

GOLDEN AGE OF BASEBALL

Willard Mullin's Drawings 1934-1972

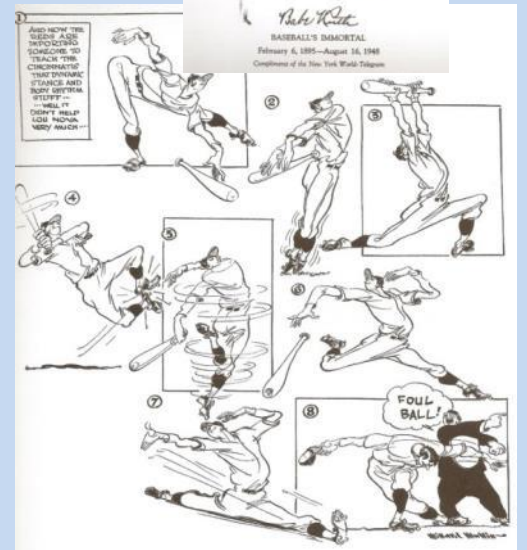
By Willard Mullin, Hal Bock, and Michael Powers, \$35,
Fantagraphics Books, Inc.

If you want to step back into one of baseball's golden ages and view an incredible collection of drawings focusing on the New York teams between 1930 and 1970, this is your book. Willard Mullin (1902-1978) was a sports cartoonist primarily for the *New York World-Telegram and Sun* and produced over 10,000 cartoons between 1934 and 1972. His most famous creation was the Brooklyn Dodger Bum who appeared frequently in the daily cartoons. He also produced quality drawings of legends like Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Stan Musial, Mickey Mantle, Casey Stengel, Yogi Berra, Ted Williams, and Joe DiMaggio. He counted many of them as his personal friends, especially Babe Ruth. You've probably seen his drawings without necessarily knowing who the artist was.

Magazines and newspapers featuring covers or cartoons by Mullin and prints of his drawings are collectible and available. Original artwork of Mullin's is also available and rather expensive.

Many of Mullin's drawings were closer to fine art portraits than cartoons. He was able to capture light, shadow, mood, and motion with seemingly little effort as he worked quickly to meet the daily deadlines. His comedic cartoons exaggerated features and portrayed a fluid motion. He added poetry, criticisms, and witticisms.

Executor of the Mullin Estate, Michael Powers, gathered the collection of Mullin's work. Illustrator, author, and long-time Mullin enthusiast, Bob Staake, wrote the foreword. AP sports reporter Hal Bock provided the text and background for this 240-page collection of baseball drawings. Bock filled in the blanks between the hundreds of Mullin drawings by explaining the sporting events leading to the drawings. Mullin's daughter, Shirley Mullin Rhodes, added personal touches in an introduction remembering how proud she was of her good-humored, playful father, "That's my Pop!" That was some artist as well.



BASEBALL GLOVES

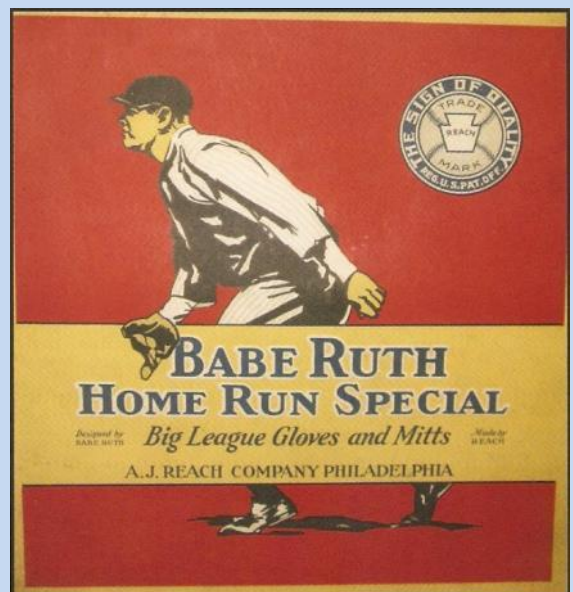
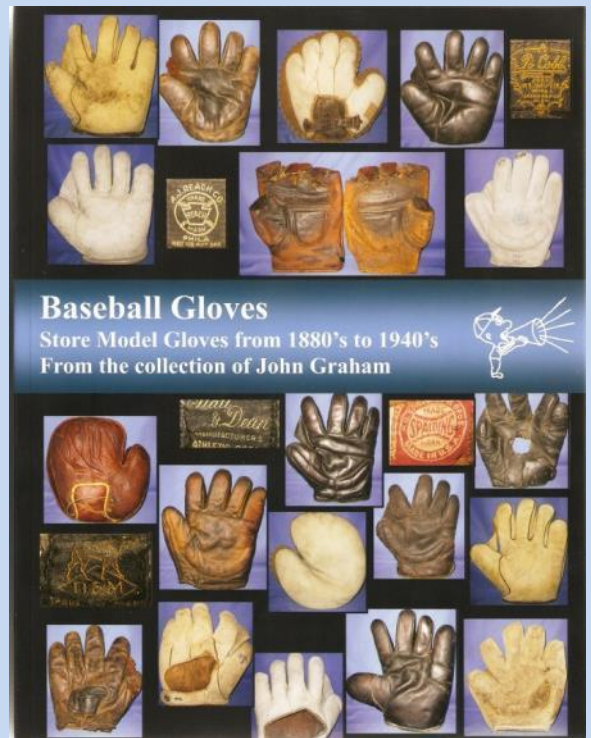
Store Model Gloves from the 1880s to 1940s from the collection of John Graham

By John M. Graham, \$20, through <http://jmginc.us/> and on eBay

Collector John Graham has self-published a 260-page book containing high-quality photographs of many of the gloves in his collection along with player images, glove boxes, and other original advertising pieces. Joe Phillips, publisher of *The Glove Collector* newsletter through 2009, wrote the introduction. Graham provided comments on his passionate pursuit of store model gloves including his findings as to their relative availability – rather than market value. Graham stated, “People I mention in the book are three of the most respected long time baseball glove fanatics around - Joe Phillips, Jim Daniel and Brett Lowman.” Graham’s wife, Vicki, and their son, Chris, assisted on the project handling the photography, layout, and editing.

Graham began re-collecting cards in 1980 with his son. He was quickly putting together vintage sets, but by the mid-1980s he moved into other memorabilia including autographed baseballs. He took his hobby and turned it into a business by co-developing the BallQube product to display autographed balls. In 1989 he started buying used store model gloves (endorsed by major league players) at flea markets for as little as \$1. He picked up over 1,600 gloves before he started selling them in recent years. The book documents his collection at its height.

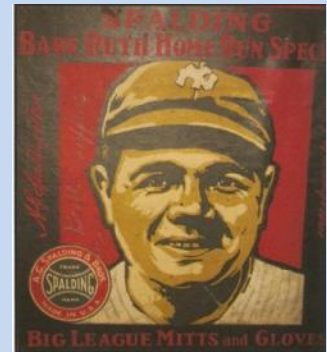
The players endorsing the mitts in Graham’s collection range from the top tier of Hall of Famers to journeymen players. He starts the listings with the initial Hall of Fame inductees, adds Joe Jackson, and continues through other pre-war HOFers. He also includes early gloves from 1880 to 1920 not necessarily endorsed by players. Since players like Ruth, Gehrig, Cobb, and other legends likely had numerous glove models that they endorsed over the years, you can see how this pursuit can keep a collector quite busy looking for that new discovery in an obscure location at a



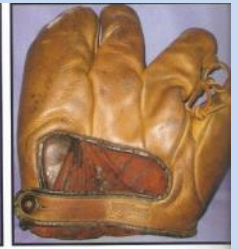
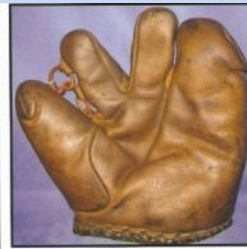
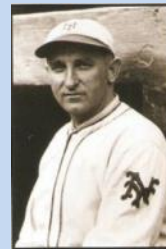
reasonable price.

Looking at some of the old gloves reminded me that players caught the ball using the palms of their hands. Webbing between the thumb and first finger gradually appeared and grew slowly over time. Catcher and first basemen mitts showed interesting advancements as well over the years. Many of the gloves showed the wear, tear, and personal touches of their original youthful owners bringing back great memories. I wonder where my old George Kell mitt is?

George Vrechek is a freelance contributor to Sports Collectors Digest and can be contacted at vrechek@ameritech.net.



55. 1910's Baseman's Mitt with Buckle Web



Carl Mays - Trusport Model 3F

1915 Boston Red Sox
Endorsement: Extremely Rare
Model: Extremely Rare



61. Joe Bush



Joe Bush - Draper & Maynard

1916 New York Giants
Endorsement: Extr. Rare
Model: Extr. Rare

