

The following excerpt is from Chapter 2 of *Research Notes for Women at Play, Volume 2*, by Barbara Gregorich.

Alta Weiss

When I first read about Alta Weiss, in Debra Shattuck's 1988 Masters thesis (Brown University), I was struck with amazement at something purely personal: that Alta's father bought her a baseball team so she could pitch. This was personal to me because, when writing She's on First, my first book, which tells the fictional story of a young woman who is hired to play on the also-fictional Chicago Eagles, I had to come up with a reason, a motivation, for some baseball owner to sign a woman to the team. As I brainstormed, the reason I came up with was that the owner was the player's father. She's on First was published in 1986. So imagine my surprise, and delight, when a few years later I learned about Alta Weiss — it was as if history were affirming my decision on plot and motivation.

Possibly because Alta was the daughter of a medical doctor who was prominent in his small community of Ragersville, Ohio, her story was much less difficult to research than many others. Much of the information I used to write the Alta Weiss chapter of Women at Play: The Story of Women in Baseball came from Ragersville: The Sesquicentennial Story of a Community, written and compiled by the Ragersville Sesquicentennial History Committee and printed by Berlin Printing in Berlin, Ohio, in 1980. The pamphlet was procured for me by fellow SABR member Fred Schuld, who drove from Cleveland to Ragersville to research Alta Weiss.

In addition to the Ragersville history document, I interviewed Ray Hisrich, whose father, Earl Hisrich, was executor of Alta's estate.

Another source of information was an article or pamphlet by David Wright, a great-great grandson of Conrad Rager, the founder of Ragersville.

Yet another source of information was a publication of the Tuscarawas County Historical Society entitled The Only Game in Town: A History of Baseball in Tuscarawas County, Ohio,

1867-1955, by C. Edward DeGraw. The author also writes about another Tuscarawas County woman who played baseball: Lois Youngen, who played for the South Bend Blue Sox of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League.

Alta Weiss was born on February 9, 1890, in Ragersville, Ohio, the second of three daughters of Dr. George Weiss. She showed athletic ability at a very early age and was encouraged by her father to develop all her talents. As President of the Board of Education, Dr. Weiss had a two-year high school established in Ragersville in 1905 so that Alta could play with a high school team. He built a private gym with a variety of body building equipment for her. He founded the Weiss Ball Park in Ragersville so the team could play. George Weiss himself managed the team from 1907 until 1914.

In 1907, the Weiss family took a vacation to the nearby lake resort town of Vermilion, Ohio. There Alta pitched against the town team, defeating them. The rest, as they say, is history: Alta pitched eight games for the Vermilion team that year, and her fame spread rapidly.

1907

Alta's semipro pitching debut was September 2, 1907 in Vermilion. More than 1,200 fans showed up. She pitched five innings, giving up four hits and one run.

Her second appearance was September 8, by which point the papers were already calling her the "Girl Wonder."

*The article below was a recent addition to my files. Accompanying the article is a photo of Alta Weiss wearing what appears to be a scoop-neck baseball jersey with the word **VERMILION** in capital letters across her chest. She may also be wearing a skirt: it's impossible to tell because the photo is from the hips upward. Alta is wearing a baseball cap. She has a glove on her left hand and has her right arm partly raised, her fist clenched. The headlines in the piece below appear above Alta's photo. Below her photo are the words: **Miss Alta Weiss and Arm That Pitches Opponents to Defeat.***

The Logansport Reporter, Logansport, Ohio, October 30, 1907

**Famous Girl Pitcher Was
Born to Play Baseball
SHE SAYS SHE IS LESS AFRAID TO PITCH A BASE BALL
GAME WITH THOUSANDS WATCHING EVERY MOVE THAN
SHE IS TO TALK WITH STRANGERS**

**By Jessie Partion
Special to the Reporter**

Miss Alta Weiss, girl pitcher and the only real feminine star in the base ball world, is a believer in subtle muscle.

“You don’t have to be ‘knotty’ to be strong,” said the little twirler. “Muscle should not obtrude itself until needed.”

As she spoke, Miss Weiss, who is only seventeen, and much resembles the average schoolgirl in her love of chocolate creams, flexed her right arm till fine, steel-like tendons could just be seen under the satin skin.

That famous put-her-across-the-plate-every-time right arm, differs little from the arm of any other schoolgirl on the surface.

There are no ugly bumps or Rocky Mountain ranges to spoil the symmetry of the Alta Weiss arm. Slender and round at the wrist swells into fuller beauty in the forearm and measures no more than the average at the biceps.

But touch that shapely member and you understand why Miss Weiss, a slight, slender schoolgirl, can pitch a game and come out fresh and smiling at the end.

“I was born to play ball,” said Miss Weiss. “I have loved it since I was big enough to hold a ball in my fingers. Throwing [unreadable word], and sending a ball swiftly across the plate is as much a fine art to me as dabbling in paints or modeling sticky clay. I get as much enjoyment out of a game well played as a musician does out of a successful concert.”

There is something wholesome and vigorous about Alta Weiss that marks her as an outdoor girl. She speaks in a crisp, vigorous tone, utterly unlike the usual girlish treble — every movement is quick and sure and eloquent with life.

“I’m a country girl, you know,” she continued, “and my athletic training began when I had to take care of the horses and help with the chores. Of course, since my parents decided to let me pitch, I have taken up gymnasium work and can notice the improvement.”

“I’m father’s boy,” she laughed. “We are three girls at home, one older and one younger than myself, and I know my father would have liked a son. I’m trying to make it up to him.”

“People often ask me if I’m not frightened when I go out on the diamond to pitch with thousands staring from the grand stand and bleachers. Well, I’m not. I feel less timidity than on the street, or meeting and talking to strangers.”

1908

I came across this article after the publication of my book.

The Evening Independent, Massillon, Ohio, March 27, 1908

Team With the Famous Girl Pitcher Wants Game With the Locals in Several Weeks

Miss Alta Weiss and her team of Weiss All-Stars, of Cleveland, will probably be seen in this city in several weeks. Miss Weiss’ manager asked Manager Hollender for a game Sunday, April 26, to be played in this city. The Addison Giants, the team of musical players, had promised to play here on that date, but no word has been heard from the Giants’ management and should Manager Hollender not hear from them definitely this week, the Weiss All-Stars, of Cleveland, will be signed. Miss Alta Weiss, it will be remembered, is the famous girl pitcher, who won fame all over the state in 1907 by her work on the slab. The team is being promoted by her father and is said to be a strong one.

Likewise, I came across this article only years after the publication of Women at Play. Although it seems odd to call Ohio “the West,” the headline below is correct.

The Sporting Life, April 11, 1908

GIRL PITCHER

The Noted Female Twirler of the West to be Sent En Tour with a Regular Team This Season

Cleveland, Ohio, April 6 — Miss Alta Weiss, the phenomenal girl pitcher, will again be in the limelight the coming season and will tour the country with a fast team to be known as the “Famous Weiss All Stars” of Cleveland. Miss Weiss will not be identified in any manner with the Vermilion Independents this season. Dr. George Weiss, the girl pitcher’s father, is the owner and financial backer of the team, while the management and running affairs of the team will be in the hands of C.A. Heidloff, of Cleveland, formerly manager of the Vermilion Independents. It is

THE INTENTION

of the management to arrange for possibly four or five games at league park [**Note:** Today we would capitalize both League and Park, but apparently that wasn’t the style in 1908.], Cleveland, all the remaining games to be played on the road. Miss Weiss was hailed as one of the greatest girl pitchers in the country last season and it is expected that she will cause a greater sensation this year. She is also confident of setting a new world’s record for long-distance throwing for women during the coming season. The present

WORLD’S RECORD

is held by Miss Margery Bell, of Chicago, who, on May 26, 1906, threw a regulation ball 204 feet, 4 inches. The throw was measured and attested by the famous coach, Alonzo Stagg. In a recent trial throw Miss Weiss beat the record by 30 feet and on days during the coming season in which the girl pitcher covers first base she will demonstrate to the fans that she can beat the world’s record and set a new mark before the season closes. She will issue

A STANDING CHALLENGE

to any woman to compete with her in a long-distance throwing contest which will take place at each game that she covers the keystone sack, and the woman defeating her will be awarded a large purse. The team

will be placed on a salary basis and all aspirants for any of the above mentioned positions [no positions were mentioned] are urged to communicate with Heidloff as soon as possible. . . .

In my files is this article, which somebody sent me in the late 1980s. There's no year written on the photocopy, but my best guess is that the story belongs to 1908.

The Messenger-Graphic, Vermilion, Ohio, May 8, probably 1908

This article says that Alta:

fields well, handling bunts with ease and gets the ball away fast and to the proper place when she gets hold of it.

At bat she is not so much. Usually she pushes the bat toward the ball, ungracefully and without force, but her father, who travels with her, has been instructing her in the art of meeting the ball properly, and this spring she claims to have mastered the art of standing up to the plate and whaling away with enough strength to make base hits occasionally.

This summer the girl pitcher will travel with her team, the Weiss All Stars, a fast semi-professional outfit which is open for games with the best teams in the country.

The following article, written by a woman reporter whose last name was Wooley, was sent to me after the publication of Women at Play. I reproduce only part of the article. Notice that the reporter engages in a kind of self-deprecatory humor.

Collinwood won the game against the Weiss All-Stars, 4-3. Based on a previous announcement in The Press, I believe the game against Collinwood was played in League Park, home of the Cleveland major league team, the Naps [who later adopted the nickname Indians].

The Cleveland Press, Cleveland, Ohio, May 21, 1908

**FAITHFUL TO HER SEX, MISS
WOOLEY ROOTS FOR ALTA WEISS
Thinks She Has Curves That Would Make Girl Pitcher
Look Like a Novice and Puzzle a Cross-
Eyed Boy to Follow**

. . . . Alta made her appearance amid applause from the entire house. The audience was composed mainly of men. A few Merry Widow bonnets graced the function. . . .

Alta's costume consisted of some sort of brown stuff and a white cap. She wore bloomers. Last year it was a skirt, I was told. The bloomers were voluminous. Her sleeves were rolled up in businesslike fashion. And she spit on her hands exactly like a man before she undertook to send in the ball. Meanwhile, she smiled. The umpire smiled. All the ballplayers smiled. And the audience smiled out loud.

It soon developed that Alta's long suit was "striking out" men. First thing I knew she had "struck out" a man. This happened every inning during her pitching. The men about me considered this extraordinarily good work. From a feminine viewpoint, however, it is nothing wonderful. Any reasonably good-looking girl can strike out a man when she feels like it. Alta is no exception. . . .

Well, there was nothing doing after that until the seventh inning. Then the All-Stars made three runs and I never knew before what an insane animal the average human being can be, nor how many different kinds of noises it can make. It was fearful. And I'm hoarse yet. . . .

Then Alta came to bat again and the audience cautioned the husky pitcher to be careful. He wasn't as careful as he should be. One ball grazed the girl's face and one man in that gathering rose and called him a brute. It spoke well for the chivalry of mankind.

Years after the publication of Women at Play, I added the article below to my files.

The Plain Dealer, Cleveland, Ohio, June 1, 1908

**WEISS ALL STARS
LOSE TO SHELBY
Miss Weiss Is Replaced by
Batter and Garvey
Is Hit**

Special to the Plain Dealer, Shelby, Ohio, May 31 — Weiss All-Stars drew the short end of a 6 to 5 score here today. Miss Weiss pitched four innings and allowed two runs and five hits. The visitors had two men on bases and desiring to score them Gift was sent to bat in the girl wonder's place. This retired her. The batting on both sides was a feature of the game. Both pitchers had fine support.

Shelby had the visitors beaten up to the eighth inning 4 to 1. Here they had a rally and secured four runs, making it 5 to 4. In the last half of the ninth Shelby took a spurt. Schiffer started with a single. Kelley followed with a two-bagger. Brit Lefland secured a single and scored two men, winding the game up to 6 to 5 in favor of the locals.

Although I've had the following article in my files since 1988, I wasn't able to use the information in my book. The piece is accompanied by a large photo of 14-year-old Carita Masteller, who is wearing a short-brimmed baseball cap. On her right hand is a baseball glove. It looks as if she's wearing a white shirt with a checked jumper or dress over it. I never did learn whether Carita and Alta faced off in a game.

The remark about Alta's batting average must be hyperbole.

The Cleveland Press, Cleveland, Ohio, June 22, 1908

**CARITA IS STAR OF
THE GIRL PITCHERS**

Alta Weiss isn't the only girl pitcher in the world.

Cleveland has one — Carita Masteller, 6105 Wakefield av.

Carita is a school girl, only 14, not so old and so big as Miss Weiss, but she is a ball player from the ground up and is willing to pitch against Miss Weiss if a game can be arranged.

“I should like to pitch in a game against her,” she says. “Give me a team as good as hers and I think I can keep her team busy”

Ball players who have seen Carita play say she has as much speed as Miss Weiss and just as good curves. She handles herself like a player on the field, being able to field, bat, and run bases. Miss Weiss fields her position poorly and has a batting average of .001.

Carita has been playing ball eight or nine years.

This article and the one following it are part of my post-publication research.

The Evening Independent, Massillon, Ohio, July 25, 1908

WHEN ALTA COMES

Just the abstract idea that there is one girl in the state who can really throw a ball where she is looking and not endanger the lives of everybody in the vicinity, means a great deal to the Massillon base ball fans who agree that if this were all Miss Alta Weiss, of Vermilion, could do, she would be a wonder. As it is Alta can not only deliver the goods to the proper spot but she has a few bewildering curves, shoots and drops that will make the Ehrets keep their lookers open Sunday afternoon.

The Weiss All-Stars, with the girl pitcher, will arrive in the city some time Sunday morning from Alliance, where the team is playing this afternoon. This will be undoubtedly the only chance this season that Massillon fans will have to see the girl pitcher, who has been the talk of the state for two seasons, in action. When the two teams come on the field at 2:30 o'clock Sunday afternoon, they will look about as follows:

Ehrets		Weiss All Stars
Smith	c	Roth
Masters	p	Miss Alta Weiss
Morgan	ss	Sonny
Schertzer	1b	Griff
Limbach	2b	Huffman
Bullock	3b	Lehman
F. Miller	lf	Weldman
Rhodes	cf	Langhanan
Huwig	rf	Fisher

J. Miller, Di Jones, Wagner, Buff and George Schnierle will be on the bench for the Ehrets. Bob Featheringham will umpire.

The Evening Independent, Massillon, Ohio, July 27, 1908

EHRETS SHUT

OUT BY A GIRL

Locals Gallantly Succumbed

Before Miss Alta Weiss

SHE WAS GIVEN AN OVATION

After Pitching Good Ball for

Four Innings, She Went to First

Base —Nearly Three Thousand

People at the Game

When lovely woman stoops to conquer, she usually does the job with neatness and dispatch. Miss Alta Weiss, of Vermilion, brought the rest of her family and some more ball players to town Sunday and proceeded to give the Ehrets a few pointers. Manager's [sic] Wagner's sturdy athletes just couldn't resist a woman and they allowed Alta to take them into camp by the convincing score of 5 to 0. And strangely enough, none of the Ehret supporters were at all disgruntled because Alta won out for they voted her a good fellow and a real player. . . .

Miss Weiss, despite the fame that has preceded her all over the state, is a most modest and unassuming young lady who seems to regard ball playing as a rather serious business. She was dressed as nearly as possible, exactly like the rest of the players on the team. On her brown locks was perched a ball cap and she wore a loose flannel blouse and a skirt of the same material which came just below her knees. Heavy ball shoes completed the novel uniform. Like a true sportswoman she was not inclined to play to the grandstand. . . .

For four innings, the girl athlete pluckily stayed in the box and then retired in favor of Sunny, the All-Star shortstop. She certainly delivered the goods and her control was superb. She had speed that surprised all of the Ehrets and with her drops, she made every one that did hit the ball, lift it into the air where it was easy picking for the All-Star fielders. In the fourth inning, she fanned Wilson Bullock and by the expression on his face when he retired from the plate, one would have thought he had been caught stealing sheep. In

the four innings that she pitched, she gave four hits, two of them, a single and a double being made by Schertzer.

When Alta went to first base she proved that she was as adept at receiving as well as delivering the ball for out of nine chances she hadn't a single error. While pitching she watched the bases carefully and caught one of the Ehret's napping at first base, for which the thousands of spectators gave her another hearty cheer. . . .

Had I discovered the two following articles while researching Women at Play (rather than later), I might have gone on, after further research, to write a magazine article about the rivalry between Emma Grable and Alta Weiss, much as I wrote one about the rivalry between Jackie Mitchell and the New York Bloomer Girls. [Note: In a followup article, Emma Grable becomes Erma Gribble.]

The Evening Independent, Massillon, Ohio, August 11, 1908

MISS GRABLE

EXPECTED SUNDAY

Ehrets to Pitch Girl Phenom

Against Canton Nationals

WEISS ALL-STARS COMING BACK

Miss Weiss and Miss Grable Will

Probably Face Each Other at

Massillon Park, Sunday,

August 30

Miss Emma Grable, the girl pitching wonder from Tuscarawas county, will undoubtedly be in the box for the Ehrets next Sunday afternoon against the Canton Nationals. Manager Wagner of the Ehrets, wrote to her this morning to make final terms and she is expected to arrive here next Sunday morning. Miss Grable has been keeping in good pitching trim lately and will be in good condition to go into the box against the Nationals in the afternoon. This is the same team that won an eleven-inning game from the Steel Plants last Sunday and a ten-inning game from the state hospital team last Friday.

Manager Wagner is planning to put Miss Grable on the slab for about half of the game and play her the rest of the time at first base. She is said to be much better at first base than Miss Weiss, of the Weiss All-Stars, recently seen here against the Ehrets. All who have seen her pitch say she is a veritable

wonder and in control surpasses even Miss Weiss. In fact, base ball authorities who have seen each of them play, say that Miss Grable is easily as great a phenomenon as Miss Weiss in any department of the game.

She will at once become a regular member of the Ehret pitching staff and will be seen in practically every regular game. Manager Wagner was undecided this morning as to whether or not he will enter her in the third game for the city championship against the Steel Plants.

Negotiations are under way with Manager Charles Heidloff, of the Weiss All-Stars, for a return date here. Manager Wagner has practically scheduled Miss Weiss and her team for another game here Sunday, August 30. The negotiations will be closed in a day or so. When Miss Weiss comes, Miss Grable will be pitted against her and will stay with the game as long as she does.

As it is certain that thousands of fans will turn out to see these two girls battle for the supremacy, Manager Wagner has decided to hold this game at the Massillon park and a small admission fee will be charged. Miss Weiss certainly produced the goods in her first game here, and all who saw her in action in the first game against the Ehrets will want to see her work again, this time against one of her own sex. . . .

The Evening Independent, Massillon, Ohio, August 26, 1908

An article entitled "Trio of Girls to Pitch Sunday" states that Miss Erma Gribble of Midvale pitched against Miss Alta Weiss the previous Sunday "and gave only one hit in four innings, but lost the game to Miss Weiss by the score of 6 to 2."

The Cleveland Leader, Cleveland, Ohio, September 2, 1908

**ALL-STARS CARRY OFF
HONORS WITH ASHLAND**

Ashland, Ohio, September 1 — (Special) — The Pumpmakers were shut out by the Weiss All-Stars here today, 2 to 0, in a well-played game. The locals secured one scratch hit off Miss Weiss during the three innings she pitched.

She fanned two batsmen and accepted five chances at first base during the remainder of the game. The visitors bunched their few hits, getting two runs.

The Evening Independent, Massillon, Ohio, September 23, 1908

EARNS UNIVERSITY COURSE

Alta Weiss Enrolls in Wooster

Preparatory School

Wooster, Ohio, September 23, 1908 — Miss Alta Weiss, girl base ball pitcher, who by her ball playing has earned money to complete her education, was in Wooster with her father, Dr. George Weiss, today and registered as a member of the junior class of Wooster University preparatory department.

Because of her athletic ability, Miss Weiss is expected to become a star on the girls' basket ball team this winter, while, if she is permitted to play, she may pitch for the college nine next spring.

A reception in her honor already is being planned for a date in the next two weeks.

1909

The Evening Independent, Massillon, Ohio, April 26, 1909

Miss Alta Weiss Returns to Diamond

ENTER ALTA WEISS

Miss Alta Weiss will again be the star attraction with the Weiss All Star base ball team this season. Miss Weiss, the clever woman pitcher, now attending Wooster University, will join the team about June 6 as soon as her school is out.

1910

I discovered the delightful article below in 2011.

The Evening Independent, Massillon, Ohio, September 3, 1910

ALTA HITS OUT**A HOME RUN**

Miss Weiss, of Ragersville,

Stars for Massillon

THE GAME WAS LOST ON ERRORS

Miss Weiss Pitches Good Game

for Massillon Doctors, but

Receives Poor Support — Band

Furnished Music — Miss Meise

of the Hospital, Also Played

The home run made by Miss Alta Weiss, of Ragersville, was the sensation of the game played between the Massillon and the Canton doctors on the state hospital grounds Friday afternoon. The game was lost on errors by Massillon, the score being 16 to 12. Miss Weiss pitched a splendid game.

Canton scored two runs in the first, second and fourth innings. Massillon made its first score in the fifth inning, and scored in every inning from then on. Canton brought in its scores in lumps.

At 2:30 a large crowd had gathered at the hospital grounds. The bleachers were filled to overflowing with patients and others who were more or less patient, but all were waiting for the game to begin. Miss Weiss was out in uniform, loosening her arm preparatory to striking out all the best ball doctors that Canton ever saw. . . .

The first man at the bat hit some thing that was a sort of cross between a bunt and a foul ball. It fell fair, however, and he would have had a chance at firts [sic] had he not kicked the ball. Alta did not take a fancy to the second man up, for some reason or other, and allowed him to feel the momentum of the ball somewhere between his shoulder blade and hip. He got his base. The next two men got their bases on balls, and the occupants of the grandstand were beginning to think that every one was going to walk, when Alta got on her nerve and fanned two in succession. The two runs made in this inning were scored on errors. . . .

. . . In the eighth inning Alta came to the bat with two down. She decided that it was time for her to do something toward winning her own game. It is true, she had brought in a score in the seventh, but she wasn't satisfied. She watched her chance, and when she saw a nice one coming straight toward the plate, reached out and met it half way. When it stopped going to was out somewhere in the stubble field. [Note: The previous garbled sentence is from the original article.] Flickinger, the man who called himself the human toothpick, put on his glasses, focused his microscope, and began a rigid inspection of the ground in the neighborhood where the ball was last seen. When he had at last recovered the pill (please notice that this is a doctor's term), Alta had finished her trip around the diamond and was receiving the congratulations of the multitude.

In the last inning Miss Meise, of the hospital staff, who had been playing at first, relieved Miss Weiss, who then went to first base. Canton's half of the ninth was short lived, Miss Weiss making three consecutive outs at first with two assists.

Miss Weiss undoubtedly pitched a splendid game, and had she received anything like support from the Massillon aggregation the local doctors would have won by a large score. As it was, a very large percentages [sic] of Canton's runs were made on errors. Miss Weiss received good support from the grandstand, bringing forth a burst of applause for every strikeout. She will pitch in Barberton on Sunday and Monday.

The score:

Massillon	A	R	H	O	A	E
Weiss, p, 1b	4	2	3	3	2	1
Price, c	5	0	0	11	1	0
Meise, 1b, p	4	1	0	5	1	1
O'Brien, 2b	5	0	1	1	1	3
Culbertson, 3b	5	2	2	1	2	1
Tatje, ss	5	3	2	2	1	1
Adair, lf	5	2	2	3	0	0
Alspaugh, cf	5	2	2	1	1	2
Brown, lf	5	0	3	0	1	0
TOTALS	43	12	15	27	10	9
Canton	A	R	H	O	A	E
O'Harra, p	5	3	2	2	3	1
Jones, c	5	0	0	7	0	0
Goudy, 1b	5	1	1	9	0	0

Flickinger, 2b	5	1	3	2	4	1
DeWitt, 3b	5	4	2	3	1	2
Daugherty, ss	5	2	2	2	0	1
Belter, lf	5	2	1	0	0	1
Buchman, cf	6	2	1	0	0	0
Flickinger, jr. rf	5	1	2	2	0	0
TOTALS	46	16	14	27	8	6

1922

The Vermilion News, Vermilion, Ohio, October 5, 1922

The reporter asked Alta if she believed there would ever be women baseball players of any note. According to the reporter, she replied: “No, I don’t believe that there ever will be any distinguished women base ball players. Women haven’t the nerve. . . . They may get up some wishy-washy girl’s nines, but they’ll never have any real players.”

The article noted that Alta played first base in Vermilion for the Pirates against the Joppa team. “She is still that marvel among women baseball players, covering the initial sack for Vermilion without a slip for seven innings that she played.”

1955

The Coshocton Tribune, Coshocton, Ohio, June 5, 1955

A long article in the “Now and Then” column is based on the reporter’s recent interview with Alta Weiss. This article gives a detailed history of Alta’s career in baseball and in medicine and may be the source of many stories about her, such as her explanation about throwing a spitball.

The Daily Reporter, Dover, Ohio, August 16, 1955

ALTA WEISS WAS STAR WITH THIS BALL CLUB

A two-column article featuring a picture of the Weiss All Stars, with the male players dressed in black uniforms and Alta in a white uniform, tells readers that Dr. Weiss is now 65 years old and has retired, returning to Ragersville to live in the old family home.

A few paragraphs later, the article states that Dr. Alta Weiss returned to Ragersville nine years earlier, when her father died. It states that six years ago “she fell and fractured an ankle which has never entirely mended but she is still active and energetic. Her home in Ragersville is within 20 miles of the home of Cy Young, 89, greatest big league pitcher of all time, who lives on a farm at Peoli.”

In my files is a chapter from The Only Game in Town: A History of Baseball in Tuscarawas County, Ohio, 1867 - 1955, by C. Edward DeGraw. The chapter is titled “Two Ladies from Ragersville.” The story below is from that chapter. I don’t know when the book was published, but I’m guessing 1955 or 1956.

George “Soph” Davis of New Philadelphia [Ohio], a long-time player and manager, loved to tell the story of when he faced Alta in a ball game. “It was a hot day,” he said. “She got two strikes on me, but I fouled off a couple of pitches and felt good about it. I wanted to get a hit [punctuation missing] Alta wiped the perspiration from her face and yelled in at me. ‘That is all for you, boy.’ The next pitch was a fast ball right down the middle. I swung and missed. She was for real, all right.”

1964

The Coshocton Tribune, Coshocton, Ohio, February 12, 1964

The obituary for Alta W. Hisrich states that she died the previous evening, that the viewing would be at Lingler Funeral Home in Sugarcreek, and burial would be at the West Lawn Cemetery in Winesburg.

The Daily Reporter, Dover, Ohio, May 14, 1964

A large boxed announcement with the headline **PUBLIC AUCTION/ REAL ESTATE/ FURNITURE/ ANTIQUES/ CARS** advertises the many items that would be auctioned off from the **ESTATE OF DR. ALTA WEISS HISRICH**.

There were five parcels of real estate, all in Ragersville. Three of the parcels consisted of homes on lots. The other two were empty lots.

Items of interest among the furniture were a portable sewing machine, a living room suite, rugs, six radios, mirrors, porch chairs, coal buckets, tools, and more.

In a category titled **OLD — ODD — AND INTERESTING** was a 1942 Pontiac, a 1940 Buick, diamond rings, sleigh bells, hand bells, guitar, violin, ukelele, banjo, and piano. There were also “McGuffey Readers and other books dating back to 1850.”

The Daily Reporter, Dover-New Philadelphia, Ohio, May 18, 1964

A photo in the center of the front page shows Earl Hisrich, executor of the estate of Dr. Hisrich [Alta Weiss], holding a 1907 Spalding bat that Alta used during her baseball career.

1980

The Times-Reporter, Dover-New Philadelphia, Ohio, July 30, 1980

Alta Weiss: Baseball was her game

This is a substantial article that recounts many of the stories about Alta Weiss. I read it before writing *Women at Play*.

1987

Vermilion Photojournal, Vermilion, Ohio, August 31, 1987

A 'skirt' on the mound stuns baseball fans

by Debbie Fakan Shattuck

This article is a brief recapitulation of Alta Weiss's games in Vermilion in 1907. Alta's record with the Vermilion team was 5 wins, 3 losses. I used the information in this article when writing *Women at Play*.