



Women in Baseball: The Forgotten History

Gai I Berlage

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Very few people are aware that women were active in baseball in the United States as early as 1866. In this volume, Gai Berlage reports the histories of the umpires, players, owners, and sportswriters as well as the teams. Professional and amateur teams are covered as well as hard and softball.

In 1974, when the Supreme Court forced Little League to change its charter and permit girls to play baseball on boys' teams, feminists cheered, heralding the decision as a significant victory. How short their memories were! Had investigators only looked to baseball history, they would have learned, much to their surprise, that women had been avidly playing baseball for over a hundred years--as far back as 1866. In 1928, one female Indiana player helped lead her team to the state championship and on to the national tournament in American League Junior Baseball. And during World War II, Wrigley started the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League. In fact, not until 1952 was there a rule barring women from being professional players.

Women in Baseball offers the details of this compelling, largely overlooked aspect of baseball history, introducing the reader to a whole new cast of little-known stars on men's teams: Lizzie Arlington, a pitcher in 1898; Alta Weiss, a pitcher for 15 years in the early 20th century; Lizzie Murphy, who played first base for the American All-Stars against the Boston Red Sox; Jackie Mitchell, who became a media sensation in 1931 when she struck out Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig. The author also reveals the stories of women's professional and amateur teams--Josie Caruso and her Eight Men, the Chicago Bloomer Girls, and the all-black Dolly Vardens of Philadelphia--and introduces women who distinguished themselves as players, umpires, and team owners. *Women in Baseball* explores the history of women in baseball from a socio-cultural perspective, analyzing how it was forgotten in the light of residual Victorian values that governed women's lives for so many decades.

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