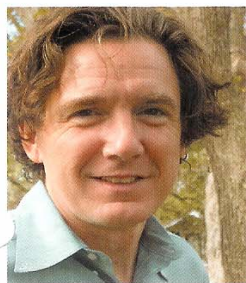


**Here's to You, Jackie Robinson:
The Legend of the Prichard Mohawks**
Joe Formichella

May 27, 2005
ISBN: 1-59692-127-7
HC Fiction \$23.50. 5 x 8. 250 pages

Rights: World. Audio. Performance.



Dorothy Smith

about the author

Joe Formichella is a Hackney Literary Award winner whose work has appeared in *Grassland Review*, *Red Bluff Review*, and the Southern literary anthologies *Stories from the Blue Moon Café II* and *Climbing Mt. Cheaha*. He lives in Fairhope, Alabama.

about the book

The thrilling and inspirational true story of an all-black baseball team in 1950s Mobile, Alabama, and its enduring legacy.

In March of 1948, Jackie Robinson and the Brooklyn Dodgers came to Mobile, Alabama, on a whistle-stop tour to play an unremarkable exhibition game that had remarkable consequences for the city, the black community, and for baseball itself.

The city's black population was thrilled to see the man who broke major league baseball's color barrier, and Robinson's brief appearance fueled their passion for the game. One man, however, saw more than just excitement for a sport. Thirty-year-old Jesse Norwood saw a way to help the kids who would congregate beyond his stoop, lost and hopeless in the segregated South of the 1950s. Though he had no baseball experience, he realized he could take the game and turn it into something that could provide a sense of dignity and pride.

Here's to You, Jackie Robinson: The Legend of the Prichard Mohawks is the story of a man who transformed a gang of scrawny youngsters into both a team and a genuine force in the community. Norwood emerges as a figure worthy of legend, and his legacy can still be felt today.

With a novelist's gift for storytelling, Formichella breathes life into a South long gone and creates a hero's story, sometimes heartwarming and sometimes heartbreaking, that begins in a sandlot and ends in the Baseball Hall of Fame.

from the author

I've been carrying these voices around in my head for more than ten years now, voices of baseball players, awed spectators, proud and thankful family members. The legend of the Prichard Mohawks was a very narrowly known tale when I started this project back in the summer of 1993. Beyond the rivals who played against them, aspired to reach their level of excellence, and the immediate community, which supported and depended on the Mohawks, it was a vague, all-but-obscure story of a bygone baseball team. Those people, though, and the Mohawk players themselves, especially, spoke of that time half a century ago as if it were only yesterday, their voices vibrant and sure, loving the game they played back in the '50s and '60s, reverent about the man who made it all possible for them, and pragmatic about the restrictions designed to stunt their lives off the baseball diamond.

Many of these men never knew their fathers, never owned a pair of new shoes before graduating high school, and never dreamed of anything beyond the confines of their segregated neighborhood in Jim Crow South Alabama. It has taken me many years to fully understand the story of Jesse Norwood and his baseball organization; how over the course of his teaching the men intuited that baseball was no mere metaphor for their lives but something more like a template for living, how their legend told of the way through the unfamiliar territory beyond baseball.

In the end, it was their voices that never left me, never let their story fade.

H A R D C O V E R

praise for *The Wreck of the Twilight Limited*

"In this multi-layered novel, Joe Formichella has written a wholly absorbing story about a horrifying disaster and its tragic effects on an entire community. The gripping climactic chapters will keep readers turning pages until its surprise ending. It's a wonderful gift from a brilliant author with expert knowledge and uncanny insights. I loved it!"

—Bev Marshall, author of *Walking Through Shadows* and *Right as Rain*

"Full of images that are at once terrible and beautiful...*The Wreck of the Twilight Limited* is a wonderful book that is not so much a pleasure to read but important to read."

—*First Draft Magazine*