

# **Finding aid for the Grand Rapids Chicks collection Collection 058**

**Finding aid prepared by Martha Bloem**

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This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department  
September 1988  
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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
<b>Title</b>	Grand Rapids Chicks
<b>Date [bulk]</b>	Bulk, 1948-1954
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1948-1986
<b>Extent</b>	2.25 Linear feet Six boxes
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>The Grand Rapids Chicks were a part of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL) from 1945 to 1954. This is a devised collection containing photographs and official programs of the original team. It also contains later AAGPBL reunion programs and photographs, baseball cards, ephemera, articles and an oral history regarding the Grand Rapids Chicks.</p>

## **Biographical/Historical note**

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In 1943 Phillip K. Wrigley received word from the Office of War Information that the 1943 Major League Baseball season might be suspended due to a manpower shortage. Because of this shortage, Wrigley began working on what was to become the All American Girls Professional Baseball League. Wrigley and his advertising agent Arthur Meyerhoff promoted the new "Girls Baseball" as wholesome family entertainment for war workers.

The Grand Rapids Chicks were a part of this league from 1945-1954. The team played at South High School field. They were very popular with large attendance numbers, as many as 5,000 people attended a single game. The seasons were long-- seven months and 110 to 125 games. The women not only had to be top athletes, they also had to attend charm school, wear short skirts, have chaperones and curfews. This was all a part of the "feminine concept" held by the league. The first professional woman ball player to win "The Player of the Year" title was Connie "Iron Woman" Wisniewski of the Grand Rapids Chicks in 1945. Connie was also the league pitching champ in 1945 and 1946. The Grand Rapids Chicks took a league championship twice (1947 and 1953) during its nine year existence.

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## **Scope and Contents note**

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The collection consists of action shots, team photos, official programs, a souvenir program from 1986, trading cards, and other ephemera. The clippings primarily date from September 1948 to May 1954. An oral history from the Orwant brothers was added in 2001.

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## **Administrative Information**

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### **Publication Information**

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department September 1988

### **Immediate Source of Acquisition note**

Gordon Olson, All American Girls Baseball League and others.

Accession numbers: 1986.491, 1986.500, 1986.517, 1999.032, 1999.123, 00.[1546].1, P2000.062, P2000.065, 2001.054, 2001.084, 2001.129, 2001.129B, 2002.099 [10/14/2002]

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## Related Materials

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### Related Archival Materials note

Collection 121 - Marguerite King Moran Collection

Collection 125 - Robinson Studio Collection. Chicks Series.

Collection 160 - Helen Earlene Risinger Collection (Beans)

Collection 185-1-20 - Six images, source unknown. Could be reproductions of those in other Chicks archival collections here.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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### Corporate Name(s)

- All-American Girls Professional Baseball League.
- Grand Rapids Chicks.

### Geographic Name(s)

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History

### Subject(s)

- Baseball for women -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids

## Series I. Ephemera

## Collection Inventory

<b>Series I. Ephemera</b>		
<b>A. PROGRAMS, Original.</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
1946 (2)	1	1
1947 (1)	1	2
1948 (10)	1	3
1949 (4)	1	4
1950 (1)	1	5
<b>Programs, Souvenir</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
AAGPBL Souvenir Program, 1986. [1986.500]	1	6
<b>2001 Reunion Programs</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>

**B. TICKETS**

AAGPBL Reunion, Sept. 6-8, 2001	1	7
GRPL Local History exhibit and reception, Sept. 7, 2001. "Who Said Girls Can't Play Baseball?" Program (1 orig., 1 copy) and flyer (2)	1	8

**B. TICKETS**

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Ticket. Gran Stadium de la Habana. 219-B, 1946-1947.	1	9

**C. TRADING CARDS**

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Dolly Niemiec Konwinski (1)	1	10
Alma Ziegler (1)	1	10
Fritsch trading card for Pat Keagle only, 2000(1) [P2000.065]	1	11
Autographed. Lavonne "Pepper" Davis (1) [2001.084, 10/30/2001]	1	12

**3 packets of Fritsch trading cards. [P2000.062, 12/29/2000]**

	<b>Box</b>
1)234 card set, c. 1995	4
2)106 card set, Series 2, c. 1996	4

## Series II. Oral Histories

4

3) 72 card set, Series 3, c. 2000.

**Series II. Oral Histories****Carl and Myron Orwant / by Gordon Olson, Dec. 14, 2001, 2001.012****Box****Folder**

Transcription (2 copies)

2

1-2

**Box**

Audio Tapes and diskettes, including diskette, master tape (cassette), user tape (cassette)

2.5

**Series III. Publications****A. Magazines and newspaper articles, Grand Rapids Press and Herald.****Box**

Oversized. Grand Rapids Press. July 9, 1982. "Calling All Chicks" (Photocopy)

5

**Box****Folder**

Chicks Obituaries.

2

2.5

Newspaper Clippings References

2

3

**Selective index to Grand Rapids Press items on the Chicks:**

July 18, 1945, p. 12, col. 1



**A. Magazines and newspaper articles, Grand Rapids Press and Herald.**

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May 8, 1946, p. 16, col. 4  
May 25, 1946, p. 12, col. 5  
June 3, 1946, p. 12, col. 3  
Aug. 22, 1946, p. 12, col. 3  
Feb. 25, 1947, p. 8, col. 2  
July 1, 1947, p. 24, col. 6  
Sept. 16, 1947, p. 14, col. 5  
Sept. 17, 1947, p. 30, col. 8  
Sept. 4, 1948, p. 24, col.. 1  
Sept. 30, 1948, p. 35, col. 1  
Sept. 1, 1949, p. 34, Col. 1  
Sept. 20, 1949, p. 22, col. 8  
Mar. 16, 1950, p. 37, col. 1  
June 6, 1950, p. 16, col. 1  
July 21, 1950, p. 2, col. 1  
July 21, 1950, p. 23, col. 3  
Aug. 17, 1950, p. 36, col. 1  
Aug. 19, 1950, p. 22, Col. 7  
Sept. 1, 1950, p. 38, col. 1  
May 7, 1951, p. 32, col. 1  
June 26, 1951, p. 16, col. 1  
Sept. 6, 1951, p. 31, col. 1  
July 22, 1952, p. 20, col. 3.

**B. Magazine and newspaper articles, Other, including unknown sources.**

July 23, 1952, p. 33, col. 7  
 Aug. 8, 1952, p. 23, col. 3  
 Aug. 23, 1952, p. 23, col. 3  
 Sept. 1, 1952, p. 31, col. 3  
 Feb. 25, 1954, p. 39, col. 3  
 Apr. 17, 1954, p. 24, col. 3  
 May 27, 1954, p. 25, col. 5

**B. Magazine and newspaper articles, Other, including unknown sources.**

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Cadence, Sept. 12, 2001. "Grand Rapids Chicks a part of area sports heritage" p. 31. [Article on the 2001 reunion]	2	15?
Chronicle, V. 30, no. 1, Spring 2007. Michigan History Day. Alayna Klco dressed as a Grand Rapids Chick. pg. 17. [2007.004.025]	2	3.5
		<b>Box</b>
Detroit News "Accent", Mar. 5, 1992 "Women in Diamonds" (photocopy)		5
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Glamour, May 1989. "Women Who Play Hardball" (photocopy)	2	4
Herizons : Women's Feminist Views. Sum. 1992. V. 6, no. 2. "The Girls of Summer" by Johanna Brand.	2	5

**B. Magazine and newspaper articles, Other, including unknown sources.**

The Jerusalem Report. Nov. 14, 1996. "In a League of Her Own" p. 31. Missing, 2000.	2	6
Michigan History Magazine, Sept./Oct. 1997. "Girl's of Summer" by Carey L. Draeger. P. 16+	2	7
Museum (Public Museum of Grand Rapids) Sum. 1994. "The Girls of Summer", pg. 8+	2	8
Peninsular Club Magazine, v. 21, May 1952, pg. 28. "Fans Can Look Forward to Bright Chick Season" Photocopy pending 2/29/2008		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
People Magazine. Aug. 17, 1987. Voices: p. 77. "This Mother could Hit" (Photocopy)	2	9
Smithsonian Magazine, July 1989. "The 'Belles of the Ball Game' were a hit with their fans" / by Jack Fincher. (photocopies, 2 different versions)	2	10
Traces: of Indiana & Midwestern History, Spr. 1993. "Women in Baseball" / Barbara Gregorich. P. 26+ (photocopy)	2	11
Women's Sports, Oct. 1982. P. 48+ "Seasons in the Sun" / by David Young. (photocopy)	2	12
Unknown source. "Girls' Ball Club Would Build \$150,000 Field on City Land" (photocopy)	2	13

**Series IV. Scrapbooks and Scrapbook pages****Series IV. Scrapbooks and Scrapbook pages****Box**

4 Scrapbook pages, from the Scrapbook of fan Marie H. Taylor, including clippings and 2 original b/w photos. [2002.099, 10/14/2002]

5

**Series V. Photographs****Photographs, N.D.(19 items 2/10/2001; ) 5x7 ish, b/w Spielmacher Photos, 16 found, 10/14/2002)  
South High Field(?)****Box****Folder**

1. Team shot, seated on steps, beside building, with shadows at bottom step.

3

1

2.-4. Individual Player (3)

3

1

5.-6. Individual Player (2)

3

1

7. Saluting the flag from the dugout (1)

3

1

8.-9. Field shots (2)

3

1

10.-14. Across the Plate (5)

3

1

10. Catcher Ann O'Dowd and Runner Mary Lou Studnicka

3

1

## Photographs, N.D.(19 items 2/10/2001; ) 5x7 ish, b/w Spielmacher Photos, 1...

11. Baserunner Alma "Gabby" Zielger. Includes Ernestine "Teeny" Petras, GR Chick sitting in the dugout in the background.	3	1
12. Unidentified catcher and runner	3	1
13. Unidentified back of No. 12 and runner.	3	1
14. Unidentified back of No. 18 near umpire and runner, with building in background.	3	1
15.-16. Night shots (2)	3	1
16. Unidentified runner, catcher, other player and umpire	3	1
17. Group with team manager	3	1
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
8x10 Team photo by Spencer Beebe, Moss Point, Miss. N.d. (1)	3	2
8x10 Copy photo, autographed by player "Beans" Risinger. (1) [Possibly a recent Fuji copy print, but was there an original, since the item carried the old photo locations, ca. 2000]	3	3
Team Photo 00.[1546].1 Robinson Studio Coll. print from our collection, 125-938-98, used in unidentified publication, with non-Robinson copy neg. #2175.	3	4

**Series VI. 2001 Exhibit Materials**

Multi-team group photo, including Lassies, Chicks and others. Borrer Studio. 2001.103, 11/1/2001	3	5
1950 or 1951 Team snapshot, out of uniform, by Wm. A. Meadows. 1999.123, with note from donor.	3	6
“Women in Baseball” Exhibit in display case. Note: Restricted. Reprints should be obtained from the National Baseball Library, Cooperstown, N.Y. (1) 2001.085	3	7
Marilyn Jenkins (3) 2002.089	3	8
Kent Co. Sheriff’s Dept. Reserves. Photocopies of Photos. This group served as Ushers at the Chicks games. Photos include donor James E. Taylor, and one includes with him his father, Hurbert D. Taylor. 2002.099, 10/14/2002	3	9
AAGPBL exhibit and reception at GRPL, Sept. 7, 2001. 20 color photos by Pam Swiler.	3	11

**Series VI. 2001 Exhibit Materials****Scope and Contents note**

An exhibit was prepared by then GRHSCC staff member Martha Bloem in 2001, to commemorate the AAGPBL Reunion, held in Grand Rapids, September 6-8, 2001. The exhibit, which as the designer planned it took the form of a large scrapbook, is expected to be given to the AAGPBL Hall of Fame in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. It has signatures of players and others who attended the exhibit opening at the Library. The material included here are mostly color laser copies of materials which were not eventually

## Series VI. 2001 Exhibit Materials

included in the exhibit. While much of this information comes from elsewhere in the GRPL Collections, some may be new material, received from undocumented donors.

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
“Paper Doll” cutout of Chicks player, probably cut from a program.	1	13
Cover and verso (first inside page) of original program. “Grand Rapids Chicks vs South Bend Blue Sox”, n.d.	1	13
Clipping. “Grand Rapids’ Miss Baseball”—Mildred Earp. N.d.	1	13
Graphic Clippings from original programs of team photos, including: Chicago Colleens, Fort Wayne Daisies, Racine Belles, Peoria Redwings, South Bend Blue Sox, Springfield Sallies	1	13
Clippings from various sources, including cartoons, an enlarged color postcard, a players head, baseballs, newspapers, etc.	1	13.5
Map, from unidentified source. Map 1.—Sites of AAGBBL [sic, AAGBPL] League Cities, 1943-1954	1	14
Exhibit labels or information sheets. 12 typed sheets of information on the League.	1	15
		<b>Box</b>
Photocopies of newspaper articles from August 1954, the last season and end of the League. Grand Rapids Press and Grand Rapids Herald		2
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>

Series VI. 2001 Exhibit Materials

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Photographs, mounted on “fringed” paper, but unused items from the exhibit preparation	3	10
		<b>Box</b>
Oversized Exhibit materials (18 items). Mostly laser copies of clippings, scrapbook pages, photos, cartoons		5