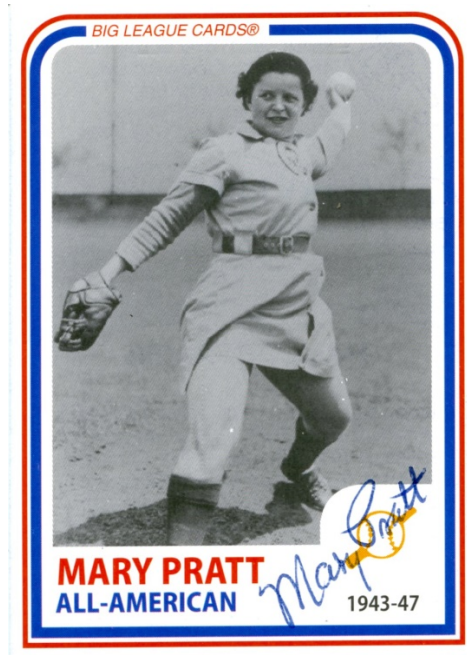


Bridgewater State University

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**Mary Pratt Collection,
1940-1959, 1982-2010, undated**
(Part of the Kathleen Bertrand and Linda Lundin,
Honoring Women in Sports Collection)
(MSS-049.01.09)

*Finding Aid Compiled by
Orson Kingsley, 2021*



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Mary Pratt Biographical Sketch

Mary Pratt was born in Bridgeport, CT in 1918. Her family relocated to Quincy, MA in 1932. During her high school years she competed in softball, basketball, lacrosse, volleyball, tennis, archery, field hockey, and sailing. She graduated from Sargent College at Boston University in 1940, majoring in physical education. She began her teaching career at this point. Years later upon reflecting on her youth in sports she wrote:

“My athletic competition through most of my growing up and teaching years was limited. I competed with and against boys. Competition at the high school and college levels for girls was limited to intramural and class competition. I did, however, have the opportunity to compete in a local church basketball league and with both the Boston Field Hockey and Lacrosse Associations.”

Pratt played competitive softball for the Boston Olympets during 1939-1940. She joined the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL) for its inaugural season in 1943, playing for the Rockford Peaches. Pratt, a lefty pitcher, would play in the league from 1943-1947. Due to league rules to create a more competitive atmosphere, Pratt was moved from the Rockford team to the Kenosha Rockets during the 1944 season. She would return to Rockford for her final two seasons, 1946-1947.

Pratt would spend 46 years as a physical education instructor with 42 of those years working for the Quincy, MA school district. For many years she was an active member of the Boston Board of Officials while officiating for multiple sports at the high school and college level as well as running officiating clinics throughout the Northeast. In 1959 she became the founder of the ASA fast pitch softball team, the Quincy Raiderettes, along with serving as the manager and as a player. The team's uniforms were handmade by Pratt and her mother and designed after the uniforms used by the AAGPBL. After she retired from teaching in 1986 she continued her life's work of promoting women in sport by being involved with numerous athletic organizations that supported female participation in athletics. The Massachusetts Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (MAHPERD) is a non-profit organization for professionals and students dedicated to promoting healthy and active lifestyles. Pratt was heavily involved in this organization, keeping many of the organization's records as the group's archivist and helping to establish the group's archival collection that is now kept at Bridgewater State. In 1987 she was a co-founder of New Agenda: Northeast, whose purpose is to provide and support the advancement of girls and women in sport. This includes annually inducting women of New England into a Hall of Fame. Under Pratt's guidance, which continues to this day, the organization annually recognizes the talents and achievements of Massachusetts high school girl athletes at the Statehouse in Boston. This collection is also housed at BSU.

A frequent speaker at events promoting women in sport, Pratt also was a prominent figure in keeping the history of the AAGPBL alive. Though the league ended in 1954, she was a regular at annual league meetings that began in 1982. In 1994 she was in the PBS documentary series, *Baseball*, directed by Ken Burns. Prior to this she was involved as a consultant for the 1992 movie, *A League of Their Own*, which depicted the original 1943 Rockford Peaches that Pratt

played for. She was elected to the AAGPBL Board of Directors in 1999, serving in this position until 2000. During this time she began the “Out and About” project with the purpose of preserving and increasing awareness of the league’s history. For this project she kept records and responses she received from former players, Associate members, and officials who accepted invitations to meet and speak with groups about their experiences associated with the AAGPBL. These records, along with annual reunion records can be found in her collection at BSU.

Mary Pratt’s dedicated purpose was to promote and advocate through sports for the advancement of women into leadership roles in society. She passed away on May 6, 2020 at the age of 101. She was the last living member of the original 1943 Rockford Peaches team of the AAGPBL.

Scope and Content Note

The Mary Pratt Collection is part of the *Kathleen Bertrand and Linda Lundin, Honoring Women in Sports Collection*. It includes original content by Pratt while she was a player in the All American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL) and original content from players and others associated with the league well after the league ended in 1954. The collection also contains some artifacts, including Pratt’s game used glove and cleats from her playing days in the AAGPBL. Beginning with the AAGPBL’s first player reunion in 1982, Pratt collected and preserved league related material, putting it into binders for future generations to have access to in her attempt to keep the memory of the league alive. Oversized material from series 1 and 2 are kept together in flat file storage.

Related collections include: the [Massachusetts Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance Records \(MAHPERD\)](#); the [New Agenda: Northeast Records](#); the many baseball and softball related collection in the *Kathleen Bertrand and Linda Lundin, Honoring Women in Sports Collection*, including the [Madeline "Maddy" English Collection](#), the [All-American Girls Professional Baseball League Collection](#), the [Joanne “Jo” Winter Collection](#), the [Margaret “Marge” Russo Collection](#), the [Helen Delores Nunamaker Collection](#), the Edith Dennison Bloomer Girl Collection, the [Bertha Levi Collection](#), and more.

Series Descriptions:

Series 1: Mary Pratt’s Softball and Baseball Career, 1940-1947, 1959, 2003

This series focuses on Mary Pratt’s playing days in softball and baseball, as well as drafts of her 2004 history of the AAGPBL write up. Archival documents and artifacts make up this series.

Series 2: AAGPBL Reunions, “Out and About” History Project, 1982-2010

Pratt was very aware of the AAGPBL’s place in history and this series is comprised of the material she collected and saved in her efforts to preserve and promote the league and its history well after the league ended in 1954. Beginning in 1982 the remaining players from the AAGPBL would have reunions. This series contains content that goes back to this first reunion and the many that followed. In 1999 Pratt began the “Out and About” project to reach out to living

players of the AAGPBL to get updates on what they were doing, how they had promoted the league's history and women participating in athletics, and more. Included in this is correspondence with players and others affiliated with the league, correspondence about event opportunities to promote the league, league newsletters, fan mail, etc.

Series 3: Miscellaneous Material, 1987-2010, undated

This small series contains mostly magazines containing write ups on the AAGPBL and recordings for television programs on the AAGPBL.

Mary Pratt Collection Box and Folder List

Series 1: Mary Pratt's Softball and Baseball Career, 1940-1947, 1959, 2003

Box 1

- Scrapbook 1: 1943 scrapbook representing Pratt's first year playing for the Rockford Peaches of the AAGPBL (league's first year). Scrapbook in box designed by Mary Pratt. Wooden cover on scrapbook with "A-AGSBL" emblem on front, "Rockford" carved on bottom, and signed by 17 players. Wooden cover handmade and hand carved by Pratt [check with Linda and Kathy about this]. All 48 pages (some of the pages are front and back, but are counted as one page here) removed from original wooden cover and each page inserted into plastic protective sleeve. Contents include news clippings, postcards, telegrams, traveling ephemera from hotels, game advertisements, original photographs (players identified in most and includes photos of players and teams from other teams outside of Rockford).

Box 2

- Scrapbook 2: 1944 scrapbook representing Pratt's second year in the AAGPBL playing for the Kenosha Comets. Scrapbook in box designed by Mary Pratt. Wooden cover handmade and hand carved by Pratt. Includes 33 pages of photos and 104 pages of news clippings and other miscellaneous items. Pages are double sided with each side counting as a page. Most players identified. Also includes postcards, 1944 league schedule, and random ephemera.

Box 3

- Mary Pratt's game used AAGPBL glove, c. 1943-1947

Box 4

- Mary Pratt's game used cleats from the AAGPBL and other leagues, used from approximately 1940-1990

Box 5

Folder

1. Reproduced program/scorecard of the Boston Garden Girls' Softball League game featuring the Boston Olympets, July 25, 1940

2. Reproduced copy of "The Olympiad," Vol. 3 No. 1. Includes information on the Boston Olympets, including a section on Mary Pratt, c. 1940
3. Reproduced copy of Mary Pratt's AAGPBL contract, 1946
4. Reproduced AAGPBL promotional program containing league information, c. 1947
5. Hand-written rough draft #1 of Pratt's 2004 AAGPBL history, "A Peach of a Game, 1943-54: On A Level Playing Field," c. 2003
6. Rough draft #2 of Pratt's 2004 AAGPBL history, "A Peach of a Game, 1943-54: On A Level Playing Field," c. 2003
7. Rough draft #3 of Pratt's 2004 AAGPBL history, "A Peach of a Game, 1943-54: On A Level Playing Field," c. 2003

Oversized Material:

- Three loose scrapbook pages that include news clippings on Mary Pratt as the player-manager of the Quincy Raiderettes, 1959
- Photograph of Mary Pratt's self-created wooden scrapbook cover for her "A-AGBBL" 1946 season (scrapbook not in the collection), original made in 1946

Series 2: AAGPBL Reunions, "Out and About" History Project, 1982-2010

Box 6

Folder

1. Loose scrapbook pages representing league history, including one original photograph of Marty McManus, 1992-1996, undated
 2. Photograph of Patricia Brown, Wilma Briggs, Maddy English, Ann McGuire, and Mary Pratt at the New England Sports Museum, Dec. 2, 1992
 3. Material collected by Pratt for "Out and About in the AAGPBL" from Canadian AAGPBL player Arleene Noga, 1999-2006
 4. Beyer Field re-dedication program, home stadium for the Rockford Peaches (includes a section written by Mary Pratt), June 5, 2010
- Book 1: Contains material on AAGPBL reunions beginning with the first league reunion in 1982 and broken down by year from 1982-1989. Includes AAGPBL newsletters, news clippings, reunion ephemera, correspondence, directories of living players, material on the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY, and material on league activities, 1982-1990
 - Book 2: Contains material on AAGPBL reunions, speaking engagements, correspondence and updates from league players, event programs, photographs, etc. 1992, 1995-2007
 - Book 3: Contains a handwritten table of contents at beginning documenting material from 1995; correspondence on Pratt's speaking engagements, invitations to events, news clippings, ephemera, correspondence with the AAGPBL Players Association (a number of these letters are photocopies), some material on AAGPBL Players Association membership and financial statistics, AAGPBL "Touching Bases" newsletters, etc., 1995, 2005
 - Book 4: Material from Boston FanFest All-Star Week in 1999, news clippings, correspondence from AAGPBL players, programs, ephemera, league history write ups,

correspondence to and from Pratt for speaking engagements and documentary material, material on AAGPBL Public Relations Committee and All American Girls Professional Baseball Players Association, Inc. (Pratt was voted to the League's Board of Directors in 1999), correspondence (including photocopied correspondence) from the "Out and About" history project, fan mail, correspondence from researchers, 1999

Oversized Material:

- Photograph collage on foam board of MLB All-Star FanFest with AAGPBL players: Boston in 1999, Atlanta in 2000, Seattle in 2001, and Milwaukee in 2002. Includes a photograph of Pratt and some other AAGPBL players with Hank Aaron and Phil Neikro in 2000, 1999-2001
- Photograph collage on foam board of AAGPBL reunions, 1986, 1993-2002
- Photograph of AAGPBL reunion at Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY, 2003

Series 3: Miscellaneous Material, 1987-2010, undated**Box 7****Folder**

1. Six magazines containing articles on the AAGPBL, 1987, 1993, 1995, 2002, 2010
2. Miscellaneous material, 1995, 2004, 2010
3. VHS – "When Dreams Come True," produced by Janis L. Taylor, undated
4. VHS – "When Diamonds were a Girls Best Friend," by Janis L. Taylor, undated
5. VHS – "Pierson to Person" – Mary Pratt, Women's Pro Baseball, undated