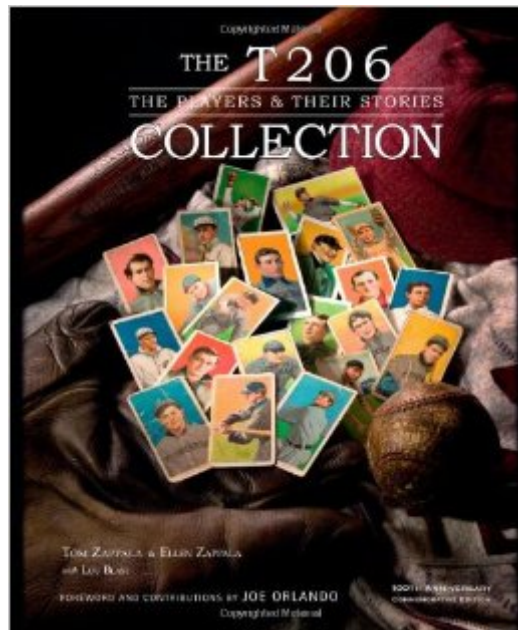


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# The T206 Collection: The Players & Their Stories



## Synopsis

A coffee table reference, which includes personal and professional stats along with a brief biographical narrative for each of the 393 players of the T206 collection, plus over 500, actual size, full color images of the cards. This volume celebrates the 100th anniversary of the cards which were printed between 1909 and 1911, when the popularity of baseball really exploded. From that era came Ty Cobb, Walter Johnson, Tris Speaker, Nap Lajoie, and Cy Young.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

One hundred years ago, the game of baseball was becoming deeply ingrained into our national psyche. Players like Ty Cobb, Walter Johnson, Christy Mathewson and Honus Wagner were well on their way to Cooperstown, and baseball cards were being produced in mass quantity to fascinate fans from coast to coast about their heroes' exploits. Arguably, the most intriguing set of baseball cards ever produced - the T206 collection - is now celebrating its 100th birthday, and to commemorate this historic milestone, Tom & Ellen Zappala have produced this wonderful perspective on the players, from A to Z. In addition to the remarkable visuals - the beautiful cards themselves - the authors have included the stories of the ballplayers captured on this piece of memorabilia; some we already knew, others are being revealed in compelling detail for the first time. Probably the most fascinating story to unfold over the years with the T206 collection concerns legendary shortstop Honus Wagner. For whatever reason, Wagner didn't want his mug on that particular card (the most popular theory stems from his distaste for tobacco), so production was limited to a mere 100, of which only 10 are in excellent to mint condition. The card gained

tremendous notoriety in 1991 when Wayne Gretzky and LA Kings owner, Bruce McNall shelled out \$451,000 for the gem. After that, the card skyrocketed in value, fetching a record \$2.8 million in 2007 (just prior to the global economic meltdown). Proving that nothing is recession-proof, however, one was sold for a mere \$1.62 million in 2008. What a bargain. You don't have to be a fan of the game to appreciate its historical significance; but if you love baseball, the story of the T206 collection is a "must have".

When you pick up a baseball card, do you wonder about the player whose picture is staring back at you? What was he like? What did he do after baseball? This curiosity is especially true with the famous T206 card set, now at its 100 year anniversary, and arguably the most fabled baseball card set in history. The set was released between 1909 and 1911 and contains the most valuable trading card in the world, the legendary Honus Wagner. Beyond Wagner, the set also contains other Hall of Fame members including Walter Johnson, Ty Cobb, Christy Mathewson, Tris Speaker as well as more obscure players from--over 500 cards in all. The T206 set is the subject of a stunningly beautiful and informative new book, called *The T206 Collection, The Players and Their Stories*. This book has taken the card series and put together thematic chapters tying like cards together. For instance, there are separate chapters on the Hall of Famers, those overlooked by Cooperstown, The Bad Boys of Baseball, The Minor Leaguers and the Uncommons. The book's contents are beautifully laid out and contain exhaustively-researched stories about the players in the set. A story within the Uncommons chapter about Lena Blackburne exemplifies the great stories within the book. No baseball can go into a Major League game without being rubbed with Lena Blackburne mud. Lena, a player from the T206 set (see graded card to the right), was a unremarkable Major Leaguer and during the 1930s, was the third-base coach for the Philadelphia Athletics. At this time, baseballs came from the factory with a gloss. Pitchers couldn't grip them, so they applied shoe polish, tobacco juice, and dirt. Lena brought some mud from his home in Palmyra, N.J., and soon all of the American League was using it.

Early tobacco cards, particularly the famed T206 White Border series of 1909-1911, evoke the charm, nostalgia, and beauty of the game of baseball. That these cards are special and prized everyone agrees; but it is not simply the value or the perceived rarity that makes them so. It is the gorgeous artwork, the historical significance of baseball in this nascent and formative time, and the background stories of the players that make the T206 collection so special. Few of the players captured on the face of these tiny pieces of cardboard were celebrities of that era -- although a

surprising number did go on to the Hall of Fame. They were, in most cases, ordinary young men with colorful stories and fascinating nicknames playing a game at a time when baseball was just becoming America's Pastime."The T206 Collection: The Players & Their Stories" captures vividly the art, beauty, and legacy of the T206 collection. This volume perfectly represents the essence of tobacco cards through stunning renditions of every one of the 524 cards, colorful stories about each player's background and history, and useful highlights of the collection as it has grown in its mystique over the last century. The authors have done a service to the history of the game and this important collection of cards by honoring the aspects of the T206 that make it so prized -- its art, beauty, and nostalgia.

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