Maybelle Blair and Shirley Burkovich Education Center
International Women's Baseball Center
DIANA STAR HELMER COLLECTION

Accession Number: **2021.1023.01**
Processed By: Kate Haines
Location: ***Ypsilanti, Michigan***

Corporate Name: Diana Helmer
Date: 23 October 2021
Extent: 1.5 Boxes [*Some of the collection is kept in an oversize box due to size of some items.*]
System of Arrangement:
This collection is divided into three series, which are further divided into subseries. The first series deals with the research notes Diana Helmer created throughout the time she was researching for the book *Belles of the Ballpark*. Within this series, two subseries exist including (a) Research Notes and (b) Thought Collection. Subseries b deals with chapter outlines, often annotated and also includes contents of envelopes that seemed to be used to collect thoughts on certain topics, utilizing the way these envelopes were labeled for folder names. The second series regards the sources she used in this research. It is further broken into the subseries (a) Books; (b) Primary Sources; (c) Secondary Sources; and (d) Players' Association Newsletters. The final series revolves around other works Helmer produced in regards to women's baseball, along with publishing materials from the *Belles of the Ballpark* book.

Due to the potential copyright issues in some of the folders, full digital copies are not available online, but full inventory lists of physical contents are available. Please contact the archives directly for specific information about these listed items.

This collection was an acquired gift from Diana Star Helmer, author of *Belles of the Ballpark*.

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Scope Note:

This collection revolves around research largely done in the late 1980s and early 1990s, at the beginning of the popularity of the All American Girls Professional Baseball League, which gained popularity with the development of the 1992 blockbuster, *A League of Their Own*. Diana Helmer's work largely focused on the Racine Belles, a team in the All American Girls Professional Baseball League, and was furthered by her close relationship with Anna May Hutchinson and Irene Hickson, players from the league. While there is correspondence with other players and fans of the game, the relationship between these women is central and capable of being seen throughout all aspects of the research.

Players' Association Newsletters

Series II, subseries d contains newsletters from the All American Girls Professional Baseball League Players' Association, a group that was created in the 1980s to reconnect many of the players from the league's years. In 1981, to foster connection between reunions and in-person meetings, a newsletter was begun that would develop into Touching Bases in later years. While this collection of newsletters was in possession of Diana Helmer and many of them were addressed to her, a large portion of these newsletters came from Irene Hickson to assist Helmer in her research, especially as she researched the current lives of the players. It is likely that the collection here is not exhaustive of the newsletters that were published in the years contained here.

Anna May Hutchison

Anna May (or Mae) "Hutch" Hutchison (1925-1998) was a pitcher and catcher in the All American Girls Professional Baseball League from 1944 to 1948. In her tenure, she played for both the Racine Belles (1944-1949) and the Muskegon Lassies (1949). The Louisville, Kentucky native was a prominent side arm pitcher in the League and threw a no-hitter, led her team to a championship, and made two all star teams in her career. Injuries to her arm cut her career short, though. Following her baseball career, Hutchinson resided in Kenosha, Wisconsin and became a respected golfer, bowler, and teacher. Following her retirement in 1987, she moved to Racine, Wisconsin. She was inducted with the rest of the League to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1988. Due to the advocacy of then-IWBC Director Ryan Woodward, "Hutch" was part of the Class of 2020 Kentucky Sports Hall of Fame.

[1] Some items in Series II are oversized, which will be marked in the finding aid, where needed. These items are kept in a different box than the main collection and may need consultation if you are interested in these items.

Irene Hickson
Irene Hickson (1915-1995) was a catcher in the All American Girls Professional Baseball League from 1943 to 1951. She played for both the Racine Belles (1943-1950) and the Kenosha Comets (1951). Prior to playing for the League, Hickson was a semi-professional softball player, a track and field champion, and a boxer. She would also play for a men's minor league baseball team for a time after her professional women's career. Following her sports career, she opened a restaurant called *Home Plate* and worked for Zayre. She was inducted with the rest of the League to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1988.

All American Girls Professional Baseball League
The All American Girls Professional Baseball League was an all-women's professional baseball league that functioned during the war years, when men's baseball had declined due to drafting of service members. Founded by Philip K. Wrigley in 1943, it passed ownership twice in its tenure (to Arthur Meyerhoff in 1944 and to a decentralized team owner structure in 1950). At its height, the League played in 14 cities and drew one million fans. As men returned to the baseball diamond and the rise of televised games increased, it became more difficult to maintain the women's league. The League folded in 1954 and the popularity of the League was revitalized with *A League of Their Own* in 1992. The League was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1988, where it is part of the permanent Women in Baseball exhibit there.

Racine Belles
The Racine Belles was one of the inaugural teams of the All American Girls Professional Baseball League and disbanded after the 1950 season. Located in Racine, Wisconsin, the team played at Horlick Field. The team touted a powerhouse team through several season, and won the League Championship in 1943 and 1946.

Bells of the Ballpark
Published in 1993 by Diana Star Helmer, this illustrated book attempts to tell the history of the League with a focus on the Racine Belles. While the research started in the late-1980s as the League became more known to people, it was published a year after the blockbuster hit, and people felt it was a good depiction of the "real" story that the movie left out.

Publishing Materials
Series III, folder 5 contains publishing materials surrounding the book *Belles of the Ballpark*. Contained within this folder are items regarding marketing, outlines, and publisher correspondence.

Biographical Note:
Diana Star Helmer (1962-) is an American writer most known in the women's baseball world for her 1993 book *Belles of the Ballpark* which followed the Racine Belles of the All American Girls Professional Baseball League following the release of the 1992 movie, *A League of Their Own*. Helmer's career as a writer has included work in children's genres, screen and playwriting, and sports and fitness, with her later career focusing on children's materials. Beyond her Belles work, Helmer wrote on women's baseball leading up to the launch of the 1992 film and wrote more general about *Baseball* (1999) in her Game Plan Series. She has also more generally written about women's sports and women's history, including her Teamwork in Action Series, where she addressed specific Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) teams.

Explanatory Note:

Fd. stands for folder

* indicates that a folder is located in an oversize box

Box 1
Series I: Diana Helmer Research Notes

Subseries a: Research Notes	**24 Fds.**
Fd. 1, Hutch and Irene Notebook	1 Item
Fd. 2, Girls League Notebook	1 Item
Fd. 3, Racine I Notebook	1 Item
Fd. 4, Racine II Notebook	1 Item
Fd. 5, Questions, Contacts, Clips	28 Items
Fd. 6, Money and Budgets	1 Item
Fd. 7, Newspaper Clips Notes	1 Item
Fd. 8, Advertising Approaches	1 Item
Fd. 9, AAGPBL Timeline	1 Item
Fd. 10, Why Not Simply Softball?	1 Item
Fd. 11, Individual Notes	5 Items
Fd. 12, Female Athlete Perceptions	1 Item
Fd. 13, Yearbook Notes	3 Items
Fd. 14, Woody-Grand Rapids Manager	1 Item
Fd. 15, Ted Spencer, HoF Curator	1 Item
Fd. 16, Diamond Gals	1 Item
Fd. 17, Leo Schrall Notes	1 Item
Fd. 18, Bibliographical Notes	1 Item
Fd. 19, Topical Notes	1 Item
Fd. 20, Chapter Outline Notes	1 Item
Fd. 21, Interview Documentation	3 Items
Fd. 22, Jane and Orval Letter, February 1991	1 Item
Fd. 23, September 1986	1 Item
Fd. 24, Slides	Slide Box
Subseries b: Thought Collection	**13 Fds.**
Fd. 1, Changes	3 Items
Fd. 2, Cuba	3 Items
Fd. 3, 46	2 Items
Fd. 4, 1950	1 Item
Fd. 5, War End	1 Item
Fd. 6, Reunion	2 Items
Fd. 7, Home	3 Items
Fd. 8, Road	3 Items
Fd. 9, Game	3 Items
Fd. 10, Chaps	2 Items
Fd. 11, Unmarked I	1 Item
Fd. 12, Unmarked II	1 Item
Fd. 13, Thought and Chapter Outlines	14 Items

Series II: Research Sources[2]

Subseries a: Books	**5 Fds.**
Fd. 1, Major League Baseball, 1946	1 Item
Fd. 2, MLB 1946 Copy[3]	1 Item
Fd. 3, MLB 1947 Copy[4]	1 Item
Fd. 4, MLB 1948 Copy[5]	1 Item
Fd. 5, Merrie Fiddler thesis manuscript with Barbara Gregorich letter	2 Items
Subseries b: Primary Sources	**38 Fds.**
Fd. 1, Photographs and memorabilia with notes*	28 Items
Fd. 2, 1990s Newspapers*	3 Items
Fd. 3, Sport Life, Diamond Daisies*	1 Item
Fd. 4, Belles of the Ball Game	1 Item
Fd. 5, 1952 Girls Baseball League Magazine	1 Item
Fd. 6, 1942-1945 Articles*	12 Items
Fd. 7, 1946-1947 Articles*	8 Items
Fd. 8, 1948 Articles*	12 Items
Fd. 9, 1949-1951 Articles*	4 Items
Fd. 10, Racine Journal Times Bundle*	9 Items
Fd. 11, 1956-1987 Newspapers*	9 Items
Fd. 12, Sports Collectors Digest, September 1988*	1 Item
Fd. 13, 1988-1990 Newspaper Articles*	8 Items
Fd. 14, 1991 Newspaper Articles*	15 Items
Fd. 15, 1992 Newspaper Articles*	5 Items
Fd. 16, Articles beyond the League Years (Dates Unknown)*	12 Items
Fd. 17, Miscellaneous or Undated Articles*	13 Items
Fd. 18, Racine Belles Bulletins	7 Items
Fd. 19, 1947 Racine Belles Yearbook	1 Item
Fd. 20, 1950 Kenosha Comets Scorecard	1 Item
Fd. 21, Peoria Redwings Yearbooks	2 Items
Fd. 22, Research subject contact	29 Items
Fd. 23, 1988-1990 Correspondence	13 Items
Fd. 24, Early-1991 Correspondence	6 Items
Fd. 25, April 1-10, 1991 Correspondence	7 Items
Fd. 26, April 11-30, 1991 Correspondence	9 Items
Fd. 27, May 1991 Correspondence*	4 Items
Fd. 28, June 1991 Correspondence*	5 Items
Fd. 29, July 1991 Correspondence	5 Items
Fd. 30, Late-1991 Correspondence	5 Items
Fd. 31, 1992 Correspondence*	10 Items
Fd. 32, 1993-2003 Correspondence	8 Items
Fd. 33, Correspondence, Unknown dates	8 Items

[2] All folders that are indicated with a * are folders with oversize items and can be found in the oversized box associated with this collection.
[3] Photocopies of the book's portion involving AAGPBL.
[4] Photocopies of the book's portion involving AAGPBL.
[5] Photocopies of the book's portion involving AAGPBL.

Fd. 34, Publisher Correspondence	12 Items
Fd. 35, Interview Notes	5 Items
Fd. 36, 1991 Resource Packet with notes*	1 Item
Fd. 37, Kenosha Times Bundle*	1 Item
Fd. 38, Old Kenosha articles*	3 Items
Subseries c: Secondary Sources	**18 Fds.**
Fd. 1, The Women of Cooperstown	3 Items
Fd. 2, Ken Sells History of the AAGPBL	1 Item
Fd. 3, 1975 Current Biography, Phillip Wrigley	1 Item
Fd. 4, 1989 Chicago History, Susan Cahn Article	1 Item
Fd. 5, 1982 Women's Sports, Seasons in the Sun	2 Items
Fd. 6, Nostalgia, The Queens of the Diamond	1 Item
Fd. 7, 1986 Diamond Gals	1 Item
Fd. 8, 1982 Tempo, The Girls of Summer*	1 Item
Fd. 9, 1986 Flint Area Sports HoF Booklet	1 Item
Fd. 10, 1989 Smithsonian	1 Item
Fd. 11, 1982 Search	2 Items
Fd. 12, The Other Major League	1 Item
Fd. 13, 1987 Sports Heritage	1 Item
Fd. 14, Woman Players in Organized Baseball*	1 Item
Fd. 15, Press Releases*	1 Item
Fd. 16, Taylor-Roepke and Fiddler Articles	3 Items
Fd. 17, Pamphlets and Newsletters	6 Items
Fd. 18, Robert Boynton Sources	5 Items
Subseries d: Players' Association Newsletters	**14 Fds.**
Fd. 1, 1981 Newsletters	8 Items
Fd. 2, 1982 Newsletters	5 Items
Fd. 3, 1983 Newsletters	2 Items
Fd. 4, 1984 Newsletters	4 Items
Fd. 5, 1985 Newsletters	2 Items
Fd. 6, 1986 Newsletters	3 Items
Fd. 7, 1987 Newsletters	5 Items
Fd. 8, 1988 Newsletters	6 Items
Fd. 9, 1989 Newsletters	5 Items
Fd. 10, 1990 Newsletters	3 Items
Fd. 11, 1991 Newsletters	2 Items
Fd. 12, 1992 Newsletters	1 Item
Fd. 13, 1993 Newsletters	2 Items
Fd. 14, Undated AAGPBL PA Information	6 Items
Series III: Diana Helmer Works	**5 Fds.**
Fd. 1, 1992 Movie Articles	2 Items
Fd. 2, 1993 Elysian Fields Quarterly	1 Item
Fd. 3, Belles of the Ballpark Proof	1 Item
Fd. 4, Belles of the Ballpark Unmarked Galley	2 Items
Fd. 5, Publishing Materials	3 Items