



Baseball: An Illustrated History, including The Tenth Inning

By Geoffrey C. Ward

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The companion volume to Ken Burns's magnificent PBS television series—updated and expanded to coincide with the broadcast of a new, two-part *Tenth Inning*, directed with Lynn Novick.

The authors of the acclaimed and best-selling *The Civil War*, *Jazz*, and *The War* turn to another uniquely American phenomenon: baseball. In words and pictures they provide a stunningly rich evocation of our beloved national pastime, a game woven inextricably into the fabric of our lives and our national memory.

Geoffrey C. Ward and Ken Burns's moving and fascinating history of the game goes beyond stolen bases, double plays, and home runs to demonstrate how baseball has been influenced by, and has in turn influenced, American life: politics, race, labor, big business, advertising, social custom, literature, art, and morality. The book covers every milestone of the game: from the rules drawn up in 1845 by Alexander Cartwright to the American League's introduction of the designated hitter in 1973; from the founding of the Brotherhood of Professional Base Ball Players in 1885 to the eight-month players' strike of 1994; from the 1924 Negro World Series (Kansas City Monarchs vs. Philadelphia Hilldales) to Jack Roosevelt Robinson's major-league debut in 1947; from the first curve ball in 1867 (pitched by Candy Cummings of the Brooklyn Excelsiors) to Nolan Ryan's seventh and last no-hitter in 1991. This new edition brings the authors' monumental work into the twenty-first century: steroids, home-run records, the rise of Latino players, the long-awaited Red Sox World Series victory, and so much more.

Nine essays by notable baseball enthusiasts, exploring their individual preoccupations with the game, complement this sweeping narrative. And a wealth of pictures document baseball's evolution since the mid-nineteenth century and bring to life its most memorable figures. Monumental, affecting, informative, entertaining, and sumptuously illustrated—*Baseball* is a book that speaks to all Americans.

With a narrative by Geoffrey C. Ward, a preface to the new edition by Ken Burns

and Lynn Novick, a new chapter by Kevin Baker, and an introduction by Roger Angell

Essays by Thomas Boswell • Robert W. Creamer • Gerald Early • Doris Kearns Goodwin • Bill James • David Lamb • Daniel Okrent • John Thorn • George F. Will

And featuring an interview with Buck O'Neil

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Baseball is indeed a mirror of American life, and Ward and Burns show how well America's story is told through baseball. Their book is the companion to a nine-part PBS television documentary scheduled to begin on September 18. In format and approach it resembles the authors' previous best seller, *The Civil War* (LJ 9/1/90). Each chapter, or "inning," proceeds chronologically with a dominant theme and *dramatis personae*. The profusion of striking illustrations add an extra dimension to each chapter. Another nice feature is the interlaced essays by such fine writers as Roger Angell, Robert Creamer, and Thomas Boswell on the hold that baseball has on ordinary people. The narrative gains force and momentum in sections examining the injustice of segregation and the forgotten heroes of the Negro leagues. Because the book is based on a documentary filmscript, the narrative sometimes seems a bit episodic, jumping from scene to scene and story to story. Overall, however, this rich and suggestive history is one of the finest books produced on baseball. Highly recommended.

--Paul Kaplan, *Lake Villa Dist. Lib., Ill.*

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From *Booklist*

Baseball comes to PBS? Don't worry, all you public-broadcasting snobs. It's not as bad as it sounds. Your local PBS affiliate hasn't outbid the major networks for the Game of the Week. Instead, Ken Burns, whose *Civil War* documentary won more than 40 film and television awards, has turned from Bull Run to Bull Durham, producing a new, nine-part video on baseball that will air in the fall. Published in conjunction with the PBS program, this lavishly produced, gorgeously illustrated history of the game rises far above the often dreary companion volume genre. Coauthored by Burns and Geoffrey Ward, the book devotes its nine chapters (or innings, as they're called) to a decade-by-decade survey of the evolution of baseball.

Complementing the historical material are more than 500 photos, some in color, and several impressionistic essays by various luminaries including Thomas Boswell and George Will. Perhaps surprisingly, the essays are the only weak link. Yes, baseball inspires us all to flights of rhetorical fancy, but isn't it time to call a moratorium on this sort of thing: America is about hope and renewal. And gloriously, so is baseball, pulsing with the mystery of the seasons and life itself. Thanks for sharing that, John Thorn, but the pictures and the unadorned facts presented here say it far more eloquently. Baseball doesn't need purple prose; the game's faces, names, dates, and numbers carry their own poetry, and Ward and Burns, unlike some of the essayists, wisely avoid the temptation to wax lyrical. Fans will find plenty to quibble about in these pages (too much Mantle; not enough Mays), but with the exception of *The Baseball Encyclopedia*, there is no better one-volume history of the sport. *Bill Ott*

From Kirkus Reviews

A magnificent, exhaustively researched chronicle in words and pictures of our nation's pastime, and how it came to be what it is. In their analysis and celebration of baseball's evolution over 150 years from a game played on vacant city lots in front of a few lookers-on to present-day contests in domed stadia with television audiences approaching one billion, Ward and Burns (*The Civil War*, 1990) divide the sport's history into nine sections (or innings), each with accompanying essays by such notable writers as Gerald Early, Doris Kearns Goodwin, and George Will. Perhaps most noteworthy is this volume's ability to examine the game while remaining blessedly free from the overanalysis and intellectualization that are common to such comprehensive studies. To wit: Babe Ruth is seen not so much as a lens through which a historical era can be studied, but as a great player whose accomplishments helped alter millions of fans' connection to the game.

Also worthy of high praise is the straightforward depiction of black players' exclusion, stemming from an unwritten agreement among team owners, during the period spanning from the late 1800s until 1947. It is made painfully clear, particularly in an interview with Negro League star Buck O'Neil, that prejudice deprived the game of several of its greatest players--and that integration, while having made great strides both in baseball and America, has a long way to go. Burns's assertion in the preface that baseball is a "powerful metaphor...for all Americans" might be dismissed by some as just a tad ingenuous. However, the true genius of this work is in demonstrating how the baseball diamond does provide a common ground for a nation comprised of disparate elements, overcoming cultural, ethnic, and regional barriers better than nearly any other institution. This companion volume to an upcoming PBS series also stands on its own as a literary achievement. (First printing of 400,000; Book-of-the-Month Club main selection) -- *Copyright ©1994, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Eunice Bosse:

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