

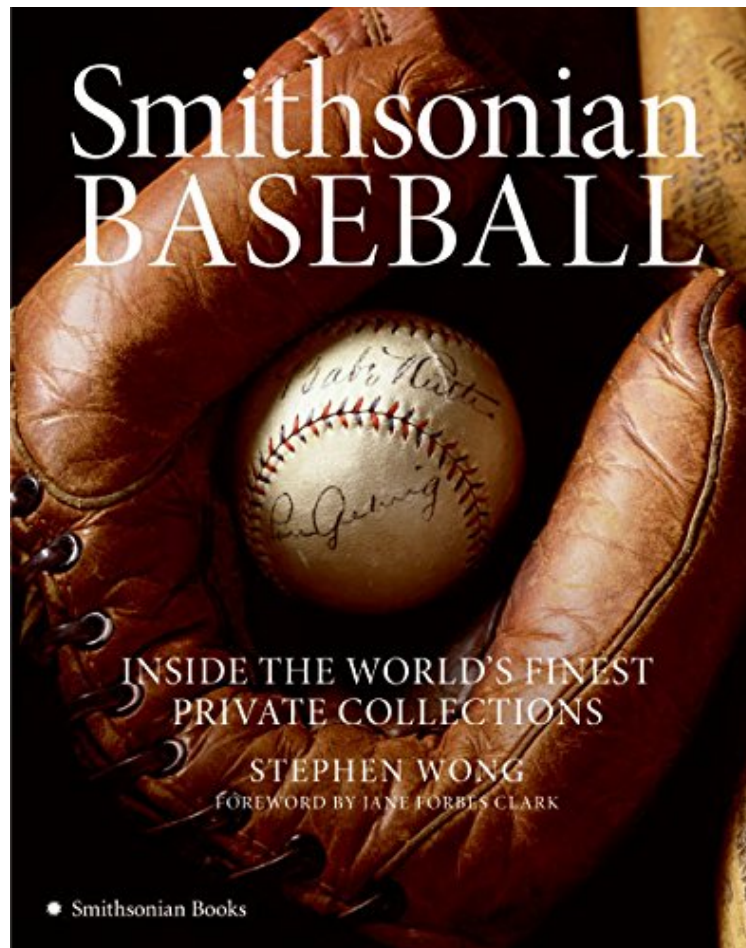
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Stephen Wong

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(Read free) Smithsonian Baseball: Inside the World's Finest Private Collections

Smithsonian Baseball: Inside the World's Finest Private Collections

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To a collector, there is no joy parallel to finding that elusive home-run ball, or a jersey worn by a legendary player.

Smithsonian Baseball: Inside the World's Finest Private Collections celebrates the abiding passion for our national pastime, as witnessed by the dedication of the sport's most devoted collectors. The first book of its kind, Smithsonian Baseball features revealing stories and lavish photography highlighting 21 of the best private collections of baseball memorabilia in existence. From a rare copy of the first written rules of the game (1848) to Mark McGwire's record-shattering home-run ball (1998), these impressive collections span baseball's entire history. Some of the game's most historically significant artifacts are part of these private collections, yet most have never before been seen by the public. Marvel at the memorabilia as you read about the historical background of the objects and get to know each collector's passions and motivations. Some of the collections are all-encompassing; others focus on a specific era or type of memorabilia -- game-used bats, for example, or folk art, or celluloid pin-back buttons. One collection features only relics and memorabilia from the grand old ballparks of the past; another comprises items from overseas exhibition tours of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Some of the most valuable vintage photographs and advertising displays as well as the most sought-after baseball cards are in these collections, including the famous T206 Honus Wagner, the highest professionally graded set of 1915 Cracker Jacks, and a gem-mint condition 1952 Topps Mickey Mantle. A father-daughter collecting duo has an impressive collection of World Series scorecards and programs, dating back to the inaugural series in 1903. The book also includes seven "tips" essays. The hobby's leading experts offer advice on collecting and authenticating artifacts, and show how to build and organize your own impressive 19th-century memorabilia or baseball card collection. Weigh the benefits of having a general collection versus a very narrow one. Find out how to store and display your collectibles. Learn to distinguish between an original first-generation photograph versus a wire photo, a vintage jersey worn at home games as opposed to one worn on the road, a player's game-used bat and one made for retail sale -- and much, much more. It's the perfect gift for any baseball fan, young or old, a baseball collectible in its own right.

From Publishers Weekly Readers who want to see Mickey Mantle's uniform from the 1968 season, Mark McGwire's 70th home run ball from 1998, or a Satchel Paige autographed glove will find them among scores of treasures in this oversized book, vividly illustrated with color photographs of the most exceptional private baseball memorabilia collections, many of which contain items that have not been seen in public for decades. More than simple eye candy for the baseball fetishist, the book includes thoughtful essays that delve into collectors' backgrounds, introducing the reader to an array of people, their quirks and their motivations for collecting. Some of the collectors are well known: one chapter is devoted to the collection of Todd McFarlane, creator of the comic book character Spawn; another displays the baseball folk art collection of Penny Marshall-Laverne of Laverne and Shirley and the director of the baseball movie, A League of Their Own. Others are more ordinary people who have been blessed with the dedication and means to take their passion for baseball to an extraordinary level. Wong, a lawyer and baseball historian, places the artifacts in social and historic context as he conveys the arcane but captivating knowledge gathered by these collectors, who are authorities on obscure details like the model numbers of bats. This book is fine companion for baseball enthusiasts looking for something to tide them over during those long winter days between the World Series and spring training. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist *Starred * This sumptuous volume offers an irresistible entree into what must be one of the richest private collections of baseball memorabilia in the world. Although the chapters are arranged by collector, they fall neatly into categories reflecting those collectors' specific areas of interest, such as baseball cards, equipment, uniforms, advertisements, "pin-backs," autographs, and stadium mementos. Many of the story lines are explicit, such as baseball's evolution since the mid-1800s, or the game's strong association with pop culture. Other story lines are less obvious but just as telling, such as baseball's (and society's) more careless tolerance of pain: nineteenth-century baseball played without helmets, rules that allowed teams to record outs by hitting the runner with the baseball (known as soaking), and mitts so unpadded as to pass for driving gloves. And there are nice little touches, like the close-up photos of nine World Series rings, or the sepia image of a touring, 1888-89 American baseball team standing at various points atop the Sphinx. The collections are beautifully photographed and laid out on the page, and the text and captions--once past Wong's obligatory paean to his own youthful attachment to baseball--complement the illustrations well. A godsend for baseball geeks everywhere. Bill Ott Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved. A godsend for baseball geeks everywhere. (Booklist Starred) ...a magnificent album of baseball mementos--by turns, beautiful, peculiar and hilarious. (Sports Illustrated)