

Perfect Game, Imperfect Lives: A Memoir Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Don Larsen's Perfect Game

Albert A. Bell, Jr.

Ingalls Publishing Group, Inc. (2006)

ISBN 1932158413

Reviewed by Beverly Pechin for Reader Views (8/06)

When you think American sports, you automatically think baseball. As much a part of American History as the Civil War, the Declaration of Independence or the Boston Tea Party, baseball will always be known as America's past time. For centuries the American people have loved and followed this age-old sport. Even the non-sports enthusiasts can tell you who Babe Ruth was or Mickey Mantle. While not everyone can give verbal records and history, most can tell you the memorable names related to this favorite game that has become known as America's favorite.

Fifty years ago another piece of history played out before a generation that was experiencing more than most others have ever experienced. The 1950's brought television, rock and roll and the Cold War into the history books but along with those memorable moments there was history in the making happening as millions watched on. Don Larsen did something that no one before him had one and no one since has accomplished. He pitched a perfect game during the 1956 World Series.

This beautiful memoir of the moment made in history is written like no other memoir I've ever seen. Unlike most people, author Albert Bell decided to approach this memorable event by not only telling the story of the perfect game but the story of life around it. The details of where he was when it happened. The details of what was happening all around him. The perfect game from the eyes of a kid growing up in an age that was far from perfect, but considered some of the best of times. Bell points out the imperfections of the time with everything from the Cold War to racial tensions happening all around him. He discusses how baseball affected his life and how he managed trials and tribulations of a typical young man. Growing up in a world of confusion and newness all around him he cites baseball and in particular his favorite New York Yankees as the way he saw a reprieve from the stresses of moving and being confronted with a country of turmoil.

Never before have I read a tribute to an event so meaningful to the real people, the children of America, the generation of the 50's. Never before has anyone so easily told you the story behind the story and made you feel as if you were there. The special moments that surrounded this monumental moment in sports history are brought to life with a creative technique that is unlike any other typical memoir I've seen. A wonderful read for the sports lover and the historian alike as there's a touch of both throughout the story. Never bogged down with too many facts or numbers, "Perfect Game, Imperfect Lives" is filled with tons of wonderful quotes and recollections by many others who also experienced the moment that will be forever remembered.

You don't have to be a Yankees fan to enjoy this memoir, simply a real person that enjoys a wonderful memory and is even a little intrigued with America's favorite past. This moment in history should be enjoyed by all.