



INTERNATIONAL TENNIS HALL OF FAME

The Newport Casino

Overview: As students are learning about the history of Newport, RI, they will also learn about the Newport Casino, home to the International Tennis Hall of Fame. The activities that accompany this lesson are geared toward students in 5th grade, and can be paired with other units on Rhode Island and/or Newport history. These activities encompass review of Common Core Standards mastered at previous grade levels as well as Common Core Standards Literacy in History/Social Studies and English Language Arts Writing to be mastered at the students' current grade level.

Based on knowledge that Newport thrived in the Gilded Age of the United States, students will connect this time to the establishment of the Newport Casino, its lean years, and eventually the establishment of the National Lawn Tennis (now International Tennis) Hall of Fame.

Objectives:

Students will be able to-

- Form an understanding of the Gilded Age and how it led to the establishment of the Newport Casino
- Activate background knowledge regarding Newport and/or Rhode Island history
- Complete a short research project that answers the questions of...

Lesson Time Suggested: One class period



James Gordon Bennett

Per legend, James Gordon Bennett, Jr., a summer resident of Newport and heir to the *New York Herald* fortune, was a member of the prestigious Newport Reading Room,

a gentlemen's-only club. Bennett reputedly bet his polo partner, Captain Henry Augustus Candy, to ride his polo horse onto the front porch of the exclusive gentlemen's only club, the Newport Reading Room. Candy took the dare one step further and rode straight through the clubrooms, disturbing members. After Candy's guest membership was revoked, Bennett purchased the land across the street from his home, Stone Villa, and sought to build his own social club, which became the Newport Casino.

A sports enthusiast, James Gordon Bennett, Jr., founded the Westchester Polo Club in 1876, the Gordon Bennett Cup for international yachting in 1872, and the Gordon Bennett Cup for automobile races in 1900.

James Gordon Bennett Objects on Display in the Museum:



James Gordon Bennett, Jr. (1841-1918)

George Benjamin Luks (American, 1867-1933)

Oil on canvas

undated

ITHF&M Acquisition, 2012

2012.17.1

Location: Area 1: Newport Casino diorama



James Van Alen

A lifelong Newporter, James Van Alen was a court tennis champion and innovator of the game of tennis. In the 1950s Van Alen saw that the Newport Casino was falling into disrepair, and knew that the former home to the U.S. National Championships needed a new purpose. After a visit to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY, Van Alen and his wife Candace thought that they had the perfect solution: turn the Newport Casino into a National Lawn Tennis Hall of Fame. Once the Hall of Fame was established, Van Alen was able to test out some of his tennis innovations at the various tournaments held on the grounds. One such innovation is the Van Alen Streamlined Scoring System (VASSS), which was the precursor to the modern-day tiebreak in tennis. Van Alen also loved writing poetry, and wrote a post

script to *A Visit from St. Nicholas* (also known as *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*), and always had a reading for local children during the holiday season at the Newport Casino.

James Van Alen Objects on Display in the Museum:



Jimmy Van Alen

Felix de Weldon (American, 1907-2003)

Bronze

1982

This is a smaller version of the sculpture of Van Alen located outside on the grounds of the International Tennis Hall of Fame. De Weldon, born in Vienna (Austria), was a long-time resident of Newport and is most famous for his sculpture titled the United States Marine Corps War Memorial (Iwo Jima Memorial) at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, DC.

ITHF&M Collection

1000.2006.88

Location: Area 1: Credentials Gallery, Van Alen Case



The Van Alen Cup, 2001 – Present

Tiffany & Co. (American)

Presented to the singles winner of the Hall of Fame Tennis Championships—held on the legendary grass courts at the International Tennis Hall of Fame & Museum—this perpetual trophy symbolizes the legacy of Jimmy and Candy Van Alen and their generous support of the Hall of Fame over the years.

Location: Area 1: Credentials Gallery, Van Alen Case



Court Tennis Racquet used by Jimmy Van Alen, ca. 1950

Bancroft (American)

Jimmy Van Alen was an avid court tennis player and champion, having won multiple singles and doubles titles.

ITHF&M Collection

1000.2006.93

Location: Area 1: Origins Gallery, Large case



Mortimer Cup for Men's Doubles, 1957

Smith & Smith (American)

The Mortimer Cup is presented to the champion of the Racquet & Tennis Club of New York City's doubles tournament. This trophy was presented to Jimmy Van Alen and Alastair B. Martin for their win in 1957.

Gift of the Estate of Candace Van Alen, 2003

2003.15.39

Location: Area 1: Origins Gallery, Large case

Newport Social Index for the 1920 Season

Newport Social Index Association (American)

The *Newport Social Index* was published yearly until 1948. It was a directory that identified the affluent class of Newport and its vicinity with a complete listing of the names of residents formally introduced into society, along with their summer and winter addresses, phone numbers, and club affiliations. This directory also provided a complete list of Newport Clubs as well as the Army and Naval Officers attached to the various stations in the area.

Gift of James H. Van Alen

PUB.1920.10

Location: Area 2: Newport Casino Invitation Case

VASSS

Hall of Fame Founder Jimmy Van Alen developed the Van Alen Streamlined Scoring System (VASSS) around 1960, leading to the modern-day tie-break.

Van Alen introduced VASSS, which he tested with professional players first in Washington, DC, then at the Newport Casino. Eventually, Van Alen introduced a 9-point "sudden death" tie-break system. Over time, a 12-point system won acceptance from fans and competitors, becoming the method of competition scoring. Television viewers insisted on shorter matches, making the tie-break mandatory, and the game has since prospered from high drama and suspense.

Location: Area 2: Tennis and Tours, Pro Tour Case



Drawing of Pancho Gonzales and Jimmy Van Alen, July 10, 1965

Paule Loring (American, 1899-1968)

Gonzales never shied away from giving his opinions, and Van Alen was equally as colorful. This moment of Gonzales arguing with Van Alen at a tournament here at the Newport Casino was captured in this cartoon which ran in the *Providence Journal-Bulletin*.

Gift of Mr. Paule Loring, 1965

65.3

Location: Area 2: Tennis and Tours, Pro Tour Case



Sudden Death Hand Sign, ca. 1970

VASSS used a sudden-death tie breaker (best-of-nine-points) to end prolonged sets and matches. This sign was used by officials to indicate when this event was underway.

ITHF&M Collection, 1994

94.8.3e



Caption: Left to right: Allie Ritzenberg, Jimmy Van Alen, Lew Hoad, and Jack Kramer at the tournament where the tie-breaker was first used, ca. 1960. Van Alen first tested out VASSS with Jack Kramer's Pro Tour at the Uline Arena in Washington, DC. Photo Credit: ITHF&M Collection

Location: Area 2: Tennis and Tours, Pro Tour Case



VASSS License Plate, 1996

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

Newport native Jimmy Van Alen was proud of his contributions to tennis and the International Tennis Hall of Fame & Museum. Following his death in 1991, his widow Candy Van Alen continued to use his vanity plate until her death in 2003.

Gift of the Estate of Candace Van Alen, 2003

2003.15.50

Location: Area 2: Tennis and Tours, Pro Tour Case

Materials Needed:

- Knowledge Rating Chart
- Bios of James Gordon Bennett and James Van Alen
- Gilded Age summary <https://www.history.com/topics/gilded-age>
- Sports Halls of Fame summary <http://studenttravelplanningguide.com/10-top-sports-halls-of-fame-in-u-s/>
- *Tennis and the Newport Casino*
- Tell Me the Details chart

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

Common Core State Standards Addressed:

Craft and Structure:

Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects:

- **Key ideas and details**
 - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
 - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.2 Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.
 - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.3 Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.
- **Craft and Structure**
 - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a *grade 5 topic or subject area*.
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.5 Compare and contrast the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more texts.
- **Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:**
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.7 Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.8 Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point(s).
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.9 Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.
- **Research to Build and Present Knowledge**
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.7 Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.8 Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Lesson & Activity

Teaching/Model

1. Teacher will present students with a Knowledge Rating Chart to assess their knowledge of two people, one theme, and one concept (James Gordon Bennett, James Van Alen, the Gilded Age, and Halls of Fame).
2. Students will be given bios of Bennett and Van Alen, and pages on the Gilded Age and Halls of Fame for background knowledge.
3. Students will be given pages from *Tennis and the Newport Casino* to learn more about Bennett, Van Alen, and the building.
4. Students will be presented with a short research project to complete. In groups, they will choose either Bennett and the Gilded Age or Van Alen and Halls of Fame. Using the Tell Me the Details chart, they will write what they have learned about each concept.
5. Students will present their information creatively by making a full-page advertisement for either the Newport Casino or the Tennis Hall of Fame, using either the computer and images or paper and cut-outs.

Knowledge Rating Chart

How much do you know about these people, themes, or concepts?

Person/ Event/ Theme	I know about the person/event/theme and can tell you something about them/it.	I have heard of the person/event/theme but I can't tell you anything about them/it.	I have never heard of the person/event/theme.
James Gordon Bennett			
Gilded Age			
James Van Alen			
Sports Halls of Fame			

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.