

A4 Monday, September 17, 2018 South Bend TRIBUNE
BACK IN TIME

**A LOOK BACK**

## BATTER UP

Women take a professional turn while men fight in WW II

When the United States entered World War II in 1941, the baseball industry faced a crisis as many players left to fight in the war. Philip Wrigley, chewing gum magnate and owner of the Chicago Cubs, began to look for alternatives to maintain public interest in baseball. Wrigley found his solution in women's baseball, screening existing softball players and holding tryouts all over the United States and Canada.

In 1943, the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League was formed with 40 players and four teams — the Racine (Wis.) Belles, Kenosha (Wis.) Comets, Rockford (Ill.) Peaches, and the local South Bend Blue Sox. In addition to intensive training, the league executives felt it was essential to protect the image of the players' beauty and deportment manuals and holding mandatory "charm schools."

Though some players felt the intense public scrutiny made the lessons important, others disagreed. Lavonne "Pepper" Paine Davis was one of those opposed to lessons in charm, saying "Some of us could use a little polish, but it was hard to walk in high heels with a book on your head when you had a charity horse ... after we'd been busting our butts for 10 hours on the field."

The popularity of the league was unquestionable, and it eventually expanded into 12 teams. But as the war continued, it became apparent that men's baseball would not disband, and Wrigley's interest began to fade.

He sold the league to advertising executive Arthur Meyerhoff in 1945, whose ad campaigns rocked attendance to unprecedented success in the post-war years.

One notable record was a 1946 Independence Day double-header at Playland Park in South Bend that saw 10,000 spectators. The South Bend Blue Sox was one of only two teams that played for the entire run of the league, featuring outstanding athletes like Betty "Socks" Jochum, Dotie Schroeder, Jean Faust and Dorothy Kautenbek. The All-American Girls Professional Baseball League folded in 1954, with over 600 women given the chance to play professional baseball.

### HEADLINES IN HISTORY

**What was making news in our area during this week in years past? The History Museum offers these newspaper excerpts to give you an idea.**

**Sept. 16, 1895:** "The Bremen boys have the distinction of being the first of the base ball aggregations in northern Indiana to down the Senators. They did it yesterday afternoon at Stadelbauer park in the presence of 1,500 people and their hand, up till play was then many admirers in the grand stand and along the bleachers. The Senators lost the game through careless base running."

— **The South Bend Tribune**

**Sept. 17, 1900:** "The Hebrew Orthodox association gave an affair Sunday evening which was the first of its kind in the history of the city. It was in honor of the purchasing of the ten commandments, including the Bible, which are entirely written on pure parchment and were sent here direct from Jerusalem. Upon the parchment's arrival in the city it was taken to Gross hall on South Chapin street, where it was greeted by music members of Ethel's orchestra and the presence of about 300 Hebrews."

— **The South Bend Daily Tribune**

**Sept. 18, 1913:** "An attractive tea room in the Robertson Bros. dry goods store was thrown open to the public to-day. The first lunch was served at noon and from the number of persons who enjoyed the tea room, indications were the innovation is to prove most popular. Several parties were held in the new department this afternoon."

— **The South Bend Tribune**

**Sept. 19, 1922:** "With 1,453 cards at noon the registration mark at Notre Dame is expected to reach 1,600 before Monday evening following the influx of students who delayed their arrival until to-day. The number is expected to increase steadily throughout the week until the expected 2,000 is approached."

— **The South Bend Tribune**

**Sept. 20, 1941:** "South Bend and the Laporte-Kingsbury, Ind., area are among 269 areas in the United States just designated by Donald M. Nelson, of Washington, defense priorities director, for defense preference for materials to be used in the construction of 300,000 homes to cost less than \$6,000 each."

— **The South Bend Tribune**

**Sept. 21, 1957:** "A tree shaped arrangement of green apples and white asters centered the speaker's table for the Sept. meeting of Schuyler Colfax chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution. Friday, Mrs. Roy L. Fries was in charge of table arrangements for the 1 p.m. luncheon in the YWCA Residence, 802 N. Lafayette Blvd., and used arrangements of greens with eggplants, lemons and green grapes on the other tables for a festive early autumn air."

— **The South Bend Tribune**

**Sept. 22, 1962:** "A new single-barrel carburetor developed by the Eclipse Machine Division of the Bendix Corp. is in production for installation on the Chrysler Corp.'s 1963 Plymouth six and Dodge Dart six with automatic transmission. Bendix officials announced today."

— **The South Bend Tribune**

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