

**African American Women's Basketball in the 1920s and 1930s: Active  
Participants in the "New Negro" Movement**

Charise Young  
History 4296  
Writing Seminar American History  
Dr. Bettye Collier-Thomas  
Dr. Kenneth Kusmer  
9 December 2009

## Table of Contents

- I. Introduction
- II. The Victorian Woman
- III. The “New Woman”
- IV. Conceptions of African American Women
- V. African American Women and Athletics
- VI. The History of Basketball
- VII. The YWCA and its Influence on Basketball
- VIII. The Philadelphia Women’s Club Teams
- IX. Inez Patterson
- X. Ora Washington
- XI. The Female Burden
- XII. The “New Negro” and Women’s Basketball
- XIII. Conclusion

**Introduction:**

Today, in 2009, females are actively engaged in physical activity. Whether it is for personal health benefits or competitive reasons, women find physical activity to be an essential part of life. I have recently completed a collegiate athletic career in field hockey. As a female athlete, I have found that participating in sports has provided the opportunity to further develop all facets of my character. I have grown physically, mentally, and emotionally through challenging myself in the sports arena. However, in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, women and sports operated in two different spheres of life. At this time, a debate existed regarding the impact that physical activity had on women's health and psyche. This debate becomes apparent through the perusal of the Black Historical Newspapers. After I read numerous accounts from the 1920s and 1930s, I discovered athletes and teams being mentioned on a regular basis. This caused me to question the influence of African American women's basketball on the Philadelphia community. In framing my research questions, I decided to focus on the broader context of women's athletics in American society during the early part of the twentieth century, the development of women's basketball in Philadelphia, and if the development had an impact on the Civil Rights movement. Throughout the paper, I will argue that African American women's basketball in Philadelphia during the 1920s and 1930s challenged the traditional, Victorian views of womanhood, and that African American women's basketball established the value of the black race for the entire community.

**The Victorian Woman:**

To begin the discussion of women's basketball during the 1920s and 1930s, it is important to understand the broader society in which African American women athletes

competed. Highlighting the complex society of which these women were a part is a 1930 Baltimore *Afro-American* article compiled by Bill Gibson. In the article an anonymous woman coach, athlete, and physical educator wrote, “woman is taking her place beside man politically, economically, and if she is given an even break she will soon begin to win her laurels athletically.”<sup>1</sup> The 19<sup>th</sup> century was full of debate regarding the spheres that women occupied in society. The traditional role of women was to tend to the household and raise children. Women were expected to support home and nation through their childbearing. However, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the impact of industrialization, urbanization, immigration, and women’s entrance into the workforce caused concern. The ability of women to balance work and home was questioned. As a whole, American society was also concerned with the declining health of the nation. Furthermore, women’s health was of the utmost priority. Pale, weak, fragile women were viewed as detriments to society. George Kent Stanley writes, “when physicians wrote about the poor health of women, they were often thinking about the children such women might produce.”<sup>2</sup> The concern rested more in the future of the nation than in the individual women themselves. It was believed that women in poor health would produce children who were sickly, creating a cycle that would “continue until national strength collapsed under the burden of inherited weakness.”<sup>3</sup> As a result, physical exercise was encouraged to promote change in the health conditions of women. Previously, well-muscled individuals symbolized the working class. Now, this physicality was becoming a symbol of health for all classes. Miss Ruth Arnett from the *Chicago Defender* wrote, “every girl should look forward to the fulfillment of her sphere in life, but she can’t do it unless she develops herself into a splendid type of womanhood...let’s show our girls that our future depends upon them: that unless they are strong physically and mentally the future race can’t be.”<sup>4</sup> Ultimately, the encouragement for women to participate in physical activities

and sport sprung from the notion that women must be exceptional within their domestic sphere. Women's involvement in the world of sports was never about a woman's own desire to participate.

### **The "New Woman":**

During the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the introduction of physical activity coincided with other social changes for women. Changes in education, divorce, and prostitution laws opened the doors for the "New Woman." This "New Woman" began attending college. These institutions of higher education were the biggest supporters of physical activity for women. The colleges provided the perfect opportunity for women to combat ill-health while developing their minds. At first, the types of physical activities included in the curriculum centered on gymnastics or stretching and mild calisthenics. Eventually, physical education was integrated as a staple of higher education. This in turn led to the inclusion of "sport" into the curriculum. However, "sport" in the context of women's education only referred to activities such as skating, croquet, badminton, lawn tennis, archery, riding, and angling. J. Lee qualifies these sports even further:

"It is interesting to note that these sports are the ones that men and women can play together...they require delicate skill rather than strength, they flattered body appearance, were suitable zones for courtship, so that they actually strengthened the notion of the game as having a purpose outside its immediate pursuit."<sup>5</sup>

Sport, for women, could not be enjoyed as its own separate entity. This is especially obvious as the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the introduction of team sports to the women's physical education experience.

Recreational sports were embraced as ways to improve women's health, support a broader education, and promote motherhood; in contrast, team sports existed for purposes that were based on old Victorian beliefs. M. Ann Hall defines these Victorian notions:

The answer lies in the strict Victorian dichotomy between *manliness* and *womanliness*.

The former represented physical virility coupled with a Christian morality ensuring influence and success in the public and economic spheres. Womanliness, on the other hand, embodied a feminine ideal...stressing...grace and beauty leading to mutual sharing and intimacy in the domestic sphere.<sup>6</sup>

There was a prevalent fear that existed that the more women participated in competitive sports, the more likely they were to take on masculine characteristics. Additionally, society believed that women who participated in sports risked both physical and mental harm. In fact, Gregory Kent Stanley provided an anecdote of this nature when he wrote, "there was no way of knowing...how many girls on a basketball team scheduled to compete with another team...were in the midst of this feminine function in which the uterus was physiologically congested and temporarily abnormally heavy...the uterus was liable to displacement by the inexcusable strenuousness and roughness of this particular game."<sup>7</sup> Even the American Medical Association believed that women's participation in competitive sports was not worth the potential risk of jeopardizing motherhood. Women were expected to remain at home and anything that interfered with this role was viewed as abnormal and masculine. One argument against women's part in sports was that the related stress had adverse effects on a woman's health. Women could not possibly be emotionally strong enough to handle the competitive nature of sports. Jessie Palmer Yarborough addressed this issue in an article in the *Philadelphia Tribune*, an African American newspaper, about women and sports. She argued that women did not make good sports and did not

understand how to lose. The author wrote, “on various occasions, I have seen a girl, after losing a match, draw her crowd of admirers about her and act hostile towards the winner of her match.”<sup>8</sup>

In essence, the author promoted a view that women have to *learn* about sports; sports are not a natural part of a woman’s existence. Yarborough continued to state, “this only hurts the sex as a whole and makes us [women] objectionable to the sporting world.”<sup>9</sup> While society appreciated the benefits of sports for women, women were still expected to maintain their femininity.

Although participating in a masculine domain, women were supposed to be graceful, beautiful, and coordinated. Stanley writes, “an outstanding woman athlete was a contradiction in terms... a woman could be athletic or feminine, but not both.”<sup>10</sup> The newspapers of the time report about these views as well. Mme Roberta Creditte Ole wrote of the traditional view of women when she stated, “for a long time they [women] were denied the physical right, every well-developed woman was labeled masculine and unnatural.”<sup>11</sup> When women first encountered physical activity, it was believed that the exertion would make them healthier for the remainder of their lives as they took care of their domestic responsibilities. Serious consideration was never given to the fact that women would find sports and competition as a legitimate source of individual gratification and then proceed to challenge the traditional views of femininity.

### **Conceptions of Negro Women:**

As the aforementioned black newspaper articles alluded to, African American women also experienced conflicting views regarding athletic participation and the roles that their community expected them to fulfill. Black women were not only strived to establish the importance of their gender, but also were a part of a bigger movement to establish the legitimacy of the African American race. In the *Philadelphia Tribune* article, “Negro Womanhood Not

Freed by Emancipation,” Zenobia Alexander addressed this conflict when she wrote, “strange as it sounds, the Negro woman is regarded as inferior to her white sister and yet more is expected of her than of the women of any other race.”<sup>12</sup> Similar to the white population, African American women were expected to contribute to the advancement of their race by bearing children to build a stronger generations for the future. In a Baltimore *Afro-American* article, Palestine Wells argued that if a black woman abandoned the call of motherhood, she placed the progress of the entire African American race in jeopardy. Wells wrote, “on the contrary it should increase the determination of the Negro mother to give to the race the men and women to carry on the struggle.”<sup>13</sup> Motherhood was viewed as an incredibly important contribution to society. However, even as African American women entered the workforce, one job became prevalent – domestic service. This stemmed from the housework performed as former slaves. By today’s standards, this job would be considered menial. However, the black race embraced the opportunity and the African American newspapers were full of petitions encouraging black women to become domestic servants. A 1912 Pittsburgh Courier article stated, “if Negro women would learn the art of housekeeping there would always be open for them a line of work.”<sup>14</sup> Frederic J. Haskin for the Baltimore *Afro-American* wrote, “the educated colored girl knows that there is no work more worthy of respect that that which enables her to administer to the needs of a home.”<sup>15</sup> These were the prevalent views and expectations of the African American women as they entered organized athletics in the 1920s and 1930s.

### **African American Women and Athletics:**

Throughout the 1920s, competitive sports emerged as a main component of American life. The era was known as the golden age in sports. However, women, especially African

American women, were not able to experience this transformation in the same way that their male counterparts did. Arthur Ashe stated, “after the Civil War when sports clubs were formed and rules were written, athletes became the most well known and among the richest of black Americans.”<sup>16</sup> However, black women were never a part of this success story. In *Black Women in Sport*, the authors write, “the Black American sportswoman has performed a prodigious psychological achievement...to become a fine athlete she had to develop the assessment of herself in the face of a society that devalued her, as both a female and a black.”<sup>17</sup> Although many traditional Victorian views were challenged as athletic activity was incorporated into the concept of the “New Woman,” full athletic participation by African American women was often hindered by lack of resources and views of beauty and race. Previously mentioned, traditional views of womanhood still prevailed despite the changing roles of women and their entrance into the workforce. In 1926, Mme Roberta Credit Ole, in her “Beauty Chats” column in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, admitted that “feminine shoulders as well as feminine prospective have broadened.” However, she also noted, “thou shalt cultivate a love for the beautiful, and make thyself look thy best at all times.”<sup>18</sup> In essence, although Ole promoted women’s participation in sports, she also simultaneously argued that sports were best intended for the purpose of making women more attractive. For some, sports and physical activity were more about beauty than physical skill and competition. Further obstacles for black women included the lack of available resources and management that were committed to the development of female athletes to their fullest potential. Unfortunately, for African American women, facilities and equipment were not readily available. Additionally, a lack of leadership caused further complications. In a 1932 article in the *Afro-American*, Ivora King wrote, “how are girls to know the value of athletics unless someone is willing to work with them, develop them, and be with them through the strongest competition

and greatest struggles?”<sup>19</sup> Other articles from the *Afro-American* clearly showed that these had been issues of concern for the black athletic community for quite some time. A 1928 sport editorial discussed the upcoming Olympics in Amsterdam. The editorial highlighted the fact that there would be no Negro women participating in the Olympics despite having women and African Americans in attendance. The author finds this disheartening as he questions the efforts being directed toward developing talented women of the African American race. By participating in athletics, a black woman attempted to dispel traditional views of femininity and establish herself as an African American. These pioneers redefined both their gender and race.

### **The History of Basketball:**

The aforementioned factors of gender and race establish the context for African American women's basketball during the 1920s and 1930s. By the 1920s, basketball was already a well-known sport in American culture whose popularity continued to rise. Dr. James Naismith, in 1891, invented basketball in Springfield, Massachusetts. His objective was to create an indoor game for male students during the cold, winter months. The thirteen rule sport was implemented through Springfield's YMCA, and by 1893, the sport was introduced internationally by the YMCA. Basketball was then introduced to the African American population in 1904 by Dr. Edwin B. Henderson, and by 1910, black colleges were playing basketball competitively. Although the sport was first played by males, “within a year of Naismith's invention of basketball in Springfield, women college students were playing the game with every bit the same enthusiasm as the men.”<sup>20</sup> In fact, teams existed at both Stanford and Berkeley by 1892. Despite the popularity amongst females, basketball was implemented very differently for women. Through the efforts of physical educators, Senda Berenson and Clara Baer, an alternate version

of the sport was developed. Berenson implemented the sport at Smith College, also located in Springfield Massachusetts. Baer, on the other hand, contacted Naismith so that she too could incorporate the game of basketball into her curriculum. However, she misinterpreted the rules and “acting on her own false impressions, Ms. Baer drew up rules for a drastically modified game she labeled as “Basquette”... which were widely disseminated to other campuses as part and parcel of the chaotic spread of Naismith’s new game.”<sup>21</sup> In 1899, a committee of four women, headed by Berenson, developed a set of rules where women could not steal the ball, women could not hold the ball for more than three seconds, and women could not leave assigned areas of the court.<sup>22</sup> Although the discrepancy in rules could be attributed to misunderstanding, the rules were more likely developed in response to the pervading views of womanhood that existed at that time. As Bjarkman writes, “the cause of such a gulf in rules and playing styles was a...product of reigning notions during the late Victorian Age that it was neither socially appropriate nor physically possible for young women to enter into the strenuous sport, exercises, and games enjoyed by their male counterparts.”<sup>23</sup> These Victorian-influenced rules would impact women’s basketball well into the twentieth century.

By the 1920s, basketball had gained popularity and was the primary rival of football. H.D. Martin from the *Philadelphia Tribune* wrote, “in the white colleges where the game has been popular for quite some time, we find basketball a real social factor in the college community. Large numbers of both sexes attend the games regularly.”<sup>24</sup> The sport was soon implemented in schools, colleges, and in professional circles. Bob Douglas introduced the first professional team for African American males in 1923 when he organized a team in New York, which he named the *New York Renaissance*. Quickly, other professional teams followed suit in the major northeast cities. The North provided better opportunities for all sports due to the

region's better quality of education. While there may have been exceptional talent in the South, the organization of education and the prevalence of YMCA's in the North provided the bulk of opportunities for athletes to develop. In Philadelphia, the first colored basketball team was the Wissahickon Boys' Club.<sup>25</sup>

### **The YWCA and Its Influence on Basketball:**

One of the greatest factors in developing sports (including basketball) and a sense of community for the African American population rested in the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations. These institutions were established to combat the challenge of the Great Migration and to increase the number of recreational facilities for the growing black population. Arthur Ashe wrote of their prominence in the athletic sector when he stated, "in some cities in the early years, the local "colored" Y assumed the stature of a private club...the Y's were in the forefront of what came to be known as the Muscular Christianity Movement...classes were held in calisthenics, gymnastics, and physical culture."<sup>26</sup> In Philadelphia, both the Germantown and Southwest Belmont branches of the YWCA served the black population and held a variety of classes to promote physical fitness. The general correspondence of the Southwest Belmont branch provided the mission, "recreation has been recognized...as a means of keeping up the moral tone and vigor of young women...free recreation has been provided in a diversified program which included music, roller skating, social dancing, swimming, and weekly play nights."<sup>27</sup> In Southwest Belmont's Activities Schedule, girls' basketball practice was held from 4:00-5:30 every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday. Friday and Saturday nights featured competitive basketball games during the season. A YWCA bulletin listed all the Health Education Fees. A \$2.00 was charged

to each basketball team member. The bulletin also mentioned that meetings were to be held to discuss the rules.<sup>28</sup> From these documents, it is clear that basketball was not just a physical fitness activity for a girl that was held during open gym hours; it was an organized sport that incorporated fees, members, rules, and specific game-day schedules. For African American girls, this was an opportunity to become involved not only in physical activity, but also an opportunity to become part of the black social scene. The *Philadelphia Tribune* has a number of advertisements and articles that indicate the social networking opportunities that were created for the African American through women's basketball games. On one reporting day, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 1933, the *Tribune* mentioned the upcoming basketball game held at Southwest YWCA between the National Colored Champion Tribune Girls and the Long Island Duckling Girls three times in three different sections of the paper. The much anticipated game was included in a column of primarily a boys' basketball schedule, in the society pages, and in the advertisement section. In both the advertisement and the society pages, the basketball event was featured in conjunction with a dance for both men and women.<sup>29</sup> This event suggests that women's basketball was part of the larger social scene for the black community. The trend of making girls' basketball games part of the larger black community continues through the 1930s as two *Tribune* articles from November of 1936 mention the "opening game, show and dance" on Thanksgiving night and New Year's Eve night.<sup>30</sup> Ultimately, these events were highly anticipated social events that were advertised for the entire black community. The games were intended to produce support for talented members of the African American race. For blacks, these social events provided opportunities to bond as a racial group and to celebrate the accomplishments of people who looked like them.

**Philadelphia Women's Club Teams:**

Philadelphia was one of the cities that developed professional and club basketball teams in addition to the high school and college teams. The two most well-known teams were the Germantown Hornets and the *Philadelphia Tribune* squad. The Germantown Hornets were associated with the Germantown YWCA and competed during the late 1920s and the 1930s. However, the Hornets only came to be known as such during the 1930s. In a March 5, 1927 *Afro-American* article, the team is referred to as the Germantown "Y" Tossers. The box score indicates that although the team name differed, the members of the team remained consistent throughout the 1930s.<sup>31</sup> The success of the Germantown Hornets became obvious in 1931 under coach and manager Joseph H. Rainey, Jr. In January of 1931, a *Philadelphia Tribune* article stated, "the Germantown YWCA "Hornets" continued their winning streak...[and] have shown that they are ready to make trouble for any girls team in the East."<sup>32</sup> This team was known throughout the early 1930's as the National Colored Girl Champions. The Hornets first won the title in April of 1931 when they faced the Rankin Club, champions of the Mid West, by a score of 23-19. The Rankin Club had not been defeated in the three years prior to this championship series.<sup>33</sup> During this era, Philadelphia became a powerhouse for African American girls' basketball. For example, the Baltimore *Afro-American* in their "In Liberty Bell Town" column mentioned, "when the Germantown Hornets, the National Colored Girls Champions, defeated the Ajax Girls...as large aggregation intensely-interested young sport fans cheered from the sidelines."<sup>34</sup> The article is informative because it explains the importance of this team nationally. Throughout the East coast, the Hornets were recognized as National Champions by the black community. The article indicated that the team had a following of fans that supported and cheered on the team. This is significant because it suggests that following girls' basketball was a

popular interest in the community. The Hornets were known as National Colored Champions until April of 1932 when the *Philadelphia Tribune* squad or the “Newsgirls” claimed the title. The Hornets continued as an organization after the loss despite changes in the coaching staff and personnel of the team.<sup>35</sup>

The *Philadelphia Tribune* team’s inauguration was in 1931 and the team was sponsored by the *Philadelphia Tribune* newspaper. The girls were often referred to as “Newsgirls” or “Tribgirls.” This was not uncommon, as “black and white papers frequently sponsored sports events and/or teams to enhance their image and increase sales.”<sup>36</sup> The team was dominant throughout the 1930s until it was disbanded in 1940. The Tribunes were coached and managed by Otto Briggs, a star of the Negro Baseball League. One of the events that highlighted the importance of women’s basketball in Philadelphia during the 1930s was the games that featured both the Germantown Hornets and the Newsgirls for the National Colored Girls Championship. A sports editorial page from January 14, 1932 published a letter from Hornets’ coach Joseph Rainey to the manager and coach of the Tribune girls, Otto Briggs. The letter indicated Rainey’s desire to play the Newsgirls, as well as the public’s desire to see the match-up. Rainey wrote, “we would, Mr. Briggs, be glad to play host to your team on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January...the public is clamoring for the game and I feel these two teams should meet.”<sup>37</sup> From reading the newspapers, it appears that protocol required coaches of basketball teams to contact one another and set up specific championship series between the defending champions and the new challengers. Although not part of the Hornet-Newsgirls championship series, Briggs addressed the legitimacy of the American Legion Girls of Atlantic City, N.J. claim to “champions” in a letter published in the *Philadelphia Tribune* on May 28, 1936. He denied their claim when he stated, “fans who follow a championship match, know that when a championship is at stake, neutral referees, and

location of title match are decided upon by the management of both concerned and that the management of the title holder has the preference.”<sup>38</sup> Ultimately, the championship series between the Hornets and the Newsgirls was specifically arranged to determine the new champions. In the letter from Rainey, he indicated the need for an uneven number of games and a neutral site to hold the series. The championship series was finally announced to the public on the *Tribune* sports page on February 4, 1932. What is most revealing about this article is that the last paragraph detailed the bets being placed on the championship series.<sup>39</sup> It is clear that the African American community of Philadelphia took pride in their women’s basketball teams. For bets to be placed, public interest in the teams must have been high. In the news articles that covered the championship series, they often mentioned the popularity of the championship series. As one writer noted, “in the most fiercely played, interesting and thrilling basketball game... [there was a] full house of cash customers [crammed [into] the Wissy gym last Monday.”<sup>40</sup> This was the atmosphere for the first game of the series. The Hornets secured the win in the first contest. The second game was won by the Newsgirls thus ending the 45 game win streak of the Hornets.<sup>41</sup> The next two games were also split which meant that there would be a fifth and final game to determine the National Colored Girls Champion. The Newsgirls eventually won the series in an extra-period game; the final score 31-23. As *Tribune* sports editor, Randy Dixon commented, “the ultimate victors outpassed, outplayed, and outmaneuvered their rivals.”<sup>42</sup> What makes this championship series so important to the study of African American women’s basketball during the 1930s is that the news coverage not only detailed the results of the games, but it provided evaluations of the teams and individuals. In the championship article a picture of the victors was even provided. This suggests that not only did these teams boast some of the best basketball talent in the area, but that the black community was

captivated by their athletic females. The games provided entertainment for the community, but they also provided a setting where African Americans could celebrate and recognize the talent that existed among members of their race.

Not only were the *Philadelphia Tribune* Girls popular in Philadelphia and throughout Pennsylvania, but they were also known up and down the East coast. One of the first indications of their renown comes from the vast amount of news coverage that exists on the team. Although the news articles often just reported the scores of games and the players' names, it is clear that the Newsgirls had a substantial following. Articles can be found on the Tribune girls in all the major black historical newspapers, including the *Philadelphia Tribune*, the *Chicago Defender*, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the *New York Amsterdam News*, the *Baltimore Afro-American*, and the *Atlanta World*. The Newsgirls also toured the South as a way to promote their team and the sport of basketball. In a *Tribune* article titled "Tribgirls Dazzle Down Home Fans in Victorious Tour," Dick Sun reported on the wins that the Newsgirls compiled over Bennett College and teams from Fayetteville, N.C. and Lynchburg, V.A. and the large number of fans who attended the games.<sup>43</sup> The Bennett girls were awed by the talent that the Tribunes displayed. Rita Liberti writes of the series, "in many ways the game did not resemble the type the Bennett players were accustomed to participating in and was thus both exciting and unsettling."<sup>44</sup> Along with the games in 1934, the Newsgirls also traveled down South during 1938 as a promotional tour. Arthur Ashe wrote, "in 1938, the Tribunes toured the South in February and March, giving clinics, offering advice and encouragement, and demonstrating for crowds the high quality of basketball of which women were potentially capable. The Philadelphia Tribune was black America's first premier female sports team."<sup>45</sup> The Tribunes were a positive role model for their African American community as they traveled around the country displaying their talents and promoting female

athletics. In essence, this team combated the widely held views that African Americans were unskilled and possessed no contributions for the greater American society.

The Tribegirls helped to maintain the strength of the African American community during the 1930s, but they also competed against a few white teams that aided in legitimizing the Negro sports world. Liberti writes, “during the first half of the century, the black press fairly brimmed with news of athletic achievement, interpreted as a measure of racial progress.”<sup>46</sup> In a 1933 *Tribune* article, a picture of Ora Washinton is placed next to a picture of Suzie Sponsetter, a white basketball player, with the title, “Which is Greater?” The article highlighted the upcoming game between the two star players.<sup>47</sup> The picture is an indication of the value that the black community placed on their athletes who competed and succeeded in the white world. If African American athletic teams could beat white teams, the blacks felt that they were confronting the existing stereotypes about their physical nature and place in society. The importance of white competition was highlighted again in 1937 when the Tribune girls faced the Buckstown Quintette, a white basketball team from Scranton, Pennsylvania. The game was played in front of 1,000 spectators on Thanksgiving night; the final score, the Tribunes, 21-19.<sup>48</sup> The Newsgirls played an important role in Philadelphia’s African American community as they faced issues of race head on in athletic competition.

The women’s club basketball teams fought for recognition as *African American* athletes and acceptance as *women* athletes. Although the teams were closely followed by the press and well-loved by their communities, there were still views in existence that diminished the capabilities of females. In the advertisement from February 9, 1933, the title read, “Girls! Beautiful Girls! And How They Can Play!” This insinuated that the girls’ game was fundamentally different than the boys’ game. The title also suggested that the popularity of the

game was due in part to the public's wish to see and evaluate the bodies of athletic girls. This diminished the individual experiences of the athletes as they were more than likely playing because they loved the game. In an *Atlanta Daily World* article, the Tribune Girls were compared to the famous Renaissance men's team of New York. It was acknowledged that the girls played a shorter schedule because "first of all, it is considered that women lack the physical durability of men and could not stand the continuous pace of game after game nightly. In the second place, there is not as much capital behind the team and in the third place, public demand isn't quite as fully developed to women basketball players."<sup>49</sup> These comments were made despite the Newsgirls playing men's rules.

**Inez Patterson:**

One of the most recognized African American female athletes in Philadelphia was Inez Patterson or "Pat" as she was commonly referred to. Patterson was a native of Philadelphia, growing up in Chester, Pennsylvania. Her athletic career began at Tilden Junior High School where she "captained the city champion junior high captain-ball team, won the city junior high round-arm throw, won the 13 miles mileage swim contest, and won individual junior high track honors in 1925."<sup>50</sup> Patterson attended West Philadelphia School from 1925-1928. In high school, Patterson also set new records in swimming and round-arm basketball throw. After high school, she decided to attend college. The *Pittsburgh Courier* reported, "Pat is going to graduate from West Philly High this month and that school is losing a student and an athlete, but their loss is to be Temple University's gain."<sup>51</sup> While at Temple, Patterson took courses in Physical Education. Throughout her collegiate career, she made six all-collegiate teams in hockey, tennis, basketball, track, volleyball, and dancing. One reporter humorously wrote, "as things stand, she only excels

in field hockey, basketball, volleyball, tennis, and swimming. That's all."<sup>52</sup> Once she completed college, Patterson continued her involvement in athletics by participating in local and national athletic contests; she was even considered an Olympic contender in the javelin. She helped to found the Quicksteppers basketball club team. She participated in their games, but she also recruited for the team. In the *Philadelphia Tribune*, Patterson wrote her own column and encouraged the local girls to come out and participate through the Southwest-Belmont Y.W.C.A.<sup>53</sup> Patterson did not stay with the Quicksteppers as she helped to organize the *Philadelphia Tribune* squad in 1931. Again, she had the responsibility of selecting members to play. This meant that Patterson chose Ora Washington to be on the team. Not only did Patterson develop her own athletic skills, but she also helped to develop younger female athletes from the community. She spent time as a physical education instructor at a variety of Y.W.C.A. locations. She ended her career at the 137<sup>th</sup> Street, New York Y.W.C.A. and was also the National Program Director for the American Tennis Association. Patterson also actively challenged the racial caste system. As a student at Temple University, Patterson was the first African American female on the field hockey team. She also challenged the separate swim schedule that existed at Temple. In the *Afro-American*, she was quoted, "I did do this: I always refused to practice on Friday afternoon during the hour set aside for colored girls alone. I got around that by always being "too busy" to do any practicing at that time which made my swim practice...when the other girls supposedly had exclusive use of the pool."<sup>54</sup> For Patterson, sports became a way to fight discrimination and develop a sense of pride for the entire African American race. Unfortunately, Patterson died suddenly in 1944 from a nervous breakdown. However, she will be remembered as one of the most versatile athletes in the history of Pennsylvania.

**Ora Washington:**

The sports pages of the *Philadelphia Tribune* and the other black newspapers through the 1920's and 30's, demonstrate that part of the success of African American women's basketball in Philadelphia can be attributed to one specific athlete, Ora Washington. She was a dominant figure throughout the 1920s and 30s and has been recognized as one of the greatest female athletes of all time. Unfortunately, due to her race and gender, she has been largely overlooked in the sporting world. Washington was born in 1899 in Virginia and moved to Philadelphia in 1910 because of hardships in the South. The northern cities promised greater opportunities, and Philadelphia in particular had schools and social services that helped to diminish the effects of Jim Crow. When Washington arrived in Philadelphia, she became a domestic worker in a local home.<sup>55</sup> Washington's story highlights the importance of the "Ys" in developing black athletes because she did not arrive in Philadelphia with the intention of playing sports. She first joined the Germantown Y.W.C.A. in 1924. She was encouraged to try tennis, and thus was born one of the greatest female athletes of the twentieth century. Washington first made a name for herself in the tennis world as she took home national championships in both singles and doubles play. In total, she won 8 American Tennis Association singles titles and from 1928-1936 she partnered with various athletes to win doubles championships.<sup>56</sup> Although Washington continued to play tennis, she found another sport to spend the winter months playing: basketball. She began her career as a Germantown Hornet and was considered an invaluable member of their National Colored Girls Championship teams. In almost every article detailing the Hornets' games, Washington's name appears. A headline from 1931 reads, "Washington and Sweeney Star As Hornets Win." Even when Washington's team lost, she was still the star of the show. One 1932 headline stated, "Ora Washington Loses, Honored Just Same." Although Washington had a

successful career with the Germantown Hornets, in the fall of 1932, after the Hornets had lost to the Tribegirls in the championship, she joined the *Philadelphia Tribune* squad. A *Tribune* article detailed the switch on November 3, 1932 right before the new season began. The article reads, “Tribune Girls quintet, national championship girls’ basketball team, have fortified themselves...by signing up the peerless Ora Washington, who holds the rating as the greatest individual performer in girls’ ranks.”<sup>57</sup> Washington was proving that African Americans had much to be proud of in terms of their race. Although the Tribune girls team had a large number of adoring fans, Washington herself was clearly honored as an individual athletic star. Her support cast on the Tribune squad included quite a few talented players like Rose Wilson, Bernice Robinson, Inez Patterson and Lil Fountaine, but, Washington, as the team’s center player, was the undisputed star. The black press constantly reported on Washington and her successes which allowed the Philadelphia community to read and follow her career. The *Pittsburgh Courier* provided all of her scoring statistics during the 1931 season, the *Tribune* selected her as an all-star pick in March of 1932, and the *Chicago Defender* provided a picture of Washington surrounded by her various trophies, medals and awards. She was hailed by Randy Dixon, a *Tribune* sports editor, as “the greatest girl player of the age...Ora can do everything required of a basketball player.”<sup>58</sup> Not only was Washington a talented athlete, but she was also a good leader. She was named the captain of the Tribune squad for a number of years. She was also a leader in the community as a member of the Tribune team that traveled and promoted the sport. In one instance, it was reported that Washington spoke at a Germantown Tennis Club party. She spoke of her accomplishments and provided the guests with an understanding of her experiences as an athlete.<sup>59</sup>

### **The Female Burden:**

Part of Ora Washington and Inez Patterson's experience as athletes was their experience as females. As has already been mentioned, Washington was a member of the *Philadelphia Tribune* squad that was constantly viewed in a different light than their male counterparts. Although Washington was recognized as a star, someone the African American community could rally around, she was also viewed as an exception. Descriptions of her physical build were often masculine in nature. In *Shattering the Glass: A Remarkable History of Women's Basketball*, she is described as "powerfully built, with broad shoulders and sharply defined muscles as well as lightening speed."<sup>60</sup> Liberti's interview with Lucille Townsend suggests that even Washington's play could be described as rough. Townsend stated, "she's hittin' me in the stomach every time I jump."<sup>61</sup> Dick Sun, from the *Philadelphia Tribune* wrote, "Ora Washington, that feminine tennis satellite, stalked across the courts..."<sup>62</sup> These descriptions are in sharp contrast to the typical girl of the day who was gentle and graceful. Patterson was never described in these masculine terms in the newspapers, but she also faced stereotypes. African American women were supposed to be married and take care of the home. Patterson and Washington, however, found more fulfillment through their serious participation in athletics. Thelma Berlack-Boozer in the *New York Amsterdam Star News* highlighted Patterson in a "Woman of the Week" column in 1941. Berlack-Boozer wrote, "as to marriage, well, she will get around to that some day but feels that one must be mentally ready to give and take when one gets married."<sup>63</sup> These descriptions are in sharp contrast to the typical girl of the day who was gentle and graceful. These types of descriptions and play are considered normal characteristics of females in today's sporting world, but during the 1930s, this was enough evidence to label a female as masculine. It is evident that Washington and Patterson were popular players for the

African American fans to follow, but, they were still considered masculine as they devoted over twenty years to sports and never married.

### **The “New Negro” and Women’s Basketball:**

The Germantown Hornets and the *Philadelphia Tribune* Girls were famous for their basketball abilities and their exciting games. And although the members of the team may not have known it at the time, they were significantly contributing to the civil rights movement through their athletic participation. During the 1920s it became important for African Americans to begin recognizing and documenting the successes of black athletes as part of the “New Negro” movement. This movement was encompassed by the desire to develop race consciousness while fighting white discrimination. Authors David K. Wiggins and Patrick B. Miller summarize the movement well when they state, “the notion signified a greater assertiveness and sense of pride among African Americans...as they also publicly celebrated the distinctive qualities of black culture and recognized that people of African heritage had long contributed to the shaping of the United States.”<sup>64</sup> Athletics was one of the many avenues that were used to promote the movement. The development and success of the Hornets and the Newsgirls was for African Americans to honor members of their community. The teams were located in a distinct African American community where black individuals played on black teams at black YWCA’s and were reported on by the black press. The press was incredibly important to the development of the African American leagues. Their coverage on games and specific athletes increased the spending on facilities and personnel. They also provided the medium for promoting the athletic success of the African Americans.<sup>65</sup> Not only did these two teams help promote racial solidarity, but they also were part of a sports movement that was designed to explicitly showcase the best of

the black population. A 1923 article by Bill Gibson, a sports writer for the *Afro-American*, wrote of the significance of sport in the African American community:

Sports have always been known much in the manner of music, to be productive inter-racial fruit. Victories have done far more than a dozen seminars or conferences. They have shown that a Negro...can demonstrate ability equal to or superior to that of any other individual. The development of more individuals with ability and in more varied lines, then, should do much toward hastening the day when face-value will mean something other than the judging a man the color of his skin.<sup>66</sup>

This type of attitude toward African American sports was incredibly important, as the NAACP did not become involved with sports and civil rights issues until after 1940. In a way, women's basketball in Philadelphia was the premier way to fight the racist ideologies that existed in society.

### **Conclusion:**

Ultimately, during the 1920's and 1930's, women's basketball, particularly the club teams of Philadelphia, used winning records and sensational athletes to promote racial solidarity and to combat prejudice. The women who were members of the Germantown Hornets and the *Philadelphia Tribune* team practiced and played a sport that they loved despite the Victorian views of feminism and despite segregation. Although Philadelphia boasts a number of talented athletes who could have been discussed in this paper, Ora Washington and Inez Patterson were the premier examples of African American athletes who took on the challenges of race and gender. They were sensational athletes who developed as players in Philadelphia and then gave back to their community. Through the separate African American basketball leagues, the black

community was able to develop their female athletes while providing social activities for the entire group. This in turn developed a sense of pride within the community, especially when the athletes competed against the white population. For Philadelphia during the 1920s and 1930s, women's basketball became part of the "New Negro" movement, thus contributing greatly to the Civil Rights movement.

## Endnotes

---

<sup>1</sup> Bill Gibson, "Hear Me Talkin' to Ya," *Afro-American* (1893-1988), April 5, 1930, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 1, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Gregory Kent Stanley, *The Rise and Fall of the Sportswoman: Women's Health, Fitness, and Athletics, 1860-1940* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 26.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>4</sup> Miss Ruth Arnett. "Girls Need Physical Education." *The Chicago Defender* (National edition) (1921-1967), December 10, 1921, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 1, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> J. Lee, "The Threat of Robust Mothers," *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 24 (November 2007), 1384.

<sup>6</sup> M. Anne Hall, *The Girl and the Game*, (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2002), 25-26.

<sup>7</sup> Stanley, *The Rise and Fall of the Sportswoman: Women's Health, Fitness, and Athletics, 1860-1940*, 106.

<sup>8</sup> Jessie Yarborough, "Women vs. Sports," *Philadelphia Tribune (1912-2001)*, February 28, 1920, <<http://www.proquest.com/>> (accessed October 22, 2009).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Stanley, *The Rise and Fall of the Sportswoman: Women's Health, Fitness, and Athletics, 1860-1940*, 109.

<sup>11</sup> "Beauty Chats: Mme. Roberta Creditt Ole." *The Pittsburgh Courier* (1911-1950), March 27, 1926, City Edition, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 1, 2009).

<sup>12</sup> Zenobia Alexander, "Negro Womanhood Not Freed By Emancipation." *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), March 13, 1930, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 1, 2009).

<sup>13</sup> Palestine Wells, "Negro Women Will Fight With Motherhood, Says Palestine Wells: Destiny of Race Depends Most of Prolific Motherhood and Perfection of Race," *Afro-American* (1893-1988), January 6, 1923, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 5, 2009).

<sup>14</sup> "The Negro as a Citizen," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, (1911-1950), July 5, 1912, City Edition, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 5, 2009).

- 
- <sup>15</sup> Frederic Haskin, "Modern Woman: XXXVI.--Negro Women Are Working for Regeneration of Their Race," *Afro-American* (1893-1988), May 10, 1913, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 5, 2009).
- <sup>16</sup> Arthur R. Ashe Jr., *A Hard Road to Glory: Basketball—The African American Athlete in Basketball*, (New York: Amistad Press, Inc., 1988), xiii.
- <sup>17</sup> Tina Sloan Greene, Dr. Carole A. Ogelsby, Dr. Alpha Alexander, and Nikki Franke, *Black Women in Sport*, (Reston, Va.: AAHPERD Publications, 1981), 1.
- <sup>18</sup> "Beauty Chats: Mme. Roberta Creditte Ole." *The Pittsburgh Courier* (1911-1950), March 27, 1926, City Edition, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 1, 2009).
- <sup>19</sup> Ivora King, "Women in Sports," *Afro-American* (1893-1988), March 19, 1932, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 5, 2009).
- <sup>20</sup> Peter C. Bjarkman, *The Biographical History of Basketball* (Chicago: Masters Press, 2000), 204.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.
- <sup>24</sup> H D Martin, "Well Known Coach Declares That Court Game Should Rival Football Suggests Offering Trophies," *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912- 2001), December 27, 1924, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 5, 2009).
- <sup>25</sup> Edwin Bancroft Henderson, *The Negro in Sports*, (Washington D.C.: The Associated Publishers Inc., 1949), 149, 307.
- <sup>26</sup> Ashe, *A Hard Road to Glory: A History of the African-American Athlete 1619-1918*, 12.
- <sup>27</sup> *YWCA-Southwest Belmont*, 26, General Correspondence, 1929-1937, Philadelphia, Temple University Libraries, Urban Archives, Philadelphia, PA.
- <sup>28</sup> *YWCA-Southwest Belmont*, 18, Activities Schedule, 1947-48, Philadelphia, Temple University Libraries, Urban Archives, Philadelphia, PA.
- <sup>29</sup> "Display Ad 7 -- No Title," *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), February 9, 1933, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 7, 2009); "Other 5 -- No Title," *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), February 9, 1933, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 7, 2009); "Other 2 -- No

---

Title,” *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), February 9, 1933, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 7, 2009).

<sup>30</sup> “Article 5 -- No Title,” *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), November 12, 1936, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 7, 2009); “Fans Jam The YWCA When Trib Girls Play,” *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), December 3, 1936, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 7, 2009).

<sup>31</sup> “Celebritas Beat Quaker Girls Score 17-13,” *Afro-American* (1893-1988), March 5, 1927, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 7, 2009).

<sup>32</sup> “Plucky Lambda Tau Chi Quintet No Match For Germantown Y Hornets,” *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), January 29, 1931, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 7, 2009).

<sup>33</sup> “Hornets Invade West, Garner Natl. Title: Western Champs Fall Before Germantown Cagers at Pittsburgh. Had Clean Slate Rankin Club was Undefeated Three Years,” *Afro-American* (1893-1988), April 11, 1931, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 7, 2009).

<sup>34</sup> Tad, “In Liberty Bell Town,” *Afro-American* (1893-1988), January 30, 1932, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 7, 2009).

<sup>35</sup> “Germantown Hornets to Play N.J. Champs,” *Afro-American* (1893-1988), December 7, 1935, <http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/> (accessed December 7, 2009); “Germantown Hornets To Play Tribune Girls In Cage Series,” *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), February 27, 1936, <http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/> (accessed December 7, 2009).

<sup>36</sup> Ashe, *A Hard Road to Glory: Basketball—The African American Athlete in Basketball*, 8.

<sup>37</sup> Joseph Rainey, Jr., “Sports: Randy Says Tribune Sports Editor Now What?,” *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), January 14, 1932, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 6, 2009).

<sup>38</sup> Otto Briggs, “Who's Champion? Ot Briggs Or A. C. Legion Girls,” *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), May 28, 1936, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 6, 2009).

<sup>39</sup> Dick Sun, “Sports: Hornets and Newgirls Play For National Title: Launch Series Monday At Wissy Gym With Interest Running At Highest Peak Tribune Lassies Map Out Defense to Stop Ora Washington, Hornets' Ace; Betting Odds Vary Inez Patterson Back With Newgirls,” *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), February 4, 1932,

---

<<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 6, 2009).

<sup>40</sup> Randy Dixon, "Fans In Pandemonium As Hornets Lace Newsgirls In Thrill Saturated Clash: Personal Exploits of Ora Washington Prove Undoing of Challengers As Losers Play Great Game. Hornets Lead At Half Time, 2 TO 1," *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), February 11, 1932, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 6, 2009).

<sup>41</sup> "Phila. Girls in Fine Showing," *The New York Amsterdam News* (1922-1938), February 24, 1932, <http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/> (accessed December 6, 2009).

<sup>42</sup> Randy Dixon, "Newsgirls Top Hornets For National Title: Newsgirls Go Extra Period To Cop Title Foul Shot in Final 15 Seconds Ties Fray Then Hornets Falter Final Score 31 To 23," *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), April 7, 1932, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 6, 2009).

<sup>43</sup> Dick Sun, "Tribgirls Dazzle Down Home Fans In Victorious Tour," *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), March 22, 1934, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 7, 2009).

<sup>44</sup> Rita Liberti, "We Were Ladies, We Just Played Like Boys": African-American Womanhood and Competitive Basketball at Bennett College, 1928-1942," *Sport and the Color Line*, eds. Patrick B. Miller and David K. Wiggins (New York: Routledge, 2004), 89.

<sup>45</sup> Ashe, *A Hard Road to Glory: Basketball—The African American Athlete in Basketball*, 8.

<sup>46</sup> Rita Liberti, "We Were Ladies, We Just Played Like Boys": African-American Womanhood and Competitive Basketball at Bennett College, 1928-1942," XI.

<sup>47</sup> "Which Is The Greater?," *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), January 26, 1933, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 7, 2009).

<sup>48</sup> Lucius Jones, "Tribune Girls Realized Dream When They Defeated White Quintette By 21-19," *Atlanta Daily World* (1932-2003), February 25, 1938, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 7, 2009); "Sensational Quint To Face Tribgirls," *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), October 28, 1937, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 7, 2009).

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Edwin Bancroft Henderson, *The Negro in Sports*, (Washington D.C.: The Associated Publishers Inc., 1949), 237.

- 
- <sup>51</sup> Bernice Dutrieuille, "Philly Maid Wins Honors in Sport: Inez Patterson Makes Unusual Record As All- Round Athlete," *The Pittsburgh Courier* (1911-1950), June 16, 1928, City Edition, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 16, 2009).
- <sup>52</sup> "Inez Patterson, Potential Record Breaker; Has Eyes On Making Olympic Team: Sensational and Versatile Temple Student Gave Flashes of What to Expect in 1931 "Nationals" To Concentrate On Javelin Event," *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), January 14, 1932, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 16, 2009).
- <sup>53</sup> Inez Patterson, "Girls in Sports," *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), September 19, 1929, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 16, 2009).
- <sup>54</sup> Bernice Dutrieuille, "Temple Student Tells How She Met Swim Color Bar: Inez Patterson (Pat) Boasts That She Put Herself Thru College Just as Her Mother Did Before Her," *Afro-American* (1893-1988), June 23, 1934, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 16, 2009).
- <sup>55</sup> Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Evelyn Brooks Higginbottom eds., African American National Biography, vol. 8 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 148.
- <sup>56</sup> Marianna W. Davis ed., Contributions of Black Women to America, vol. 1 (Columbia, S.C.: Kenday Press, Inc., 1982), 502.
- <sup>57</sup> "Greatest Girl Court Ace Now With Tribune," *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), November 3, 1932, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 7, 2009).
- <sup>58</sup> Randy Dixon, "Sports: Ora Washington Capt., All-Philly Girls' Team Hornets' Ace Picked As Best Girl Player; Jersey Girl Gains Guard Berth First Team Consisting of Hill, Laws, Washington, Davis and Patterson, is Best Ever Selected Hard Battle For Second Team Berths," *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), March 17, 1932, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 7, 2009).
- <sup>59</sup> St Episcopal, "Germantown Folks Enjoy Yuletide Follies," *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), January 8, 1931, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 7, 2009).
- <sup>60</sup> Pamela Grundy and Susan Shackelford, Shattering the Glass: The Remarkable History of Women's Basketball, (New York: The New Press, 2005), 63.
- <sup>61</sup> Rita Liberti, "'We Were Ladies, We Just Played Like Boys': African-American Womanhood and Competitive Basketball at Bennett College, 1928-1942," Townsend Interview, 89.
- <sup>62</sup> Dick Sun, "Ora Washington Three-Time Net Winner: One Time Philly Lassie Dominates Open Tourney As Smith Retains Title Annual Conclave of State Net Body on Germantown "Y"

---

Courts Featured By Spirited Play Throughout; Gordon-Dawkins Doubles Victors Coxen Surprises To Rule Juniors,” *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), July 24, 1930, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 16, 2009).

<sup>63</sup> Thelma Berlack-Boozer, “Woman of the Week,” *New York Amsterdam Star-News* (1941-1943), August 23, 1941, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 16, 2009).

<sup>64</sup> David K. Wiggins and Patrick B. Miller eds., *The Unlevel Playing Field* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 143.

<sup>65</sup> John A. Saunders, *100 years after Emancipation: A History of the Philadelphia Negro, 1787 to 1963*, (E. Washington Rhodes, Esq., 1966), 333.

<sup>66</sup> Bill Gibson, “Hear Me Talkin' To Ya,” *Afro-American* (1893-1988), August 20, 1932, <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (accessed December 7, 2009).

---

## Bibliography

- Alexander, Zenobia. "Negro Womanhood Not Freed By Emancipation." *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001). March 13, 1930.  
<<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 1, 2009).
- Arnett, Miss Ruth. "Girls Need Physical Education." *The Chicago Defender* (National edition) (1921-1967). December 10, 1921.  
<<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 1, 2009).
- "Article 5 -- No Title." *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001). November 12, 1936.  
<<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 7, 2009).
- Ashe, Arthur R. Jr. A Hard Road to Glory: A History of the African-American Athlete 1619-1918. New York: Warner Books, Inc., 1988.
- Ashe, Arthur R. Jr. A Hard Road to Glory: Basketball—The African American Athlete in Basketball. New York: Amistad Press, Inc., 1988.
- "Beauty Chats: Mme. Roberta Creditt Ole." *The Pittsburgh Courier* (1911-1950). March 27, 1926, City Edition. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 1, 2009).
- Berlack-Boozer, Thelma. "Woman of the Week." *New York Amsterdam Star-News* (1941-1943). August 23, 1941. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 16, 2009).
- Bjarkman, Peter C. The Biographical History of Basketball. Chicago: Masters Press, 2000.
- Briggs, Otto. "Who's Champion? Ot Briggs Or A. C. Legion Girls." *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001). May 28, 1936. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 6, 2009).
- "Celebrities Beat Quaker Girls Score 17-13." *Afro-American* (1893-1988). March 5, 1927.  
<<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 7, 2009).
- Davis, Marianna W. ed. Contributions of Black Women to America, vol. 1. Columbia, S.C.: Kenday Press, Inc., 1982.
- "Display Ad 7 -- No Title." *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001). February 9, 1933.  
<<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 7, 2009).

---

Dixon, Randy. "Fans In Pandemonium As Hornets Lace Newsgirls In Thrill Saturated Clash: Personal Exploits of Ora Washington Prove Undoing of Challengers As Losers Play Great Game. Hornets Lead At Half Time, 2 TO 1." *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001). February 11, 1932. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 6, 2009).

Dixon, Randy. "Newsgirls Top Hornets For National Title: Newsgirls Go Extra Period To Cop Title Foul Shot in Final 15 Seconds Ties Fray Then Hornets Falter Final Score 31 To 23." *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001). April 7, 1932. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 6, 2009).

Dixon, Randy. "Sports: Ora Washington Capt., All-Philly Girls' Team Hornets' Ace Picked As Best Girl Player; Jersey Girl Gains Guard Berth First Team Consisting of Hill, Laws, Washington, Davis and Patterson, is Best Ever Selected Hard Battle For Second Team Berths." *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001). March 17, 1932. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 7, 2009).

Dutrieuille, Bernice. "Philly Maid Wins Honors in Sport: Inez Patterson Makes Unusual Record As All- Round Athlete." *The Pittsburgh Courier* (1911-1950). June 16, 1928, City Edition. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 16, 2009).

Dutrieuille, Bernice. "Temple Student Tells How She Met Swim Color Bar: Inez Patterson (Pat) Boasts That She Put Herself Thru College Just as Her Mother Did Before Her." *Afro-American* (1893-1988). June 23, 1934. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 16, 2009).

"Fans Jam The YWCA When Trib Girls Play." *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001). December 3, 1936. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 7, 2009).

Gates, Henry Louis Jr. and Evelyn Brooks Higginbottom eds. African American National Biography, vol. 8. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

"Germantown Hornets to Play N.J. Champs." *Afro-American* (1893-1988). December 7, 1935. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 7, 2009).

"Germantown Hornets To Play Tribune Girls In Cage Series," *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), February 27, 1936, <http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/> (December 7, 2009).

Gibson, Bill. "Hear Me Talkin' to Ya." *Afro-American* (1893-1988). April 5, 1930. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 1, 2009).

- 
- Gibson, Bill. "Hear Me Talkin' To Ya." *Afro-American* (1893-1988). August 20, 1932. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 7, 2009).
- "Greatest Girl Court Ace Now With Tribune." *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001). November 3, 1932. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 7, 2009).
- Greene, Tina Sloan, Dr. Carole A. Ogelsby, Dr. Alpha Alexander, and Nikki Frank. Black Women in Sport. Reston, Va.: AAHPERD Publications, 1981.
- Grundy, Pamela and Susan Shackelford, Shattering the Glass: The Remarkable History of Women's Basketball. New York: The New Press, 2005.
- Hall, Anne M. The Girl and the Game. Ontario: Broadview Press, 2002.
- Haskin, Frederic. "Modern Woman: XXXVI.--Negro Women Are Working for Regeneration of Their Race." *Afro-American* (1893-1988). May 10, 1913. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 5, 2009).
- Henderson, Edwin Bancroft. The Negro in Sports. Washington D.C.: The Associated Publishers Inc., 1949.
- "Hornets Invade West, Garner Natl. Title: Western Champs Fall Before Germantown Cagers at Pittsburgh. Had Clean Slate Rankin Club was Undefeated Three Years." *Afro-American* (1893-1988). April 11, 1931. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 7, 2009).
- "Inez Patterson, Potential Record Breaker; Has Eyes On Making Olympic Team: Sensational and Versatile Temple Student Gave Flashes of What to Expect in 1931 "Nationals" To Concentrate On Javelin Event." *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001). January 14, 1932. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 16, 2009).
- Jones, Lucius. "Tribune Girls Realized Dream When They Defeated White Quintette By 21-19." *Atlanta Daily World* (1932-2003). February 25, 1938. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 7, 2009).
- King, Ivora. "Women in Sports." *Afro-American* (1893-1988). March 19, 1932. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 5, 2009).
- Lee, J. "The Threat of Robust Mothers," The International Journal of the History of Sport 24. November 2007.

- 
- Liberti, Rita. ““We Were Ladies, We Just Played Like Boys”: African-American Womanhood and Competitive Basketball at Bennett College, 1928-1942.” Sport and the Color Line. eds. Patrick B. Miller and David K. Wiggins. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Martin, H D. “Well Known Coach Declares That Court Game Should Rival Football Suggests Offering Trophies.” *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001). December 27, 1924. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 5, 2009).
- “The Negro as a Citizen.” *The Pittsburgh Courier* (1911-1950). July 5, 1912, City Edition. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 5, 2009).
- “Other 2 -- No Title.” *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001). February 9, 1933. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 7, 2009).
- “Other 5 -- No Title.” *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001). February 9, 1933. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 7, 2009).
- Patterson, Inez. “Girls in Sports.” *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001). September 19, 1929. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 16, 2009).
- “Phila. Girls in Fine Showing.” *The New York Amsterdam News* (1922-1938). February 24, 1932. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 6, 2009).
- “Plucky Lambda Tau Chi Quintet No Match For Germantown Y Hornets.” *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001). January 29, 1931. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 7, 2009).
- Rainey, Joseph Jr. “Sports: Randy Says Tribune Sports Editor Now What?” *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001). January 14, 1932. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 6, 2009).
- Saunders, John A. 100 years after Emancipation: A History of the Philadelphia Negro, 1787 to 1963. E. Washington Rhodes, Esq., 1966.
- Stanley, Gregory Kent. The Rise and Fall of the Sportswoman: Women’s Health, Fitness, and Athletics, 1860-1940. New York: Peter Lang, 1996.
- St Episcopal. “Germantown Folks Enjoy Yuletide Follies.” *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001). January 8, 1931. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 7, 2009).

---

Sun, Dick. "Ora Washington Three-Time Net Winner: One Time Philly Lassie Dominates Open Tourney As Smith Retains Title Annual Conclave of State Net Body on Germantown "Y" Courts Featured By Spirited Play Throughout; Gordon-Dawkins Doubles Victors Coxen Surprises To Rule Juniors." *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001). July 24, 1930. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 16, 2009).

Sun, Dick. "Sports: Hornets and Newsgirls Play For National Title: Launch Series Monday At Wissy Gym With Interest Running At Highest Peak Tribune Lassies Map Out Defense to Stop Ora Washington, Hornets' Ace; Betting Odds Vary Inez Patterson Back With Newsgirls." *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001). February 4, 1932. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 6, 2009).

Sun, Dick. "Tribgirls Dazzle Down Home Fans In Victorious Tour." *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001). March 22, 1934. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 7, 2009).

Tad. "In Liberty Bell Town." *Afro-American* (1893-1988). January 30, 1932. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 7, 2009).

Wells, Palestine. "Negro Women Will Fight With Motherhood, Says Palestine Wells: Destiny of Race Depends Most of Prolific Motherhood and Perfection of Race." *Afro-American* (1893- 1988). January 6, 1923. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 5, 2009).

"Which Is The Greater?" *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001). January 26, 1933. <<http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.temple.edu/>> (December 7, 2009).

Wiggins, David K. and Patrick B. Miller eds. The Unlevel Playing Field. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003.

Yarborough, Jessie. "Women v. Sports." *Philadelphia Tribune* (1912-2001), February 28, 1920. <<http://www.proquest.com/>> (October 22, 2009).

YWCA-Southwest Belmont. 18. Activities Schedule, 1947-48. Philadelphia. Temple University Libraries, Urban Archives. Philadelphia, PA.

YWCA-Southwest Belmont. 26. General Correspondence, 1929-1937. Philadelphia. Temple University Libraries, Urban Archives. Philadelphia, PA.