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**Bertha Levi Collection,
c. 1935-1945**
(Part of The Kathy Bertrand and Linda Lundin,
Honoring Women in Sports Collection)
(MSS-049.01.06)

*Finding Aid Compiled by
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Bertha Levi Biographical Sketch

Bertha Levi played in the Amateur Softball Association (ASA). Levi was also known to participate in basketball, rowing, and track and field. The ASA was founded in 1933 and would later be called USA Softball (USAS). She played for J.J. Kreig's Alameda Girls team, based out of Alameda, California. The Alameda Girls team won the Amateur Softball Association championship in both 1938 and 1939. ASA championship games in this period amassed between 30,000 and 40,000 fans, which increased softball's recognition as a legitimate, competitive sport. With this double victory, the Alameda women became the first team west of the Mississippi to win the championship two years in a row. Additionally, the Alameda Girls team won more than 100 games in a row – some against professional men's teams. The Alameda Girls team was considered "one of the best feminine outfits ever to be assembled in California."

Levi's teammates included Olympic javelin thrower Gloria Russell Hillenbrand, and Wilda "Willie" Mae Turner, who later played for the Parichy Bloomer Girls alongside Helen Nunamaker and won the National Girls Baseball League (NGBL) championship in 1947. Because the ASA was founded before other professional women's sports teams, it was not uncommon for players who ended up in other professional leagues (AAGPBL and NGBL) to have started out in the ASA.

In 2016, ASA/USA Softball (its joint name) was rebranded to USA Softball. It has since become the National Governing Body of Softball, cementing its legacy as the founders of the softball we know today. With its universal rules, uniforms, and a Hall of Fame of its own, the ASA is to credit for one of the most popular sports of the twenty-first century. It's also to credit for the first and only U.S. Olympic softball team, which participated in the 1996 Games.

Bertha Levi**Scope and Content Note**

The Bertha Levi collection is part of the larger *Kathleen Bertrand and Linda Lundin, Honoring Women in Sports Collection*. The collection contains two boxes containing a photographic album created by Levi, photographs, one postcard, and a softball players patch.

The primary strength of this collection is its novelty given that there are almost no materials on Levi's career published online. Additionally, the photograph album in Box 1 was compiled by Levi, allowing researchers a primary visual record of her circle of friends, various travels, and, perhaps most importantly, how Levi saw the world around her.

Related collections include: The many sub-collections within the *Kathleen Bertrand and Linda Lundin, Honoring Women in Sports Collection*.

Bertha Levi Collection**Box and Folder List****Box 1****Folder**

1. Photograph Album of Bertha Levi, 1935-1940
2. Oversize photograph, "Champions of the World" softball, 1938-1939

Box 2**Folder**

1. Photographs (5) of Bertha Levi playing softball, c. 1940
2. Postcard and photo, "Worlds Amateur Softball Champions of the amateur Softball Association, J.J. Krieg Co.," 1938
3. Baseball/track photographs (9), possibly of the J.J. Krieg team, 1940
4. Assorted team photographs (12) involving Bertha Levi, c. 1940
5. Patch—Canadian National Exhibition International Girls Softball, 1940
6. Chene Trombly Girls Softball Team (individual photos of each team member (10), Detroit, MI, c. 1945