Chapter 3 describes the deficiencies of early medical education at the University of Pittsburgh with emphasis upon the inadequacies of clinical instruction. Interviews with and letters from former medical students and professors add interesting insight into this topic. Note is also taken of the impact upon the local medical school of national efforts to reform medical education. By 1922, the university was convinced of the necessity of establishing better clinical facilities for its students.

The final chapter assesses the efforts of the university to affiliate with a general hospital which would become the nucleus of a proposed medical center. When Western Pennsylvania and Montefiore hospitals rejected proposals initiated by the university, negotiations were undertaken with Presbyterian Hospital, and they eventually culminated in an agreement which proved advantageous to both parties. Presbyterian had become the "core teaching hospital" (p. 83) of the university medical center and had embarked on a new era of its history. This is by far the most original and substantive chapter in The Presbyterian Hospital of Pittsburgh.

The narrow focus of this brief volume limits its value. While it contributes to our understanding of how Presbyterian Hospital "grew from its small beginnings . . . to become one of the leading hospitals of the Pittsburgh area" (p. xiii), the full story remains to be told.

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Josh Gibson was one of many Negro professional baseball players born too soon. Although unquestionably qualified, they were prevented from playing in the white major leagues in their prime, and then, because of age or death, were unable to benefit from the breach of Organized Baseball's long-standing color line in 1946, the year Jackie Robinson joined Brooklyn's Montreal farm team. Josh Gibson died at only thirty-five, a few months before Robinson went on in 1947 to star with the Dodgers as the first black player in the majors since Fleet and Weldy Walker in 1884.
Next to Satchel Paige, Gibson was the most famous Negro player. He was reportedly the best batsman in the Negro Leagues, known especially for his prodigious home run hitting, which won him acclaim as the Babe Ruth of Negro ball. Gibson's prowess as a hitter and catcher failed to receive general recognition, however, until his election to baseball's Hall of Fame in 1972.

William Brashler, the author of this biography, contributes some new details about Josh's early life, punctures the myth that Gibson hit a ball out of Yankee Stadium, and includes some good material in a chapter called "Beisbol" about the experience of Negro players in Latin American baseball. Josh's rapid decline in his final years also receives effective treatment. Brashler's estimate of Gibson in Chapter 16 is excellent, and best of all he refrains from conferring martyrdom on his subject.

Unfortunately, the book is flawed in a number of respects. A preface about the author's baseball memories and four chapters dealing with other Negro players tacked on near the end are almost wholly irrelevant to his subject. The book also has some organizational problems. The chapter on "The Craws" (the Pittsburgh Crawfords team) is poorly put together; here and in other instances the writer found it necessary to backtrack and explain something he should already have discussed. Questionable interpretations also appear: Brashler makes a point of saying that the Crawfords did not indulge in sexual escapades, although some former players such as Buck Leonard and George Scales have elsewhere indicated otherwise. Possibly the author was trying to counter the impression left by his very good novel, The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars and Motor Kings, that Negro touring teams were of rather loose moral character.

The book contains neither footnotes nor bibliography, but it is in more important ways that Brashler shows himself as no historian. Although he offers some good general background information on the Negro at the beginning of the book, he indulges in the common failing of untrained historians: introducing extraneous material in the mistaken notion that he is placing his subject in historical context. The material on Amos 'n' Andy and on Louis Armstrong are cases in point. For that matter, he uses the term "historian" very loosely. Journalists are not "historians." Brashler clinches his misunderstanding of history and historians in his statement that "baseball historians" are "people whose minds thrive on speculation and hypothesis."

Most disappointing to one who enjoyed Bingo Long, the writing
in Josh Gibson falls below the level of that in the novel. Examples of poor style and other faults abound. Every sentence in a paragraph on page 60 begins the same: "He started. . . . He added. . . . He already . . . He then. . . ." Brashler also wears out the word "awesome." Words are misused: hotels are "rancid" and offices "talk." More important, Brashler succumbs to "more importantly," an error that threatens to compete with "hopefully" and "like" (as in Shakespeare's Like You Like It?) in the lexicon of butchered English. Injections of current jargon occur — Greenlee's "financial input" and, later, his "personal input" — as do the fad words "feisty" and, twice, "gutsy." Sportswriters translate hits into "blasts" that batters "stroke" with "murderous" bats; they also "club" and "clout" home runs, and a throwing arm is called a "wing." In addition, for a book of this length too many typos intrude. Where was Harper's editor?

Finally, much of the book is plodding. Gibson as a man seldom comes through. For all his great ability as a player, Josh Gibson lacked color, and Brashler apparently needs colorful material for his craft. Perhaps he should concentrate on fiction, where he can bring his imagination into play and in which he excels.

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HAROLD SEYMOUR

BOOK NOTE


Always intending upon retirement "to do my bit" by writing an article on the growing lax methods of teaching, Miss Lily Lee Nixon has come forth in a small book with the story of her life up to about 1960. As a teacher in the Pittsburgh public schools in the first half of the twentieth century, she showed a great love for history, and it is reflected in this book. Nixon has not only followed the changes in the schools, the methods of teaching, the students, and their backgrounds and disciplinary problems, but has noted the ever-changing world scene of important names and events, wars and politics, discoveries and inventions.

Beginning with life on a farm just fifteen miles from Pittsburgh, Nixon traces her schooling from a two-story red brick country school