

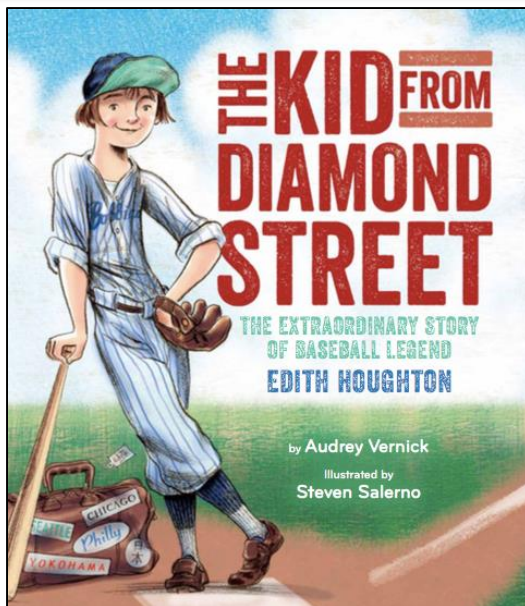
THE KID FROM DIAMOND STREET

THE EXTRAORDINARY STORY OF BASEBALL LEGEND EDITH HOUGHTON

Written by Audrey Vernick, Illustrated by Steven Salerno

BOOK SUMMARY

Beginning in 1922, when Edith Houghton was only ten years old, she tried out for a women's professional baseball team, the Philadelphia Bobbies. Though she was the smallest on the field, soon reporters were talking about "The Kid" and her incredible skill, and crowds were packing the stands to see her play. Her story reminds us that baseball has never been about just men and boys. Baseball is also about talented girls willing to work hard to play any way they can.



A Junior Library Guild Selection

PRE-READING PROMPTS

- What would you like to become when you grow up? Could you achieve that goal now, as a kid? Why or why not?
- What would you sacrifice in order to achieve your goals? Would you be willing to travel far from your family for a few months at a time? Explain your thinking.
- How does the word *diamond* in the title connect with the illustration on the book cover?
- Locate Japan on a map. What are some ways you might travel from your home to Japan? How long do you estimate the journey would take?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Which character traits helped Edith to achieve her goals? What are the character traits that you will need to achieve your goals?
- Edith's hair was cut into a bob style before she could join the Bobbies. What would you agree to change about yourself in order to pursue your dream? What would you *not* be willing to change?

- Before Edith left for Japan at the age of 13, her parents knew she would be missing many weeks of school. Edith said, "The principal and teachers agreed that I'd get more out of that trip than being in that class, and it was true." What does this mean? Do you agree or disagree? Explain your thinking.
- On page 17, we learn that Edith and her teammates "barnstormed" their way across the US. Infer the meaning of this term, then check the

dictionary definition. Would it be more or less difficult to barnstorm one's way across the US today or in 1925? Explain your thinking.

- While playing in Japan, catcher Eddie Ainsmith "...promised Edith a yen for every catch she made. And like the pro she was, Edith nearly got rich on that deal." What is a yen? What is it worth? If you hadn't heard of a yen before, what clues from the text helped you to figure out the meaning?
- When Edith played her first game in Japan in front of 10,000 people, she wasn't nervous. She said, "...once you get out there to play, you don't see those people. You didn't even know there was anybody there. You were playing." How does this reflect Edith's passion for baseball? What activity puts you "in the zone," where you're so absorbed with what you're doing that you don't notice what is going on around you? How do you feel when you're in that zone?
- Why do you think a male battery (pitcher and catcher) played with the Bobbies in Japan? How do you think Edith felt about this? Explain your thinking.

POST-READING ACTIVITIES

- Click on “History” at www.littleleague.org. How old was Edith when Carl Stotz founded Little League baseball? He said, “I wanted [Little League®] to be just like the Big League, but for little boys.” Pretend to be Edith and compose a letter to Mr. Stotz reacting to his statement.
- Edith’s father kept a scrapbook with newspaper articles and mementos of his daughter’s baseball-playing days. Create your own scrapbook page, and another one that might have been in Edith’s scrapbook. How do the pages compare? (To create a digital scrapbook page, try a tool like [Glogster](http://Glogster.com).)
- Using Google Earth, find Fairmount Park in Philadelphia, where Edith tried out for the Bobbies. Locate 2502 Diamond Street, where she lived. How does Diamond Street compare to the illustration on pages 36 and 37? If Edith could walk down Diamond Street today, what would she think? What might she say?
- Visit the Library of Congress’ online [National Jukebox](http://NationalJukebox.org) and search for the 1924 song *Hey! hey! and hee! hee! (I’m Charleston crazy)*. Learn how to dance the Charleston [here](http://here.com) from the New York Film Academy. Put the music and the dance steps together and dance the Charleston like Edith and her teammates did!
- The Bobbies invented up their own baseball lyrics to *Collegiate*, a popular song at the time. Listen to part of this song [here](http://here.com) (both with and without the words), and then make up your own lyrics about your favorite pastime. If the Bobbies were still playing baseball today, which modern-day hit song might they have chosen to rewrite?
- Look at the illustration of the scene where the Bobbies arrived in Yokohama, Japan in 1925 (pages 24 and 25). Compare that scene with this [photograph](http://photograph.com) taken in Philadelphia in 1926. What similarities and differences do you notice? What might have surprised a Japanese tourist visiting Philadelphia for the first time in 1926?

- Judging by the expressions of the fans, Edith’s parents, and the reporter on page 13, how do you think this game is going for the Bobbies? Listen to an early radio broadcast of a baseball game [here](http://here.com). Create a play-by-play snippet of the action that the reporter on page 13 might be writing. How does your report compare with your classmates’ version of the scene?
- The map on pages 14 and 15 traces the Bobbie’s journey from Philadelphia to Yokohama, Japan. Research the cost and time needed to travel by train from Philadelphia to Seattle, and then by ship from Seattle to Yokohama (see Resources below). How does that compare with air travel? What are the pros and cons of traveling with the different modes of transportation? Which method would you choose? Explain your thinking.

RESOURCES

- [National Baseball Hall of Fame](http://NationalBaseballHallOfFame.org)
- [History of radio broadcasting](http://Historyofradiobroadcasting.org) (from the National Baseball Hall of Fame)
- [Trans-Oceanic travel](http://Trans-Oceanictravel.com)
- [ak](http://ak.com)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Audrey Vernick is the author of more than a dozen books for young readers. She is an avid baseball fan and lives with her family near the ocean in New Jersey.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Steven Salerno has illustrated twenty-two picture books, including *Wild Child*, which he both wrote and illustrated. Steven lives and works in New York City.

Read Audrey Vernick’s other baseball picture book biographies!

