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Finding Aid for the Helen Earlene "Beans" Risinger Grand Rapids Chicks collection Collection 160

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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

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Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

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Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical / Historical	3
Scope and Contents	4
Administrative Information	4
Related Materials	5
Controlled Access Headings	5
Collection Inventory	5
Series I. Correspondence & Biographical information	5
Biographical info on Risinger.	6
Correspondence.	7
Series II. Ephemera	7
Baseball Cards, 1943-1954.	7
Programs	7
1947 Abril 27 a' 4de Mayo. Gran Stadium de la Habana	7
Series III. Publications	8
Books	9
Booklets	9
Periodical & Web articles	9
Periodical & Web articles	10
Clippings [oversized]	10
Newspaper sections/clippings.	11
Series IV. Series Scrapbooks	12
Series V. Photographs.	12
Bigelow Field fire. 1952. Grand Rapids Press Library photos. (3)	12
Night game at Bigelow Field. n.d.	12
John Rawlings photos. [1952] (2)	12
Robinson Studio Photographs, n.d. 1999.032	13
Unidentified B/W team group photo, perhaps of Grand Rapids Chicks. AAGPBL 2001.054B	13
Series VI. Posters.	14
Series VII. Realia	14
Series VIII. Moving Images	15

Summary Information

Repository:	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
Title:	Helen Earlene "Beans" Risinger Grand Rapids Chicks collection
ID:	Collection 160
Date [inclusive]:	1943-2009
Physical Description:	4.13 Linear Feet Six boxes
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	Helen Earlene "Beans" Risinger (1927-2008) was a pitcher for the Grand Rapids Chicks (Grand Rapids, Mich) baseball team, part of the All American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL). This collection contains baseball cards, programs, magazine and newspaper articles, scrapbooks and photographs of the Chicks. The material focuses on Risinger's years on the team, 1949-1954.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

Helen Earlene "Beans" Risinger was born in the small town of Hess, Oklahoma, daughter of Lizzie and Homer Risinger, on March 20, 1927. Her nickname "Beans," was given her by her father, due to her fondness for pork and beans, a staple of the family diet. She first learned the sport of baseball from her father, who played for the local town's team against the teams of other neighboring communities. She continued to play the sport with and against her adult male relatives through high school, and was often found on the pitching mound.

Although she had a love for basketball, she competed for a chance to play for the AAGPBL in Oklahoma City in 1947, after seeing a notice for tryouts in that city's newspaper. Her pitching skills attracted the attention of the League managers during the tryouts, and Risinger was offered a position in 1947. However, it is not until the following year, encouraged by League player Shirley Jameson, that she signed a contract with the Springfield Sallies in 1948, at the age of 21. Low attendance caused the Sallies to fold after that season. During the early part of 1949 Risinger toured with the Americanas, an exhibition team which was playing at that time in South America. Later in 1949, she signed a contract with the Grand Rapids (Michigan) Chicks. She remained with the Chicks until 1954 when the league disbanded.

Risinger was an outstanding pitcher. A right hander, standing at 6'1", her most memorable game was when she struck out Sammy Sams of the Kalamazoo Lassies with the bases loaded to win the playoffs for

the Grand Rapids Chicks in 1953. During the regular seasons Risinger maintained an ERA under 2.40 for five consecutive seasons.

The Grand Rapids Chicks baseball team won the league championship in 1947 and 1953 and a league pennant in 1948. Elwood "Woody" English took over for Johnny Gottselig in May of 1952 as coach for the Grand Rapids Chicks, and stayed there for the remainder of the league's existence. In 1988, the AAGPBL was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York.

Encouraged by the Chicks team physician, Dr. Blackburn, Earlene "Beans" Risinger took college courses to become a medical technician during the winter months. She went to x-ray school at Butterworth Hospital. Then, when the League disbanded, Beans continued to live in Grand Rapids, working in the office of an orthopedics surgeon and continuing in this field until her retirement in 1991. She continued to participate in Chicks reunion events and was a consultant for the movie "A League of Their Own," which documents the AAGPBL womens' baseball league.

Beans died July 29th, 2008, in Hess, Oklahoma, where she had returned to live near her family in later years.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents

The Grand Rapids Chicks baseball team was one of fourteen unique women's baseball teams representing fourteen different Midwestern cities. The teams played from 1943 to 1954. The wooden wall plaque in the collection is from 1953, a pennant victory year for the Chicks. The baseball cards picture players from the AAGPBL and indicate where they played as well as their statistics. The scrapbooks contain newspaper articles and memoirs from Risinger's tenure with the Grand Rapids Chicks. The photographs include a view of the Bigelow Field fire on July 16, 1952, and a few images of Woody English. The newspaper articles concern Risinger or the Grand Rapids Chicks. Game programs include a special program from spring training in Cuba in 1947.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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

111 Library Street NE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

localhis@grpl.org

URL: <http://www.grpl.org>

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Helen Earlene Risinger

Accession numbers: 1990.30; 1999.032; 2000.049; 2001.054; 2002.019; 2003.003; 2004.040; 2005.085; 2006.025a-d ; 2007.090

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Related Materials

Related Materials

Coll. 058 Grand Rapids Chicks Collection

Coll. 121 Marguerite King Moran Collection. Scrapbooks

Coll. 125 Robinson Studio Collection. Chicks Series.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Baseball for women -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History
- Grand Rapids Chicks
- All-American Girls Professional Baseball League

Collection Inventory

Series I. Correspondence & Biographical information

Scope and Contents

Includes articles or documents about Risinger's life.

Biographical info on Risinger.

Title/Description	Instances	
"Earlene "Beans" Risinger" Statement by Risinger for an unidentified source. "What did the All-American Girl's Baseball League do for Me? ..."	Box 1	Folder 1
Making it as an All-American Girls Professional Baseball League Player" / by Burna Cole. Altus Times, Altus, Oklahoma. Aug. 9, 1999. Photocopy of newspaper clipping, with image of Risinger.	Box 1	Folder 1
[Women's Sports], Dec. 1982. Letter to the editor, pg. 5. 2 copies. Photocopies.	Box 1	Folder 1
"Meet Beans Risinger" Grand Rapids Herald, July 6, 1949. 2 copies. Photocopies	Box 1	Folder 1
"Former Chicks remember other years as baseball season opens" Grand Rapids Press. Apr. 15, 1962. Includes of Risinger and other former players as medical technicians. Original clipping	Box 1	Folder 1
"Chicks' "Beans" in lineup for mall's sports card show" Grand Rapids Press, Nov. 2, 1992. Photocopy, Laminated by donor. [See also poster from this event listed below] 2004.040	Box 1	Folder 1
BaseballHistorian.Com entry	Box 1	Folder 1
AAGPBL Interview : Earlene Risinger. From The Diamond Angle, the Eclectic Baseball Magazine n.d.	Box 1	Folder 1
""Beans' Risinger: An All-American Pitcher in the AAGPBL's Postwar Years / Jim Sargent. c. 2005 AAGPBL. http://www.aagpbl.org/index.cfm/articles/risinger-earlene-beans/11 (Accessed 05/31/2018)	Box 1	Folder 1
Beans Risinger: All-American Pitcher / by Jim Sargent. Grand River Valley History, v. 16, 1999.	Box 1	Folder 1
Helen Earlene "Beans" Risinger / Joyce M. Smith. http://www.aagpbl.org/index.cfm/articles/risinger-earlene-beans/18 (Accessed 05/31/2018)	Box 1	Folder 1
Risinger fastball gives chicks second straight / Roscoe D. Bennett. May 12, 1952. Color laser copy of unidentified newspaper clipping (GR Press or Herald?) 2006.025D	Box 1	Folder 1
A Memorable Game. RE 1953 Final series game, Chicks vs Kalamazoo Lassies. Source unknown. Chicks catchers reminiscence. 2006.025D	Box 1	Folder 1
Swinging for the Fences / by Barbara Beal Schmid. Michigan History. May/June 2003 2006.025	Box 1	Folder 1.3

Correspondence.

Title/Description	Instances	
Letter to Women's Sports, Oct. 1, 1982. From Beans Risinger and Marilyn Jenkins. RE: David Young's article "Season in the Sun."	Box 1	Folder 1.5
Helen Earlene "Beans" Risinger Obituary. Grand Rapids Press, July 31, 2008. Includes photos. D6 Obituary article / B6 Obituary	Box 1	Folder 1.2

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series II. Ephemera

Scope and Contents

Includes baseball cards, play programs, flyers, and other miscellaneous advertising or information articles, as available.

Baseball Cards, 1943-1954.

Title/Description	Instances	
Orange packet (20)	Box 1	Folder 2
Green packet (18)	Box 1	Folder 2
Blue packet (20 + 2 photocopied sheets)	Box 1	Folder 2
Flyer. AAGBL Cards. Sharon Roepke & Daniel Barber, ca. 1988. Also lists the publication "Diamond Gals", and is housed in the same folder with that publication.	Box 1	Folder 3

Programs

Title/Description	Instances	
Grand Rapids Chicks vs Ft. Wayne Daises.[1950?]	Box 2	Folder 1
1951	Box 2	Folder 1

1947 Abril 27 a' 4de Mayo. Gran Stadium de la Habana

Title/Description	Instances	
Fort Wayne vs Grand Rapids	Box 2	Folder 2
Muskegon vs Grand Rapids	Box 2	Folder 2
All American Girls Professional Baseball League, 1943-1954. Souvenir Program, Ft. Wayne, 1986 (2)	Box 2	Folder 3

Women in sports Leadership Conference. Feb. 7-8, 1983, Sheraton Lansing Hotel, Lansing, Michigan. + Folder, Empty. MHSAA. Women in Sport Leadership. 2006.025D

Biographical / Historical

Sponsored by the Michigan High School Athletic Assoc. Special Guests for the WISL Reception on Feb. 7 were members of the AAGBL.

Invitation. Reception for Earlene "Beans" Risinger, Hess, Oklahoma. at the Oklahoma Sports Museum, Guthrie, April 21, 2002. 2006.025D

AAGPBL, Players Assoc. Dinner invitation, Sept. 9, 2001, Grand Rapids Hilton. 2002.019B

Pre-Game Script. Colorado Rockies. Pre-Game Script, Sept. 10, 1979. "Beans" (Community). 2006.025D

The Springfield Sallies. [Greeting card with image, including Risinger, of the Springfield Sallies, n.d. Blank inside; historical data on the back. All American Girls Professional Baseball League #048. 2002.019

Folder only. Empty. A-A. GPBL. America's Classic League. All American Girls Professional Baseball League. Player's Association, Inc. 2006.025D

General

Bean's name written inside cover. Image of unidentified player on the back.

True Major Leaguers: the All American Girls Professional Baseball League : an exhibit from the AAGPBL Collection, The Northern Indiana Historical Society. Leighton Gallery, South Bend, In. Aug. 5, 1993-Jan. 16, 1994. 2006.025D

Leagues of Their Own : a Michigan "Summer of Sports" Exhibition, Van Andel Museum Center, Feb. 1-Sept. 1, 2003. Flyer. 2006.025

Biographical / Historical

Bean participated in the Aug. 9, 2003 event "Tales from the Dugout: the Women of the all-American Girls Professional Baseball League" listed in this program.

Earlene Risinger. Baseball Card. 2003.003b

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series III. Publications

Scope and Contents

Includes booklets, magazines articles and newspaper clippings related to the team, the league in general or other league players. These publications are both national and local in scope. While the local news clippings include articles contemporary to the active era of the league, most of the other publications are from the 1980 to the present, documenting the history of the league. For articles specific to Beans Risinger, see Series I.

Books

Title/Description	Instances	
Don't Die on Third / by Rosemary Stevenson, with W.C. Madden. Monticello, In. : Madden Enterprises, 2006.	Box 2	Folder 19

Biographical / Historical

Inscribed to Risinger by Stevenson, who played for the Grand Rapids Chicks in 1954.

Minor League Baseball Towns of Michigan, Adrian to Ypsilanti : the teams & the ballparks of the Wolverine State from the 1880s to the present / by Marc Okkonen. Thunderbay Press ; Grand Rapids : Dickinson Press, printers, 1997. Pg. 58 = Grand Rapids.	Box 2	Folder 15
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Booklets

Title/Description	Instances	
Diamond Gals : the story of the All American Girls Professional Baseball League / by Sharon L. Roepke. C. 1986 by AAGBL Cards, 2nd ed. 1988.	Box 1	Folder 3

Periodical & Web articles

Title/Description	Instances	
Life Magazine, June 4, 1945. v. 18, no, 23. Sports. Girls' Baseball : a feminine Midwest league opens its third professional season, pg. 63-66.	Box 3	

General

Includes an image of all of the players of the league for the year on pgs. 64-65. Lots of signed advertising art in this issues as well. No other GR association is apparent.

Women's Sports, Oct. 1982. pg. 48+ "Season in the Sun" / by David Young.	Box 2	Folder 8
People, Aug. 17, 1987. pg. 77+ "This Mother Could Hit" / by Helen St. Aubin as told to Todd gold.	Box 2	Folder 9

General

Article on former AAGBL player who's son is pro baseball star

Glamour, May 1989, pg. 99 "Women right now : Women who play hardball"	Box 2	Folder 10
Smithsonian v., 20, no. 4, July 1989. pg. 88+ "When the diamond was a girl's best friend" / by Jack Fincher. (2 copies)	Box 2	Folder 11
St. Joseph Valley Record / Northern Indiana Historical Society. v. 5, no. 1, Summer 1993. The South Bend Blue Sox.	Box 2	Folder 12
Museum (Public Museum of Grand Rapids) Summer 1994. The Girls of Summer. p. 8-11. 2006.025B	Box 2	Folder 13
"In a League of Her Own" / David Spaner. The Jerusalem Report. Nov. 14, 1996. pg. 31	Box 2	Folder 14
Jean Faut : South Bend's All-American All-Start Pitcher" / Jim Sargent. Apr. 4, 1998. From the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, Website.	Box 2	Folder 16

General

Original website no longer available: <http://www.dlcwest.com/~smudge/jeanfaut.html>

Periodical & Web articles

Title/Description	Instances	
Doris Sams / Jim Sargent. Webpages. All American Girls Professional Baseball League, 1943-1954. May 19, 1998 print.	Box 2	Folder 17
General		
Original website no longer available: http://www.dlcwest.com/~smudge/dorisams.html .		
Memories and Dreams, v. 25, no. 4, Fall 2003. pg. 9+ "All-American Girls Claim Their Place in History" / Sue Macy 2004.040 6/4/2004	Box 2	Folder 18

Clippings [oversized]

Title/Description	Instances	
Newspaper articles, 1945-1991. Photocopies.	Box 6	Folder 1
Guthrie News Leader, Guthrie, Oklahoma. Apr. 16, 2000. (3) Re Bean's visit there. See also invitation at 160-2-5	Box 2	Folder 20
Oklahoma Almanac, 2005/2006. Entry for Helen Earlene Risinger "State of Champions". pg. 13. Color laser photocopy. 2006.025	Box 1	Folder 1

Newspaper sections/clippings.

Title/Description	Instances
1. Remember the Grand Rapids Chicks? 1945-1954. "Those Were the Days" column by Gordon Harrington. In the Interpreter, July 29, 1971, pg. 7. Section w pg. 7-14 presented. 2006.025D.	Drawer FF.XV.B
2. Apr. 15, 1962. Grand Rapids Press. Former Chicks remember other years as baseball season opens / Eleanor Pettersch. [Dup.?] 2006.025D	Drawer FF.XV.B
3. July 9, 1982. Grand Rapids Press. "Calling all Chicks" / By Bob Becker. First-Ever Reunion Hatches Priceless Baseball Memories. 2006.025D.	Drawer FF.XV.B
4. June 17, 2001. "Chicks rule as first team in GR Sports Hall of Fame." Grand Rapids Press. Sports Section. + Laminated clipping of same. 2006.025D.	Drawer FF.XV.B
5. March 17, 2002. GR Press, Flair Section. Who's Who among area Women : suffragist fought for rights until the day she died / by Kathy Rush. 2006.025D.	Drawer FF.XV.B
General	
RE Emily Burton Ketcham. Also features Beans & Nancy Mulnix. See images of these two on page J2.	
6. July 28, 2005. Grand Rapids Press. Chicks gather at museum to honor former player / by Dean Holzwarth. 2006.025D.	Drawer FF.XV.B
General	
Includes the same image used in June 17, 2001 article above.	
7. Kalamazoo Gazette, Aug. 24, 2004. "TODAY" section. " A Reunion of the own : former pro women baseball players gather here to commemorate 50th anniversary" / by Martin Heinritz. 2006.025D.	Drawer FF.XV.B
8. The News Sentinel, Fort Wayne, In. Section F. June 26, 1992. Tear sheet. "They're back at the Plate" & "Despite the sports cliches, 'League' is a solid hit. "League of Their Own" era. 2006.025D.	Drawer FF.XV.B
General	
Includes a cameo picture of Beans, and 4 others + also front page of the newspaper provided, no other Chicks info.	
9. South Bend Tribune. Aug. 7, 1993. Metro Edition. "Baseball stars come out for a night of their own" / by Kathy Borlik. 2006.025D.	Drawer FF.XV.B

General

RE the AAGPBL. 50th Anniversary celebration. Front page & A2.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series IV. Series Scrapbooks

Scope and Contents

Three scrapbooks document the years 1950-1952.

Title/Description	Instances
Scrapbook 1, 2, 1950-1951.	Box 4
Scrapbook 3, 1952.	Box 5

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series V. Photographs.

Scope and Contents

Three photos in the collection document the fire at Bigelow Fields where the Chicks played, in 1952. Images of the coach and a couple of team photos are included.

Bigelow Field fire. 1952. Grand Rapids Press Library photos. (3)

Title/Description	Instances	
1. Woody, Ziegler, Inez Voyce Looking at charred remains	Box 6	Folder 3
2. Fire ablaze with 2 firemen	Box 6	Folder 3
3. Fire ablaze with little remaining.	Box 6	Folder 3

Night game at Bigelow Field. n.d.

Title/Description	Instances
Enlarged digital image, annotated with signatures of three players, including "Beans" Risinger's. 2006.025. Oversized.	Box 3

John Rawlings photos. [1952] (2)

Title/Description	Instances	
1. Robinson Studio photo. Rawlings standing with group seated on bleachers.	Box 6	Folder 4

2. Spielmacher photo. Rawlings in uniform, with crowd and unidentified man throwing out the ball.	Box 6	Folder 4
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Robinson Studio Photographs, n.d. 1999.032

Title/Description	Instances	
1. Twila Shively, Pat Keagle, Philomena Francisco.	Box 6	Folder 5
2. Teeney Petras in uniform	Box 6	Folder 5
3. Team photo with group seated on steps at unidentified location	Box 6	Folder 5
4. Betty Wicken	Box 6	Folder 5
5. Connie Wisniewsk	Box 6	Folder 5
6. YoYo Liellet	Box 6	Folder 5
7. Mid Earp	Box 6	Folder 5
8. Audry Haines	Box 6	Folder 5
9. Thelma Granbo	Box 6	Folder 5
10. Doris ?	Box 6	Folder 5
11. Elsio Wingrove	Box 6	Folder 5
12. Twila Shively	Box 6	Folder 5
13. Teeny Petras	Box 6	Folder 5
14. John Rawlings	Box 6	Folder 5
15. Ruth Lessing	Box 6	Folder 5
16. Pat Keagle	Box 6	Folder 5
17. Alma Zegeer	Box 6	Folder 5
18. Alice Haylett	Box 6	Folder 5
19. Vera Whitman	Box 6	Folder 5
20. Philomena Francisco	Box 6	Folder 5
Aug. 26, 2000. AAGBPL Milwaukee Reunion. Bird's eye view of players standing in a "V" shape, on the field. 2 color laser copies. 2001.054A	Box 6	Folder 6
Sculpture, Dedicated to the AAGPBL, May 15, 2006, at Cooperstown, N.Y. Baseball Hall of Fame. (1 color snapshot) May 26, 2006 "Frame 12".	Box 6	Folder 8

Unidentified B/W team group photo, perhaps of Grand Rapids Chicks. AAGPBL 2001.054B

Title/Description	Instances	
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Unidentified.	Box 6	Folder 7
Beans Risinger	Box 6	Folder 7
Jayne Bittner	Box 6	Folder 7
Pepper Paire	Box 6	Folder 7
Gabby Ziegler	Box 6	Folder 7
Mo Silvestri [possibly]	Box 6	Folder 7
Doris Satterfield	Box 6	Folder 7
Inez Voyce [possibly]	Box 6	Folder 7

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series VI. Posters.

Scope and Contents

Two posters are included, both from 1992, related to promotional activities, and/or from Risinger's work related to the "League of Their Own" movie.

Title/Description	Instances
Nov. 7, 1992. Mall promo poster, with image of Bean's as a GR Chick pitcher. 2004.040.	Drawer FF.XV.B
Collage Poster created by Mary Smitter, and given as a remembrance to her friend Beans Risinger, 1992. 2005.085.	Drawer FF.XV.B

General

Items document Bean's participation in events surrounding the movie "A League of Their Own". Includes a movie poster, and newspaper clippings showing the stars, including one with Beans standing next to Madonna.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series VII. Realia

Scope and Contents

A 1953 wall trophy is included in this collection. While the Archives does not collect Museum objects, small real objects are sometimes include in support of the other collection materials, and for possible exhibit purposes.

Title/Description	Instances
Wall trophy, 1953. 1990.030	Box 3

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series VIII. Moving Images

Title/Description	Instances		
Tape 135. Grand Rapids Sports Hall of Fame / Fox 17 WXMI 2006.025C	Collection 175	Box UT9	cassette 135

General

Item is housed with Coll. 175 videotapes.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)