

Anson to Zuber: Iowa Boys in the Major Leagues

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Anson to Zuber: Iowa Boys in the Major Leagues, by Jerry E. Clark. Omaha: Making History, 1992. 232 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$20.00 paper.

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Baseball continues to catch the interest of reading fans nationwide. Now Jerry Clark extends the fascination of the game to the regional level with this well-researched work on the Iowa men who had the good fortune to play in the major leagues. The author has compiled information on 225 players who were born in Iowa or who considered Iowa their home. Each entry has a biographical sketch, usually a partial account of the player's journey through the minor leagues, and the highlights of his career in the majors. In addition, many sketches include information about the player's post-baseball life, and nearly half are accompanied by a baseball card reproduction. The material is organized by chronological period, and there are helpful surname and geographical indexes. There are no individual or annual statistical compilations.

The book is both enjoyable to read and a helpful reference. Clark's pleasant writing style makes every player interesting, whether it be Hall of Fame star Bob Feller or a virtual unknown like Ray Luebbe, who played briefly with the Yankees in 1925. There are fascinating accounts of how George Pipgras was discovered and why Walt Marbet suddenly left the St. Louis Cardinals shortly after making the team. Readers will recognize many names, such as Bill "Goober" Zuber of the Amanas and Mike Boddicker of Norway. Fans of baseball and students of Iowa history and culture will find the book a good starting point for local and regional research. The aspirations and successes of individuals reflect the important role baseball played in small-town social and economic life. The biography of a Billy Sunday or a Hal Trosky probably has baseball at its origin.

The next edition might include information on players from the Negro Leagues and the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League. It would be very interesting to add information, however difficult to obtain, on those players who made it only to the minor leagues. But this is not to detract from a fine effort, one that we can hope will stimulate more research and writing on the subject.

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