



The national game

Alfred Henry Spink

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Originally published in 1910 (with a second, revised edition in 1911), *The National Game* by Alfred H. Spink is the first important history of baseball, predating Albert G. Spalding's better-known *America's National Game* by a year. Dedicating the first edition, Spink spells out his lofty goal: "I want this book to live forever, so that the names of those who helped to build up and make base ball the greatest of outdoor sports may never be forgotten." That goal was postponed, however, as Spink's *The National Game* has been out of print since 1911.

While Spalding comes down firmly on the side of the owners, telling how the courageous and honest magnates triumphed morally over greedy and crooked players, Spink celebrates the accomplishments of the great players who helped to bring the game into the prominence it enjoyed in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Spink provides a history of baseball before 1910; position-by-position biographies of every current major league player and of former players; sketches of managers, magnates, journalists, and umpires; the line-up of every championship team from 1871 to 1910; and a complete record of all games played for championships from 1884 to the 1910 World Series.

In his foreword, Steven P. Gietschier, director of historical records at the *Sporting News*, details Spink's career as a St. Louis journalist and as secretary and press agent for the St. Louis Browns until he left the team to start a weekly newspaper devoted entirely to sports: "The *Sporting News*, eight pages long, hit the streets for the first time on St. Patrick's Day, 1886."

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