



Baseball's First Lady: Helene Hathaway Robison Britton and the St. Louis Cardinals

Joan M. Thomas

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Baseball's First Lady is the story of Helene Hathaway Robison Britton, the first woman owner of a major league baseball club, and her influence on the evolution of the St. Louis Cardinals. Late in life, Cardinals owner M. Stanley Robison willed his club and ballpark to niece Helene Britton. This transfer in 1911 marked a break in the gender barrier in the executive level of Major League Baseball, as Helene, a young wife and mother of two, confidently accepted her inheritance. Operating among baseball's magnates of the day, she attended owner's meetings as an equal and took an active role in running her club all at a time when society dictated that a lady should not attend a baseball game without a male escort. Despite facing serious domestic problems during her tenure as owner, she proved herself worthy of her uncle's trust. Facing competition from one, and then two other St. Louis clubs, she maintained the Cardinals for six years, selling when the club showed promise for another century.



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