



# **Hero of the Heartland: Billy Sunday and the Transformation of American Society, 1862-1935**

*Robert F. Martin*

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"Robert F. Martin demonstrates nicely that, beneath all of Billy Sunday's flamboyance, the orphan-turned-baseball player-turned-evangelist embodied the tensions of his age. Martin's prodigious research has yielded a wealth of anecdotal material that adds flavor and spice to his keen analysis."

—Randall Balmer, author of *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory:*

A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America

William Ashley "Billy" Sunday was the most popular and influential evangelist of his time. Between 1896 and 1935, the colorful Iowa-born evangelist toured first his native Midwest and then the nation, preaching in tent and tabernacle, espousing a simplistic but, for many, deeply satisfying interpretation of Christianity. Embodying the traditional values and attitudes of the heartland and at home in an increasingly diverse, urban, industrial America, Sunday won the hearts—and the pocketbooks—of millions of Americans.

Hero of the Heartland is an interpretive biography that focuses on the ways in which the man and his career resonated with the hopes and fears of his contemporaries as they coped with the economic, social, and cultural changes around the start of the 20th century. Robert F. Martin shows how Sunday and his revivalism helped his followers bridge the gap between the traditional past and the progressive future, and made more comfortable the transition from the old order to the new.



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