

PRIMARY SOURCE

Pittsburgh Courier, April 21 1945

"Smitty's" Sports Spurts, By Wendell Smith

Boston, Mass- This is Boston cradle of America's democracy, where the tattered and torn liberty-loving "Rebels" for the colonies fought off the Red Coats in every "Middlesex village and farm."

This is where 170 years ago this week America's first great jockey, Paul Revere came riding down the "stretch" by the light of the moon, crying out, "The British are coming!"

And this is where Crispus Attucks, tall, gaunt and bronze, stood defiantly with a rebellious mob of fearless Americans behind the "Old State House" and challenged the British "blitz" of 1770.

He fell- Crispus Attucks did- when the Red Coats let go with that first thunderous volley of powder, and his blood flowed freely across the cobblestone ground he and his compatriots were defending.

Crispus Attucks was a Negro! He was the very first to give his life in defense of his country... Like today, those were historic, significant days. Like today, liberty-loving people were fighting off despots and dictators, intolerance, and fascism...

And today history is being repeated. It's the same story, only cast in a different setting... against a different foe. White and black Americans are fighting side by side on the Western front [in Europe]. They fight together... in the land of the "Grey Coats" of Germany.

That is history... and that is fact. And here I am... in Boston... where Revere rode, and Attucks died, trying to break down some of barriers and wipe out some of the intolerance they fought to obliterate more than 170 years ago. I have three of Crispus Attucks decedents with me. They are Jackie Robinson, Sammy Johnson, and Marvin Williams. All three are baseball players, and they want to play in the major leagues. They- and many others like them- have been barred for years solely and simply because they are Negroes....

We have been here for almost a week now, but all our appeals for fair consideration and opportunities have been in vain neither John Quinn [General Manager] of the [Boston] Braves, nor Eddie Collins [General Manager] of the Red Sox have displayed so much as a semblance of that indomitable spirit we had anticipated here in the shadow of Bunker Hill.

They stand before us as uncompromising despots. They loom as modern Red Coats, resolved to deny us opportunities which are rightfully ours by virtue of heritage.

But we are not giving up. We are Americans, the color of our skins to the contrary... and we are going to stick to our guns! We are looked upon as "confounded rebels" who would challenge the divine right of baseball's kings.

Questions

Answer on a separate sheet of paper, in complete sentences

1. What “hero” of the Revolution does the author focus on in the early part of this article? Why does the author do this?
2. Who does he compare to the “Red Coats” and why?
3. Who is he comparing to Cripsus Attucks? Why?
4. To what does the author compare the commissioners and owners of major league baseball? Why?
5. Summarize the argument the author is trying make by referencing revolutionary period history in this article. What is his goal?