

## For nearly 200 years, baseball has been a poignant and exhilarating metaphor for America, and for minority communities in this country

Bobbi Booker Tribune Staff Writer | Posted 3 weeks ago

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The history of baseball reflects the best and worst of America. The breaking of the racial barriers in baseball was a watershed moment for American society and a precursor to the Civil Rights Movement.

The National Museum of American Jewish History's (NMAJH) summer-long exhibition, "Chasing Dreams: Baseball and Becoming American" follows the stories of baseball's ethnic diversity while confronting racial prejudice.

For nearly 200 years, baseball has been a poignant and exhilarating metaphor for America, a land of so much promise and opportunity, whose best ideals are realized through creativity and consistent, determined hard work.

And for minority communities in this country — be they Jews, African-Americans, Italians, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, or Japanese — the sport has long served as a path to learning and understanding American values.

"Chasing Dreams" features more than 130 original objects, including game-worn uniforms, game-used objects, correspondence, newspaper accounts, board games, awards, baseball cards, signed baseballs, Jewish ritual objects, ballpark giveaways, stadium seats, little league memorabilia and more.

Objects from the Museum's collection will be complemented by loans from public and private collections, as well as the Museum's public collecting initiative on Tumblr. Original films feature interviews with baseball executives and everyday fans. Interactive displays will offer visitors various opportunities to play, participate and learn.



Jackie Robinson signs autographs on the first of spring training with the Brooklyn Dodgers on March 6, 1948. — Photo/Donated by Corbis

“Since the 19th century, baseball has been an exhilarating metaphor for America, a land of so much promise and opportunity,” explained Josh Perelman, chief curator and director of collections and exhibitions at NMAJH. “And for minority communities in this country, the sport has long served as a path to learning and understanding American values, representing a shared American identity and sometimes highlighting our differences. It is, in short, a mirror of America.”

The exhibition celebrates well-known Jewish heroes such as Hank Greenberg and Sandy Koufax, as well as iconic baseball players like Jackie Robinson, Joe DiMaggio and Ichiro Suzuki. The stories are not limited to Baseball Hall of Famers, and includes members of the extended baseball family — vendors, team owners, scouts, broadcasters, journalists, novelists, and especially fans.

“Chasing Dreams” celebrates baseball’s legends and myths, its heroes and flops, as well as its struggles and moments of triumph.

The National Museum of American Jewish History is located at 101 South Independence Mall East at the corner of Fifth and Market Streets. For more information, visit [NMAJH.org](http://NMAJH.org) or call (215) 923-3811.

Contact staff writer

Bobbi Booker at (215) 893-5747 or [bbooker@phillytrib.com](mailto:bbooker@phillytrib.com)

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