

Clark, Ellery H., Jr., *Boston Red Sox - 75th Anniversary History 1901-1975*, (Exposition Press, Hicksville, N.Y., 1975). 168 pp.

Much like *The Wizard of Oz*. Ellery H. Clark's book, *Boston Red Sox - 75th Anniversary History, 1901-1975*, invites analysis on two different levels. For the dedicated Red Sox fan, the book is a delightful, informative study, greatly enhanced by a splendid assortment of pictures from the author's own collection. For the serious sport historian, however, the book promises more than it delivers.

Ellery H. Clark, Jr., a retired Navy captain and associate professor of history at the Naval Academy, has been a Red Sox supporter for fifty-six years. During these years, he has studied the team's performance, corresponded with former players, and collected Red Sox photographs and memorabilia. It is hard to imagine anyone alive who knows more about the team and its history, and this book would seem to represent the culmination of a lifetime of devotion.

Boston Red Sox departs startlingly from the traditional team history format. In a sense, only the sixty-four pages of photographs are truly historical; arranged chronologically and fully captioned, these pictures are a team history in themselves and will be a real treat to Red Sox fans of any vintage. The prose section of the book consists of eleven chapters averaging about ten pages in length; they comprise, for the most part, a series of statistical analysis of Red Sox' performance in different aspects of the game and in the American League since 1901. Some thirty-six tables identify individual and team leaders in a wide assortment of pitching, batting, and fielding categories. In addition, Clark picks his all-time Red Sox team, featuring Harry Hooper as captain and Bill Carrigan as manager. This kind of information should provide plenty of conversation topics for the taverns and/or family rooms in the vicinity of Fenway Park. Finally, Clark writes in an engaging, informal style that demonstrates conclusively his long love affair with the Red Sox.

Serious baseball historians may find this book a disappointment. Take away the pictures and there are barely 100 pages of text left, and much of that is consumed by the statistical tables. The research appears incomplete, the tables lack sufficient explanation, and, at times, the analysis and conclusions drawn by the author seem trite or contradictory. The conclusion is hard to avoid: should fifty-six years of study not result in more than what is here? From the first chapter, "Essential Characteristics of the Dedicated Red Sox Fan", we get the flip characteristic, "Propagation of the Species". From a chapter, "Analysis of Player-selected Great Moments," we learn that studying such moments is a "philosophic experience". This is not the stuff of which substantial sports histories are made.

Author Clark tries to relate baseball to society in a promising chapter, "Analysis of Red Sox Scorecard Advertising". But, again, the delivery does not match the promise, and we are left with some random remarks drawn from the ads of "twenty-five representative programs". Products which have disappeared from the programs are listed (alphabetically) with no explanation as to when or why, for example, and the chapter ends with the suggestion that in the future, more advertising be directed toward the "girls".

Separate chapters deal with pitching, batting, home runs, and fielding, with Boston's individual leaders and the team's position relative to the league delineated in various ways for each category. In general, Red Sox players, and the team as a whole, fare well in most categories, although the pitching has not held up as well as the hitting. Still, Boston probably ranks behind only the New York Yankees in any overall measure of American League success. The statistics are convincing in this regard, but Clark's analysis carry them little further.

Clark contends that pitching is the most important factor in a baseball team's success. Most baseball authorities would probably agree with this assertion, although it is interesting to note that Clark's own statistics and analysis at times bring the assertion into question. For example, Chicago and Cleveland rank high in league individual and team pitching excellence but have won relatively few pennants. Why? Poor hitting. Similarly, when analyzing the 1974 season, Clark writes, "...good pitching proved more important than good hitting," but in the next sentence, he continues, ". . . Boston in the final weeks lost more because of lack of timely hitting than weak pitching." Obviously, what we have here is a Gresham's Law of baseball: "Bad Hitting drives out Good Pitching".

The writing style that will please the Red Sox fan will distract the sport historian. The lack of an index may prove annoying. It is safe to say that, like *The Wizard of Oz. Boston Red Sox* is a book that will find more success on the emotional level than on the intellectual level.

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