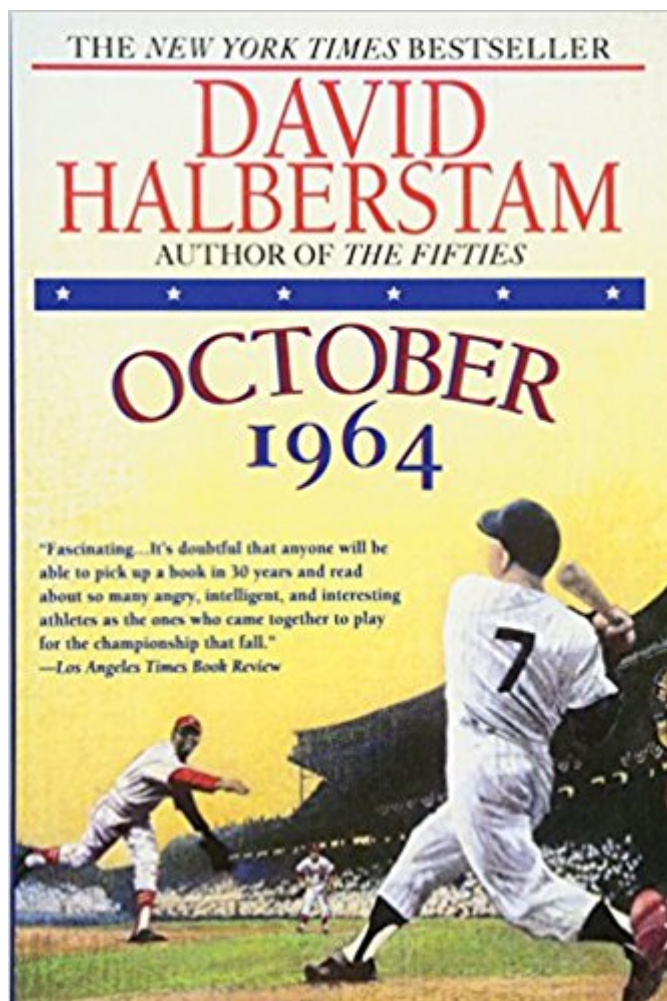


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October 1964



Synopsis

THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER THE BEST SPORTS BOOK OF THE YEAR "October 1964 should be a hit with old-time baseball fans, who'll relish the opportunity to relive that year's to-die-for World Series, when the dynastic but aging New York Yankees squared off against the upstart St. Louis Cardinals. It should be a hit with younger students of the game, who'll eat up the vivid portrayals of legends like Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris of the Yankees and Bob Gibson and Lou Brock of the Cardinals. Most of all, however, David Halberstam's new book should be a hit with anyone interested in understanding the important interplay between sports and society."--The Boston Globe "Compelling...1964 is a chronicle of the end of a great dynasty and of a game, like the country, on the cusp of enormous change."--Newsweek "Halberstam's latest gives us the feeling of actually being there--in another time, in the locker rooms and in the minds of baseball legends. His time and effort researching the book result in a fluency with his topic and a fluidity of writing that make the reading almost effortless....Absorbing."--San Francisco Chronicle "Wonderful...Memorable...Halberstam describes the final game of the 1964 series accurately and so dramatically, I almost thought I had forgotten the ending."--The Washington Post Book World "Superb reporting...Incisive analysis...You know from the start that Halberstam is going to focus on a large human canvas...One of the many joys of this book is the humanity with which Halberstam explores the characters as well as the talents of the players, coaches and managers. These are not demigods of summer but flawed, believable human beings who on occasion can rise to peaks of heroism."--Chicago Sun-Times

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Customer Reviews

Heroes have a habit of growing larger over time, as do the arenas in which they excelled. The 1964 World Series between the Yankees and Cardinals was coated in myth from the get-go. The Yankees represented the establishment: white, powerful, and seemingly invincible. The victorious Cards, on the other hand, were baseball's rebellious future: angry and defiant, black, and challenging. Their seven-game barnburner, played out against a backdrop of an America emerging from the Kennedy assassination, escalating the war in Vietnam, and struggling with civil rights, marked a turning point--neither the nation, nor baseball, would ever be quite so innocent again. Halberstam, one of the great reporters of the '60s, looks back in this marvelous and spirited elegy to the era, the game, and players such as Mantle, Maris, Ford, Gibson, Brock, and Flood with a clear eye in search of the truth that time has blurred into legend. His confident prose, diligent reporting, and deft analysis make it clear how much more interesting--and forceful--the truth can be.

This follow-up to the best-selling Summer of '49 assesses the Yankee-Cardinal World Series of 1964. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I'm a life-long Cardinal fan. I was 13 in 1964, and I don't remember anything about that season except that we were playing dismally, well under .500, and then we got Lou Brock and the team caught fire - the rest is history. Until I did some research, I remembered that we were 12 games behind with 14 games to play, we won all 14 and the Phillies lost their last 10. Actually, my memory had enhanced that finish by a good bit, but we *were* waaay out and wound up winning most of our games while the Phillies collapsed, enabling the Cards to clinch the pennant (this was the last season before both leagues were broken into divisions and the playoff system was added) on the last day by 1/2 game. This book is somewhat mis-named, as only the last chapter is really about the amazing World Series between the fading Yankees and the surging Cards. The book is really about those two teams, their history, and their condition and actions in 1964 that led to their meeting in the Series. It also has a *lot* of detail and history about the acceptance (or lack of, in the case of the Yankees) of black players in the major leagues. There is also a lot of detail about the owners and management of the two teams. Also, pretty much every player, or at least major player, on the two teams is examined, including their origins and their history up to and including 1964. I learned more

about baseball (esp. about scouting and pitching) and these two teams in this book than I knew overall before. It is a "dense" book - I usually could only read a chapter (they are long chapters) a night. I highly recommend it to all serious fans of both teams.

I have been trying to allow myself time to read this book for many years; but always kept putting it off. Now that I have finally read it, I kick myself for waiting so long. I now intend to read more of his books sooner rather than later. Halberstam is not just an author, he truly is a top notch journalist, in the best sense. Recommended for all that are interested in history, no matter the particular category.

Enjoyed very much reading this book. The details Halberstam includes on some of my favorite ballplayers are very, very interesting. The attitudes of owners towards their players and managers were eye opening. The differences between 2 ball clubs, Yankees and Cardinals, and how they came to be that way, kept me turning the pages all the way through. At the time of race relation issues in America, it was very interesting to see how "America's past time", in particularly these two powerhouses, played a role in their winning or not. More is covered here than just the 1964 World Series. Much baseball history is examined leading up to those years and following 1964. Other teams are included, as to how they were handling various situations and finishing their pennant drive. If you followed Major League Baseball, then or now, you will enjoy this book.

Halberstam delivers another masterpiece book on baseball, a follow up to his other must read "Summer of '49". Ostensibly, this story is about a classic 1964 World Series between the Yankees and the St. Louis Cardinals. However, Halberstam scope is far broader than just a classic NL pennant race and a memorable 7 game World Series. For this WS was a watershed moment in baseball history. While not on the level as Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier 17 years earlier, it stands just a few rungs below in importance. This WS was the last for the famed Yankee franchise before the advent of another seminal period in baseball, free agency. The Yankees had dominated baseball from the time they acquired Babe Ruth until 1964. Featuring some of the most memorable names in baseball history -- Ruth, Gehrig, DiMaggio, Mantle and others - the Yankees were the team that most players wanted to play for, in spite of their penny pinching ownership and management. However, the decline of the Yankees that seemingly accelerated with the end of this WS really began when Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in 1947. Yankee management remained steadfast in its opposition to integrating their lineup -- fearing they would alienate their "middle class white customers". The Dodger's signing of Robinson was a catalyst for other teams in

the National League to increase the pace of signing African-American players -- not out of altruistic reasons, but to stay competitive. These African-American players represented the best talent and if NL teams didn't follow the Dodger's path, they risked falling farther behind competitively. However, the situation in the American League was far different. The two heavyweight franchises, the Yankees and the Red Sox, remained two of the last two teams to sign black players. During this time, it is no surprise that the balance of power shifted from the AL to the NL which became a who's who of Hall of Famers --- Aaron, Mays, Clemente, Banks, Gibson, Brock, Morgan and others. In fact, The Yankees could have extended their dynasty if not for the prejudice of management, passing on Hall of Fame talent Ernie Banks and Willie Mays. During the 1964 season, it was evident that the great Yankees of this era were fading - Ford, Mantle and Maris - and the farm system just didn't have the talent to replenish. Meanwhile, the Cardinals traded for Lou Brock the previous year, had a top flight first baseman in Bill White, a phenomenal center fielder in Curt Flood and an ascendant pitcher in Bob Gibson. The Cardinals started off 1964 slowly but benefited from the collapse of the Phillies and an amazing second half of pitching by Gibson, Sadecki and others - winning the NL pennant on the last day of the season. In the 64 WS, we saw glimpses of the Yankee legacy, strong pitching and power, however, it was also marred by erratic defense and the physical breakdown of players like Ford and Mantle. In no small part, the Cardinals put pressure on the Yankees with their aggressive brand of baseball, led by the speed of Brock and Flood. The series went to seven games and Cardinal manager Johnny Keane started Bob Gibson on two days rest --- an almost unthinkable occurrence a few short years ago, a black pitcher starting the most important game of America's pastime. Gibson battled through the fatigue without his best stuff, ultimately going the distance to defeat the Yankees. After the game, when reporters asked Keane why he left in Gibson in the ninth when it was apparent how fatigued he was (giving up two solo HRs), he gave what may have been the ultimate compliment that a manager could have paid any player - "I had a commitment to his heart". This book is a must read for any serious baseball fan. As a Yankee fan, I read much of this with dismay at the arrogance and ignorance of Yankee management at that time. I also read it with admiration and awe at players like Bob Gibson and Lou Brock - what they still had to endure during a very racially divided America - and performing at the top of their profession in spite of all the barriers thrown their way. Once again Halberstam delivers another classic.

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