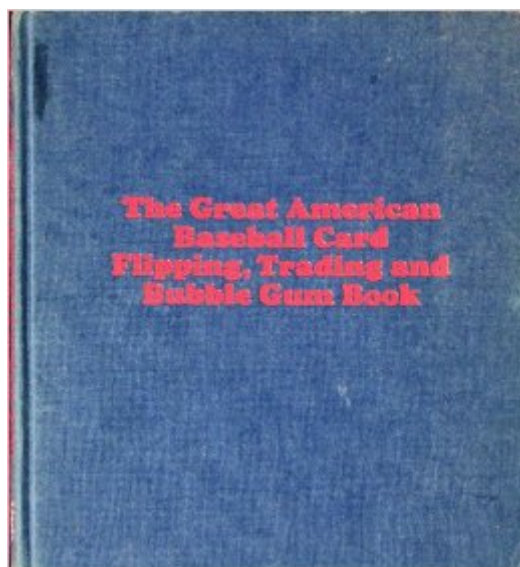


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The Great American Baseball Card Flipping, Trading And Bubble Gum Book



Synopsis

Nostalgic look at the baseball card hobby before it became more like big business featuring hundreds of color photos of (mostly) 50's cards, and a loving, appreciative & funny text

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Each of us occasionally has experiences that are so vivid that they make immediate and permanent imprints upon the memory. For example, I can still remember my excited first day of kindergarten, as well as my first glimpse of Three Rivers stadium, as our family car approached it along the jumbled, congested streets of the North Side. Believe it or not, I can similarly remember my first experiences reading this book, as though they were yesterday. I was in grad school in California, and a friend was visiting me with this book in tow. As he spread out a sleeping bag and nodded off to sleep, I curled up with his magnificent book. I can still picture that entire scene, my old apartment as it was then, and even one particular page on which I lingered in fascination (the Joe Fornieles profile.) The feeling of reading it was that electric, that hyper-engaging. A book has got to be good if reading it is remembered as a formative experience. Let me try another way to explain how much I loved this book. When I couldn't find this book anywhere (it being out of print), I directed a nationwide book search to try to find it for me. They did, a flawless hardback edition that I still treasure, and still maintain in carefully guarded, pristine condition. Mind you, I was a starving grad student when I did this, and could hardly afford such luxuries. As you can see from the other reviews below, this book takes that type of hold on those who love it. There are three major sections in this book; one covering the sensory atmosphere of a 1950s suburban childhood, one on the baseball card industry as it existed in 1973, and one a series of profiles of players as depicted on samples

from the authors' baseball card collection. The first and third of these are the great ones. I adore the opening chapter, which brought childhood back to me even though I didn't grow up in the same era as the authors. But some things are universal I guess, including the way that childhood memories exist as scraps and floating debris of the odd popular cultures through which we guide our children. Boyd and Harris's childhood world will be recognizable to anyone who grew up in America -- a world of advertising jingles, cap guns, yo-yos, Pez, and of course, baseball cards. A time cycle in which the kids learn to break down the interminable flow of their school year according to the changing weather, the holidays and favorite activities of each mini-season. And even those of us whose childhoods weren't so innocent nevertheless cling to those small fragments of memory of a time when we had no responsibilities and the world was a fascinating and wondrous place. I once wrote a newspaper review of this book in which I referred to this opening chapter as Marcel Proust in Levittown, and I think it still fits. But the real core of the book is the "Profiles" section. This is a procession of baseball cards, one after another, two per page, each of which triggers a particular set of memories from the authors. Many of these, if not most, are really funny. But others are poignant. Not all of the little capsule profiles are about the players themselves. Sometimes the authors take the opportunity to laugh over the baseball card itself -- a goofy pose, a bad airbrushing job, an inexplicable caption, an ill-considered description on the back. It's an exquisite feeling, thumbing through their card collection with them. You feel the pang of reverence for the Ted Williams card. You snicker over Choo-Choo Coleman and the lousy catchers collected by the New York Mets. You ponder how it could be that Charlie Smith was traded straight up for Roger Maris. You nod knowingly over the author's continual confusion of Mike de la Hoz and Bob del Greco. The visual design of the book is central to its power, which is why I particularly treasure my hardback edition. One page of umpire cards has a colored background on which is stamped, simply, "Boo, Boo, Boo, Boo. . ." A page with the cards of Jackie Robinson and Roberto Clemente contains no commentary, just a respectful black background (each had recently passed at the time of the book's original publication.) Somehow it all seems to mean something, even without seeming to try to mean anything. And therein lies the book's genius. I know of no other baseball book like this one. It defies categorization, and despite my poor effort above, it really defies description. Buy it, hide it, shut the door and turn out the world, savor it, ponder it, laugh at it, love it. Have a good time. It's meant to be fun, you know. Let's play two.

This book is a treasure. I think if I had to pack one bag of books for a long stay on a desert island, this would be one of the first ones included. Like one of the other reviewers, I have worn out more

than one copy and find myself puzzled why it's been allowed to go out of print."The Great American Flipping, Trading and Bubble Gum Card Book" has three principal sections. The first, "Where Have You Gone VINCE DiMaggio" is a warm and very witty recollection of the co-author's childhoods in the 1950s and the central role that baseball cards played in them. Part two, "This Kid Is Going To Make It," is a look at how the baseball card business operated circa 1973, the date of the book's original publication. As entertaining as these openers are, the best (and largest) part of the book is the one simply called "Profiles." Reproduced in full color are hundreds of cards from the early 1950s to the late 1960s, accompanied by the author's observations about the players immortalized on them. You'll find greats on these pages, like Richie Ashburn, Stan Musial and Ted Williams...but the real joy is the rediscovery of the men on the fringes of the game's glory...."immortals" like Chris Cannizzaro, Frank Leja, Foster Castleman, Clyde Kluttz and Coot Veal. It's tempting to quote from the book at length, but that would spoil the fun. Just to give you a sense of the flavor though, I opened at random to the page featuring Hector Lopez, poor-fielding third baseman for the Yankees and Kansas City A's. After judging Lopez not to be just a bad fielding third baseman for a baseball player, but for a human being, they declare, he did not "simply field a ground ball, he attacked it. Like a farmer trying to kill a snake with a stick." This is a wonderful book for any baseball fan, and should especially be treasured on those short, cold winter days when the crack of the bat and the warm blue skies and green grass of summer seem oh-so-far away.--William C. Hall

I received this as a Christmas gift one year and was initially disappointed. I had only heard of a few of the guys that were showed on the cards and I set it aside, figuring on sticking it up on my bookshelf with the other boring books that I had and never bothered with. Several days after Christmas we went on the annual family gift return, a day I truly hated. In desperation I grabbed this book off of my pile and took my accustomed place in the back of the station wagon. For the rest of that day and night the only time I put the book down was to eat, and then only briefly. This is a completely irreverent look at baseball as a whole, and the thing that really sealed the deal for me was the card of Whammy Douglas and the comments made by the author. I tried to get my dad to read it because I figured he would get more out of it than I did, (I'm 41 and consider myself to be on the trailing edge of those who might "get it",) but he wasn't interested. Maybe I'll try again. This book might have a limited range of interest, but if you have fond memories of baseball in the 50's and 60's, I think you'll fall right into that range.

This is a fantastic book! It took me back 40 years! What's actually great about this book is the

interview with Sy Berger, the head of the Topps Sports Chewing Gum Department. It gives a brief history of Topps and reveals some information that can not be found today. What's even more precious about this book is that it helped me prove that one of the hobby's self-proclaimed experts doesn't know what he's talking about. A must have book!

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