

Voigt, David Quentin, *Baseball: An Illustrated History*. University Park, Pa. : The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987. Pp. 402. Index, photographs, bib. \$38.50.

Perhaps no one is better qualified to write a one-volume overview of baseball's history than Dave Voigt. He has firmly established himself as the foremost narrator of the game's past. For scholars and serious students he has previously produced a three-volume *American Baseball*, an outstanding, scholarly history of the national game from its beginnings to the 1980s. In other works, such as

America Through Baseball and in numerous papers and presentations, Voigt has dealt insightfully with a wide variety of topics in baseball history.

Baseball: An Illustrated History answers many requests from historians, fans, and general readers for a solid, accurate, one-volume history of the sport. In responding to this need, Voigt and his publishers have produced a very attractive overview that should appeal to a wide general audience. Paralleling Voigt's earlier multivolume study, the book traces the history of baseball from colonial days to 1986 in three main divisions: from the origins of the game to 1900; the period 1900 to 1945; and the current era from 1946. The primary focus is on the development of the major leagues, but separate sections trace the history of the minor leagues, the story of the Black Major Leagues, and the development of collegiate and amateur baseball. Also, the book devotes an illustrated chapter to the evolution of playing equipment and gear and another to the changes in baseball parks and stadia.

The narrative is fast-paced, straightforward, clear, and enlivened with humor such as this comment on the Abner Doubleday legend: "Clearly, the acceptance and propagation of the Doubleday myth requires a childlike faith which was apparently in plentiful supply among sportswriters and baseball propagandists in 1939 when the major leagues solemnly celebrated the centennial of the game's myth invention" (p. 15). The book balances its treatment of maneuvers in the front offices with an exciting account of events on the field, including great teams and dramatic moments. Ample space introduces the reader to the significant personalities of the game's history. The book echoes Voigt's frequently advanced theme that baseball has mirrored American history and benefits from the mature, sharp analysis and perspective that his life-long study of baseball has produced.

Scholars familiar with Voigt's three-volume study will find little new in the author's narrative, interpretations or analysis; nor should they, because the intent here is to offer a one-volume account to a different and uninitiated audience. Serious students will be pleased, however, that this new volume contains the essence of the longer work. The compressed narrative still gives suitable space to each period and abounds in insightful judgments on subjects such as labor relations, ownership, and the impact of media.

The more than 400 superb photographs and illustrations of *Baseball: An illustrated History* are worth the price of the volume by themselves. Drawn from the archives of major league teams, individual collectors such as Voigt and John Thorn, as well as such institutions as the National Baseball Library and the New York Public Library, the photos constitute a visual history of the game from the picture of Alexander Cartwright, complete with his fireman's trumpet (p. 17), through the shot of Roger Maris standing and admiring homer number sixty-one (p. 266), to the Mets celebration of 1986 (p. 381). The photographs also chronicle the game's interrelationship with society from a haunting daguerreotype of Union soldiers at camp with their baseball bats displayed alongside their muskets (p. 14) to the segregated Indianapolis Clowns of the 1950s (p. 206). For many readers the book will provide a

pictorial reference to now-vanished scenes of major league action, such as Shibe Park, the Polo Grounds, and Ebbets Field. Others will be impressed with the gallery of baseball personalities. Chris von der Ahe, Babe Ruth, Joe DiMaggio, Roger Clemens, and Will Clark are all here along with a hundred other significant and memorable characters. Someone merely flipping through this rich visual collection will receive an inkling of the fascinating unfolding of the game's past.

The publishers have joined with Voigt in producing a most attractive volume. The book has an index and an excellent bibliography-rare and welcome items in sports volumes of this type. The big-print narrative and photographs mesh well and enhance each other. While some will note the omission of a favorite photograph, and Stan Musial fans may question the appropriateness of the note "He batted .256 in Four World Series" above Musial's picture (p. 237) these are minor quibbles for a work of enormous breadth and great merit.

Baseball historians will need to keep Voigt's three-volume *American Baseball* on their bookshelves, but they are likely to display *Baseball: An Illustrated History* proudly on their coffee tables and to present it to laymen as a gift, instead of *The Ultimate Baseball Book* or *The Game for All America*. This reviewer hopes that the wider appeal of *Baseball: An Illustrated History* will place it in many hands, especially those of sportswriters and broadcasters, for it will give readers a sounder, more sophisticated, and better balanced understanding of the national pastime's history. The book will serve as an ideal starting point for novices into the past of the sport and promises to enhance interest in more serious historical accounts of the national pastime.

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