

***Red Sox Century:  
One Hundred Years of Red Sox Baseball***

By Glenn Stout and Richard A. Johnson

Houghton Mifflin Company

**A Reading and Discussion Guide**

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**SUMMARY:**

The front office and the managers wrote the plot for this Boston drama that ran for a century: Frazee, Cronin, McCarthy, Yawkey, O’Connell and the Yawkey Trust with Sullivan and LeRoux. The cast of players is legendary: Cy Young, Bobby Doerr, Ted Williams, Tris Speaker, Lefty Grove and of course, Babe Ruth, in the first act. Johnny Pesky, Ted Williams, Dom DiMaggio, Johnny Pesky, Carl Yastrzemski, Carlton Fisk, Luis Tiant, Mo Vaughn, Jim Rice, Roger Clemens and Pedro Martinez appeared in the second. There is angst over what might have been: Harry Agganis, Jackie Robinson, Tony Conigliaro, Jim Lonberg, Bucky Dent and Bill Buckner. This Shakespearean tragedy even has illusions of a curse and a Green Monster that lurks in Fenway Park.

Calling it “the most interesting franchise in baseball history,” the authors of *Red Sox Century* cover the entire period of the team’s history, from 1901, when the Boston Americans began throwing pitches, to the year 2000. Based largely on primary source materials, the book tells its story through interviews with the players, newspaper articles, and motion picture film. The appendix includes team statistics, most valuable players, and Cy Young Award winners. The authors also selected “teams of the century” from before and after World War Two.

An updated edition through 2003 is available.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Did the Red Sox conspire to “fix their first World Series win?” Has greed always been a factor in pro baseball? Did any owners appear to put their ego or finances above the good of the team? Any players? If so, was there any major damage?
2. Was trading Babe Ruth the worst thing that ever happened to the Red Sox? Is there really a curse?

3. Do you agree with Cy Young that “pitchers, like poets are born and not made?” Who was better? Cy Young, Jim Lonberg, Roger Clemens or Pedro Martinez? Do the statistics tell the whole story? What else makes a great pitcher?
4. Imagine if the Red Sox had hired Jackie Robinson when he tried out in 1945. What might have been? What impact did racism have on the team history? Is there still a perception of racism today?
5. Pride, prejudice and personality were elements in Red Sox personnel decisions over the years. What trades or acquisitions, unrelated to performance on the field, were either helpful or hurtful to the team? Who were the best/worst owners and managers? Looking back, have the reputations of any managers changed for better or worse?
6. Which of the Red Sox World Series teams since 1918 had the toughest opponents? Which had the most heart? Given that the phrase, “wait until next year” is ingrained deeply into the Boston psyche, how will the fans change if their World Series dreams come true?
7. Examine some of the newspaper reprints in the book. The Boston sports writers have always put in their two-cents when it comes to the Red Sox. Now “talk radio” is a source for fan opinion. Ballplayers and managers have differed on their treatment of the press. Is it important for them to cultivate the press, or is it only performance on the field that matters?
8. The authors picked a team of the century before World War Two and a different one for the post-war era. How did the game change between the two time periods? What impact did these changes have on the team? Which team is stronger? Why? Construct a single all- star Red Sox team from the entire history of Red Sox baseball.
9. List the five greatest moments in Red Sox history.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

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Glenn Stout has been the series editor of *The Best American Sports Writing* since its inception and has written three illustrated biographies with Richard A. Johnson: *Ted Williams: A Portrait in Words and Pictures*, *Joe DiMaggio: An Illustrated Life*, and *Jackie Robinson: Between the Baselines*. He is a columnist for Boston Baseball, and the acclaimed

author of *Red Sox Century*, *Yankees Century*, and *The Dodgers*. His work has appeared in many regional and national magazines and newspapers.

Richard A. Johnson is the curator of the Sports Museum of New England, the author of *A Century of Boston Sports: Photographs and Memories*, the co-author of *Young at Heart: The Story of Johnny Kelley*, and a freelance writer whose work is also published frequently in regional and national magazines and newspapers. He has written numerous illustrated sports books with Glenn Stout, including *Yankees Century* and *The Dodgers*, and they are both frequent commentators on all things Red Sox for national and regional television and radio, including HBO and ESPN.

### **HELPFUL LINKS:**

The research for this book was done with great care. For individual player statistics and records, you may wish to consult the following websites:

<http://www.redsox.com>

<http://www.mlb.com>



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