
HEROES of AMERICA™

Jackie Robinson

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Chapter 1

The House on Pepper Street

“Take some of that energy of yours outside and do some chores,” Mallie Robinson gently scolded her eight-year-old son. Jack Roosevelt Robinson was the youngest of her five children. Jackie, as his family called him, was always moving, running, jumping, playing ball; he had boundless energy.

Jackie picked up a broom and began to sweep the outside steps. The Robinsons lived in a house on Pepper Street, in Pasadena, California. It was a modest house in a neighborhood of working people,



The Only African Americans on the Block

JACKIE ROBINSON

but it was better than the crowded one the Robinsons had recently shared with Jackie's Uncle Burton.

There were problems, however, in their new neighborhood. The Robinsons were the only African Americans on the block, and Mallie and the children often encountered hate and prejudice.

In America in the 1920s, African Americans faced barriers and limitations to where they could live, where they could eat and where they could socialize. In the South, these limitations were known as Jim Crow laws. In the North, oftentimes, there were no laws that segregated white people from African Americans, but the silent barriers and limitations were there anyway.

For the Robinsons, living on Pepper Street brought them face-to-face on a daily basis with this unfortunate side of American life.

While Jackie was sweeping, a voice called out

JACKIE ROBINSON

suddenly, "Get out of our neighborhood. We don't want to see your black faces any more!"

Jackie felt anger boil inside him. No one worked harder than his mother, caring for five children and holding down a full-time job as a maid in order to have their house. No one should have the right to tell his family where they should live.

He saw a little girl, taunting and teasing, and found himself picking up a rock. He threw it at her. Before they knew it, the two children were in a rock-throwing fight.

Hearing the shouts, the little girl's father came out. He joined in—a grown man throwing stones at an eight-year old boy because of the color of his skin. Finally the little girl's mother came out to call her family back inside. Jackie, flushed, his chest heaving, rushed inside to his own mother.

"Child, what in the world was going on out there?" Mallie asked as she towed off her



He Threw It at Her.