

# Life With A Former Compton Amargon

By The Delirium Threemen  
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Authors Note:

In my story "Messages From The Heart", the first chapter dealt briefly with why Harriett had divorced Roy's father. She also remarried a man named Jim Finley who became Roy's stepfather.

# Life With A Former Compton Armagon

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The young mother walked briskly down the street as one of her arms was being pumped back and forth by the excited seven-year-old attached to it. Each had a baseball glove tucked under their free arm. Reaching the traffic light at the corner, she looked down at the baseball cap covering the head belonging to her son. She gave his hand a reassuring squeeze as the light turned green and they continued the trek to the neighborhood park.

Her son reminded her so much of her brother Wally, who perished during World War II. Royal Wallace Cabot was a junior grade Lieutenant aboard the USS Indianapolis when it was torpedoed by an I-58 Japanese submarine between Guam and Leyte Gulf. About 900 crewmen made it into the water when the cruiser first sank.

Harriett often wondered if Wally was one of the unfortunate ones who lingered for days in the ocean until succumbing to one of many things like exposure, salt-poisoning, dehydration or a shark attack. She recalled most of this information from the news accounts on Captain Charles McVay's court-martial. The only thing she knew for sure about her brother was that he wasn't one of the 316 men who survived.

"Mom... Mom, the light's green now," her thoughts interrupted by Roy as he tugged gently on her arm to get her attention.

She smiled down at the son she had named for her beloved brother while the two of them crossed the street to the other side. She wasn't sure who was more excited about going to the park. Her thoughts began to drift to more pleasant memories, such as the last time she had thrown a baseball.

"I bet I can guess who your favorite player is, Mom!" Roy asked excitedly.

"You may lose that bet, buckaroo."

"Is it The Babe, Lou Gehrig, or Joltin' Joe?"

"Nope, nope and nope. It happens to be a pitcher who struck out the *Sultan of Swat* and *The Iron Horse* on the same day."

"Really, he struck out both Ruth and Gehrig in the same day?"

Harriett let out a light laugh, "I never said it was a he. In fact, it was a SHE."

"*NO WAY!* A *girl* struck out both The Babe and Gehrig?" the young boy replied back in amazement.

"Saw it with my own two eyes, kiddo."

"I *NEVER* heard of a girl pitcher. What team was she on?" Roy asked skeptically.

"Well, her name was Jackie Gilbert and she played for Chattanooga Lookouts, minor leagues, Class double-A. She even helped teach me few things about pitching when I met her."

"If she struck out both Ruth and Gehrig, then how come she's not in the majors? There are no gal players in baseball," Roy asked, still somewhat stunned by learning a girl had struck out the two best hitters in baseball.

"How about I tell you about Jackie Gilbert and why women don't play in the major leagues once we're at the park," Harriett answered.

"Kay, Mom."

They quickly walked across the street and entered the park's gate. Harriett spotted a bench within eye sight of the baseball diamond. A small group of pre-teenage boys had a game going. Mother and son sat down on the bench and Harriett looked down at her son. He returned her gaze with a shy slight smile. Harriett beamed back at her son and began to tell him the story of Jackie Mitchell.

"We had moved to Tennessee shortly after the start of the Depression. Uncle Henry had a farm about 10 miles outside of Chattanooga with Aunt Bertie. We lived a few hours from them, and it was common for my mother to head over to their place on the weekends. Aunt Bertie was sick, and my mother would help her out whenever she could. I normally spent time playing with my cousins on the farm or helping them out with their chores."

Roy looked up patiently at his mother as she paused a moment before continuing.

"Uncle Henry had gotten tickets to an exhibition game between the Yankees and the Chattanooga Lookouts. A few days prior to the game, the owner of the Lookouts signed a female pitcher by the name of Jackie Mitchell. The newspapers in the Chattanooga area were all atwitter over the Lookouts new female pitcher."

"The crowd was anticipating the rare chance to see the Yankees play. Many of us were also wondering if Jackie would be pitching. Of course, there were reporters and a newsreel camera ready to film the game that day."

"Jackie was called up to the mound after the starting pitcher gave away a double and single that resulted in a score for the Yankees. It was Jackie's first time pitching and she was facing Babe Ruth. Jackie pitched left-handed and threw a fast ball that dropped down suddenly as it neared the plate. Her first pitch to Babe Ruth resulted in a ball being called. The Babe swung and missed the next two pitches. He didn't swing on third pitch, which stayed in the strike-zone. The ball was over the corner of the plate as it dropped, and the umpire called the third strike on Babe Ruth."

Harriett looked down at the amazed expression on her son's face. "Babe Ruth left the field in a huff. Lou Gehrig walked up to the plate for his turn at bat. He swung his bat at all three of pitches Jackie threw at him - and MISSED them all! Jackie had just struck out the two greatest hitters in baseball. The crowd went wild and it took several minutes for all the cheering to die down."

"So what happened next?" Roy asked.

"Once the crowd calmed down, the next Yankee to bat was Tony Larzari and he didn't swing at all and walked to first. After Larzari walked, they pulled her out of the game and went with the original pitcher, Clyde Barfoot. That was the only time she played during the entire game. Of course, the Yankees clobbered the Lookouts 14-4."

"So why didn't they let her play anymore?" Roy asked.

Harriett frowned, "I'm not really sure why. If I were to gander a guess, I would say they felt all the other Yanks were going to refuse to swing and try to walk like Larzari. A few days after that game was when the Baseball Commissioner voided Jackie's contract. He claimed that baseball was 'too strenuous' for women. At least, that was the way he put it."

Roy looked up at his mother in disbelief, "Really? Why would he do a mean thing like that?"

Harriett thought a moment before answering, "Well, honey, even Babe Ruth didn't like the idea of women playing professional baseball. He pretty much felt women weren't up to the game."

"That kinda stinks. I mean, how many people could strike out Babe Ruth along with Lou Gehrig," Roy muttered sourly.

"A lot of men felt the same way he did. In fact, some claimed that Jackie striking out Ruth and Gehrig was rigged. That they did the gentlemanly thing and let her strike them out."

"You were there, Mom—do you think Jackie really struck them out?"

Harriett smiled down at her son, "Of course Jackie really struck them out. Some people just refused to believe it."

"So what happened to Jackie after that? Did she give up baseball?"

"Well, Jackie traveled around pitching at exhibition games. She retired from baseball a few years later after she grew tired of being a sideshow act. She returned to Chattanooga to work for her father."

"Tell me about when you met Jackie," Roy inquired.

Harriett chuckled, "Before my family moved to California, I had a chance meeting with Jackie. My brother, cousins and I had a game going in the pasture at Uncle Henry's farm. I was pitching and Jackie Mitchell happened to be driving by. She pulled off to the side of the road to watch us play before climbing the fence. She asked to join in for a bit. We were all flabbergasted that the girl who struck out the two greatest hitters of the day had appeared at the farm. She must have spent an hour pitching balls to us. Afterwards, she gave me some tips on pitching. Showed us some arm stretches and stressed the importance of warming up before the game."

"Can you show me how to pitch like Jackie showed you?" Roy asked.

Harriett picked up her baseball glove, "Well, first we have to work on throwing and catching. How about we see how that goes. When you're ready we'll work on your pitching."

The two of them stood near the bench while Harriett went through some arm stretches with Roy. She handed Roy the ball and he ran to a spot about thirty feet from her. She smiled approvingly as he pointed his shoulders in her direction. He took a step forward as he threw the ball at her. She took a couple of steps forward to meet the ball.

"Thumb to the Thigh, Knuckles to the Sky, Mom," Roy yelled triumphantly back to her. He knew his throw was short on distance, but it stayed straight.

Harriett lobbed the ball back his way. "That's right, you remember the rule. Loosen up your wrist more when you throw. It looked a little stiff."

She hadn't taught him the four seam grip yet. She planned on doing that when she felt he was ready to learn to pitch. He threw another ball her way. She noted that he had managed to keep his elbow up. In time, she knew he would have a little more power behind his throw. Her main concern was on teaching him to use the proper techniques. She could hear him repeating the throwing mantra she had drilled into him over the next few throws, 'Down, Back and Up.'

"Okay, now it's time to work on some catching now," Harriett shouted over to her son as she threw a low ground ball his way.

Roy skirted to the side and held his gloved arm out from his side at a downward angle and missed catching the ball. He quickly ran after the ball as it came to a stop several yards away. He picked it up and tossed it back in his mother's direction. His seven-year-old arms didn't quite have the strength to throw the ball the entire distance, so it landed a few feet shy of where his mother was standing.

Harriett signaled for Roy to come over to her, "Okay, Buster Brown, what did you forget about catching grounders?"

"Try to center your body with the ball and use both hands when catching," Roy answered with his head hung low.

Harriett tilted his head upwards and gave her son a reassuring smile, "Hey sweetie, I only want to see the button on the top of your cap when you're catching the ground balls."

"I sorta forgot the button on the cap thing," Roy smiled shyly back at his mother.

"Okay kiddo, let's go over the catching rules. What is the "Belly Button" rule?" Harriett asked as she poked her son lightly in the stomach.

"Fingers Up, Fingers Down. Up if the ball is above the belly button and down if the ball is below the belly button," Roy answered with a grin.

"Two hands rule?"

"Follow the ball into the glove with your hand because, it will stop the ball from popping out of your glove and it's quicker to take the ball out of the glove when you throw it."

"Catch position rule?"

"Move towards the ball and meet it dead on."

"And...?" Harriett prompted him to finish.

"Two hand rule. Catch it in the center of the body with both hands," Roy answered enthusiastically.

Roy ran back to the open area of grass where he was earlier. Harriett tossed him a short hop. Roy moved towards the ball coming at him and caught with his hand immediately following the ball into his glove. He smiled as he threw the ball back to his mother. Harriett continued throwing several 'pop flies', 'line drives', and 'ground' balls his way. Roy managed to catch most of them. As the afternoon wore on she noticed his return throws were gradually getting a little less distance. She knew he was tiring and signaled for Roy to come over to her.

"Time to head on home. I'm getting kinda pooped out," Harriett said once Roy was at her side.

Roy smiled up at her in agreement. Harriett knelt down so she was eye-level with her son. She stared at him for a moment. The reddish-blond hair and the smattering of freckles running across the bridge of his nose spilling onto his cheeks reminded her so much of her brother. She looked up at the white puffy clouds in the sky as she thought of Wally. *Royal Wallace Cabot, I miss you so much.* Roy scurried off to the fountain while Harriett waited. She spotted the white tock of a dandelion nearby and plucked it out of the ground. She stared at its white head for a moment.

*He reminds me so much of you at times. He has your baby-blue eyes. I wish he could have met his namesake.* She blew at the white tock and watched as the seedlings drifted away from her. She felt a light warm breeze lift the hair at the back of her neck and she could almost hear Wally's voice as it toyed with a lock of hair around her ear. *"Thank goodness you named him Roy instead of Royal."* She could almost hear his light laughter, *How you hated the name Royal. Mom always said you insisted on going by your middle name before outgrowing your nappies.* She watch the seedlings drift further away in the light spring breeze. She was so absorbed in her thoughts that she didn't notice Roy had returned from the water fountain. *"You did the right thing, for him and yourself, never doubt that, Harri."*

"Mom, Mom, what did you just wish for?" Roy asked his young face filled with confused curiosity as he spotted the naked dandelion stem in her hand.

Harriett smiled, "I was just thinking of somebody and I sent them my thoughts."

"Didn't you tell me, you can make wishes by blowing the dandelion seeds into the air?"

"Yes I did, but you can also send your thoughts to someone by blowing on a dandelion as well."

"Who were you sending thoughts too?"

"I was just letting your Uncle Wally know I miss him," Harriett replied with a heavy sigh as she stood up.

"Mom, did Uncle Wally like baseball too?" Roy asked as he wondered his uncle.

Harriett smiled, "He loved baseball as much as I did. He loved to tease me about having a rubber arm."

"What does that mean?"

"It means I could pitch for a long time without my arm getting tired."

"Did you ever think about playing baseball like Jackie Mitchell?" Roy inquired as they walked through the park towards the entrance to the street.

"Honey, I actually did play on a team in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League called the Compton Amargons with Aunt Kazy during the war."

"Really? You and Aunt Kazy played professional baseball?" Roy looked up at his mother with his eyes as big as saucers.

"There were a few major league baseball big-wigs that thought a professional league with women players would maintain interest in baseball while the men fought in World War Two. I met Aunt Kazy during the final tryouts in Chicago. Only 280 girls were invited to those tryouts. We would run back and forth to each others' rooms at the Belmont Hotel during the final selection process for the teams to tell each other the latest on which girls didn't make the cut and who was still left. Finally, Kazy and I were offered contracts to play with the Compton Amargons. The following year we actually got to go Peru for spring training."

"What position did Aunt Kazy play?"

"She played right field," Harriet answered as they walked towards their apartment building.

"Did Uncle Wally ever get to see you play?"

Harriett smile as she put an arm around her son. "Uncle Wally was able to catch my first game before he had to head out to the war."

"You miss him a heck of a lot, don't you Mom?" Roy said with the sadness he felt for his mother's loss heavy in his young voice.

Harriett looked down at her son with a whimsical smile, "Yes, honey, I'll always miss Wally, but it helps sharing my memories of him with you."

They walked silent for a few minutes before Roy tugged at his mother's arm, "Can you tell me some of your baseball stories?"

"How about after supper I show you some of my baseball stuff."

"Deal, and don't forget the stories," Roy answered excitedly as they entered the courtyard of the apartment building.

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After supper, Harriett had Roy spell out the words from his latest chapter in his spelling book before they both headed off to her bedroom. Harriett had packed away a box of items that her friend 'Kazy' had brought for her during her last visit. Harriett dug around in her closet as Roy sat on her bed waiting patiently. Harriett emerged from the closet with the box and set it on the bed beside Roy. She opened the lid and pulled out a smaller box. Taking the lid off that box she held up the top part of a baseball uniform. It was short-sleeved with a front panel decorated with an emblem representing the Compton Amargons. The panel buttoned down the left side of the shirt.

She held the garment up in front of her. "Hmmm, I wonder if I this even remotely fits anymore?" she mused to herself.

Roy's eyes grew enormous when she held up the short and flashy skirt of the outfit with its accompanying belt. "Mom! You didn't really wear a skirt that short?"

"Your Uncle Wally said something like that when he watched my first game," Harriet laughed.

"We also wore matching knee-high socks with those skirts. I guess they thought showing a little leg would help bring people to the stadiums," Harriett said in order to lighten the mood as she went back to the closet and pulled out a case. "Here is the cosmetic case all the girls on the teams were given."

"Makeup? Why would they give you makeup for playing baseball?"

"Well honey, unlike the men's leagues, they had strict guidelines for us girls to follow. We were taught how to properly put on makeup and NEVER were we to appear in public without it on. We also had to go to charm school as part of our spring training too. When we weren't playing ball the league expected us to act and look like ladies at all times. We had rules we had to follow off the field. We couldn't wear slacks in public, our hair always had to be neat and tidy and not too short."

"What did makeup and charm school have to do with baseball?" a puzzled Roy asked.

"It was more the image Mr. Wrigley and the other investors in the league wanted. They wanted to make sure we were seen as proper ladies off the baseball field. We had chaperones and dates with a fellow had to be approved by them. The league had very strict standards of behavior for us to follow."

"Kinda like school, where we have to follow the rules, huh?"

"More or less," Harriett answered as she folded the uniform back up and put it away before pulling out her old athletic shoes and a baseball covered with signatures.

"Anybody famous sign that ball, Mom?" Roy asked as he bounced excitedly on the bed.

Harriett chuckled, "No dear, just the other team members. That was the last ball I pitched in my last season with the team."

"Did you win that year?"

"No we never even made it to the semi-finals," Harriett sighed as she passed the ball over to Roy, "See if you can find Aunt Kazy's signature on there."

After turning the ball around a few times in his hand Roy finally pointed to a spot. "Here it is," he answered and turned the ball over again, "Here's your signature, Mom."

Harriett pulled out another box and removed the lid. Assembled neatly were rows of baseball cards. She had organized the cards by year and team. She grabbed a group of cards from 1943 and sat down on the bed.

"At the start of the season we weren't allowed to mingle with the girls on the other teams, so during spring training many of us would pass our baseball cards amongst each other and sign them."

"Wow, you had baseball cards just like the guys," Roy said as he scanned through the stack Harriett gave him.

She pulled him closer to her and went through the cards with him. "There's Aunt Kazy's card," Harriett pointed to the card of the perky looking brunette player with the name Velma Kazmierczak. She had signed the card by the nickname her and the other girls had given her. After almost two hours of going through the baseball cards with Harriett telling Roy some stories about some of the games she played and some of the other players on the other teams she finally put the cards away.

"So Mom, did you get a nickname like Aunt Kazy," Roy inquired.

Harriett chuckled, "Because I could run fast they used to call me 'Hurricane Harriett.' Okay young man, time for you to get ready for bed." Roy looked a little disappointed as he slid off the bed. "I'll be in to check on you in ten minutes," she said as he headed to his own bedroom, she called as he left the room.

"Mom, do you think you could autograph my baseball glove for me?" Roy asked as he stood in the doorway.

Harriett gave her son a wide smile, "Okay, bring it here and I'll sign it while you get ready for bed."

Roy quickly returned with his glove and handed it to his mother before heading to his bedroom to change into his pajamas. Harriett searched through her bureau drawer before finding a felt tip pen. After she had signed the glove, she set it on the bed and began repacking her box of memorabilia. She heard Roy in the bathroom brushing his teeth as she placed the last box back into the closet. She entered her son's room just as he finished getting under the covers. She sat down on the side of his bed and brushed back the hair from his forehead.

"You know when you go to Aunt Kazy's for the summer she can work on your batting," Harriett smiled softly at her son.

Roy looked at her with hesitation clouding his eyes, "I still wish I could stay with here with you."

Harriett gave him a half-smile, "I know, but with me being at work all day I'd rather you stay there where I know you're safe. I'm not too comfortable leaving you here with Mrs. Snapps all day. There really aren't any other children here for you to play with either."

"I know...but I'd still rather be here with you," Roy answered slowly.

"You know, Aunt Kazy is really looking forward to having you over for the summer. She and Uncle Vern have all kinds of stuff planned for you," Harriett said in persuasion.

Roy gave her a partial smile, "I know, but I just wish you were coming."

"You know sweetie, I'll be up every single weekend. I'm going to miss you to pieces. You know, Aunt Kazy was pretty good at handling the bat. She scored the most home runs for our team when we played. Bet she'll love teaching you how to hit the ball."

She handed Roy his glove, "How about when you miss me you just look inside your glove."

Roy looked down at what his mother had written inside his glove. Roy smiled as he placed his glove on the dresser. He then wrapped his arms around his mother's neck as they exchanged good-night kisses. Once Roy was tucked in Harriett turned out the light and softly closed the door to his bedroom.

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### ***Jim Finley's Wish:***

Jim Finley finished locking his front door before heading down the front steps of his porch. He spotted the white head of a dandelion at the side of his walkway. He grumbled something about 'damn weeds' before bending down and plucking it from the ground. He stared at it for a moment remembering the days as a boy when he and his friends would make wishes before blowing on the dandelion puff-balls and scattering their seeds in the wind.

"I suppose it wouldn't hurt to give it a try," he muttered to himself.

*I WISH she'd stop saying 'No' every time I ask her out,* he thought as he took a deep breath and blew all the seeds from the dandelion leaving just the naked stem of the plant in his hand. *Humm, I'm sure I'll be pulling plenty of those weeds in a couple of weeks,* as he watched the seeds drift over his front lawn. He turned and continued up the walkway to his car.

Once inside his vehicle he started it up. He looked up at his reflection in the rear-view mirror and smoothed out his thick hair. He straightened his tie before putting the car in reverse and backing out of the driveway. The 11 o'clock deposit he made daily at the bank seemed eons away. No matter how long the line at her wicket was he always made sure it was the pretty blonde teller named Harriett that waited on him. She had caught his eye the first day she had begun working at the bank. He couldn't help but notice how gracefully she moved or how her makeup always looked perfect - just enough to enhance her features.



For the last three months, Jim would look into her pretty blue eyes and ask her out without any success. Each time she shyly replied 'No' and something about having 'plans' or 'other obligations' after work. Two weeks ago he had followed her home. He wasn't sure what possessed him to do something like that, but he had swung by the bank shortly before it closed and followed her to her apartment. He was about to leave when he saw her and a young boy about six or seven emerge from the building and head up to the corner store. He could hear the boy referring to her as 'Mom' as they walked up the street. Feeling embarrassed and slightly ashamed for spying on her, Jim pulled his car out onto the street to head off to his own empty house.

He pulled his car into his parking spot at work and headed inside wondering if today would finally be the day she would say 'yes' and accept at least a lunch date with him.

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***Two years later:***

Nine-year-old Roy glanced at the autograph inside of his baseball glove that covered his hand, *Always your number one fan, Hurricane Harriett AKA Mom*. He closed his glove and quickly ran out to the field with the other members of his team. Positioning himself in left field, he anxiously waited for the game to start. He spotted his mother and stepfather Jim in the bleachers alongside his Aunt Kizzy and Uncle Vern who had come down for the day just to watch his first game. He was initially disappointed that he had to leave the bat Aunt Kizzy signed for him at home, but having her and Uncle Vern coming down to see his first game made up for that.

He spotted the fuzzy-white head dandelion nearby and impulsively picked it. *Uncle Wally, I know Mom would be really happy if you let her know you were watching my first game. Do you think you can find a way to let her know you're here?* He quickly blew the head of the dandelion and watched the seeds resembling little parachutes float away on the light wind of summer .

"Hey Roy, quit goofing around! We got a game to win," Cuddy called out to him from second base. Roy gave him a sheepish grin before focusing his attention towards the batter.

"He looks so adorable in his uniform. Don't forget to send me a picture of him in it," Kizzy whispered to Harriett.

"He was so excited over his first game it took him forever to fall asleep last night," Harriett answered back.

Harriett felt something touch her shoulder and turned her head only to find Jim engrossed in a conversation with Kizzy's husband Vern. *He's certainly your son, Harri. Always be proud of him*, her brother Wally's voice seemed to whisper in her ear.

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**Dandelion Myths or Facts in this story are:**

**Amargón is a Spanish word used for dandelion. In Guatemala, the amargón variety of the dandelion is used as a salad green and blood strengthener, especially in cases of anemia.**

**The dandelion tock looks like a fine ball of soft white fluff. Blowing on the white head of a dandelion is one way to make a wish. It is also said that you can send a message to another person by visualizing your message as blow on the white head. There are also two other myths I'll mention in future stories in this series that involve blowing on a dandelion.**

**The dandelion is the symbol for persistence and a strong will which I believe describes Jackie Mitchell. The dandelion can also represent wishes coming true, cheerful love, and general happiness.**

**Authors Notes:**

**Joe Engel, the owner of the Chattanooga Lookouts signed up Jackie Mitchell (17 at the time) on March 18, 1931. Mitchell was the second woman to sign a minor-league contract. The first was Lizzie Arlington (who played one game) in 1898 as a pitcher for Reading Coal Heavers.**

April 2, 1931 was the day Jackie Mitchell struck out both Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig during an exhibition game between the Chattanooga Lookouts and the New York Yankees. Several days later Baseball Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis voided Jackie Mitchell's contract, claiming baseball was too strenuous for women.

After her contract was voided, Jackie traveled across the country pitching in exhibition games. After pretty much becoming nothing more than a sideshow act and along with the endless and degrading jokes, she retired from baseball at the age of 23 in 1937. She went to work for her father, an optometrist.

July 13, 1952 Major League Baseball Commissioner Ford Frick banned woman from playing professional baseball. The ban lasted until 1992 when Carey Schueler was drafted by the Chicago White Sox for the 1993 season. Note that the drafting of Schueler has been referred to as a publicity stunt and she never actually signed with the White Sox.

In 1982 Jackie Mitchell was invited to throw out the ceremonial first pitch for the Chattanooga Lookouts on their season opening day. In 1987, Mitchell died at the age of 73.

The All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (1943 – 1954) was founded by Philip K. Wrigley, Jackie Mitchell refused to come out of retirement and join the league. During spring training Helen Rubinstien's Beauty Salon was contracted by Wrigley and the players were required to attend charm school classes in the evening. There were also rules of conduct the girls had to follow such as wearing lipstick at all times. Each player received a beauty kit and instructions on how to use it. The Rules of Conduct for the league were very strict and there were penalties in place if they were violated.

California DID NOT have a team playing in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League. The Compton Amargons is a fictitious team I created for this story. The teams in the league over the years were from Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana and Minnesota. The idea at the time Wrigley proposed it too many of the Major League owners was not well received. The cities chosen to represent the league at its formation were Racine and Kenosha Wisconsin, Rockford, Illinois, and South Bend, Indiana because of their close proximity to Chicago. The following year the league expanded to include a few more teams.