

Wise, Suzanne. "[Rev. of *Baseball in the Carolinas: 25 essays on the states' hardball heritage* edited by Chris Holaday]." *North Carolina Libraries* 60:4 (Winter 2002), p. 119. NCLA [Greensboro, NC], 2002.

The original version of this article appeared in the Winter 2002 issue of *North Carolina Libraries*.

When one thinks of sports and North Carolina, college basketball immediately comes to mind, followed closely by stock car racing, golf, and football. Surprisingly, baseball also has a long and rich history in the Carolinas, dating from the Civil War. Chris Holaday is a Durham resident and member of SABR (Society for American Baseball Research) whose previous books on baseball include *Professional Baseball in North Carolina: An Illustrated City-by-City History, 1901-1996* (McFarland, 1998), winner of the 1998 *The Sporting News*–SABR Baseball Research Award. In *Baseball in the Carolinas* he has gathered a duke's mixture of writing celebrating the long affiliation of baseball with the region. While the book covers both of the Carolinas, most of the essays deal with hardball in North Carolina. The publisher, McFarland, has in recent years made baseball a specialty of the house.

The authors included in the collection are all baseball fans who have been involved with the game in one way or another, from Termite League hero to minor league president to baseball journalist. Their contributions primarily recall professional baseball—a special season, the history of a team or league, a profile of a player. The pieces vary in depth and quality, but all help document the history of baseball in the region.

The essay topics range from North Carolina natives who played in the All-American Girls Baseball League to the history of Durham Athletic Park. The cream of the collection for this reader was “Diary of a Minor League Season” by Miles Wolff, a humorous account of the first year of his ownership of the Durham Bulls franchise, and “The Cannon Street All-Stars” by Gene Sapakoff, the heart-wrenching story of a Charleston, South Carolina, team from the first black Little League in the state that was denied the chance to play in the 1955 Little League World Series in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. The “Let them play!” chant of the crowd still haunts me. Also deserving special mention is an interview with “Crash” Davis, the inspiration for the Kevin Costner character in the film *Bull Durham*.

The reviewer has a bone to pick with Matthew Eddy's choice of second basemen in “The All-Time South Carolina Team.” How can you ignore Bobby Richardson of Sumter, South Carolina? Richardson was the quintessential second baseman with great range, sure hands, and the ability to turn a double play. He started for the Yankees from 1959 to 1966, had a .266 career batting average as a model lead-off man, and really came to the fore in post-season play, when he routinely got key hits to win games. Author selections Willie Randolph and Del Pratt had solid careers, but Richardson was a seven-time All-Star, won five consecutive Gold Gloves, was named Most Valuable Player of the 1960 World Series, and was second only to teammate Mickey Mantle in balloting for the 1962 American League MVP. Ah, well, such discussions eternally fuel the Hot Stove League.

Baseball fans of all ages will enjoy this book, and any library collecting North Carolina history should have a copy.

—Suzanne Wise

Appalachian State University