

Voigt, David Quentin, *American Baseball—Vol. III: From Postwar Expansion to the Electronic Age*. University Park, Penn.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983. Pp. xxvi, 414. Index, notes, illustrations. bibliography. \$16.75 (cloth), \$10.00 (paper).

Albright College sociologist David Quentin Voigt caps a career of over twenty years researching and writing about professional baseball with the completion of the third volume of *American Baseball*, reaffirming his status as one of the leading historians of the national pastime. The subtitle is somewhat misleading, for the time period covered is 1946-1982. The theme of the book is not clearly stated, but seems to be that the direction of post-war baseball was heavily affected by contemporary societal developments, the rise of television, the expansion of the major leagues, and the increasingly prominent role that money has played in the sport.

The book is divided up chronologically into two sections. The first part examines baseball up to 1960, with two-thirds of the book focusing on the latter years, when the major leagues expanded from eight team circuits to a total of twenty-six today. The format of the book is similar in structure to Voigt's previous volumes. Consequently there is a great deal of attention devoted to pennant races and to the most notable players, owners, and bureaucrats. Little discussion is devoted to rule changes because few rules were changed in this era. Most of the major topics that one would expect to encounter are discussed, including the integration of baseball, the migration of franchises, expansionism, and the rise of the player as plutocrat. Particular subjects that are especially well handled include the office of the commissioner, the character of the "new breed" ballplayer, the "chipmunk" school of journalism, and baseball fiction. I would have actually preferred a more extended discussion of the latter two topics.

The book has some serious weaknesses, some of which may have been due to an uncertainty about the anticipated audience and others by a lack of copy

editing. As the third volume of a scholarly series, published by a university press, a reader has certain expectations about the scholarly quality of a book which will conflict with a product aimed at a more general reading public that we would all like to reach. Far too much attention is devoted to the pennant races and the baseball heroes. Certainly in the earlier volumes of *American Baseball*, when Voigt was writing about a remote and distant time, that might have been appropriate. I am less sure in this case. Certainly his lengthy discussions of the league pennant races, capped with redundant discussions of the World Series resulted in considerable repetition. Related to the question of audience is the matter of documentation. The book does have end notes that are very spartan, especially when citing magazine articles, and the reader has to often refer back to the bibliography to understand the citation. The book's very first note reflects one of my problems. It reads: "Back to the Unfabulous '50s," *Time*.

Another problem I had with the work was Voigt's constant use of sports-writers jargon, perhaps a reflection of his sources. One reads of teams being "lapped" by others; "flingers" hurling pitches; teams going on long "winning skeins"; reams being "smote down"; batters providing "homeric"; offensive crews hitting "plenteous" home runs; and Jackie Robinson's career being "wested" in 1956.

One crucial weakness of the third volume of *American Baseball* is that some major topics are given short-shrift or not discussed at all. There is a mini-chapter on Robinson, but the process of integration is not fully discussed. The minor leagues are only mentioned on four pages in the text. Even the expansion movement is insufficiently discussed. The location and development of the new ballparks is only briefly discussed, and barely in the context of their neighborhoods. The author did not use Roger Noll's *Governments and the Sports Business* (1974), nor Rudolph K. Haerle, Jr.'s published studies on baseball and social mobility. Voigt also failed to utilize the readily quantifiable data that is easily accessible on ballplayers through such sources as the *Baseball Encyclopedia*. Where, for example, did baseball players come from? The files of the National Baseball Library have a lot of data on the education of players and their subsequent careers. But none of that is used here.

As is true of all such studies, Voigt makes certain judgments that everyone cannot agree with. For example, was Ted Williams the best hitter of all time (p. 64)? Were the 1950s a period of "tyranny" by the Yankees? Was Billy Evans (p. 88) the first great general manager? What about Ed Barrow? Was the Yankees pennant drive of 1978 the greatest since 1914 (p. 197)? What about the 1951 Giants. There are also questions of accuracy. Is it possible that Latinos comprised 40 percent of all major league prospects in the 1970s (p. 244)? Voigt argues that the twenty black players in the 1970 All-Star Game constituted a majority (p. 231), but that seems impossible since there were at least fifty players. He also points out that Curt Flood was paid less than the league minimum as a rookie, but does not explain that discrepancy (p. 223).

Other errors include attributing Curt Simmons with a defeat in the 1964 World Series against Jim Bouton (p. 138) instead of Barney Schultz; and crediting Riess with authorship of a paper which was delivered by Thomas Karnes at the 1980 meeting of NASSH.

As always, Professor Voigt has produced a stimulating, informative and most interesting book to read. I am certain his ideas will stimulate further research and analysis into the post-war development of baseball. All readers of this journal have an intellectual debt to him for his pioneer work in the field of sports studies, and I for one look forward to his continuing productivity. The first two volumes of *American Baseball* have been reprinted by Penn State University Press who I herewith take to task for not sending a cloth-bound copy to the reviewer.

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