



Mint Condition: How Baseball Cards Became an American Obsession

Dave Jamieson

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When award-winning journalist Dave Jamieson's parents sold his childhood home a few years ago, he rediscovered a prized boyhood possession: his baseball card collection. Now was the time to cash in on the "investments" of his youth. But all the card shops had closed, and cards were selling for next to nothing online. What had happened? In *Mint Condition*, his fascinating, eye-opening, endlessly entertaining book, Jamieson finds the answer by tracing the complete story of this beloved piece of American childhood. Picture cards had long been used for advertising, but after the Civil War, tobacco companies started slipping them into cigarette packs as collector's items. Before long, the cards were wagging the cigarettes. In the 1930s, cards helped gum and candy makers survive the Great Depression. In the 1960s, royalties from cards helped transform the baseball players association into one of the country's most powerful unions, dramatically altering the game. In the '80s and '90s, cards went through a spectacular bubble, becoming a billion-dollar-a-year industry before all but disappearing, surviving today as the rarified preserve of adult collectors. *Mint Condition* is charming, original history brimming with colorful characters, sure to delight baseball fans and collectors.

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