

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Shirley Burkovich

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Sports Stories - Baseball Oral History project

Interview # SSB-V-L-2017-067

Shirley Burkovich, who played in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League from 1949 through 1951, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Sports Stories - Baseball* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Aug 1, 2017 Location: Midway Village Museum, Rockford, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital video

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Technical Support (videographer): David Phyfer, Stage Fright Productions

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript
being processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 2:19 / 2.32 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on November 14, 2017.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Shirley Burkovich, *Sports Stories - Baseball*, SSB-V-L-2017-067

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Shirley Burkovich was born on February 4th, 1933 in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, and grew up in Swissvale, a town just east of Pittsburg. Her father worked in the steel mills and was also an avid baseball fan, often taking Shirley and her brother to Pittsburg Pirates games, teaching Shirley the rudiments of the game, position by position. Shirley's passion for the game continued to grow when her older brother allowed her to shag balls for the neighborhood boys as they played pick-up games. She heightened her fielding skills by throwing a ball against their house – against the basement to simulating grounders, and against the upper story to simulate pop flies.

In 1949, while still in high school, her brother took her to a tryout in Pittsburg for the All-American Girls' Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL). She was one of a handful who were selected to attend a spring training session. While at spring training, she continued her schooling by mail, then spent her first season with the Muskegon Lassies, but played very little. The following year Shirley played with what was essentially a traveling farm team, playing with the Springfield Sallies one day, and the Chicago Colleens the next, moving from city to city across the east promoting the league, sharpening her baseball skills along the way. Shirley was a utility player, happy to get into the game in any position, both outfield and infield. For the 1951 season Shirley played with the Rockford Peaches, seeing limited action as a utility player. Following that season, she decided to leave the game that she loved for something that promised more long term potential, and accepted a job with Pacific Bell Telephone. She retired from Bell in 1983 when the industry was broken up. Shirley has been a strong supporter and promoter of the AAGPBL, active in its association, and had a bit role in the 1992 movie, *A League of Their Own*. She often makes public appearances promoting the AAGPBL and advocating for the creation of a new women's baseball league.

Subject Headings/Key Words: All American Girls Professional Baseball League; Rockford Peaches; Springfield Sallies; Chicago Colleens; Swissvale, Pennsylvania; Pittsburg Pirates; Pacific Bell Telephone; *A League of Their Own*; Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum; AAGPBL Player's Association;

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