



Breaking the Barrier: African Americans and the World of Tennis

Overview: As students learn about African Americans who have broken barriers on the tennis court and off, they will also review the use of text features and search tools to research, build and present knowledge as they conduct a short research project. The activities that accompany this unit are geared toward students in 6th-8th grade. These activities encompass review of Common Core Standards mastered at previous grade levels as well as Common Core Standards Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects and English Language Arts Writing to be mastered at the students's current grade level.

Objectives:

Students will be able to-

- Form an understanding of barriers that were broken on and off the court by past, present, and up-and-coming African American tennis players.
- Activate background knowledge regarding text features and their importance in accurately reading and using informational text for research purposes.
- Gain an understanding of significant African Americans who have contributed to advancing diversity in the world of tennis
- Complete a short research project that answers the questions of who these tennis players were and their importance not only in the world of tennis, but to history as a whole.

Lesson Time Suggested: Five class periods



Lucy D. Slowe

Born in 1885, Lucy Slowe went on to become the first female graduate and the first scholarship recipient of her high school to enter Howard University in Washington, D.C. Slowe graduated as class valedictorian in 1908 and accepted a teaching position

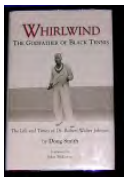
at Douglass High School in Baltimore. While attending Howard University and continuing through the years, she excelled at tennis. In 1917, Slove became the first African American to win a national title in any sport by winning the first women's title at the American Tennis Association's (ATA) national tournament in Baltimore.



Hall of Famer Dr. Robert W. Johnson

Tennis historians have long lauded the noble efforts of Althea Gibson and Arthur Ashe in breaking down racial barriers, but without the guidance and encouragement of Dr. Robert Johnson, known as the "godfather" of black tennis, Gibson, Ashe, and countless other African Americans would have been denied the opportunity to play tennis, therefore dashing not only tennis hopes and dreams, but the myriad of personal growth benefits that come with athletics. For more than two decades, Dr. Johnson trained, coached, and mentored African Americans from his personal courts in Lynchburg, Virginia. He established a Junior Development program for the American Tennis Association (ATA), worked tirelessly behind the scenes to provide opportunities for all competitors, and emerged as a towering figure in the game's evolution. For more information visit [Dr. Robert Johnson](#) on the International Tennis Hall of Fame website.

Dr. Robert Johnson Objects on Display in the Museum:



Whirlwind, The Godfather of Black Tennis

(author) Doug Smith (American, 1942-)

(foreword by) John McEnroe (American, 1959-)

(publisher) Blue Eagle Publishing Company (American)

2004

Dr. Johnson served as a force behind the integration of tennis. He built a tennis dynasty that produced two grand Slam champions, Althea Gibson and Arthur Ashe.

Gift of Doug Smith, 2004

PUB. 2004.17

Location: Area 2: Tennis & Tours, American Tennis Association Case



Hall of Famer Althea Gibson

Tall and sinewy, determined and athletic, confident and aggressive, Althea Gibson turned the 1950s into a showcase for her talent and temerity. Breaking the color barrier in 1950 at Forest Hills by gaining entry into the U.S. National Championships, Gibson played with peak efficiency from 1956-1958. In that span, she collected five major singles titles, sweeping Wimbledon and the U.S. back-to-back in the latter two seasons. For more information visit [Althea Gibson](#) on the International Tennis Hall of Fame website.

Althea Gibson Objects on Display in the Museum:



Time Magazine featuring Althea Gibson

(artist) Boris Chaliapin (Russian, 1904-1979)

(publisher) Time Inc. (American)

August 26, 1958

Gift of Michael Dodson, 1998

98.8.4

Location: Area 2: Tennis & Tours, 1940s and 1950s Case



Sports Illustrated Magazine featuring Althea Gibson

(publisher) Time Inc. (American)

September 2, 1957

ITHF&M Acquisition, 1998

98.81.2

Location: Area 2: Tennis & Tours, 1940s and 1950s Case



I Always Wanted to Be Somebody

(author) Althea Gibson (American, 1927-2003)

(publisher) Harper & Brothers Publishers (American)
1958

In her autobiography, Althea Gibson chronicles her life on and off the court, including the trials and tribulations she had to overcome in her rise to greatness.

Gift of Mr. John D. Law, 1997

PUB.1958.5

Location: Area 2: Tennis & Tours, American Tennis Association Case



Wheaties Cereal Box featuring Althea Gibson, 2001

General Mills (American)

ITHF&M Collection, 2001

2001.2.1

Location: Area 2: Tennis & Culture, Pop Culture Case



Hall of Famer Arthur Ashe

Younger generations of tennis fans may only recognize Arthur Ashe's name as the one that adorns the stadium at the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center at Flushing Meadows, NY, site of the US Open, or that starting in 1993 the USTA has kicked off the tournament with Arthur Ashe Kids' Day. Ashe rose from segregation and racial roadblocks to become the first African-American male to win the US Open (1968), Australian Open (1970), and Wimbledon (1975). In 1963 he was the first African-American chosen to play Davis Cup for the United States, and in ten years representing his country, helped the US win five championships (1963, 1968, 1969, 1970, and 1978). He was an activist, author, educator, and a tireless campaigner for civil rights and racial equality, not only in the United States but worldwide, particularly against the apartheid systems of South Africa. For more information visit [Arthur Ashe](#) on the International Tennis Hall of Fame website.

Arthur Ashe Objects on Display in the Museum:



In His Shadow (Arthur Ashe)

Richard Wilson (American, 1972 -)
Pastel on Wallis sanded pastel paper
2010

North Carolina-based artist Richard Wilson strives for his art to tell stories about optimism or introspection. "In His Shadow" portrays a young tennis player walking off the court inspired by his idol, Arthur Ashe.

Gift of John G. Davis, 2011
2011.10.1

Location: Area 2: Tennis & Tours, next to Pro Tours Case

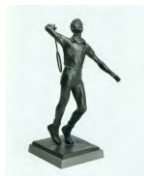


ATA National Championships Program, 1962

The 46th ATA National Championships were held at Wilberforce University in Ohio. Arthur Ashe won a third consecutive men's singles title while Carolyn Liquori won the women's singles title and partnered with Mimi Kanarek to capture the women's doubles title.

Gift of Nora Graves, 2007
2007.43.12

Location: Area 2: Tennis & Tours, American Tennis Association Case



Arthur Ashe (6/45)

Joe Brown (American, 1909-1985)
Bronze
1966

Joe Brown created this realistic bronze of Arthur Ashe which was presented during National Arthur Ashe Day on Tuesday, August 30, 1966.

ITHF&M Acquisition, 1998
98.6

Location: Area 2: Tennis & Tours, American Tennis Association Case



Telegram from Jackie Robinson to Arthur Ashe, September 10, 1968

Western Union (American)

In 1968, Arthur Ashe, an amateur tennis player, defeated professional Tom Okker 14-

12, 5-7, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, in the first US Open final. With this win, Ashe became the first African-American man to win a major title, a historic feat which was recognized by Jackie Robinson.

ITHF&M Acquisition, 2005

2005.8.1

Location: Area 2: Tennis & Tours, American Tennis Association Case



Napkin autographed by peers of Arthur Ashe, 1986

In 1986, Arthur Ashe attended his 25th high school reunion in Virginia. His classmates and teachers, proud of what he had accomplished, sought out his autograph. Ashe believed that he was no more significant than his peers, and spent the evening obtaining the autographs of his former classmates and teachers.

ITHF&M Acquisition, 2013

2013.2.1

Location: Area 2: Tennis & Culture, Games Case, Drawer 4



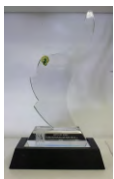
Wheaties Cereal Box featuring Arthur Ashe, 1997

General Mills (American)

Gift of Julia A. Levering, 1998

98.20

Location: Area 2: Tennis & Culture, Pop Culture Case



ATP Arthur Ashe Humanitarian of the Year Award, 2003

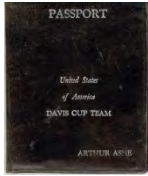
Waterford Crystal (Irish)

In 2003, Gustavo Kuerten was presented with this award, in recognition of the work he has done through his Institute Guga Kuerten (inspired by his late brother Guilherme and opened in 2000). The Institute Guga Kuerten is dedicated to providing developmental opportunities, sports, education, and social inclusion for the disabled in Brazil.

Gift of Gustavo (Guga) Kuerten, 2014

2014.18.3

Location: Area 3, ATP WCT/Handsome 8, Wimbledon Boycott, Year-End Championships Case



Arthur Ashe's Davis Cup Team Passport Case, ca 1980

unknown maker

Ashe represented the United States 18 times as a player, and later served as Captain (1981-1985).

ITHF&M Acquisition, 2005

2005.8.6

Location: Area 3, Global Tennis Gallery, Davis Cup Case



“Arthur Ashe Competition II” Tennis Racquet used by Arthur Ashe, 1975

Head (American)

Arthur Ashe used this racquet in the 1975 Wimbledon Gentlemen’s Singles Championship final to defeat rival Jimmy Connors 6-1, 6-1, 5-7, 6-4.

Gift of Arthur Ashe, 1980

80.13

Location: Area 3, Grand Slam Gallery, Wimbledon Case



Serena Williams

Serena Williams embodies style, power, beauty and courage. Currently ranked #1, Serena has overcome insurmountable odds to win 21 career Grand Slams. Not only is she remarkable at tennis, her success with endeavors outside of the sport include film, television, fashion and philanthropy. Her tennis ability combined with her off-court activity makes her one of the most recognizable names and faces in the world—an icon.

Serena was born September 26, 1981 in Saginaw, Michigan, to Richard and Oracene Williams. While still an infant, the family moved to Compton, California where she began playing tennis at the age of four. At nine, Serena and her family moved to West Palm Beach, Florida. Since that time, she has become one of the most dominant figures in tennis.

Venus Williams

Athlete. Entrepreneur. Best-selling author. Olympic Gold medalist. Activist. Designer.

Daughter. Sister. Champion. Each of these describes Venus Williams, but on their own they fail to capture the sum of her person.

Growing up in a tight-knit family and coached by her parents Richard and Oracene, Williams entered the pro ranks of the Women's Tennis Association when she was 14 years old. Her attacking style and impressive physicality immediately caught the attention of the tennis industry. Soon, the whole world was watching Williams rack up 43 WTA Tour titles, three Olympic Gold medals, break the record for fastest serve ever recorded (129 mph), and compete in the longest finals match in Wimbledon history (two hours and 45 minutes).

Venus Williams items on display in the Museum:



WTA Tour Equal Prize Money Recognition Award, 2007

Sterling Cut Glass Co. (American)

The Sony Ericsson WTA Tour created this one-of-a-kind display—containing a ball from the 2007 Wimbledon Championships autographed by finalists Venus Williams and Marion Bartoli—to recognize the achievement of securing equal prize money for women in all four of the Grand Slam tournaments. In 2007 Roland Garros and Wimbledon agreed to do so, following the Australian Open and the US Open who have provided equal prize money since 2000 and 1973 respectively.

Gift of the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour, 2009

2009.14.1 a-c

Location: Area 3, WTA Virginia Slims and Prize Money Case



Dress worn by Venus Williams, 2010

Eleven by Venus Williams (American)

With its skin-toned lining, this “see-through” black lace dress shocked and awed audiences during the 2010 French Open at Stade Roland Garros in Paris and around the world. Venus’s daring ensemble entertained viewers of the second Grand Slam event of the year.

Gift of Venus Williams, 2010

2010.21.1

Location: Area 3, WTA Fashion, Players, Year End Champs Case

Serena Williams items on display in the Museum:



Serena Williams's Catsuit, 2002

Puma (German)

The form-fitting Lycra "catsuit" made headlines and raised eyebrows when Serena Williams wore it as she dominated the 2002 US Open. Although Williams credited the outfit for the supreme confidence with which she was playing, it was not worn when she completed a "Serena Slam" in Melbourne at the 2003 Australian Open, becoming the fifth woman in history to hold all four major titles at the same time.

Gift of Serena Williams, 2003

2003.22.1

Location: Area 3, WTA Fashion, Players, Year End Champs Case



Serena Williams's Gold Tennis Shoe, 2002

Puma (Germany)

Williams sported the gilt tennis shoe style during the 2002 French Open Women's Singles Championships at Stade Roland Garros. She defeated her older sister Venus 7-5, 6-3 to win her first French Open title.

Gift of Serena Williams, 2002

2002.48

Location: Area 3, WTA Fashion, Players, Year End Champs Case



Dress and tennis shoes worn by Serena Williams, 2010

Nike, Inc. (American)

At the 2010 Australian Open, Serena Williams defended her 2009 title by defeating Justine Henin of Belgium 6-4, 3-6, 6-2. This was Serena's 12th major singles title and an Open Era record 5th at the Australian Open.

Gift of Dianne Hayes on behalf of Nike, Inc. and Serena Williams, 2010

2010.12.1 and 2010.12.2a&b

Location: Area 3, Grand Slam Gallery, Center Case

Venus & Serena items on display:



Venus & Serena: Serving from the Hip

(author) Venus Williams (American, 1980-)

(author) Serena Williams (American, 1981-)

(contributor) Hilary Beard (American, unknown)

(publisher) Houghton Mifflin Company (American)

2007

ITHF&M Collection

PUB.2005.23

Location: Area 3, WTA Fashion, Players, Year End Champs Case



Madison Keys

2016 marked Madison Keys's best season on the WTA tour. She won her first two titles, finished in the Top 10 (#8) for the first time, made her first WTA Tour Championships, and made it to the Bronze Medal match at the Olympic Games in Rio. This was all as a 21-year-old. Keys has a lot of promise for the future, and is a proud representative of the Next Generation of American women's tennis stars.

Possible Sources:

- *Faithful to the Task at Hand: The life of Lucy Diggs Slowe* by Carroll L.L. Miller and Anne S. Pruitt-Logan
- *Whirlwind: The Godfather of Black Tennis* by Doug Smith
- *Changing the Game: The stories of tennis champions Alice Marble and Althea Gibson* by Sue Davidson
- *I Always Wanted to be Somebody* by Althea Gibson
- *A Hard Road to Glory Vols. 1-3* by Arthur Ashe
- *Days of Grace* by Arthur Ashe
- *On the Line* by Serena Williams
- *Venus & Serena: Serving from the Hip* by Venus & Serena Williams
- *Come to Win* by Venus Williams
- ATP/WTA pages of players
- ITHF pages of Hall of Famers

Materials Needed:

- Knowledge Rating Chart
- Common Text Feature Glossary
- Informational Text Feature Chart
- *A Hard Road to Glory* Chapter 4
- Sequencing timeline

- Lending library of materials (International Tennis Hall of Fame Information Research Center, School Library, Public Library, Classroom Library)
- Tell Me the Details chart
- Wheaties Box Biography sheet

Literacy In History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects and English Language Arts Writing

Common Core State Standards Addressed:

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.5

Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.6

Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Production and Distribution of Writing:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas clearly and efficiently.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.7

Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.8

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.9

Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Lesson & Activity

Teaching/Model (These lessons should be completed over a 5 day time period)

1. Teacher will present students with a Knowledge Rating Chart to assess their knowledge of six past, current and up and coming African American tennis players.
2. Teacher will activate students' prior knowledge regarding text features and their importance in gathering information using Common Text Feature Glossary and an article or book that includes examples of text features. Students will then be presented with the Informational Text Features Chart. Students will then be directed towards a lending library created by the Tennis Hall of Fame or by the classroom teacher/media specialist with books and articles about the six tennis players presented on Knowledge Rating Chart. The students will have the opportunity to go through these books and articles while filling out the Informational Text Features Chart (independently or in small groups). If time allows students can share out their text feature findings with the entire group. **(End of Day 1)**
3. Teacher will remind students of the usefulness of text features in gathering information from informational text. The teacher will then focus on the text feature of the timeline. Students will be given Chapter 4 from *The Hard Road to Glory* and working in small groups will create a timeline of important historic dates related to the advancement of African Americans in the world of tennis by using the Sequencing Timeline provided by the teacher. Timelines should be displayed so that students have a chance to look at other students' timelines and solidify their background knowledge regarding the advancement of African Americans in the world of tennis. **(End of Day 2)**
4. Students will be presented with a short research project to complete. They will choose one of the six tennis players previously presented to them on the Knowledge Rating Chart. Using the lending library and other resources students will begin to answer the questions "Who is (chosen tennis player)?" and "What is his/her historical significance to the game of tennis?" To assist in the organization of research students will fill out the Tell Me the Details graphic organizer as presented by the teacher.




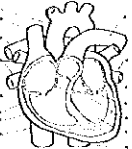
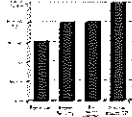

5. Students will present their information creatively using the Wheaties Box activity. They will be required to use many text features to effectively answer the research questions mentioned above. **(Days 3-5)**

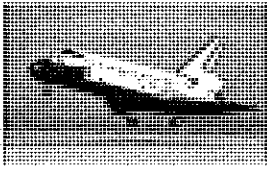
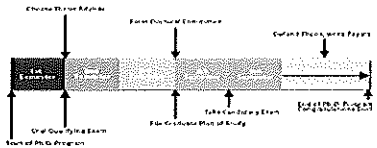
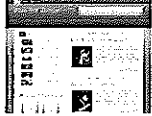
Knowledge Rating Chart

How much do you know about these famous African American Tennis Players?

Person	I know about the person and can tell you something about them.	I have heard of the person but I can't tell you anything about them.	I have never heard of the person.
Lucy Slowe			
Arthur Ashe			
Althea Gibson			
Dr. Robert Johnson			
Venus and Serena Williams			
Madison Keys			

Text Features Chart

Text Feature	Definition	Example
Title	Name of a literary work. It gives the reader an idea about what will be read in the book	
Appendix	a section at the back of a book or document that gives additional information that is important to but is not in the main text	<p>Appendix A chronological record to June 30, 1948 of the development of Rotary contributed by Rotary International, Philip C. Lovejoy, General Secretary, whose courtesy is appreciated by the Publishers.</p>
Captions	words underneath/ beside photographs, illustrations or charts explaining what it is or what it is about	 <p>Inauguration of President Kennedy</p>
Charts or tables	a visual representation of data, a visual depiction of information that is quick and easy to read	
Diagram	a drawing intended to explain how something works; a drawing showing the relation between the parts	
Glossary	glossary is an alphabetical list of terms with the definitions for those terms. It usually appears at the end of a book and includes terms which are newly introduced	<p style="text-align: center;">GLOSSARY</p> <p>Astrophysics – The branch of astronomy that deals with the physics of stellar phenomena Atmosphere – The layers of gases which surround a star, like our sun or a planet like our earth</p>
Graphs	a visual representation showing how 2 or more sets are related to each other plotted with reference to a set of axes	
Heading	a line of text serving to indicate what the passage below it is about	<p>Ancient Road System There are traces of several ancient roads in the history and landscape around Turoe.</p>
Index	Pages at the back of the book that tell where to find important topics in the book. It lists the page number the term is found on.	<p>Index Abernathy, William, 36-37, 38, 47, 197-199 Acheson, Dean, 47, 291 Aeme Cleveland, 312 action principle, 13-14, 17, 119-155</p>
Maps	Information presented in visual form to tell you where something is or where it happened. It helps to understand where places are located	

Photograph/Illustration	A picture that emphasizes key points and adds interest																																				
Bold Print	Text that is heavier and darker than the rest of the text. It can be used to show which words can be found in the glossary.	Text in Bold Print																																			
Table	A list of facts or numbers arranged in a special order, usually in rows and columns.	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Belt</th> <th>Gates Length Tolerance (in.) (Approx.)</th> <th>RMA Length Tolerance (in.)</th> <th>Center Distance (in.)</th> <th>Sag (in.)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3VX500</td> <td>0.14</td> <td>0.15</td> <td>21.50</td> <td>1.07</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3VX760</td> <td>0.28</td> <td>0.30</td> <td>32.80</td> <td>1.86</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6VX1600</td> <td>0.42</td> <td>0.45</td> <td>67.40</td> <td>3.27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5VX2500</td> <td>0.42</td> <td>0.45</td> <td>103.00</td> <td>4.02</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8V3350</td> <td>0.65</td> <td>0.69</td> <td>142.40</td> <td>5.43</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8V4000</td> <td>0.70</td> <td>0.75</td> <td>170.90</td> <td>6.87</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Belt	Gates Length Tolerance (in.) (Approx.)	RMA Length Tolerance (in.)	Center Distance (in.)	Sag (in.)	3VX500	0.14	0.15	21.50	1.07	3VX760	0.28	0.30	32.80	1.86	6VX1600	0.42	0.45	67.40	3.27	5VX2500	0.42	0.45	103.00	4.02	8V3350	0.65	0.69	142.40	5.43	8V4000	0.70	0.75	170.90	6.87
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Table of Contents	A list that shows the major chapters and parts of the book as well as the page numbers.	Contents List of illustrations 5 General Introduction 6 User's guide 10 Language of Shakespeare 17 Commentary 20																																			
Time line	A visual representation of events in history displayed in chronological order.																																				
Subheading	A secondary heading added underneath a subject heading. It is used to divide entries under the subject into more specific subcategories.	Heading For a major heading, skip three lines from the top margin (or previous section) and place the heading. Use a font larger than the text, initial capitals, and boldface. For minor reports, the major heading serves as the report's title. Subheading																																			
Footnote	a note of text placed at the bottom of a page in a document that provides additional information	² Radford, Robert. July 28 2002. < http://www.imperialmetric.com >																																			
Bullet Points	a symbol used to introduce items in a list. Bullet points are used to create a list and make it easier to read and understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item 1 • Item 2 • Item 3 																																			
Italics	Words that are slanted to the right. It calls attention to important words or terms. It shows which words can be found in the glossary.	<i>Words in italics</i>																																			
Sidebar	Boxes of information to the side of the main text/column(s).																																				

Tennis

The Sport of Kings

Before horse racing assumed the title of "the sport of kings" in the mid-1700s, tennis lay claim to that category. The French called it *tenez* and played their version indoors. The English followed in turn and, depending on which sets of rules were followed, it was referred to more properly as *real tennis* or *court tennis*. In 1415, Charles, Duke of Orleans, played tennis while imprisoned by the English after the Battle of Agincourt. King Henry VIII was an avid player.

The English brought it outdoors, changed the court dimensions, and eventually Mary Outerbridge brought the sport to America in 1874. The first national tournament was held in 1881 at Newport, Rhode Island, and the entries were predominantly the members of elite private clubs of the Northeast. No blacks or socially outcast players were permitted but, by 1890, several professional black families had built courts on their properties.

There were no public courts in the 1890s and it had little appeal to working class folk. Players traditionally dressed in all-white with the men in flannel pants, long-sleeved shirts, and ties. The women wore long ankle-length full skirts and

blouses up to the neck. Their shoes were leather-soled and high-topped. Most courts were of closely cut grass that required steady maintenance. Tennis, along with crew and golf, was identified with the upper classes and strictly for amateurs. The United States National Lawn Tennis Association (USNLTA), its governing body, meant to keep it just the way it began.

Tennis among blacks took root at the Ivy League colleges where the well-to-do sent their children—if they could get in. Eventually the campuses of Howard University, Lincoln University, Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University), and others had courts for their faculty. Records at Tuskegee show tournaments were held there as early as 1895. The organizers were E.T. Atwell, Emmett J. Scott, Warren Logan, and S.E. Courtney.

Not to be outdone, enterprising blacks in Philadelphia held a tournament in 1898 which was won by Thomas Jefferson of Lincoln University. The Philadelphia contingent, headed by Reverend W.W. Walker, had also invited fellow blacks from Washington, D.C., to compete in team play in 1898 and 1899. The Washington, D.C., group, led by Dr. Henry Freeman, went down to defeat. One of Freeman's members

was Charles C. Cook, Howard University's first football coach who had attended Cornell University.

By the first decade of this century, professional blacks along the East Coast had formed clubs and were playing regular intercity matches. Socially prominent blacks found tennis an ideal sport and encouraged their children to learn. Teachers, preachers, professors, doctors, lawyers, dentists, and merchants sought refuge in fraternal and sororal associations at their local courts. Out in Chicago, Mrs. C.O. "Mother" Seames, a legendary figure in tennis circles there, began teaching on a single court at the turn of the century.

The equipment then was quite crude and expensive by today's standards. The rackets were wooden and unwieldy with large bare handles (no leather grips), the strings were thicker and they loosened considerably as time passed. The balls were slightly smaller and lost their fuzzy nap much sooner, even though most courts were grass. Courts used by blacks, however, were nearly always made of clay. On a typical tennis outing, players had to even bring a net to the site as few were permanently provided.

By 1910, the black press reported on the doings of the Monumental Club of Washington, D.C.; the Chautauqua Tennis Club in Philadelphia; the Flushing Tennis Club of New York City; and others in Wilmington, Delaware; New Rochelle, New York; New Haven, Connecticut; Annapolis, Maryland; Atlanta; Durham, North Carolina; Charleston, South Carolina; and New Orleans. That same year, the members of the Washington, D.C., YMCA team con-

ducted a traveling tour of several cities to show the rudiments of the game to interested groups. Play in the Far West and Midwest seemed limited as Edwin B. Henderson noted that there was "...only one court available to colored citizens..." in St. Louis, Missouri.

Among the Washington, D.C., troupe was John E.N. Wilkinson, who was the best player between 1910 and World War I. Other names that appear as having exceptional records were Rev. Walker, Edgar Brown, Henry Freeman, E.J. Ridgely, Ralph Cook (Charles' brother), H. Stanton McCard, Gerald F. Norman, Daisy Reed, Dora Cole Norman, and Lucy Diggs Slowe. Dora Cole Norman was also the best basketball player in her day and Miss Slowe eventually became dean of women at Howard University.

On the eve of World War I, Edwin B. Henderson and Roscoe C. Bruce, the new assistant superintendent of Colored Schools of Washington, D.C., had introduced the sport to some public school youngsters and black colleges were playing informal matches. Virginia Union, Hampton Institute (now Hampton University), Howard, and Atlanta University had the best teams. Enough sustained interest seemed present to form a national body to cultivate even more interest in the black community. The result was the formation of the American Tennis Association (ATA). It became the oldest, continuously operated black sports group in the country, outside of collegiate circles.

The American Tennis Association

In 1916, the Association Tennis Club of Washington, D.C., invited local players and

those from Baltimore to form a national body. The initial attendees at the ATA's formation were Henry Freeman, John E.N. Wilkinson, and Talley Holmes from Washington, D.C., and H. Stanton McCard, William H. Wright, B.M. Rhetta, and Ralph Cook from Baltimore. McCard was elected president and Gerald Norman of the Ideal Tennis Club in New York was executive secretary.

The ATA had four goals: to develop tennis among black people in the United States; to encourage the formation of clubs and the building of courts; to encourage the formation of local associations; and to encourage and develop junior players. To that end and to inaugurate its efforts, the first ATA Nationals were held at Baltimore's Druid Hill Park courts, in August 1917. Twenty-three clubs sent players and from the thirty-nine entries, Talley Holmes emerged the winner of the Men's Singles. The first Women's winner was Lucy Diggs Slowe. Miss Diggs thus became the first black female national champion in any sport. Junior Singles and Women's Doubles did not begin until 1924.

In spite of the success of the ATA, tennis remained confined to the black professional classes and collegians. A survey was made in 1926 which showed little or no interest from fifty-six of seventy colleges queried, only thirty-six schools with courts, and only four of them with coaches. Dr. Elwood Downing of Roanoke, Virginia; Charles Williams of Hampton's faculty; and Cleveland Abbott at Tuskegee helped remedy this shortcoming.

The best opportunities came at white colleges with their superior facilities, tough

competition, and quality coaching. Four blacks played on these varsity squads before the Depression: Richard Hudlin at the University of Chicago; Douglas Turner at the University of Illinois; Henry Graham at Michigan; and Reginald Weir at the City College of New York (CCNY). Hudlin was captain of his team in 1927, Turner was runner-up in the Big Ten Championships in 1929, and Weir was captain three years running at CCNY.

In 1929, the ATA and the USNLTA had its first confrontation over the entries of Weir and Gerald Norman, Jr. in the USNLTA's Junior Indoor event at New York City's seventh Regiment Armory. Relations between the two groups had been cordial until then. In 1921, Dwight F. Davis, the donor of the Davis Cup and the secretary of war, had umpired a semi-final match at the ATA Nationals. But the USNLTA had an unwritten rule barring blacks from participation. Now, however, some blacks were good enough to compete with the best around.

Weir and Norman had paid their one dollar entry fee and showed up to play. When informed that his son could not participate, Norman's father, Gerald Sr., complained to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The NAACP assistant secretary, Robert Bagnoll, complained but received the following reply: "...the policy of the USLTA [they had deleted the word "National" from their title] has been to decline the entry of colored players in our championships....In pursuing this policy we make no reflection upon the colored race but we believe that as a practical matter, the

present method of separate associations... should be continued."² Neither Weir nor Norman played.

It is interesting that the NAACP was brought into the predicament when very little input from them was forthcoming in other sports like baseball. But tennis was a middle class sport and the NAACP—at the time—had a middle-class following, with virtually all of its officers drawn from the black professional class. The NAACP did not, for instance, try to intercede on behalf of the boxer Harry Wills, who was summarily cut out of his rightful heavyweight title opportunity by Tex Rickard and other boxing authorities.

The denials of Weir and Norman did not disguise the talent in ATA events. Eyre Saltch was one of the best and most athletic of ATA Nationals winners. He was more famous as a member of the famed New York Renaissance basketball team. Among the women, Isadore Channels and Ora Washington were clearly the best yet. Channels won four ATA Nationals crowns between 1922 and 1926, Washington won a record eight crowns between 1929 and 1937. Both Channels and Washington were, like Saltch, star performers on the basketball courts as well.

Washington was so good that Chicago's black paper, the *Chicago Defender*, noted on March 14, 1931, that "Ora Washington, now of Chicago, again holds her position as national champion, having gone through the season without a defeat. We don't even recall her losing a set.... Her superiority is so evident that her competitors are frequently beaten before the first ball crosses the net."³ So complete was the dominance of a few women players that

in the first twenty years of the ATA's history, there were only five different winners.

Washington was also quite unorthodox in her approach. She held the racket half way up the handle and seldom took a full swing. But no woman had her foot speed, which she honed while playing basketball for the *Philadelphia Tribune* team. She was clearly the first black female to dominate a sport. Lulu Ballard finally stopped her winning streak in 1936. Completing the list of outstanding female players were Flora Lomax of Detroit and the Peters sisters, Roumania and Margaret. The latter twosome won the ATA Women's Doubles crown a whopping fourteen times, unmatched by any doubles team—male or female.

Ora Washington's reign came during the Depression years of the 1930s, which turned out to be a blessing and a curse for black tennis. The blessing came in the form of more facilities built during President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration programs. Hundreds of public courts were erected in parks where blacks played. The curse, of course, was that few people had enough resources to do much of anything, let alone play games.

The Depression Years and World War II.

With more balanced interest and facilities in more places, the ATA moved its Nationals event to different venues during the 1930s. But soon the courts at Wilberforce College in Ohio became the most centrally located because of the increased entries from Texas, Arkansas, and even California. The Nationals remained east of

the Mississippi River, however, until 1975, when they were played in San Diego.

College play greatly enhanced the appeal of ATA events, which fitted in neatly with the group's middle-class orientation. Interest had expanded since the end of World War I, and the Colored (Now Central) Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) was by far the strongest conference. Smith, Morgan State, Howard, and St. Augustine all won titles during the 1930s and 1940s. The Midwestern Athletic Association (MWA), the Southwest Athletic Conference (SWAC), the South Central Athletic Conference (SCAC), and the Eastern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (EIA) fielded mediocre teams at best. The talent in the clubs and in the collegiate ranks remained in the Northeast though Tuskegee was an exception.

Tuskegee compiled the best record of any black school in any sport on the tennis courts but, in truth, their competition was woefully inadequate. They had a club team beginning in 1909 and their coach, Cleveland Abbott, became an ATA president. They also had two courts built exclusively for women staff and students. When the ATA Nationals were held there in 1931, fourteen courts were in place with a covered grandstand for 1,000 people. Quite an achievement in the Depression. The other solid southern team was at Xavier University in New Orleans, thereby taking advantage of that city's long history of blacks in sports. The SWAC did not even have a conference championship until 1942.

To capitalize on the growing interest, the ATA, at its 1937 annual meeting, arranged an exhibition tour for some of its

best players at schools and colleges. Starting on February 4, 1938, Lulu Ballard, Ernest McCampbell and others visited twenty-one colleges and eight high schools in a journey that must rank as a noble effort to upgrade black tennis across the eastern half of the country. That there were possible rewards in the offing (for those who heeded their advice) came in the form of a continuing black presence on some white college varsities. Dan Kean had played at Michigan in 1933 and Maceo Hill was at Ohio State that same year.

The styles of play of players like Kean and Hill had changed considerably since the era of Rev. Walker and Henry Freeman. Early participants used lots of chops and spins and the next wave of players made better use of the power derived from better equipment. By 1930, the best black players were copying the best white players in strokes and swings. Although white players could not be seen at events held at private clubs, they could be viewed at places like the seventh Regiment Armory in New York City.

The Jackson brothers, Nathaniel and Franklin, were baseline experts like the legendary Don Budge, the white champion, and well-coached by Cleveland Abbott. They dominated the ATA Doubles events in the 1930s. Jimmy McDaniel was the first good player from California. Beginning in 1939 he won four ATA crowns. His style, as opposed to that of Kean, Hill, and the Jackson brothers, was the serve-and-volley variety developed on the fast cement courts in Los Angeles. California had few if any slow clay courts, so their players played very aggressive tennis. McDaniel was so impressive that he was involved in an his-

toric interracial exhibition in July 1940 with Budge, winner of the four major world titles in 1938.

This exhibition took place at the Cosmopolitan Tennis Club on Convent Avenue in Harlem, New York. Budge won 6-1, 6-2 on the club's best clay court in front of the largest crowd ever to watch a match there. Sandwiched as it was among tall apartment buildings, the club could not hold all who wanted to witness this historic happening, but it was the best that Harlem had to offer at the time. After the singles, Budge and Reginald Weir played a doubles match against McDaniel and Richard Cohen, the reigning ATA champions.

While Budge's appearance was certainly inspirational and appreciated, blacks were still *persona non grata* at the USLTA Nationals at the West Side Tennis Club at Forest Hills, New York. Of the ATA Nationals winners, only Lloyd Scott and the 1950 champion, Oscar Johnson of Los Angeles, had practiced regularly against whites. Said Johnson of that period: "At the time, blacks were literally not allowed to play in tourna-

ments against whites. Players before me could not enter... Jimmy McDaniel was very good in his day. The only encounter... he had playing against a white was in a tournament in New York, an all-black tournament."⁴ However, McDaniel and Johnson were not the only eminently qualified players to face discrimination.

Pressures were mounting nonetheless for the USLTA to admit blacks to its sanctioned events. After World War II, the most important breakthrough came from an unlikely source—a street-smart, lower-middle-class female named Althea Gibson. She and Johnson would force the USLTA to amend its tournament entry policies and lead a new wave of black players who went to the very top of the rankings.

Notes

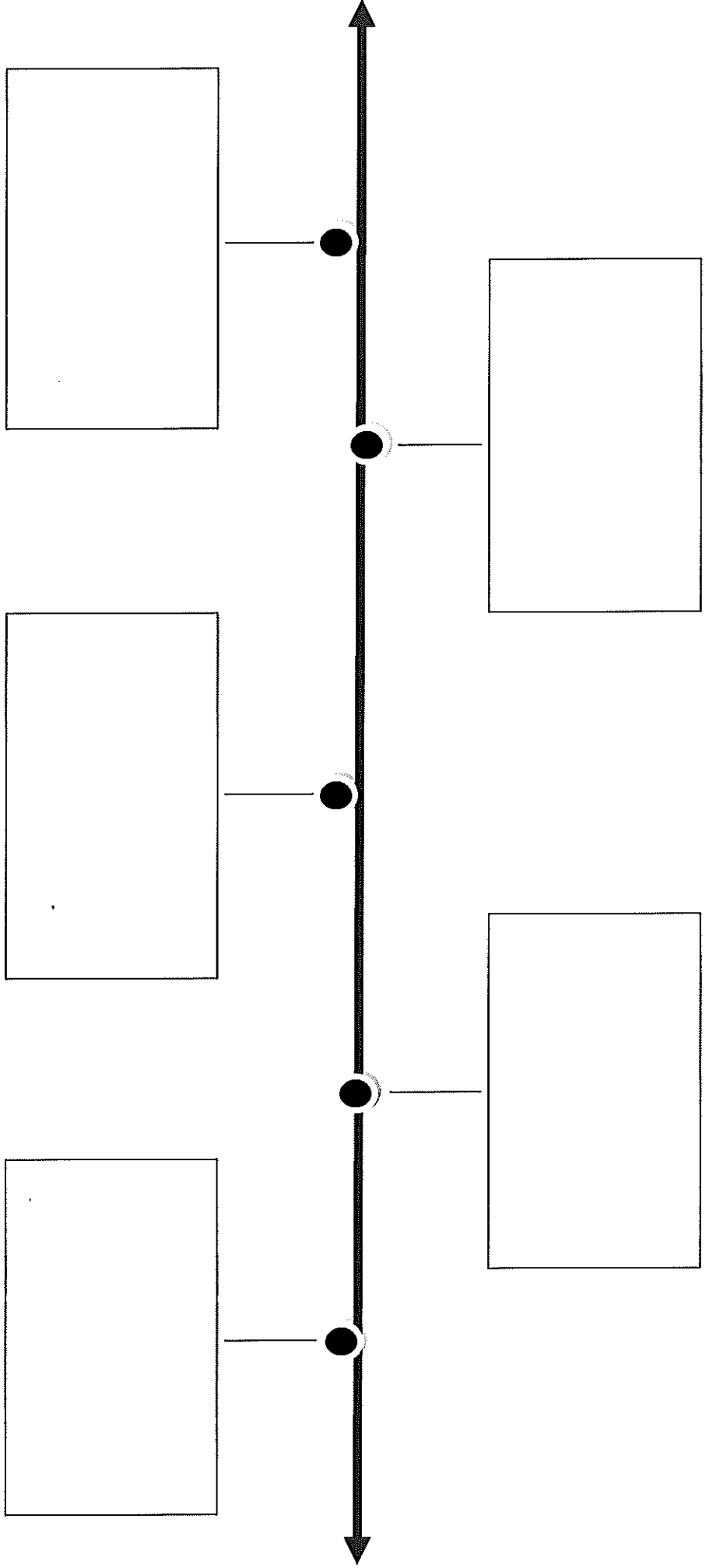
1. Henderson, *The Negro in Sports*, p. 312.
2. *Montgomery Advertiser*, 28 December 1929.
3. *Chicago Defender*, 14 March 1931.
4. *Tennis West Magazine*, March 1984, p. 140.

Name: _____

Sequencing Timeline

Write the person's name on the line. Next write important events in the order in which they happened.

Important Events in _____'s Life



Tell Me the Details

Use the graphic organizer below to record major details about

_____.

Detail 1 _____

Detail 2 _____

Detail 3 _____

Detail 4 _____

Detail 5 _____

Use the back of this paper to record more details if needed.

Wheaties Box Biography

After conducting your reading and research use text features including but not limited to, headlines, charts, photographs, captions, fact boxes, graphs, maps and timelines create your own Wheaties Box Biography. Be sure to cover your cereal box neatly with white paper before you begin creating your box by following the steps below.

FRONT OF THE BOX – The front of the box should have a picture of the person from your reading. The picture may be an illustration or photograph of the person. The front should also clearly state the person's name in bold letters.

SIDE OF THE BOX – The side of the box, typically states the nutrition facts, should list facts about the person. The person's date of birth, death, hometown, marital status, number of children, and any other facts you would like to include. The "ingredients" list should include character traits of the person. Also, include information related to the person contribution to tennis and to diversity.

BACK OF THE BOX – On the back of the box describe the major accomplishments of the person. What did he or she do well? What failures or obstacles did he or she encounter?

SIDE OF THE BOX – On the other side of the box describes the **setting (time and place)** when and where this person lived. Was the setting important to his/her success or fame?

TOP OF THE BOX – On the top of the box tell about the influences in this person's early life that developed his/her personality and character.

BOTTOM OF THE BOX – Your name and the title and author of the reading.