

*Ty Cobb.* By Charles C. Alexander. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984. Pp. 272. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$16.95.)

One of the greatest, if not the greatest, players in baseball history was Ty Cobb, major league outfielder from 1905 to 1928. A native of the red-clay country of northern Georgia and son of a locally prominent educator, he moved into the world of sports before he was twenty. During nearly all his career, he wore the uniform of the Detroit Tigers and set innumerable records as a hitter and base stealer. Only recently have some of them been broken or closely approached. Owing to shrewd investments, such as stocks in Coca Cola and General Motors, more than to compensation from the Tigers (very modest by modern standards), he retired as a multimillionaire. This long period to 1961 brought him more trouble than happiness, as his unstable temperament alienated family and friends and detached him from the sport he loved.

Charles Alexander has produced a well-researched, well-written biography, quite superior to the usual book about athletes. A skilled historian, he has gathered evidence wherever available—from relevant manuscripts at the National Baseball Library at Cooperstown and the Detroit Public Library, from interviews and a wide range of publications. But newspapers provide most of his information, which is apparent in full descriptions, season by season, of Cobb's sensational feats on the diamond. Though the author's literary style is very good, this sort of narrative does become a little tedious and cluttered with detail. Nonetheless, Alexander portrays a fascinating personality: ruthless, combative, intelligent, a veritable perfectionist. Given to fights and controversies at the slightest provocation, Cobb had few close associations, but his incredible prowess and never-fading color excited an enormous popular interest. Here Alexander seeks to explain this social dimension by relating Cobb to early twentieth-century America; and to the limited extent he succeeds, his volume will have a fairly broad appeal. One has the feeling that he, or others consulting his work, could do still more.

*Indiana University, Bloomington*

Maurice Baxter

*Research: A Bibliography on Historical Organization Practices.*  
Edited by Frederick L. Rath, Jr., and Merrillyn Rogers O'Connell. (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1984. Pp. xiii, 209. Appendix, index. \$15.95.)

This is the sixth and last volume of the *Bibliography on Historical Organization Practices*, published by the American Asso-