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Glenn Stout. *Yankees Century: 100 Years of New York Yankees Baseball.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002. 496 pp. $35.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-618-08527-9.

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I come from a long line of Yankee haters. I was nursed on anti-Yankee sentiment. Now that this Yankee-less World Series is over, we still have six more Yankee-free months ahead.

I realize there are some Yankee fans around who may not feel this way. I also realize that disliking the Yankees is politically incorrect. So for the myriad of Yankee people who consider this post-season a mere aberration, Houghton Mifflin has issued Yankees Century, a gigantic, 3½ pound, coffee table panegyric. The nearly 500 pages of not quite sycophantic text by the excellent Glenn Stout and hundreds of generally forgettable black-and-white photographs may, for some, be worth $35, or you could wait until it gets remaindered.

My favorite story, "The Pitch," came early in the book, in Chapter Two. Gentleman Jack Chesbro pitched in 55 games, winning 41. The Yanks and the Red Sox battled to the wire for the pennant. They were down to a pair of double headers, Saturday and Monday, Sunday games being blue-lawed then (Ah, for those halcyon days!): the first in Boston, the second in New York. As it shook out, the Yankees needed to sweep the home pair to grab the pennant. Chesbro pitched the front end, taking a 2-0 lead into the 7th inning, his 452nd inning pitched for the year, where his work was undone by three misplays by his second sacker.

In the 9th, the match was now still tied despite another infield misplay and a perfect bunt. Chesbro stood on the mound, one out away from getting to the bottom of the ninth. He was a spitballer and on his next pitch he let loose, but the ball slipped from his grip, sailed over the catcher's head, plating Boston's go-ahead run, a lead they didn't relinquish. There was no joy in Yankeeville that night, but there was in Boston. The mighty Yanks had struck out. Later Chesbro mused, "I would have given my entire salary back could I but had the ball back." That was almost a hundred years ago and it may have been Boston's finest hour.

There's more of this in Yankees Century. Consider it.

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