

# Integration Timeline of the Boston Red Sox

## UNDER TOM YAWKEY'S OWNERSHIP

It's impossible to talk honestly about the issue of integration in America and the Boston Red Sox without first acknowledging the brutal, painful, and shameful legacy of American slavery and segregation. To this very day, we live with a host of inequities and injustices that arose from systems that turned people into property and, even after emancipation, denied those same people jobs, opportunities, and basic rights simply on the basis of the color of their skin. Thankfully, African Americans, other people of color, and their friends refused to accept that inferior position and through lawsuits, peaceful protest, and constant advocacy pushed the nation to live up to its own ideals of "liberty and justice for all."

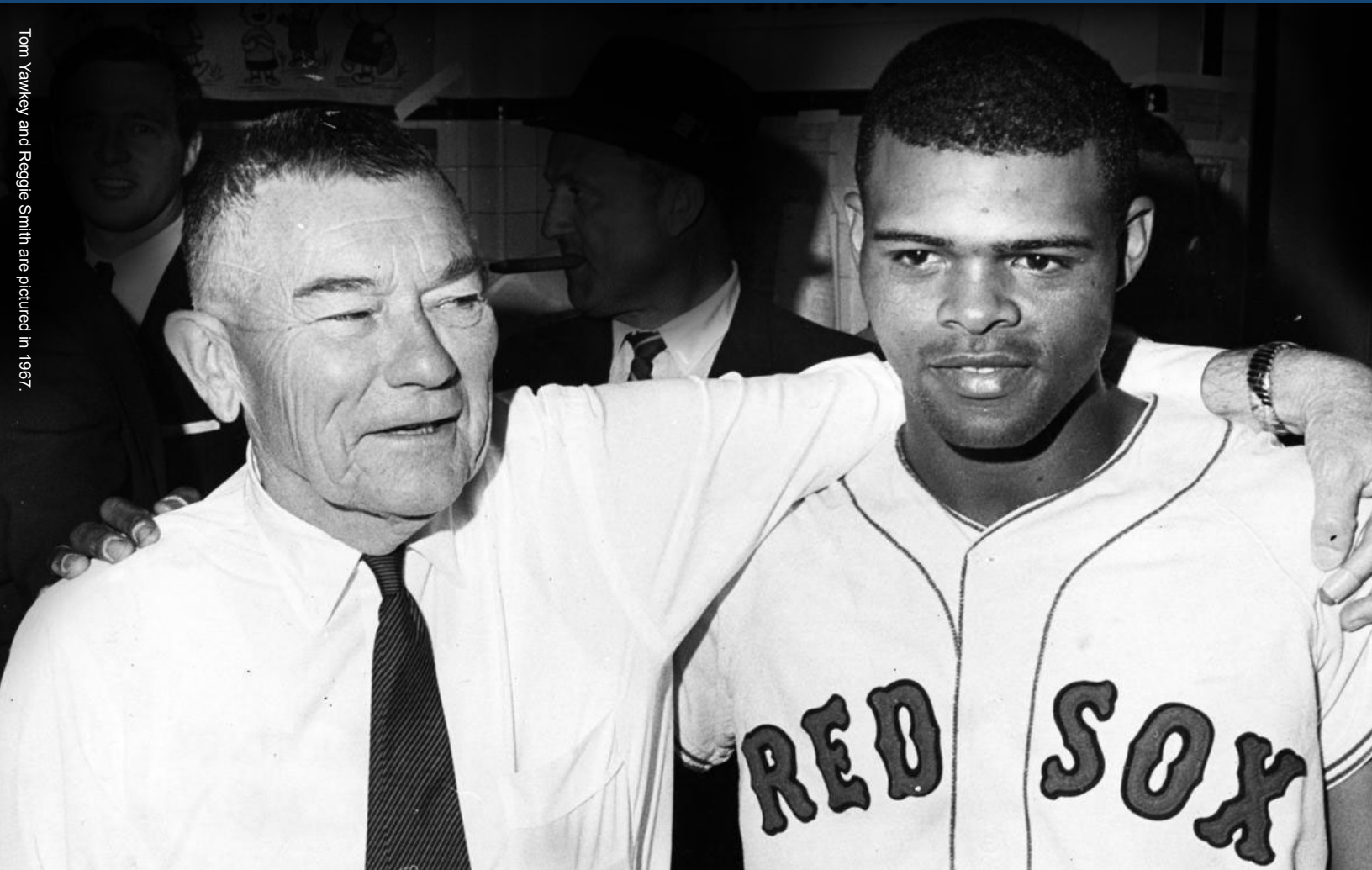
As the nation was evolving in the mid-1900s, so too was Major League Baseball, including the Red Sox. Contrary to popular belief, the Red Sox were not resistant to integration. In

fact, under the leadership of Tom Yawkey, the Red Sox successfully recruited Black players to their minor league teams. Yawkey also made numerous sincere and credible offers to recruit talented and established Black players to Boston's major league roster a full decade before integrating the major league team with the addition of Elijah "Pumpsie" Green in 1959.

We acknowledge these facts don't change the regrettable and painful reality that despite many efforts and early success at integrating its minor league system with several Black and Latino players, the Red Sox were the last team to fully integrate by having a Black player on its major league roster. It is also a fact that Major League Baseball embraced integration long before many corporations, media organizations, and educational institutions. We acknowledge that what happened in Boston and across the country resulted in damaging

and painful consequences that were demeaning and wrong—for players and fans of color, and the larger community.

Mindful of all that, we invite you to [learn more about the true story of Tom Yawkey](#)—a man "who changed and grew," as the great pitcher Jim Lonborg so eloquently put it—who bought a moribund team, revived it, integrated it and, particularly in the last three decades of his life, worked hard to recruit talent regardless of race. We invite you to learn how the legacy of Tom and Jean Yawkey, whose generous and often anonymous philanthropy extended to people of all races and classes, continues to this day through the Tom and Jean Yawkey Foundation.



Tom Yawkey and Reggie Smith are pictured in 1967.

YAWKEY  
FOUNDATION



**1900s-  
1940s**



**1950s**



**1960s-  
1980s**



**1990s-  
today**

## 1900s-1940s

### 1903

Major League Baseball (MLB) is established.

### 1933

Tom Yawkey, at 30 years old, purchases the Boston Red Sox. The team signs Latino Mel Almada, the first Mexican-born player in MLB history. Almada plays four years with the Red Sox and is inducted into the Mexican Baseball Hall of Fame in 1973.

### 1945

The Red Sox hold a tryout for future Hall of Famer Jackie Robinson along with Samuel Jethroe and Marvin Williams. Although Tom Yawkey was not in Boston at the time of the tryout, a false narrative emerges years later about Yawkey and that tryout which casts an unsubstantiated pall over the team's efforts to integrate. Boston Globe columnist Will McDonough, based on his reporting, wrote in 1997 that the incident "never happened."

In October, less than two months after the end of World War II, the Brooklyn Dodgers sign Jackie Robinson to a minor league deal to play for their triple-A international team in Montréal, Canada.

### 1947

The Brooklyn Dodgers are the first MLB team to integrate with the signing of Jackie Robinson to its major league roster. A few months later, the Cleveland Indians integrate with the signing of Larry Doby.

### 1948

*An Executive Order is signed to end segregation in the Armed Services.*

### 1949

By the end of the 1949 season, only four of the 16 MLB teams have Black players on their major league rosters.



Tom Yawkey in the late 1930s.



Mel Almada, the first Mexican-born player in Major League Baseball, pictured with fellow Red Sox Billy Werber and Rick Ferrell. Almada was on the team from 1933 to 1937.



1900s-  
1940s



1950s



1960s-  
1980s



1990s-  
today

## 1950s

### 1950

The Red Sox sign Black infielder Lorenzo “Piper” Davis to a minor league contract. That same year, the Red Sox make a substantial offer to acquire future Hall of Famer Larry Doby from Cleveland. Offers at that time were made to teams, not players, but Tom Yawkey was known for making strong offers for established players, irrespective of race. The Red Sox even offer to trade All-Star player Dom DiMaggio, fan favorite and future Boston Red Sox Hall of Famer, whose salary was more than three times that of the average baseball player in the 1950s, but Cleveland declines the trade because Doby is deemed too valuable to their team.

### 1952

The Red Sox enter into a bidding war to acquire Double A pitcher Bill Greason from the Texas League, who would go on to play for the St. Louis Cardinals as their second ever Black player, offering nearly four times the average baseball salary at the time. However, the offer is declined because the team’s owner decides to keep him for another season.

The Red Sox make a second attempt to acquire Larry Doby, but Cleveland’s general manager refuses to trade the future Hall of Famer.

### 1953

The Red Sox sign Black pitcher Earl Wilson to a minor league contract.

### 1954

The Red Sox make an offer to acquire Dodgers’ Black second baseman and future All-Star Charlie Neal. The offer was comparable to the salary of Joe DiMaggio, the highest paid professional baseball player at the time. However, the offer is declined with the Dodgers’ vice president stating that Neal figures into their plans for the upcoming season. That same year, the Red Sox make a substantial offer to acquire Black outfielder and future Hall of Famer Al Smith from Cleveland, but the offer is rejected.

*The Supreme Court rules in Brown v. Board of Education that segregation in schools is unconstitutional.*

### 1955

The Red Sox sign Black infielder Elijah “Pumpsie” Green from the Oakland Oaks to the team’s minor league system.

By the end of the 1955 season, 13 of the 16 MLB teams have Black players on their major league rosters.

*Rosa Parks sparks the Montgomery bus boycott.*

### 1957

At spring training, the Red Sox determine Earl Wilson is ready to be promoted to the majors after pitching a 5-2 victory in a game against the team’s major league squad. However, he then receives his military draft notice and enlists in the U.S. Marines for two years.

The Red Sox sign Latino Mike Fornieles to their major league roster. Fornieles was a Cuban-born, All-Star pitcher who went on to play six years with the team.

*The Civil Rights Act of 1957 is signed to protect voter rights.*

### 1958

The Red Sox sign Black Bostonian Lawrence Plenty to its Waterloo, Iowa minor league team.

### 1959

The Red Sox integrate with the promotion of Elijah “Pumpsie” Green to its major league roster. Earl Wilson is also promoted to the major league roster weeks later after completing his military service.



Elijah “Pumpsie” Green with Manager Bill Jurges. Green was the Red Sox first Black player on the major league roster and he played with the team from 1959 to 1962.

1900s-  
1940s

1950s

1960s-  
1980s

1990s-  
today

## 1960s-1980s

### 1960

*The Greensboro Sit-In, a non-violent protest of segregation, inspires similar sit-ins in other states.*

### 1960-1966

The Red Sox spend much of the decade acquiring talented players such as Black outfielder Willie Tasby in 1960, Black infielder Billy Harrell in 1961, Puerto Rican infielder Félix Mantilla in 1962, Cuban outfielder Román Mejías in 1963, Black outfielder and third baseman Al Smith finally joins the team in 1964, and Black outfielder Lenny Green in 1965.

In 1966 the team gets a major skill boost with the addition of Black third baseman Joe Foy, Cuban outfielder José Tartabull, Black first baseman George Scott, Puerto Rican pitcher José Santiago, Black outfielder Reggie Smith, Virgin Islander outfielder Joe Christopher, Black second baseman George Smith, and Black pitcher John Wyatt.

### 1961

*Freedom Riders challenge Jim Crow laws in the South.*

### 1963

*Martin Luther King Jr. gives his "I Have a Dream" speech.*

### 1964

*The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is signed to prevent employment and education discrimination and outlaw racial segregation in all public places and most private businesses.*

### 1965

*Martin Luther King Jr. leads the first civil rights march in Boston. More than 20,000 people marched from Nubian Square in Roxbury to Boston Common.*

### 1967

Tom Yawkey continues to assemble one of the best and most diverse teams in all of MLB, the "Impossible Dream Team," and wins the American League Championship. Some of the players include Mike Andrews, Tony Conigliaro, Joe Foy, Elston Howard, Jim Lonborg, Rico Petrocelli, Jose Santiago, George Scott, Reggie Smith, Jose Tartabull, John Wyatt, and Carl Yastrzemski.

### 1968

*The Civil Rights Act of 1968 is signed to provide equal housing opportunity.*

### 1968-1974

Throughout the late '60s and early '70s, Tom Yawkey and the Red Sox add more notable talent such as Puerto Rican infielder Luis Alvarado, Black outfielder Floyd Robinson, and Puerto Rican pitcher Juan Pizarro in 1968; Puerto Rican

catcher Joe Azcue and Mexican pitcher Vicente Romo in 1969; Puerto Rican pitcher Roger Moret in 1970; Black first baseman Cecil Cooper, Venezuelan shortstop Luis Aparicio, Cuban pitcher Luis Tiant, Puerto Rican outfielder Juan Beníquez, and Panamanian left fielder Ben Oglivie in 1971; Black outfielder/third baseman Tommy Harper, Black pitcher Lynn McGlothen, and Black pitcher Bob Veale in 1972; Puerto Rican first baseman Orlando Cepeda and Dominican shortstop Mario Guerrero in 1973; Black left fielder/designated hitter Jim Rice, Cuban pitcher Diego Seguí, and Dominican pitcher Juan Marichal in 1974.

### 1975

The culmination of the Red Sox's acquisitions result in the team winning the American League Championship and then playing in what is considered one of the best World Series of all time, ultimately losing in the final game against the Cincinnati Reds 4-3. Notable players on the team include Rick Burleson, Cecil Cooper, Dwight Evans, Carlton Fisk, Bill Lee, Fred Lynn, Roger Moret, Rico Petrocelli, Jim Rice, Luis Tiant, Rick Wise, and Carl Yastrzemski.

### 1976

Tom Yawkey passes away and his will establishes the Yawkey Foundation to support the places and causes that were important to him during his lifetime.

### 1986

Tom's wife, Jean Yawkey, establishes the Thomas A. Yawkey Scholarship Fund at Boston College to provide scholarships for minority student-athlete baseball players from the Greater Boston area.

The Red Sox play in the World Series under Jean Yawkey's ownership, who was one of the first women owners of an MLB team.

### 1988

Jean Yawkey underwrites the Boston exhibit of the Jackie Robinson Foundation national tour, spreading awareness of Jackie Robinson's life and legacy among thousands.

That same year, Jean has an inspiring conversation with Rachel Robinson, Jackie Robinson's widow. She establishes the Yawkey Scholarship with the Jackie Robinson Foundation to financially support minority students aspiring to attend college and provide higher education guidance. Since then, the Yawkey Foundation has funded Jackie Robinson Scholars with more than \$600,000 in scholarships and the support continues today.



Jean Yawkey interacts with Red Sox fans at Fenway Park.



1900s-  
1940s



1950s



1960s-  
1980s



1990s-  
today



The Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities program was established in Boston by the Yawkey Foundation in collaboration with the Yawkey-owned Boston Red Sox.



Along with funding the renovation of Clemente Field, the Yawkey Foundation has supported the renovation of baseball facilities throughout Boston.

## 1990s-Today

### 1992

Jean Yawkey passes away. Yawkey majority ownership of the Red Sox continues in the form of a trust.

### 1993

Yawkey Foundation, in collaboration with the Yawkey-owned Boston Red Sox, establishes the Rookie League and the Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities Program in Boston, which serves thousands of boys and girls each year.

### 2002

After more than 70 years of Yawkey ownership, the Red Sox are sold for over \$700 million, which at the time is the highest price ever paid for a major league team. The Yawkey interest, as the majority shareholder, is sold for more than \$400 million. As Tom and Jean Yawkey intended, their proceeds from this sale go directly to the Yawkey Foundation in order to continue its legacy of making significant and positive impacts on the quality of life for children, families, and the underserved in the areas that the Yawkeys called home: Boston, Massachusetts and Georgetown County, South Carolina.

### 2006

Yawkey Foundation provides a \$3 million grant for the establishment of the Jackie Robinson Museum in New York City, which will memorialize his achievements.

### 2008

Yawkey Foundation honors Roberto Clemente, Baseball Hall of Famer and member of the first all-Black lineup in MLB history, by funding the renovation of Clemente Field in Boston's Fenway neighborhood in partnership with Emmanuel College and the City of Boston.