

*The* DREAMS *of*  
SUMMERS PAST

LEGENDS OF THE EARLY  
DAYS OF BASEBALL



SAM TORODE

THE DREAMS OF SUMMERS PAST

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On the front cover: Ty Cobb;  
back cover: Honus Wagner.

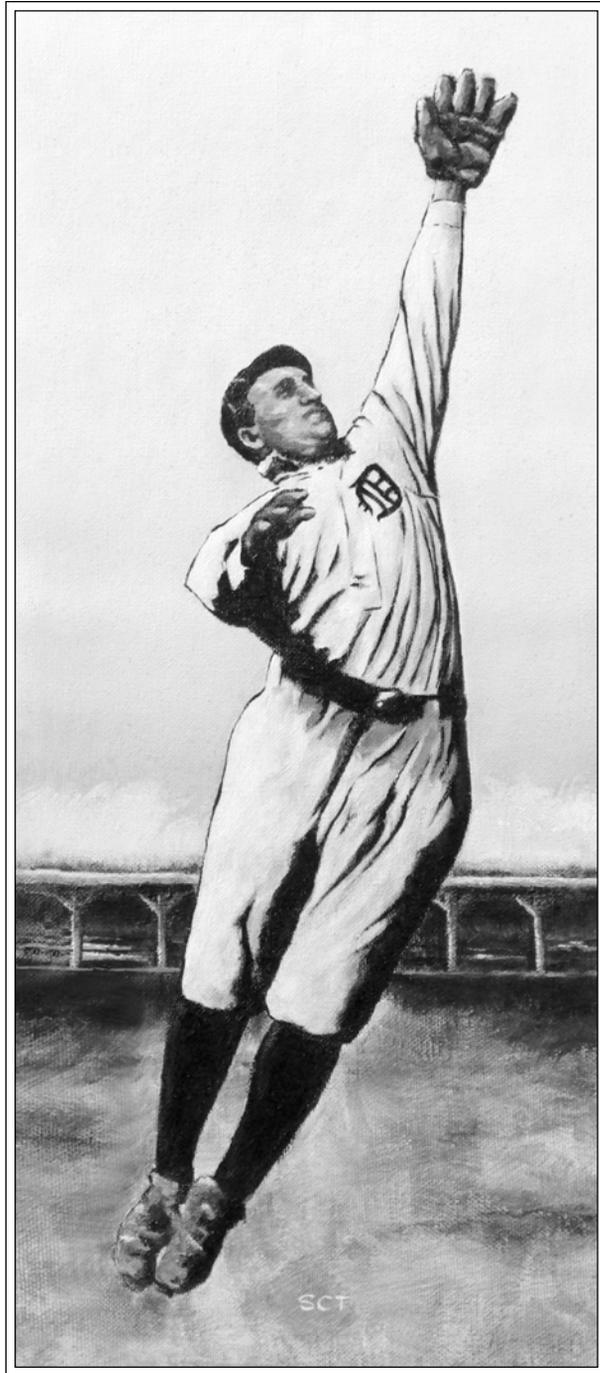
Written and illustrated in 1992;  
designed and published in 2017.  
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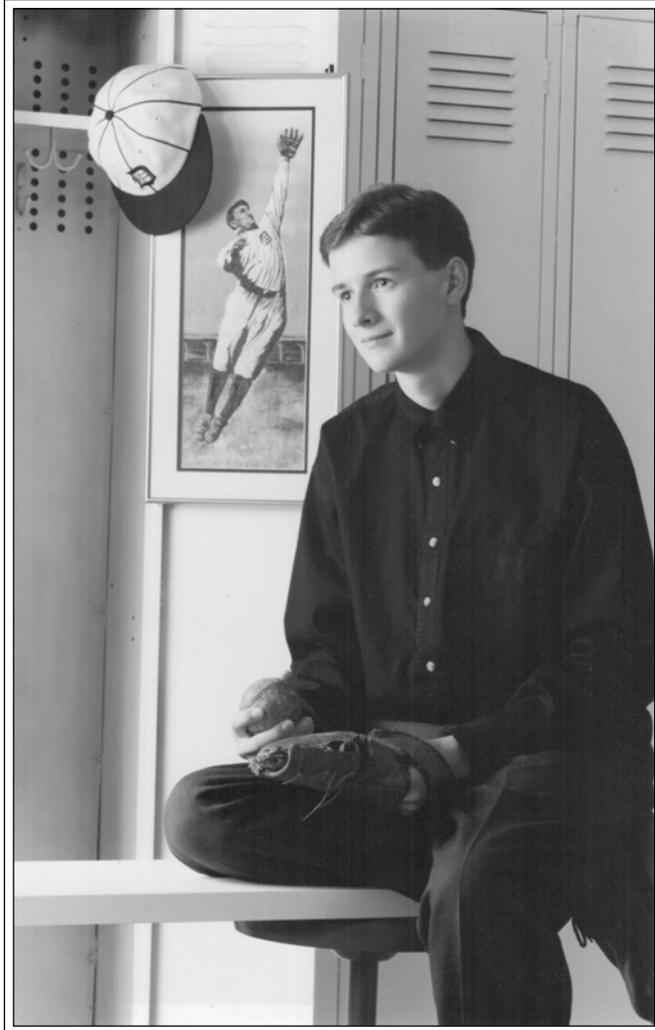
SAM TORODE



TY COBB

**The dreams of summers past  
No longer toil in ruin,  
Having crossed the mortal bound'ry  
Found within an earthly tomb.**

**While far below the celestial gate  
Is written another line,  
By the fortuitous quill — the hand of fate,  
Upon the sands of time.**



This book was written and illustrated by a 16-year-old  
artist, baseball fan, and student of history.

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# BASEBALL AS HISTORY

A small crowd gathered on the outfield grass. They had ridden to the park in buggies and wagons pulled by horses. A new sport called “base-ball” was about to be introduced to a group of New Yorkers. The year was 1846, and the new sport would eventually be called America’s “national pastime.”

A few hours after the game had begun, the umpire called the final out, “Strike three!” The New York Nine had defeated the Nickerbockers, 23 to 1. But far more important than the game itself, that small crowd had witnessed a truly great event in history.

Baseball is history. A history rich in great players and great performances. A history written in record books and on baseball cards.

The history of baseball shows us how the game has changed. But more importantly, it shows us how life itself has changed.



JOHN MCGRAW

# THE LITTLE NAPOLEON AND THE WILD WEST

**W**hen these early players were growing up, life was hard. The Civil War still raged on in the South, and white men were still fighting Native Americans in the West. Contraptions like radios, telephones, and automobiles were only dreams of the future.

The game of baseball has always reflected its times. That means that what was customary in society became customary in baseball. In those days you had to be tough to survive, so ballplayers were tough. Ballplayers yelled and brawled because they had done it all their lives.

John McGraw was one player who did brawl and yell and play rough. Rougher than anyone! While playing with the Baltimore Orioles in the 1890s, John changed the way baseball was played. He used many tricks and ploys. Several times, the crafty third baseman had paths cut in the grass to make balls hit fair to go foul!

A decade later, John joined the New York Giants as a manager. He used his brilliant strategies to make his Giants one of the greatest teams ever. And John became one of the greatest managers of all-time. With a grim stare, he ruled over the playing field from 1902 to 1932. The men John managed always called him “The Little Napoleon.”

John McGraw was always determined to win. When his players made mistakes, he was very hard on them. Just as hard as his past had been on himself.

# THE ROOKIE AND THE GENTLEMAN

**N**ot all of the early ballplayers were as rough as John McGraw. Many played to have fun, not just to win. And by doing so, they became winners.

In the fall of 1903, a young rookie wandered into the Pittsburg Pirate clubhouse. The manager of the Pittsburg team had simply told him to come to the game. He didn't even know where to change into his uniform! Years ago, veteran players would give rookies a hard time, so most of the Pirate team just laughed at the newcomer.

But suddenly, a deep and friendly voice yelled out, "Hey kid, come on over and use my locker!"

The deep voice belonged to Honus Wagner. Honus was one of the kindest men ever to play the game. "The Flying Dutchman," as he was called, is also known as the greatest shortstop of all time.

No one could field better than Honus. He would scoop up the ball like a shovel. Often, his huge hands would pick up a handful of dirt along with the ball!

Few could hit better. Honus swung the bat like a whip. In a 21-year career (from 1897 to 1917), he smacked out over 3,000 hits.

But as great a player as Honus Wagner was, he is best remembered as a true gentleman. And perhaps that, more than anything, is what makes him a legend.

HONUS WAGNER



CHRISTY  
MATHEWSON



# THE MASTER'S TOUCH

**F**rom 1900 to 1916, few could match the New York Giants and Cincinnati Reds pitcher Christy Mathewson. He had near perfect control. In 1913, Christy pitched 68 innings in a row without walking a single batter!

Using his famous “fadeaway” pitch, or Screwball, he won 373 games in his magnificent career. “Matty was the master of ‘em all,” the fans declared.

In those days, ballplayers were looked down upon. Many people thought that grown men shouldn't be paid for playing a child's game. High society called them “roughnecks,” and sometimes games would indeed turn into brawls. The early ballparks were not a place for women or children.

But Christy brought a much needed touch of class to the game. A university graduate of Bucknell University, he was respected by people from all classes of life. Christy was a man of dignity, on and off the field. Men and women and children of all ages came to the ballparks he pitched in.

Before dying at the young age of 45 in 1925, Christy Mathewson gave many things to the game of baseball. He played a big part in making it what it is today: our great national pastime.

# THE FIERY PEACH

Being well-liked, like Christy Mathewson or Honus Wagner, may give a player a good reputation. But it won't help him play better on the field. Ty Cobb was hated by opposing players, but he was also very good. Many people call him the greatest of all-time.

In 1936, the five best players up to that day were put into the Hall of Fame. The first one chosen was Ty Cobb.

Just as Ty was getting a start in professional baseball, his father was killed in a tragic accident. His father had never wanted Ty to play baseball, so Ty was always trying to prove that he could play well and make a living at it. After his father was gone, Ty was more determined than ever to be a success.

It was this great determination that earned Ty a place in major league baseball, and it kept him on top for 24 years. "The Georgia Peach," as he was called, played with the Detroit Tigers and the Philadelphia Athletics from 1905 to 1928. During his spectacular career, Ty won both a great reputation as a player, and a terrible reputation as a person.

Playing with terrific fire, Ty ruled over the outfield. His motivation was unmatched. Ty played every game as if he were fighting a bare knuckled-battle against every man in baseball. Few players liked him, but Ty didn't care. He just kept on outhitting, outrunning, and plain outthinking everyone in the league.

When Ty retired in 1928, he held the following lifetime records: most games played, most runs scored, most hits, and most stolen bases.

Today, most of Ty Cobb's records have fallen. But his legend still remains: the fiery competitor, the feared baserunner, the Georgia Peach, the greatest baseball player who ever lived!



TY COBB



EDDIE COLLINS

# TURNING GIANTS INTO GOATS

**T**y Cobb may have been a smart ballplayer, but Eddie Collins was the smartest who ever played the game.

Eddie had a long career spent with the Philadelphia Athletics and the Chicago White Sox (from 1906 to 1930). During those 25 years, he became known as one of the greatest second basemen ever. Eddie was an excellent base-stealer and a great hitter in the clutch. But he was best known for his smart plays in the field.

In baseball, a “goat” is a player who loses a game by committing an error—not a split-hoofed farm animal. Eddie’s most famous play came when he turned all of the Giants’ infielders into goats.

This amazing event happened in the sixth game of the 1917 World Series. Eddie and the White Sox were leading the Giants by three games to two. In the fourth inning, Eddie reached first base on an error. He then ran to third on another

error. The next batter grounded to the pitcher. Eddie started running for home, thinking that the pitcher would throw the ball to first. But the pitcher then threw to third base. Eddie was trapped between third and home.

With the ball in his hand, the third baseman was chasing Eddie toward home. The catcher started running toward Eddie and third base. Instead of covering home plate, the first baseman and the pitcher both stood and watched.

Eddie quickly stepped to one side. The third baseman, still running home, and the catcher, still running toward third, collided! Trotting home, Eddie easily scored.

The game of baseball has changed greatly since 1917. Today, few players use their brains to make a smart play. Instead of scoring one run at a time, they try to hit a home run and score a cluster of runs at once.

But when Eddie Collins retired, he left behind a lifetime of brilliant performances, brainy plays, and great memories. That's what makes him so special. That's what makes all of these players so special.

Yesterday, they were heroes. Today, they are legends.

