



Wrigley Field's Last World Series

The Wartime Chicago Cubs
and the Pennant of 1945

Charles N. Billington

Reviews

“Required reading for baseball history buffs.”

—Harvey Frommer, Sportsology.net, July 7, 2005

“In his fascinating study of the ballclub in its glory days between 1900 and 1945, Billington highlights proud facts that might seem the stuff of wistful fantasy to present-day fans. . . . Billington’s extensive baseball knowledge, drawn in part from bibliographical sources including contemporary newspapers and Major League publications and films, provides the fuel of enough baseball minutiae to keep a diehard fan chugging happily along from cover to cover. His engaging way with the narrative makes this book a perfect addition to the valuable historical library Lake Claremont has created with such consistent care: **impeccable research mixed with obvious passion for the subject and an intimate, highly readable style.** You don’t need to be a baseball fan to feel the excitement of the games and road trips Billington details; the insider’s familiarity with star players and stats; and the tension, sinking over time into perennial disappointment, as the beloved team suffers disadvantages beyond its control (World War II’s effect on its farm system) as well as bad management and stupid trade decisions. **Billington’s style is so full of color and layers, the book could easily serve as the basis for an interactive sports history exhibit.** . . . [His] skill in capturing the time and culture of his golden team, their fans, and even the wholesome ideal of the sport bursts in nonstop captivating tidbits throughout the book. . . . **Lake Claremont Press hits another one out of the park.**”

—Jean Kozlowski, *Cricket in the Corner*, “Hometown Homerun,” September 1, 2005

“Charles Billington, a history buff and mental health professional (which, some would say, are perfect qualifications to write about the Cubs), parlays his years of being a fan into **a gripping, ‘I was there,’ account of the season.** That the Cubs lost the World Series in seven games to the Detroit Tigers and have not gone back to the pinnacle since, only adds more poignancy to Billington’s narrative. Billington spares no effort to recreate the details of that magical season. . . . Billington intersperses his narrative with myriad interesting sidebars, many of which offer **an eloquent social commentary of the times.** . . . Billington’s love for history and the Cubs comes through convincingly in this interesting chronicle of an eventful year in Cubs history.”

—Ram Subramanian, *Curled Up With a Good Book*, July 25 2005

“The Chicago Cubs had the best hitting, pitching and fielding in the National League in 1945. The North Siders hit .277, posted a 2.98 earned run average, fielded at a .980 clip and lost to the Detroit Tigers in a seven-game World Series. First baseman Phil Cavarretta was presented with the NL MVP award in 1945. The team won its 16th pennant in its 70-year history. As Cubs fans know all too well, that was the team’s last NL flag and last appearance in the Fall Classic. A new 321-page book chronicles the feats of that 1945 team, puts baseball and World War II in perspective and analyzes the Cubs in the six decades since a pennant was last won at Clark and Addison.”

—Steve Krah, *The Truth* (Elkhart, IN), Local Sports, “Roundtable: New book chronicles Cubs’ history,” August 1, 2005

“A page-turner.”

—Sheila Cull, *Sports Fan Magazine*, “Better Than a Night at Wrigley Field,” June 30, 2005

“*Wrigley Field’s Last World Series* . . . is Charles N. Billington’s account of the ball club that brought the World Series to the ‘friendly confines’ of Wrigley Field . . . This book is a well researched review of the Cubs’ playing ability, as well as how owner, chewing gum mogul Phillip K. Wrigley handled the team, including the sale of World Series tickets to loyal and dedicated fans! . . . **No matter who one roots this baseball season, *Wrigley Field’s Last World Series* makes a great read!** . . . [I]t’s a book that will give an urge to ‘Root, Root, Root for the Cubbies.’ And if they don’t win, then it’s not a shame . . . (to use a WWII-era phrase) it’s SNAFU!”

—Rich Borowy, *Accessibly Live Off-line*, Vol. 10, No. 28, July 11, 2005

“Billington makes an astute observation that ’45 was the dividing line between the successful Cubs of the early 20th century and the crappy Cubs my father and I have been saddled with. . . . A wealth of information is provided about the effect of WWII on the team and the interesting circumstances around Spring Training of that year. . . . **It makes me wish that I could have a whole bookshelf of books, each putting the magnifying glass on a particular year.** Peanuts Lowrey and Bill “Swish” Nicholson would be proud of this book.”

—David M. Beyer, *A View From the Bleachers*, www.viewfromthebleachers.com, October 9, 2005

“*Wrigley Field’s Last World Series* will have you asking questions, foremost of which will likely be, ‘Has it really been that long since the Cubs were in the World Series?’ The book . . . is **a trivia lover’s delight**. . . . The book goes into great detail about the players and the games of that championship season. It explores how the first-rate Cubs came to lose to the mediocre Detroit Tigers. It also provides much insight into life during wartime.”

—Donna Vickroy, *The Daily Southtown*, “Can’t get enough Cubs lore,” June 12, 2005

“Every ‘real’ Cub Fan ought to go out to Amazon today and plunk down the eleven and change [\$16.95] that this large soft-cover goes for, to see for themselves the kind of clutch performance a real pennant winner requires.”

—Rob Letterly, *Goat Riders of the Apocalypse*, September 13, 2005

More Print Attention

- *Chicago Tribune*, Fred Mitchell’s “Around Town” column, September 29, 2005
- *Chicago Tribune*, Fred Mitchell’s “Around Town” column, April 7, 2005
- *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, “Billington captures Cubs at high point,” July 17, 2005
- *Post-Tribune*, Northwest, IN, “Cubs’ near-miss in ’45 began 60-year drought,” July 3, 2005
- *Suburban Chicago Newspapers*, July 28, 2005

Radio, Television, and Public Appearances

- ESPN Radio
- Illinois Authors Fair, Springfield, IL
- MCMY-AM, Ottawa, IL
- Peoria Chiefs minor league baseball game
- PBS, Springfield, IL
- WBIG-AM, “People to People,” July 26, 2005
- WGN-TV, Chicago, “Mid-Day Show, June 29, 2005
- KXEL-AM, Waterloo, IA
- WJOX-AM, Birmingham, AL
- KNFT Sports Talk, Silver City, NM
- WSCR-AM, Mike Murphy Show, June 8, 2005
- WTTW-TV, Chicago Public Television, “Chicago Tonight,” July 27, 2005