

Moore, Jack. *Joe DiMaggio: A Bio-Bibliography*. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, Pp. 252. Bibliography, notes, index. \$35.00.

Joe DiMaggio dominated baseball for most of his thirteen year career. As the star of the New York Yankees he played in ten World Series, established himself as one of the game's best hitters, and in 1941 achieved an epic 56 game hitting streak. No one played the outfield with his efficiency and grace. DiMaggio has been the subject of a number of baseball biographies, and recently writers such as Roger Kahn and Christopher Lehman Haupt have focused on his impact on American society. In this bio-bibliography Jack B. Moore attempts to distinguish fact from fiction in DiMaggio's life, analyze the reasons which led to DiMaggio's cult status, and to investigate the DiMaggio literature. He hopes that the book will appeal to both sport fans and students of American culture.

In the first chapter, "A Hero's Life," Moore traces the development of DiMaggio from the shy, ugly boy with a big nose and buck teeth, which he later fixed, to the dapper, handsome, superstar for the New York Yankees. Despite his expensive wardrobe he remained socially awkward, and at times seemed aloof and surly. Early in his career he hurt a knee, then a heel and he brooded over these injuries which diminished his immense skills. He was shocked by New York fans who booed him when he joined the ball club in 1938 after holding out for a well deserved raise, and offended by the Yankees who attempted to cut his salary in 1941 by arguing that he was making more than the boys fighting for their country. When he returned to baseball after the war he was only an average superstar, and he could not reconcile his dignity with his gradual descent to mediocrity. Unable to get along with Casey Stengel, his last manager, and disgraced by the published New York Giants scouting report of 1951, which depicted him as a liability to his team, he retired a bitter man. During his playing days he brooded more over his setbacks than he savored his successes. The resentment that built up during his career continued after his retirement when the Yankees did not offer him a suitable position forcing him into virtual exile from the game he loved.

Moore's treatment of DiMaggio's early San Francisco years is excellent. He debunks the story that DiMaggio's father was opposed to his son's baseball career and that Joe was discovered peeping through a knothole at a San Francisco Seals' game. This section, however, could have been strengthened by a closer look at contemporary sport pages, and there are gaps in DiMaggio's post baseball career. DiMaggio's first wife, Dorothy Arnold, and his son from that marriage, remain faceless. It would be of particular significance to see the relationship of DiMaggio, who had such strong parental ties, with his son. There is the standard treatment of his marriage to Marilyn Monroe. It appears to have been a dull marriage, and it is rather tiresome to read about.

The second chapter, "A Hero's World," offers interesting insights into DiMaggio's role as an ethnic type. Moore argues that the Italian-Americans needed a better model than Capone. The heroes of the 1930s, Primo Crnera and Mussolini, became jokes in the 1940s. Sinatra, despite his appeal, was a flawed

character, who reinforced certain racial stereotypes. DiMaggio's character, success and dignity gave Italians pride in themselves. He did for Americans of Mediterranean descent what Joe Louis did for Black Americans. Moore makes astute observations on why DiMaggio's heroic stature towered over that of players nearly his equal like Ted Williams. In Moore's work there is however little to suggest the qualities of leadership, which are so prominent in Maury Allen's work, *Where Have You Gone Joe DiMaggio?*, or the character that Hemingway saw in DiMaggio. Moore depicts DiMaggio as a sour and dull man, though there are glimpses of a more appealing person in the three interviews which comprise the final chapter.

The third chapter, "The Literature about DiMaggio," is the first attempt to analyze the magazine articles, monographs, comic books and references to DiMaggio in serious works of fiction like Hemingway's *Old Man and the Sea*. The approach is chronological beginning with Quentin Reynolds' piece in *Colliers* in 1933. While Moore has excellent insights, particularly in examining the comic book and juvenile literature, some of this is repetitive and would have been more appropriate, particularly the purely journalistic pieces such as the work of Reynolds, Daniel and Meany, in illuminating DiMaggio's life in the first chapter.

Moore concludes with three interviews—Vince DiMaggio, Spud Chandler and Robin Roberts. Vince was a charming, gregarious man talking of the family's early years, about a period that Joe, considered, like his marriages, taboo subjects. It was unfortunate that Vince did not have Joe's baseball talents. He was an immensely more appealing person. Chandler and Roberts, one a teammate and the other a rival, both revere DiMaggio and bring out that aspect of his character which is lacking in the general narrative, perhaps an indication that oral biographies have a power and immediacy lacking in bio-bibliographies.

Baseball fans might quibble about Moore having Tris Speaker retiring in 1921, the academic prose, the careful analysis of popular sports literature and will probably prefer the Allen, De Gregorio, and Golenbeck books about DiMaggio. Scholars of American sports and culture, however, will be grateful for this work. Moore has done considerable research and has provided some sharp insights showing how the nation relates to its favorite pastime, and the process by which myths are made.

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