinson became "*our* Jackie who owned that spring weekend of 1949 and won the hearts of black Atlanta." Moreover, the games set a new standard for what African Americans in Atlanta could achieve. During the mayor's race that summer, John Wesley Dobbs, one of the foremost leaders of Atlanta's African American community, demanded the hiring of African American firemen and the construction of an African American fire station. He made this demand in front of a large African American audience and the two candidates for the office. Dobbs told them that if Robinson could draw the largest crowd ever to Ponce de Leon Park for a baseball game, then African Americans could successfully fight fires.⁵²

Mann emerged from the games with his prestige greatly enhanced. Because he had defied Green, he earned a national reputation as a prejudice buster.

Writing in the *Sporting News*, Dan Parker of the *New York Daily Mirror* extolled his courage and fortitude: "If more people told the Ku Klux Klan where to get off as bluntly as President Earl Mann of the Atlanta Baseball Club did, the bed-sheet braves would all scurry back into their rat holes." In the same issue of the *Sporting News*, the lead editorial lauded Mann for his resolute determination to do what was right in the face of grave adversity. Baseball had benefited from his judgment and wisdom, and Mann, the editorial concluded, should be in the major leagues.⁵³ The Crackers' president also won the accolades of the *Atlanta Daily World*. In an editorial, the newspaper held him up as an example for church leaders to follow on racial issues. In defying the Klan, Mann showed great courage and leadership, qualities that they too often lacked.⁵⁴

The Dodgers-Crackers series in Atlanta cleared a path for integrated games in the other cities of the Southern Association and the smaller towns of the South. Atlanta was the major city of the region. It was the headquarters of the Klan. Moreover, Atlanta was the undisputed baseball capital of the South. Under Mann's leadership the Atlanta Crackers became the premier minor-league organization in the South and one of the finest in the country. Between 1934 and 1948, his teams won six pennants, more than any other club in organized baseball except the New York Yankees.⁵⁵ Mann's Crackers led the Association in attendance every year from 1934 to 1947; in 1948 the team finished second. In 1935 Atlanta became the first team in the history of the Southern Association to attract more than 300,000 paid admissions. Atlanta's attendance of 330,795 was the highest in the minor leagues that year. The Crackers surpassed the 300,000 mark the following year and again led the minor leagues in attendance. Atlanta was the first city in the history of the minors to draw a two-season total of more than 600,000 spectators. In 1935 Atlanta's attendance surpassed that of five major-league teams and in 1936 it exceeded that of three. After his first season running the Crackers in 1934, Mann turned a profit every year between 1934 and 1948, with the exception of 1942 and 1943, when World War II forced many minor-league teams and leagues to cease operations altogether. Twice Mann won the coveted *Sporting News* Minor League Executive of the Year Award. Only one other minor-league executive won this award twice, and only one other Southern Association executive won it between 1934 and 1949. By April 1949, Mann had earned a reputation as a baseball genius and as one of the most talented and successful minor-league operators in the country. With this recognition and unparalleled record of achievement both on and off the field, Mann and the Atlanta Crackers exercised paramount influence over the rest of the Southern Association. Because Mann and Atlanta had approved integrated play, integrated play was right for the Association and for the South. "The fact is that when the liberal forces in Atlanta, stronghold of

the Ku Klux Klan, defeated the white shirters who wanted to bar Jackie Robinson from appearing there with Brooklyn last spring,” wrote Dan Parker in the *Sporting News*, “a powerful blow was struck against the color line in sports. The whole South seems to have regarded the issue as settled by the Atlanta case. . . . It would seem that the racial issue as it affects baseball is practically dead in the South.” Indeed, between 1950 and the end of the spring exhibition season in 1954, every city in the Southern Association, including Birmingham and Little Rock, had accepted integrated baseball games. During these years, Southern Association cities hosted fifty-five mixed-race games, all without incident. Almost four hundred thousand fans attended them, voting with their feet and their money in favor of integrated play.⁵⁶

Green did not live to see this phenomenon. He suffered a massive heart attack and died at his home on August 18, 1949. Mann had purchased the Crackers from the Coca-Cola Company twelve days earlier, and he continued to operate the club successfully and profitably for another decade.⁵⁷ By bringing the integrated Dodgers to Atlanta for a series of games against the Crackers at Ponce de Leon Park, Mann engineered a revolution that reverberated throughout organized baseball in the South. He broke decisively with the decades-old custom of Jim Crow, shattering a tradition that spread inexorably throughout the region. The Dodgers-Crackers games in 1949 marked the end of an era and the beginning of a new one for Atlanta and southern baseball.

NOTES

1. Desk diary entry of Hughes Spalding, April 8, 1949, Hughes Spalding Papers [hereafter HSP] MS 1413, box 18, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia–Athens. Only rarely did Spalding add notes or commentary in his desk diary, and usually they concern his family life. Unfortunately, he did not summarize his meeting with Earl Mann on April 8.

2. This paragraph is a synthesis of many secondary works. The following were the most useful: Frederick Allen, *Atlanta Rising: The Invention of an International City, 1946–1996* (Atlanta: Longstreet Press, 1996); Frederick Allen, *Secret Formula: How Brilliant Marketing and Relentless Salesmanship Made Coca-Cola the Best-Known Product in the World* (New York: Harper Business, 1994); Andy Ambrose, “Atlanta,” *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?path=/Cities/Cities&id=h-2207>; David Harmon, *Beneath the Image of the Civil Rights Movement and Race Relations: Atlanta, Georgia, 1946–1981* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996); George Lankevich, *Atlanta: A Chronological and Documentary History* (Dobbs Ferry NY: Oceana Publications, 1978); Harold Martin, *Atlanta & Environs: A Chronicle of Its People and Events*, vol. 3, *Years of Change and Challenge, 1940–1976* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987); Harold Martin, *William Berry Hartsfield:*

Mayor of Atlanta (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1978); Paul Miller, ed., *Atlanta, Capital of the South*, American Guide Series (New York: Oliver Durrell, 1949); Mark Pendergrast, *For God, Country & Coca-Cola: The Definitive History of the Great American Soft Drink and the Company That Makes It*, 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1999); *Welcome South Brother: Fifty Years of Broadcasting at WSB, Atlanta, Georgia* (Atlanta: Cox Broadcasting, 1974); and all population statistics are from <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0076.twsoo076.html>.

3. Ronald Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 7.

4. In 1877 the enactment of a poll tax drastically reduced the number of black voters in Georgia. In the 1890s the state Democratic Party adopted a white-only primary that barred blacks from choosing the party's nominees for office. In 1908 a constitutional amendment completed the disenfranchisement of the state's black population. See Harmon, *Beneath the Image*, 9–11; Bayor, *Race and the Shaping*, 6; Alton Hornsby, *Black Power in Dixie: A Political History of Blacks in Atlanta* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2009), 12–72 *passim*; and Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 20–21.

5. Lorraine Spritzer, *The Belle of Ashby Street: A Political Biography of Helen Douglas Mankin* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1982), 64–73.

6. Spritzer, *The Belle of Ashby Street*, xiii.

7. Spritzer, *The Belle of Ashby Street*, 74, 85, 100–101. Talmadge's disparaging references to Ashby Street were to the largest black voting precinct in Atlanta, Precinct 3-B, which was located at the E. R. Carter Elementary School on Ashby Street. Because of a huge turnout of black voters, this precinct's votes were counted last in the 1946 election. When the count began, Mankin trailed her chief opponent, Tom Camp, by about 150 votes. In this precinct, Mankin received 963 votes to Camp's 8, giving her the election by about 800 votes. See Spritzer, *The Belle of Ashby Street*, 72. Although I have relied primarily on Spritzer's work, several other books discuss Mankin's victory and its racial significance. None, however, are as detailed or insightful as Spritzer, a journalist, who knew and befriended Mankin. See Allen, *Atlanta Rising*, 1–7; Bayor, *Race and the Shaping*, 23; Harmon, *Beneath the Image*, 20–22; Hornsby, *Black Power*, 69–70; Kruse, *White Flight*, 32–33; and Gary Pomerantz, *Where Peachtree Meets Sweet Auburn: The Saga of Two Families and the Making of Atlanta* (New York: Scribner, 1996), 150–53. For more on Talmadge and his 1946 campaign for governor, see William Anderson, *The Wild Man from Sugar Creek: The Political Career of Eugene Talmadge* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1975), 215–39.

8. Allen, *Atlanta Rising*, 8; Ambrose, "Atlanta"; Bayor, *Race and the Shaping*, 18; Harmon, *Beneath the Image*, 22–24; Hornsby, *Black Power*, xv–xvi, 70–72; Kruse, *White Flight*, 33; Martin, *William Berry Hartsfield*, 50; Pomerantz, *Where Peachtree Meets*, 152. Because of the end of the white-only democratic primary, about one hun-

dred thousand African Americans in Georgia had registered to vote by the summer of 1946. See Numan Bartley, *The Creation of Modern Georgia*, 2nd ed. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), 201; and Wallace Warren, "The Best People in Town Won't Talk: The Moore's Ford Lynching of 1946 and Its Cover-Up," in *Georgia in Black and White: Explorations in Race Relations of a Southern State, 1865–1950*, ed. John Insko (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 268.

9. Steven Weisenburger, "The Columbians, Inc.: A Chapter of Racial Hatred from the Post-World War South," *Journal of Southern History* 69 (2003): 833. See also Stetson Kennedy, *Southern Exposure* (New York: Doubleday, 1946), 162–263 *passim*.

10. On the Klan and Green, see Allen, *Atlanta Rising*, 9–10, 18–19; Anderson, *Wild Man*, 224–25; David Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan*, 3rd ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1981), 325, 329, 332; Stetson Kennedy, *The Klan Unmasked* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990), originally published as *I Rode with the Klan* (London: Arco Publishers, 1954), 11, 16, 26, 39, 44–45, 118; Kennedy, *Southern Exposure*, 212; Kruse, *White Flight*, 50–51; Wyn Wade, *The Fiery Cross: The Ku Klux Klan in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 276–79; and Weisenburger, "Columbians," 835.

11. J. Wayne Dudley, "Hate Organizations of the 1940s: The Columbians, Inc.," *Phylon* 42 (1981): 264. Stetson Kennedy infiltrated the Klan, won the confidence of its members, and joined the whipping squad. He describes in excruciatingly vivid detail the murder of the cab driver in *The Klan Unmasked*, 108–12. The quotation is from Kennedy, *The Klan Unmasked*, 117. See also the *Baltimore Afro-American* [hereafter *BAA*], January 22, 1949.

12. Stetson Kennedy also infiltrated the Columbians. The quotations in this paragraph are from his *The Klan Unmasked*, 122, 123. See also the photograph of Kennedy in his Columbian uniform in *The Klan Unmasked*, viii. On the Columbians, see Dudley, "Hate Organizations," 266–69; Kennedy, *The Klan Unmasked*, 120–26; Kruse, *White Flight*, 42–48; Robert Patrick, "A Nail in the Coffin of Racism: The Story of the Columbians," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 85 (2001): 246–56; Spitzer, *The Belle of Ashby Street*, 117–26; and Weisenburger, "Columbians," 821–26.

13. Allen, *Atlanta Rising*, 12; Anderson, *Wild Man*, 232; Bartley, *The Creation of Modern Georgia*, 203; Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism*, 329; Kennedy, *The Klan Unmasked*, 64, 129, 161; Kruse, *White Flight*, 21; Pomerantz, *Where Peachtree Meets*, 153; Spitzer, *The Belle of Ashby Street*, 95–96, 105; and Wade, *The Fiery Cross*, 277. Mankin loved baseball and appointed Mann to her 1946 reelection committee. In 1948 Mann hired her as a scout, explaining, "Mrs. Mankin is a baseball fan and sees games nearly every day. She already has given us tips on good players. She deserves the proper credentials." A year later, she joined the National Association of Professional Baseball Scouts. Mann's hiring of Mankin was not a publicity stunt. As a teenager, her primary interest was baseball. She was a skilled player and was the only girl on her neighborhood team.

Mankin was extremely knowledgeable of baseball, and Mann valued her judgment. Moreover, throughout her life, Mankin was a strong-willed, outspoken, intelligent, and independent woman who would not have tolerated such patronizing. Spitzer, *The Belle of Ashby Street*, 10, 12–13, 45, 54–55, 94, 150; clipping from *Atlanta Constitution*, May 30, 1948, Atlanta Cracker Scrapbook, Georgia Sports Hall of Fame, Macon; and unidentified clipping, August 14, 1949, Atlanta Cracker Scrapbook, Georgia Sports Hall of Fame, Macon.

14. Dudley, “Hate Organizations,” 263.

15. The best and most thorough study of the Moore’s Ford Bridge Massacre is Laura Wexler, *Fire in a Canebrake: The Last Mass Lynching in America* (New York: Scribner, 2003). I have relied primarily on this book. The quotations come from Wexler, *Fire in a Canebrake*, 81, 92. See also BAA, January 22, 1949; Allen, *Atlanta Rising*, 15–16; Anderson, *Wild Man*, 233; Harmon, *Beneath the Image*, 53; Martin, *Atlanta and Environs*, 124–25; and Warren, “Best People,” 266–88. The FBI reopened the case in 2006. To date, the guilty have not been identified.

16. The most thorough treatment of this incident is Harold Henderson, “M. E. Thompson and the Politics of Succession,” in *Georgia Governors in an Age of Change: From Ellis Arnall to George Busby*, ed. Harold Henderson and Gary Roberts (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988), 49–65. See also Allen, *Atlanta Rising*, 14–17; Bartley, *The Creation of Modern Georgia*, 203–5; and Scott Buchanan, “Three Governors Controversy,” *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?path=/GovernmentPolitics/Politics/PoliticalIssuesandControversies&iid=h-591>; Timothy Crimmins and Anne Farrisee, *Democracy Restored: A History of the Georgia State Capitol* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007), 117–23. I would like to thank my friend and colleague Paul Hudson for showing me this book.

17. Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism*, 329; Wade, *The Fiery Cross*, 283, 289; and BAA, January 22, 1949.

18. Because of the restrictions placed on the African American officers, Hornsby describes them as “only quasi-policemen” (*Black Power*, 77). Charles Rosenzweig argues that they were full policemen from the moment the city hired them (“The Issue of Employing Black Policemen in Atlanta, Georgia” [master’s thesis, Emory University, 1980], 71–72). This work is the only study devoted exclusively to the integration of Atlanta’s police force. Allen concludes, “By the standards of the day, they enjoyed near parity [with white policemen]” (*Atlanta Rising*, 35).

19. Hornsby, *Black Power*, 78. According to Hornsby, Hartsfield made this statement in a ceremony at the black Greater Mount Calvary Baptist Church in front of a large audience of African Americans. According to Pomerantz (*Where Peachtree Meets*, 163), Hartsfield made this statement only to the eight black police officers in the basement of the Butler Street YMCA. Hartsfield then thrust his fist in the air for emphasis. None of the other works cited in note 20 mention this incident at all.

20. In writing this paragraph, I have relied primarily on Rosenzweig, "Black Policemen." See also Allen, *Atlanta Rising*, 35; Raymond Andrews, "Once Upon a Time in Atlanta," *The Chattahoochee Review* 18 (1998): 85; Harmon, *Beneath the Image*, 24–34; Hornsby, *Black Power*, 75–79; Herbert Jenkins, *Forty Years on the Force: 1932–1972; Herbert Jenkins Reminiscences on His Career with the Atlanta Police Department* (Atlanta: Emory University Center for Research in Social Change, 1973); 44–53; Jenkins, *Keeping the Peace: A Police Chief Looks at His Job* (New York: Harper, 1970), 24–32; Kruse, *White Flight*, 33–34; Martin, *William Berry Hartsfield*, 51–52; and Pomerantz, *Where Peachtree Meets*, 161–63. On the significance of the integration of the police department to Atlanta's black community, see also the illustration by Benny Andrews of an African American officer in Raymond Andrews, "Once Upon a Time," 87. This gigantic officer towers over a large crowd of blacks lined up to purchase tickets at the Royal Movie Theater. Other than his enormity, the most prominent feature of the officer is his oversized pistol. The two people at the front of the line look approvingly at this imposing figure of public safety and authority. Award-winning novelist Raymond Andrews moved from his native Madison, Georgia, to Atlanta in December 1949 when he was fifteen years old. He lived at the Butler Street YMCA just off Auburn Avenue, the political, economic, social, and cultural heart of black Atlanta. His aunt, whom he visited often, lived in a duplex next door to one of Atlanta's first black police officers. The prospect of seeing an African American policeman left the young Andrews awestruck: "Never before had I seen a *colored* policeman. . . . A *colored* policeman living right next door to my aunt and cousin! Lord, *Atlanta!*" (Andrews, "Once Upon a Time," 22; italics in the original).

21. *Sporting News* [hereafter *SN*], February 1, 1950; *SN*, January 26, 1949; *New York Times* [hereafter *NYT*], January 14, 1949; *Atlanta Journal* [hereafter *AJ*], January 14, 1949; *Atlanta Constitution* [hereafter *AC*], January 15, 1949; and Charlie Brown with James C. Bryant, *Charlie Brown Remembers Atlanta: Memoirs of a Public Man* (Columbia SC: Bryan Company, 1982), 159–65. On Hartsfield's dislike of baseball, see Furman Bisher, *Miracle in Atlanta: The Atlanta Braves Story* (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1966), p. 8; Brown, *Charlie Brown Remembers*, 286; and Earl Mann to John Mullen, May 8, 1959, Robert W. Woodruff Papers [hereafter *RWP*] MS 10, box 12, folder 5, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

22. *AC*, January 15, 1949; *AJ*, January 15, 18, 1949; *NYT*, January 15, 18, 1949; *Atlanta Daily World* [hereafter *ADW*], January 16, 25, 1949; *SN*, January 26, 1949; *Memphis Press Scimitar*, January 18, 1949; *BAA*, January 22, 1949; and *Pittsburgh Courier* [hereafter *PC*], January 22, 29, 1949.

23. *AJ*, January 14–15, 1949; *NYT*, January 15, 1949; *ADW*, January 16, 1949; *AC*, January 15, 1949; *SN*, January 26, 1949; *Memphis Press Scimitar*, January 15, 1949; *BAA*, January 22, 1949; and *PC*, January 22, 1949.

24. *NYT*, January 16, 1949; *ADW*, January 20, 1949; *BAA*, January 22, 1949; and *PC*.

January 22, 1949. Articles in these papers quote statements supporting the games from the two Atlanta papers; the two Macon, Georgia, papers; and the Charlotte and Asheville, North Carolina, papers; and Greenville, South Carolina, papers.

25. *SN*, February 9, 1949; *NYT*, January 18, 1949; and *AC*, January 17, 1949. On Tarver as a journalist, see Leonard Teel, *Ralph Emerson McGill: Voice of the Southern Conscience* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001), 172; and *AJ*, January 16, 1949.

26. *SN*, January 26, 1949; *NYT*, January 18, 1949; *AJ*, January 30, 1949; *ADW*, February 16, 1949; *ADW*, March 29, 1949; and *BAA*, January 29, 1949.

27. *AC*, February 15–17, 1949; *AJ*, February 15–16, 1949; *ADW*, February 16–17, 20, 1949; and Jonathan Mercantini, “Coming Home: Jackie Robinson and the Dodgers Face the Crackers,” *Atlanta History: A Journal of Georgia and the South* 41 (1997): 9–10.

28. *ADW*, March 11, 17, 24, 29, 31, 1949; and *ADW*, April 1, 3, 1949.

29. Rickey’s prediction was correct. The *AC* of April 10, 1949; the *ADW* of April 13, 1949; the *SN* of April 20, 1949; and the *BAA* of April 23, 1949, have photos of white children besieging Robinson for his autograph at Ponce de Leon Park. See also the *PC*, April 16, 1949; Jackie Robinson with Alfred Duckett, *I Never Had It Made: An Autobiography* (New York: Putnam, 1972; Hopewell NJ: Echo Press, 1995), 81. Citations refer to the Echo Press edition.

30. *ADW*, March 31, 1949; *ADW*, April 1, 7, 12, 1949; *BAA*, April 9, 16, 1949; Arnold Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson: A Biography* (New York: Knopf, 1997), 208; Robinson, *I Never Had It Made*, 81; Jenkins, *Forty Years on the Force*, 108; Norman Macht e-mail to the author, October 1, 2010; *AJ*, April 9, 1949; and interview with Oreon Mann, March 10, 2011. Although Oreon was only seven years old in 1949, he said in this interview that this story was one of his father’s favorites and that he never tired of telling it. On Ernie Harwell’s background, see Curt Smith, *Voices of the Game: The Acclaimed Chronicle of Baseball Radio and Television Broadcasting—from 1921 to the Present*, updated ed. (New York: Simon Schuster, 1992), 230–32.

31. *NYT*, April 9, 1949.

32. Jules Tygiel, *Baseball’s Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 265; Mercantini, “Coming Home,” 15; and Norman Macht, “Memories of a Minor-League Traveler,” in *The National Pastime: Baseball in the Peach State*, ed. Ken Fenster and Wynn Montgomery (Cleveland: Society for American Baseball Research, 2010), 64.

33. *AC*, April 4, 9, 1949; *ADW*, February 11, 1949; *ADW*, April 5, 6, 10, 1949; and *AJ*, April 8, 1949.

34. Interview with Oreon Mann, March 10, 2011; interview by telephone with Myra Mann Morrison, October 30, 2010; Norman Macht e-mail to the author, October 1, 2010; and interview by telephone with Charles Pettett, July 26, 2011. Unfortunately, when Loran Smith of the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame interviewed Mann in the late 1970s or early 1980s, he did not ask the former Crackers president about the 1949

Dodgers-Crackers games. A videotape and typescript of this interview is at the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame Archives, Macon.

35. Furman Bisher, "They Call Him a Genius in Dixie," *Saturday Evening Post*, June 28, 1952, 32–33, 68, 70, 74.

36. Weather information and attendance data are from the AC. On the record-setting attendance pace, see the AC, June 22, 1949.

37. Robert Woodruff was more than just the leading businessman in the city. He was the most influential man in Atlanta for decades. Mayor Hartsfield never made an important decision concerning city affairs without first consulting Woodruff and getting his approval. Woodruff once remarked, "Bill [Hartsfield] thinks he runs the city. Hell it's my city." Allen, *Atlanta Rising*, 29; Allen, *Secret Formula*, 288–89; and Pomerantz, *Where Peachtree Meets*, 207.

38. Every year from 1935 to 1949, Mann sent Woodruff the number one season pass and pleaded with him to attend Crackers games. Woodruff never did. Woodruff did not even bother to sign his pass for 1949. Mann's letters to Woodruff and many of Woodruff's passes are in RWP, box 12, folder 5. Woodruff's preferred sports were golf, horseback riding, poker, gin rummy, and especially hunting. Allen, *Secret Formula*, 188–89, 279–81; and Pendergrast, *For God and Country*, 156.

39. Even so, Woodruff wanted the team to make a profit. He once chided Mann for giving out too many free passes because they reduced paid admissions. Robert Woodruff to Hughes Spalding, April 14, 1939, RWP, box 12, folder 5.

40. Allen, *Secret Formula*, 7, 285–290.

41. On the relationship between Woodruff and Spalding, see Allen, *Secret Formula*, 268, 272, 293–94.

42. Desk diary entry of Hughes Spalding, April 8, 1949, HSP, box 18. The entries for April 9–11 contain no reference to the Dodgers-Crackers games. Unlike Woodruff, Spalding liked baseball and attended games frequently.

43. Carl Erskine with Burton Rocks, *What I Learned from Jackie Robinson: A Teammate's Reflections on and off the Field* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005), 20–22; Smith, *Voices of the Game*, 248; and Roger Kahn, *The Boys of Summer* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972; New York: Harper Perennial, 1998), 325. Citations refer to the Harper Perennial edition. Pomerantz, *Where Peachtree Meets*, 182–83.

44. *Nashville Banner*, April 9, 1949; AC, April 9–11, 1949; *AJ*, April 9–11, 1949; *ADW*, April 9–10, 12, 1949; and *SN*, April 20, 1949. The two incidents are mentioned in the AC, April 9, 1949; and the fistfight behind home plate is mentioned in the PC, April 16, 1949; but these sources do not indicate the cause of the fight.

45. The previous record for an exhibition game was 21,642, established in 1946 when the Crackers hosted the New York Yankees. The largest crowd to attend any event at Ponce de Leon Park numbered nearly 40,000 and came for the Baptist World Alliance in 1939.

46. *AC*, April 11, 1949; *AJ*, April 11, 1949; *NYT*, April 11, 1949; *SN*, April 20, 1949; and *ADW*, April 12, 1949. Some newspapers in Southern Association cities limited their coverage of the series to the third game. See *Memphis Press Scimitar*, April 11, 1949; and *New Orleans Times Picayune*, April 11, 1949. For researchers, see Mercantini, "Coming Home," 12–15; Macht, "Memories of a Minor-League Traveler," 64–65; Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, 267; Tim Darnell, *Southern Yankees: The Story of the Atlanta Crackers* (Atlanta: self-published, 1995), 108–9. For eyewitnesses, see Clyde King with Burton Rocks, *A King's Legacy: The Clyde King Story* (Lincolnwood IL: Masters Press, 1999), 67. See also Burt Shotton's comments to a banquet audience in Miami in early 1950: "I'll never forget that crowd. The normal seating capacity of the park was 15,000, and how they got 25,000 into it I don't know. . . . It was a great sight and so far as crowds are concerned that turnout gave me my biggest thrill" (*SN*, February 1, 1950).

47. The exact number of African Americans who attended this game is not known. John Bradberry estimates it at 6,000; Ed Danforth and Marion Jackson give 6,419, but they do not give a source for that exact figure; the *NYT* gives 5,000; and the *PC* of April 16 says at least 5,000.

48. *ADW*, April 3, 7, 9, 12, 1949; *AC*, April 9, 1949; *AJ*, April 9, 1949; *Nashville Banner*, April 9, 1949; *SN*, April 20, 1949; and *BAA*, April 16, 1949.

49. *AC*, April 10, 1949; *AJ*, April 10, 1949; *ADW*, April 10, 1949; and *BAA*, April 23, 1949. On March 20, 1949, Mann sold the rights to televise Crackers home games to WSB-TV. Four exhibition games that spring, two against the Philadelphia Phillies and two against the Detroit Tigers, had already aired on television. See clipping from *AJ*, March 20, 1949, Atlanta Cracker Scrapbook, Georgia Sports Hall of Fame, Macon; and *AC*, March 20, 1949.

50. *ADW*, April 12, 14, 21, 1949; and *SN*, April 20, 1949.

51. *AC*, April 24, 1949.

52. *ADW*, January 21, 1949; *ADW*, March 11, 1949; *ADW*, April 5, 1949; Andrews, *Once Upon a Time*, 86, italics in the original; Pomerantz, *Where Peachtree Meets*, 185.

53. In its October 1950 issue, *Baseball Digest* reported that Mann might become the next general manager of the Pittsburgh Pirates, the position that went to Branch Rickey the following month (74).

54. *SN*, January 26, 1949; *ADW*, April 14, 1949; Bisher, "They Call Him a Genius," 32, 70.

55. In 1944 Atlanta had the best overall season record, but finished second in both halves of a split season, making Atlanta ineligible for the championship playoff. In the Southern Association, Nashville won four pennants during this period. The Scranton, Pennsylvania, entry in the Class A Eastern League won five pennants. No other minor-league team in the country won more than four.

56. Charles Hurth, *Baseball Records, The Southern Association, 1901–1957* (New Orleans: The Southern Association, 1957), 7–8, 134; Lloyd Johnson and Miles Wolff,

eds., *The Encyclopedia of Minor League Baseball*, 2nd ed (Durham: Baseball America, 1997), 279–377, 659; *SN*, September 5, 19, 1935; *SN*, October 29, 1936; *SN*, December 31, 1936; Earl Mann to Robert Woodruff, April 12, 1937, RWP, box 12, folder 5. The loss in 1934 was 40% less than the loss in 1933, and the combined losses in 1942 and 1943 were 17% less than the loss in 1934 (statement of selected financial data of the Atlanta Crackers, 1932–1948, RWP, box 12, folder 5). *SN*, February 22, 1950; Bisher, “They Call Him a Genius,” 70; and Kenneth R. Fenster, “Earl Mann, Nat Peeples, and the Failed Attempt of Integration in the Southern Association,” *NINE: A Journal of Baseball History and Culture* 12 (2004): 85–87.

57. *AJ*, August 18, 1949; resolution of the Board of Directors of the Coca-Cola Company authorizing the sale of the Atlanta Crackers, August 6, 1949, RWP, box 12, folder 5; desk diary entries of Hughes Spalding, August 5, 6, 1949, HSP, box 18; stock purchase and transfer form, August 6, 1949; personal papers of Oreon Mann, kindly shown to me by Mr. Mann; *AJ*, August 7, 1949; and *AC*, August 7, 1949.