

## Society for American Baseball Research

# BIBLIOGRAPHY COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

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## Comments from the Chair

Andy McCue

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We are getting tantalizingly close to finishing the Committee's project for completing indexes to all the team histories published by G.P. Putnam's Sons in the 1940s and 1950s.

In the past quarter, John Spalding turned in his index to *The Baltimore Orioles* by Fred Lieb (1955) and Bob McConnell presented me with the index to *The New York Yankees* by Frank Graham (rev. 1948). That leaves only Warren Brown's *The Chicago Cubs* (1946) on the waiting list. Since the ever-reliable Joe Murphy has put in a claim to prepare this index, I suspect we'll see it soon.

I am looking into the possibility of doing a set of the indexes once they are all done. My current thinking is to offer them on a subscription basis as a one-time event. If you have thoughts, I'd appreciate them.

John's and Bob's indexes, plus all of the earlier ones (see list to the right), are available from the SABR Research Library.

We are always looking for volunteers to provide indexes for important baseball books that lack them. I might suggest two books by Red Barber as good possibilities: *The Broadcasters* (1970) and *1947: When All Hell Broke Loose in Baseball* (1982). Also, Tristram Potter Coffin's *The Old Ball Game: Baseball in Folklore and Fiction* (1971) is one of the most interesting baseball books around. It has an index, but it is highly inadequate and might make a good project. I'm sure there are plenty of other possibilities.

The Research in Baseball Index (RBI) continues to grow and improve (see Ted Hathaway's article elsewhere in this newsletter). We are gratified that the SABR Board of Directors authorized us to purchase a drive that will allow us to create CD-ROM copies of the database.

I'd like to welcome Paul White (RR #2, Kemble, Ont., Canada NOH 1S0) to the Committee. Paul is a fan of the Braves before they decided they were America's team in the era when they graced Boston and Milwaukee. He does a lot of writing for the Becket sports publications. Paul attended the Committee meeting during SABR 27 in Louisville. He promised he would send me his e-mail address and I'm sure he'll do it once he reads this.

That's all for now. I hope to hear from more of you during the next several months.

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## Book Indexing Project

Here is the status of the Bibliography Committee's project to prepare indexes for books which were published without them (an asterisk \* indicates a book in the Putnam series):

### Book title, author, and publication date

Book title, author, and publication date	Indexer
<i>Ball Four</i> , by Jim Bouton (1970)	Tom Hetrick
<i>A Ball Player's Career</i> , by Cap Anson (1900)	Tom Shieber
<i>The Baltimore Orioles</i> , by Fred Lieb(*) (1955)	John Spalding
<i>The Boston Braves</i> , by Harold Kaese(*) (1948)	Bob Bailey
<i>The Boston Red Sox</i> , by Fred Lieb(*) (1947)	Jack Carlson
<i>The Boys of Summer</i> , by Roger Kahn (1971)	Bob Boynton
<i>The Brooklyn Dodgers</i> , by Frank Graham(*) (1948)	Rick Johnson
<i>The Chicago White Sox</i> , by Warren Brown(*) (1952)	B. McConnell
<i>The Cincinnati Reds</i> , by Lee Allen(*) (1948)	Bill Hugo
<i>The Cleveland Indians</i> , by Franklin Lewis(*) (1949)	Bob Boynton
<i>Connie Mack</i> , by Fred Lieb(*) (1945)	Bob Boynton
<i>The Detroit Tigers</i> , by Fred Lieb(*) (1946)	Bob Bailey
<i>McGraw of the Giants</i> , by Frank Graham(*) (1944)	Terry Smith
<i>The Milwaukee Braves</i> , by Kaese & Lynch(*) (1954)	Brad Sullivan
<i>The New York Giants</i> , by Frank Graham(*) (1952)	Terry Smith
<i>The New York Yankees</i> , by Frank Graham(*) (1948)	B. McConnell
<i>The Philadelphia Phillies</i> , by Fred Lieb & Stan Baumgartner(*) (1953)	Howard Pollack
<i>Pitching in a Pinch</i> , by Christy Mathewson (1912)	Tom Shieber
<i>The Pittsburgh Pirates</i> , by Fred Lieb(*) (1948)	Jack Carlson
<i>The St. Louis Cardinals</i> , by Fred Lieb(*) (1944)	Bob Boynton
<i>Veeck ... as in Wreck</i> , by Bill Veeck (1962)	Bob Boynton
<i>The Washington Senators</i> , by S. Povich(*) (1954)	Jim O'Donnell

Copies of these indexes are available from the SABR Research Library. Contact Len Levin, 282 Doyle Ave., Providence, RI 02906-3355 (phone 401/351-3278), who will quote you postage and photocopying costs.

Indexes currently being worked on include: Joe Murphy for Warren Brown's *The Chicago Cubs* (1946); and Tom Shieber for Lee Allen's *100 Years of Baseball* (1950).

The following books in the Putnam series need to be indexed: *The Umpire Story*, by James Kahn (1953); and *The Story of the World Series*, by Fred Lieb (1949). Suggestions of other books that require indexing—as well as volunteers willing to index—are welcome; contact Skip McAfee, 5533 Colts Foot Court, Columbia, MD 21045 (phone 410/730-5847).

## Research in Baseball Index (RBI)

Ted Hathaway

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In my usual broke-record fashion, I am happy to report continued rapid growth of the RBI database. We added another 6067 articles this past quarter! A 15% increase in only three months. Hearty thanks go to **Brad Sullivan**, **Terry Sloope**, and **Bob Boynton** for their cataloging work. Brad, as usual, led the way with more than 3400 articles cataloged: he continued his effort on *The Sporting News*, he contributed important work on *Sports Illustrated* from the 1950s and *Sport* from the 1970s, he cataloged almost the entire runs of *Athletic Journal* and *Scholastic Coach*, and he began work on the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the important African-American newspaper from the 1920s, which will provide unique access to contemporary information on black baseball.

I generally don't mention myself among the volunteers being recognized and I'm not going to start now except to say that I have been making a greater effort to catalog sources from before 1940.

As I indicated in the July 1997 newsletter, only 2% of the total database covers this period. You can see from some of the sources listed below that we have begun making greater inroads into this period of baseball literature and I am happy to say that we added more than 500 articles to the database from before 1940. I will continue to work on publications such as *Newsweek*, *Life*, *Leslie's Weekly*, *American Magazine*, and other general publications from this period as I have ready access to them.

Publications of note cataloged July–Sept. 1997:

*Athletic Journal* (1957–1965): 147 articles (Brad Sullivan)  
*Baseball Digest* (1993–1994): 446 articles (Terry Sloop)  
*Boston Baseball* (1996): 53 articles  
*Dodgers Dugout* (1997): 62 articles  
*Harper's Weekly* (1857–1900): 142 articles  
*Japan Weekly Chronicle* (1932–1940): 142 articles  
*Life* (1938–1941): 42 articles  
*Minneapolis Review of Baseball* (1981–1983): 124 articles  
*Nine* (1996–1997): 43 articles (Andy McCue)  
*OldTyme Baseball News* (1997): 43 articles (Bob Boynton)  
*Pittsburgh Courier* (1923): 29 articles (Brad Sullivan)  
*Scholastic Coach* (1976–1989): 360 articles (Brad Sullivan)  
*Sport* (1972–1975): 218 articles (Brad Sullivan)  
*Sporting News, The* (1977–78, 1983): 2056 articles (Brad Sullivan)  
*Sports Illustrated* (1955–1958): 685 articles (Brad Sullivan)

## RBI Statistics

<u>Level</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% change over last year</u>
<i>Books</i>		
5	3,104	8.5%
4	1,474	3.9%
<u>Other</u>	<u>10,708</u>	<u>10.8%</u>
Total	15,286	9.6%
<i>Book Sections</i>		
5	6,446	13.1%
4	1,312	20.8%
<u>Other</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>53.8%</u>
Total	7,801	14.7%
<i>Magazine/newspaper articles</i>		
5	34,047	70.3%
4	1,291	inf.%
<u>Other</u>	<u>5,797</u>	<u>117.5%</u>
Total	41,135	80.8%
<i>Total</i>		
5	43,597	53.7%
4	4,077	59.3%
<u>Other</u>	<u>16,548</u>	<u>36.4%</u>
Total	64,222	49.4%

## Book Review

**Leverett T. (Terry) Smith**

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### THE BILL JAMES GUIDE TO BASEBALL MANAGERS FROM 1870 TO TODAY

Bill James. New York: Scribners, 1997. 352p. indexed. \$30

I doubt there's anyone in SABR who is unaware that this book exists. In what follows, I'll attempt to summarize its contents (no

easy task) in case someone is wondering whether to buy the book, another doubtful circumstance. Like other Bill James productions, it's full of facts and opinions about baseball and most of us are interested in both. The topic, though, is an unusually slippery one: evaluating baseball managers. Oddly, James never mentions Leonard Koppett's book on the same subject, *The Man in the Dugout* (Crown, 1993). He does construct a Koppett-like family tree of baseball managers (p.34):

"All major league managers, essentially, come from one of three families—the Connie Mack family, the Branch Rickey family, and the Ned Hanlon family. The Hanlon family is the largest of the three; most major league managers today can be traced back to Ned Hanlon."

This does not, however, constitute for James a productive way of analyzing managers or organizing the book. In fact, he begins his book by announcing (p.7) that the "discussion of baseball managers, I realized at the time [c.1985], was the most disorganized, unproductive, and ill-informed discussion in the world of sports". His book sets out to do something about it.

The book's table of contents is poker-faced. James takes up managers decade by decade beginning with the 1870s. The book is a chronological march through (mostly) major league baseball. There is a list of the "most successful" managers of each decade (Casey Stengel, for instance, in the 1950s). The characteristics of the typical manager are described. Outstanding managers are profiled. Evolutions in game strategy and the manager's role are identified and discussed. But this is just the book's skeleton. James promises at the beginning of the book (p.8) "not to try to say who was a good manager and who was not, but to focus on how one manager was different from another". Thus he waits until he is a third of the way into the book to outline his criteria for managerial success (p.139–154). His choice for the best manager of all time (Joe McCarthy) slips out on page 96, but he waits until the middle of the book to reveal his criteria. "I buried the article about it here, in the middle of the book, in the vain hope that this would discourage reviewers from thinking that that was what the book was all about" (p.144).

What it is all about is "how one manager was different from another". Toward the end of the book (p.295–313), James looks at current major league managers and presents his suggestions for creating a numerical record that describes the tendencies of each individual manager. Does he go with a set lineup or shuffle his players around? The number of lineups a manager uses can tell us that. We can also arrive at the percentage of each manager's starting players who have the platoon advantage. We can find out the number of relief pitchers each manager uses. We can count the number of pinch runners, pinch hitters, and defensive replacements each manager uses. Other strategies can be counted: intentional walks, sacrifices, bunts attempted, stolen bases attempted, hit and run attempts, pitchouts. Having all this information will enable us to understand a particular manager's style. It still leaves us wondering about the difference between a good one and a bad one.

This isn't all there is in the book by any means. Interspersed through the book are essays on various aspects of baseball, a few entirely unrelated to managing. I'll mention several in concluding.

On three occasions (p.20, 108–113, and 292–294) James discusses the batting order and its relative importance. He argues that essentially the order in which players bat does not matter. And his argument will prove fascinating if not persuasive. (It is weakened some by the presence of suggestions for improving the current conventional order of hitters.)

There is also a section on the sacrifice bunt (p.130–136). Here James has second thoughts about his opposition to the sacrifice as an offensive weapon.

Particularly startling, because entirely unrelated to managing, is James' defense of Marge Schott (p.322–326) on the grounds of freedom of speech.

Finally, and I think appropriately, given the way major league baseball has developed, James concludes with a look at "the

modern bullpen". He insists that the article is not about relief pitchers, but about strategy, "about how relief pitchers have been used by their managers over time" (p.330). He finds the current fixations on the single "closer" and the necessity for multiple left-handers in the bullpen to be illogical (he believes these fixations may be responsible for the apparent "shortage" of good pitching nowadays) and are bound to change. In support of this belief, James asserts that "the world is ultimately logical" (p.339), surely the most fantastic statement in the book. In both this book and *The Bill James Historical Baseball Abstract* (1986), James has begun to shape an analytic (as opposed to anecdotal) history of the game on the field. Opinionated, contentious, lucid, inspiring—it is essential reading.

## Book Review

**Ron Kaplan**

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### **THE BABE IN RED STOCKINGS: An In-depth Chronicle of Babe Ruth with the Boston Red Sox, 1914-1919**

Kerry Keene, Raymond Sinibaldi, and David Hickey. Champaign (Ill.): Sagamore Publishing, 1997. 307p. \$22.95

"The Babe in Red Stockings" would be an apt name for a detective story and in a sense it is. The coauthors have been tireless investigators in their subject.

Ruth burst onto the scene as the ultimate raw talent. Strong, uncultured, boisterous, all this rube wanted to do, at the beginning at least, was to play ball. In the numerous biographies of the Sultan of Swat, we are reminded over and over how stunned he was to learn he would be paid for playing baseball.

Sold to the Red Sox after a stint with the minor league Baltimore Orioles, Ruth became one of the premier pitchers in the big leagues. But it was his startling strength at the plate that swayed the fans. By 1917, with the Sox floundering, manager Ed Barrow sought to use Ruth's bat on a more regular basis. Pinch-hitting was one of the few skills Babe did not acquire (he was adjudged to be a very smart fielder and a surprisingly adept baserunner). Barrow experimented, moving the youngster to first base and to the outfield. The latter move was to help compensate for the loss of Tris Speaker, perhaps the greatest centerfielder of all time. But these appearances were sandwiched between Ruth's pitching stints, and the constant shuffling began to wear on him after awhile.

Massachusetts-based Keene and Hickey, along with Sinibaldi, a long-time Bosox fan from Florida, recount almost every game the Sox played during the Ruth era. Naturally, more attention is paid to the games involving the slugger-cum-pitcher. The book is somewhat inconsistent in its renderings of the games. Sometimes his pitching lines are included, sometimes they are missing data, and other times they are simply omitted. The same with his batting performances. The authors should have decided to go entirely one way or the other.

Nevertheless the information is abundant, not only the bare facts and statistics of the games, but of Ruth himself. We can see how he changes from a hayseed to a more mature, smarter ballplayer. He married Helen Woodford, moved to the Massachusetts countryside, engaged an agent—all signs of an astute player for whom playing the game solely for the joy of it had worn off.

Baseball was relatively unaffected by World War I until 1918, when Secretary of War Newton Baker issued his "work or fight" rule. Red Sox owner Harry Frazee worked harder than any baseball executive to ensure that the season continue as long as possible, perhaps not coincidentally since his club was heading toward the pennant. The authors opined that the best that could be said of Frazee was that he was "much maligned", the worst (and closest to accurate) that he was "reviled"—"the only man the youngsters in

Boston learned to hate before they even knew his name". To many he was simply "the guy who sold Babe Ruth".

Squabbles between Ruth and the Red Sox management over salary and deportment are adequately reported here, but the main story is how Ruth developed from an all-star calibre pitcher into a batting master, the likes of which had never been seen heretofore. Kids no longer aspired to be Ty Cobb; they wanted to be a slugger like the Babe. Out with the scientific game, in with knocking the ball out of the park.

The authors include a detailed version of Frazee's sale of Ruth to the Yankees, debugging several myths about the transaction. They also wax hypothetical about what might have happened had Ruth spent his entire career with Boston, both for the slugger and the Sox.

Absent from the book are the lurid escapades that helped make him larger than life (of course, most of them came once Babe had moved on to the Yankees). What is mentioned often is the Babe's lack of luck with cars, having been involved in several accidents of greater or lesser seriousness while with the Sox.

The appendices sport a bibliography and a game-by-game listing by year, from Ruth's debut on July 11, 1914 to his final turn on the hill on Sept. 20, 1919, a game in which, fittingly, he cranked a homer in the bottom of the ninth to lead his team to a win over the White Sox. Another section lists his World Series accomplishments and the pitching records he set.

One criticism of the book, which is ostensibly a scholarly work by dint of the copious research involved, is an amazingly shabby job of proofreading. Readers may quickly find distracting the inconsistencies in punctuation.

But after reading *The Babe in Red Stockings* one can see easily how Ruth, in the words of the authors, "took the game of baseball to a level it had never known before".

## Book Reviews

**Ted Hathaway**

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### **HI EVERYBODY!**

Herb Carneal, with Stew Thornley. Minneapolis: Nodin Press, 1996. 232p. illus., indexed.

### **HOLY COW! The Life and Times of Halsey Hall**

Stew Thornley. Minneapolis: Nodin Press, 1991. 246p. illus., indexed.

### **SID! The Sports Legends, the Inside Scoops, and the Close Personal Friends**

Sid Hartman, with Patrick Reusse. Stillwater (Minn.): Voyager Press, 1997. 304p. illus., indexed.

The past few years have brought several new biographies of Minnesota media figures.

Although I generally loathe expressions of nostalgia with respect to baseball, I must admit that I have always associated the sound of Herb Carneal's voice with summer—usually working in the yard or the garage with my father when I was a child. Carneal's voice was as much an essential background to these activities as are crowd noises at a ball game. Describing Carneal's voice as "background" might suggest he is boring or unremarkable. Indeed, a hallmark of his style is silence. I can recall more than a few times turning the radio on for a Twins game and being uncertain if I had the station or not: the crowd noise sounded much like background static, until Carneal finally began to speak again. Of course, now that chattering idiots are the norm among broadcasters, Carneal's style is like balm.

This is not to suggest that Carneal is unemotional or always low key. Like his fellow Southerner, Red Barber, Carneal's tones are warm and friendly—smooth and comfortable like an easy chair. But he never downplays the excitement of the game. A close play at home or a big strikeout is punctuated by a growling bark, "He's out!" A mighty home run: "He swings ... *and it's gone!* Oh, man! There wasn't any doubt about *that* one!" Carneal's language has always been simple and descriptive. He has no "tags" (like his longtime partner John Gordon's threadbare "Touch 'em all, [insert name here]!") nor eccentricities in his delivery. While not absolutely impartial, Carneal does not "root" for the Twins and is quick to acknowledge the achievements of the opposing team. He also does not take cheap shots at opposing players. Carneal sees his role as broadcaster (and rightly so) as facilitating the fan's enjoyment and understanding of the game, unlike many contemporary broadcasters who apparently see themselves as part of the entertainment, or worse, as mere shells for the home team.

Carneal's biography is fairly basic, written in chronological order and containing an abundance of the usual anecdotes one expects in any sports biography. The prose is unremarkable, but concise and to the point, much like Carneal's play-by-play. Although mainly interesting to Twins' fans, other readers may be interested in Carneal's extensive discussion of his development as a broadcaster and his surprising candor regarding his many partners over the years. This last part I found particularly noteworthy: the gentlemanly Carneal being decidedly critical of a few of his past partners. Although Carneal has not made it his priority to be the player's "close personal friend", readers should find this book to be the most interesting and informative of the biographies reviewed here.

The fondness many local fans have for Halsey Hall is indicated by the success of Thornley's recent biography, written 14 years after Hall's death. Unlike the other men profiled here, Hall was a genuine success in both the print and broadcast media. Starting in the 1920s, he covered the Minneapolis Millers for local papers and radio stations. His broadcasts were highly popular while his newspaper stories were often reprinted in national publications (e.g., the "Best Sports Stories" series). When the Senators arrived in 1961, Hall was chosen as the vital "local element" to Twins broadcasts. He gave up regular newspaper coverage at that point, but continued to write for other publications until a few years before his death in 1977.

Ironically, Hall's memory, however affectionate, has become rather one-dimensional. Hall was a jocular man with a highly infectious laugh. He was also an expert story-teller. Most fans remember Halsey for the many stories he told during rain delays, his puckish sense of humor, and, of course, his laugh. A CD issued a few years ago after the Twins won the 1991 World Series has a four-minute segment entitled "The Best of Halsey Hall" consisting almost entirely of Halsey laughing. So for many people he has been reduced to a laugh track, or a kind of "Uncle Remus" of baseball. Of course, there are many people whose principal association with Joe DiMaggio is Mr. Coffee ...

Thornley's biography attempts to illustrate what a multit talented person Hall was, with numerous personal testimonies as well as reprints of several of his columns. Thornley was assisted in no small part by Hall's daughter. This is both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand, we find out much about the man and his personal life, something we get only glancingly in the other biographies reviewed here. Unfortunately, it is too much. The details of Hall's family life are not very interesting and devoting an entire chapter to the details of his unremarkable death was unnecessary.

Many of Hall's famous anecdotes are dutifully related, but Thornley doesn't tell them very well—not in print, at any rate. At a local SABR function several years ago, Thornley gave a presentation on Hall and told many of these same stories, and they were hilarious. It seems as if this biography was written with Hall's daughter looking over the author's shoulder, the author anxious not to offend. While not quite hagiography, there is too much sugar-coating in this book. Frankly, the most interesting chapters were

about Hall's parents and his childhood. By the time the Twins arrive in 1961, the book has run out of gas.

Despite these shortcomings, however, this is an important work about one of the most prominent men in Minnesota sports media, with much useful information provided in a clear and concise fashion. While not the most felicitous of writers, Thornley is always to the point and does not bore his readers.

After years of waiting, local fans have finally been treated to a biography of "El Sid", which Hartman has written with the assistance of Reusse, a fellow *StarTribune* columnist. Hartman admitted in a newspaper account that he simply spoke into a tape recorder, handed the tapes to Reusse, and let him "make sense of it". Reusse did this admirably as the prose reads like typical Hartman. The gaps are enormous, with many events and individuals glossed over or left out. The timeline jumps back and forth and it is sometimes unclear what year we are at in the narrative. Despite occasional efforts to describe his own life, however, the bulk of this "biography" centers on the sports figures Hartman knows or has known.

One of the best descriptions I've heard of the writing abilities of Hartman came some years ago during a SABR research presentation. Belittling the stature of the Union Association, the presenter remarked: "Describing the Union Association as a major league is like calling Sid Hartman a 'man of letters'." The laughter that follows such a remark is stifled when one recalls that Hartman has dominated Minnesota sportswriting now for more than three decades.

Whether through his illiterate column in the *StarTribune* or his maundering radio program every Sunday morning, sports fans throughout the upper Midwest attend to the words of Sid Hartman. Perhaps they are looking for that daring prediction on the Vikings, that interesting tidbit about Carl Pohlad, or more likely that dyspeptic grumbling over the pathetic Timberwolves. Mr. Average Fan can always find something to react to, dismiss, or digest from old Sid.

Hartman's appeal has been assured by the public's appetite for celebrities. His entire career—in print, on radio, and in person—has revolved around associating himself personally with prominent figures, in and out of sports, in tireless pursuit of the "scoop". That such familiarity would often result in journalistic hallmarks like objectivity, professional integrity, and even ethics being tossed out the window is not lost on Hartman—he admits it freely. Hartman's boosterism for Minnesota teams and his "close personal friends" (i.e., Hartman's tag for celebrities he associates with for "scoops") is an anachronism reminiscent of the crass figures of Sinclair Lewis' *Zenith City*: the blatant hyperbole and crude hucksterism of a narrow-minded, small-town hack.

It should not be thought, however, that his approach has brought forth merely lies and distortions. Hartman's relentless pursuit of sports information, particularly on the local scene, is unparalleled in the region. He has often been the only one allowed an interview or the first or the only local journalist to find the latest on some important event or issue in local sports. Initially in Hartman's career, when he began writing his hodge-podge column of sports information, this was perhaps enough. But Hartman has never known how to interpret or sort and it is all disgorged for the reader of his columns, no matter how trivial or idiotic. It all boils down to personalities and Hartman's relationships with them. There is a place for this kind of sports journalism, just as there is a place for the gossip column, but the central place that Hartman occupies in Minnesota sportswriting is both unfortunate and disgraceful.

Also of interest: *Golden Memories*, by Ray Christensen with Stew Thornley, published in 1995 by Nodin Press of Minneapolis. Though known principally as the voice of Univ. of Minnesota Gophers football, Christensen also did broadcasts for the Minneapolis Millers during the 1950s. A chapter in this 228-page book is devoted to this part of his life.