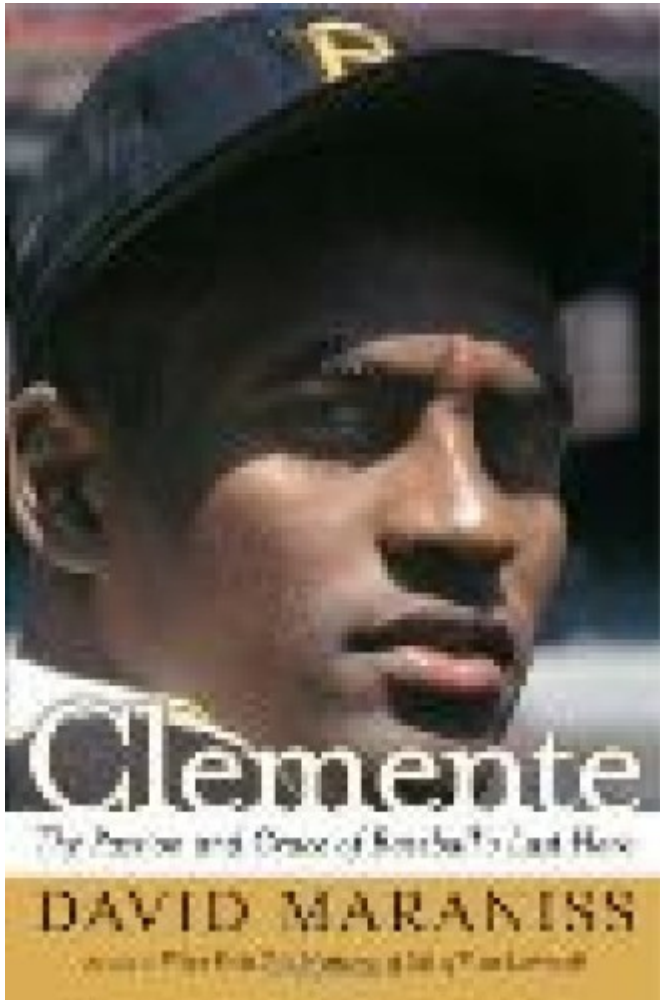


CC recommends

Books in the [December 12, 2006](#) issue

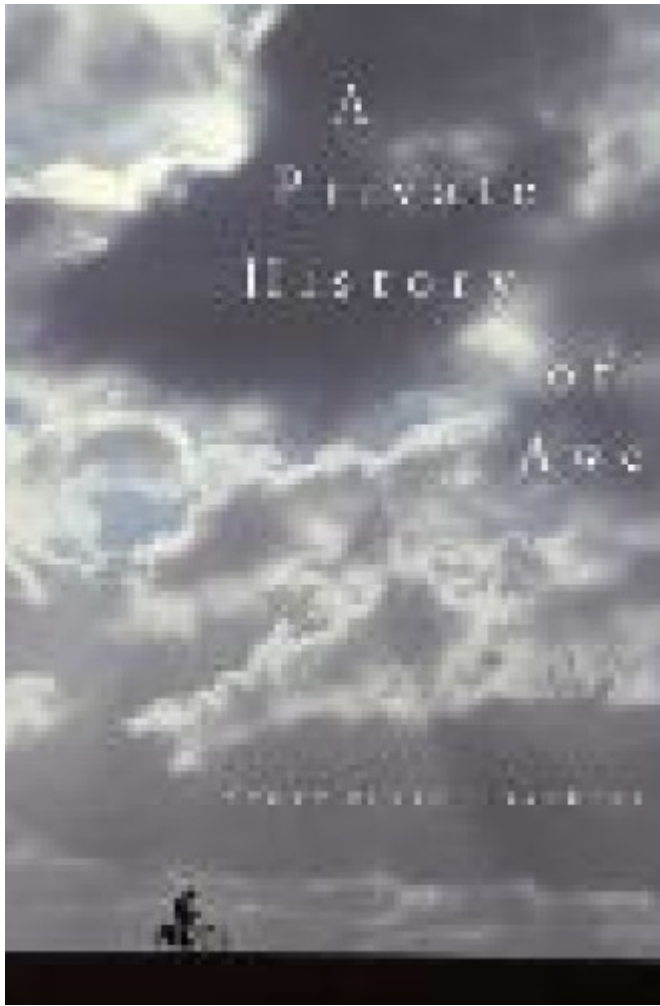
In Review



Clemente: The Passion and Grace of Baseball's Last Hero

David Maraniss

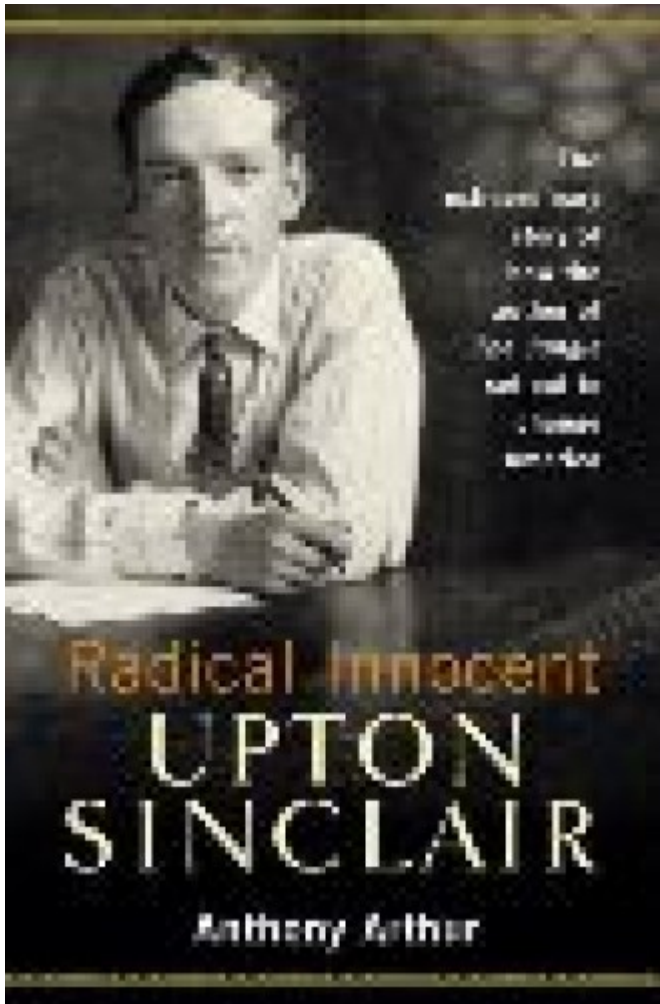
Simon & Schuster



A Private History of Awe

Scott Russell Sanders

North Point



Radical Innocent: Upton Sinclair

Anthony Arthur
Random House

David Maraniss, author of *When Pride Still Mattered*, a biography of Vince Lombardi, delivers another biography of a gifted yet complex sports hero. One didn't have to be a fan of the Pittsburgh Pirates to admire the grace with which Clemente played the game of baseball. Off the field he was a model too, as evidenced by his ill-fated flight to aid victims of the 1972 Nicaraguan earthquake. In this skillful narrative, Maraniss documents that Clemente was the Jackie Robinson of Spanish-speaking baseball players.

Sanders, who has taught English at Indiana University since 1971, writes what may be one of the best memoirs so far by a baby boomer. The *Christian Century* reviewer said of this work: "While writing about his whole life and its key influences, Sanders

keeps tenderly returning to the death of his mother and the birth of his granddaughter. In these overlapping events he reflects on how the flame of life—the flow of energy that he understands to be operating as love—is passed from one generation to another.” The book’s most exquisite narrative is the account of Sanders’s courtship and lifelong love affair with his wife, Ruth, which almost seems like a throwback to another age: no sex before marriage, fidelity to one partner.

Although obviously brilliant, Upton Sinclair was a failed novelist—not to mention a self-absorbed and failed husband and father—until the publication of *The Jungle*, the book for which he is best known. A blistering account of the meatpacking industry in Chicago, *The Jungle* led to passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act. A onetime Socialist, Sinclair eventually ran as a Democrat for governor of California, but lost. He was a friend of famous folk of his day, among them Teddy Roosevelt, Charlie Chaplin and Albert Einstein. *Radical Innocent* is a very engaging and competent biography.