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## Review of Nebraska Diamonds: A Brief History of Baseball Major Leaguers from the Cornhusker State

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*Nebraska Diamonds: A Brief History of Baseball Major Leaguers from the Cornhusker State.* By Jerry E. Clark. Omaha: Making History, 1991. Preface, bibliography, index. vi + 85 pp. \$11.50 paper.

Has Nebraska produced baseball players of major league quality? The answer, according to Jerry Clark, is "Over a hundred, thank you." *Nebraska Diamonds* is a collection of biographies of major leaguers hailing from the Cornhusker State. It does not discriminate according to player quality, detailing the careers of both Sam Crawford, who had a hall of fame career, and John Sanders, who appeared in one game. Nor does it exclude non-lifetime Nebraska residents like Wade Boggs, born in Nebraska but raised in Florida. Some sketches

include personal details, but most concentrate on each athlete's baseball career.

The main text is divided into four sections, each corresponding to a different thirty year period. Of these sections, the richest is probably the 1900-1930 epoch, when "nearly half of all major leaguers from Nebraska played." It includes relatively long sketches of stars Sam Crawford, Grover Cleveland Alexander, and Clarence Mitchell, as well as details of the short-lived Federal League's impact on baseball. Clark attributes this preponderance of Nebraskans in the majors to the Nebraska State League, which "provided a constant focus on the game of baseball." He does not speculate on why fewer Nebraskans would play in the post-1930 era, although he does comment that most of the modern competitive college teams are in the "Sun Belt."

Clark initially defines a Nebraskan as someone born in Nebraska but includes a separate chapter on players who called Nebraska home, including Brooklyn Dodgers hall-of-famer Arthur "Dazzy" Vance. The chapter provides more personal data than the others, detailing the circumstances that led each ballplayer to define himself as a Nebraskan.

This is a popular, not an academic, work. Clark is writing specifically for Nebraska baseball fans. The text is stocked with names, dates, statistics, and nostalgic anecdotes, including Clarence Mitchell's five outs in two World Series at bats. (He hit into a triple and a double play.) Clark refrains from analysis, presenting his material in encyclopedic form with minimal comment. The result is a decent and entertaining reference book.

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