

The Life and Career of a Tennis Icon:

How Althea Gibson Created a Turning Point in African American Female Sports

Senior Paper

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Process Paper

Ever since third grade, I have loved tennis. The thrill of hitting the ball across the net, the joy of winning, and simply being on the tennis court brought out my athletic and energetic side. Despite my genuine passion for playing tennis, I never found myself watching professional matches. Out of curiosity, I searched for “Best Tennis Match” on YouTube, leading me to watch Serena Williams in action, and I was captivated. Fast forward six years, as I explored history through NHD, I reflected on my interests and hobbies. I considered writing about Serena Williams’s remarkable gameplay. However, I stumbled upon a story of another extraordinary woman, Althea Gibson, whom I had never heard of before. It turned out she was the true trailblazer who served as the role model of my role model, and naturally, I chose to focus my paper on her.

I started with an in-depth investigation into Gibson's childhood. Surprisingly, she began her tennis career by playing paddle tennis. This drove me to explore further how and why Gibson transitioned to tennis. Whenever I encountered information lacking sufficient detail, I searched various sources to gain a comprehensive understanding, ensuring I could articulate it effectively in my research. After concluding my research of her childhood, I searched for the formative years of her tennis career, meticulously looking into tournaments she participated in and the obstacles she struggled through. Subsequently, I delved more into pivotal moments that served as a turning point for her life and future generations.

My paper is divided into six sections, each discussing critical stages of her life. The introduction provides a fundamental background for the readers to understand that this paper is dedicated to the life of Althea Gibson and gives a brief overview of how she became a trailblazer in history. My paper progresses chronologically, so the next section covers her tough childhood. From there, quotes are used from those close to her or who saw her play in tennis competitions. The third section talks about her struggles through racial segregation, specifically the restrictions she faced due to the Jim Crow Laws. The following sections articulate the turning point she set for the world, being the first Black female athlete to win the U.S. Open and Wimbledon, and how she paved the way and inspired the next generation of Black female athletes. The conclusion sums up why she deserves to be remembered as a historical trailblazer.

Althea Gibson is a significant figure in history as she continued her tennis career despite being vulnerable to criticism, racial insults, and enmity simply due to her race as an African American female athlete. Not only did she win multiple notable titles and prove to the world that she was a remarkable tennis player, but she also broke the seemingly insurmountable racial barrier in sports for women. Her achievements sent a powerful message to the world, affirming that individuals, regardless of their race or gender, have the capability to pursue and excel in their passions.

Introduction

The early 20th century was a period of significant change and challenge for the African-American community. Overt politically sanctioned racial segregation and discrimination in the form of Jim Crow laws, very limited economic opportunities, educational inequity, and voting restrictions were some of the major obstacles they faced in their daily lives.

However, amidst this social and political unrest, a 28-year-old athlete debuted for the Brooklyn Dodgers in April of 1947, changing the trajectory of sports in the United States forever. Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in professional sports and became a trailblazer in the fight for African-American equality (“Jackie Robinson”). Thanks to actions on and off the field, Robinson became a household name, transcended sports, became featured in most school curriculums, and is regarded as a monumental figure in the history of sports and the fight for equality in the United States.

However, within a few years of Robinson's debut in baseball, a much less well-known athlete broke the female color barrier and set a path for so many young African-American females. Althea Gibson was born in Silver, South Carolina, in 1927 and was raised in Brooklyn (“Althea Gibson”). She faced the double challenge of being a female and African-American athlete at a time when women in sports drew little attention from spectators or sponsors and sports were segregated under Jim Crow laws. Thanks to her grit and determination, Gibson would go on to become one of the greatest female tennis players of all time. She is a role model for all disenfranchised people worldwide, and her life and career are turning points in the history of African-American and female sports. This is her story.

A Natural Talent Blooms

Raised in Harlem, New York, in the 1920s, Gibson was born into an impoverished family. She believed her father, Daniel Gibson, a cotton sharecropper, “was let down when she was born in the family’s cabin on August 25, 1927, for a simple yet significant reason: she was not a boy” (Brown 20). Gibson described herself as “never really [being] the tennis type,” and in fact, nothing in her early life indicated that she would go on to be one of the most influential tennis

athletes ever (Stanmyre 13). Her family moved to New York when she was two years old, as a part of the Great Migration of Black Southerners fleeing the depression-ridden Jim Crow South. They lived in the economically depressed community on 143rd Street in Harlem. Like so many Black families who were initially enticed by the promises offered during the Harlem Renaissance, they arrived at the end of this developmental period and their lives were far from easy (Destin).

Althea was not a star student and spent much of her early life using the boxing skills her father taught her to fight with other girls. Fearful of her father's violent behavior, she had spent much of her teenage years in the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children after running away from home multiple times, resulting in her becoming homeless. Althea states in her autobiography, "My parents did their best to raise me, but I didn't let them" (Gray 2). Being a rebellious adolescent, she stepped into the real world too quickly and was unprepared for the challenges awaiting her. When Gibson reflected on her childhood after the triumph she accomplished, she gave tribute to "the awful amount of people who cared enough to help me [her]" and appreciated the "wicked amount of punishment along the way," which helped her grow not just as an athlete, but also as a person (Stanmyre 9).

Gibson continued to struggle in the classroom, often skipping school altogether and eventually becoming a high-school dropout. However, Gibson loved to play sports, especially paddle tennis ("Althea Gibson Biography"). The street she lived on was one of the popular streets where young people gathered to play, with games including hoop basketball, marbles, loadies, and paddle tennis. The paddle tennis court was located right in front of their family house, and ever since she started hitting the ball back and forth with her friend one summer morning, they immediately were "the block paddle tennis court occupiers" ("Interview with Althea Gibson"). However, despite her truly difficult childhood, she quickly became the New York City women's paddle tennis champion in 1939, partly due to her innate athleticism but also due to the time and effort she put into paddle tennis. Mildred "Millie" Travis, a maternal figure to Gibson and her coach during her formative years, said, "When other girls were putting on lipstick, she was playing stickball" (Brown 255). After her outstanding win in the paddle tennis championship, she was invited to play standard lawn tennis at Black tennis clubs in her community. The clubs were still segregated at this time, but this was a crucial step in her career as she started competing in local

tournaments. Despite her innate tennis skills, her etiquette on the court was often very inappropriate. She was known to spit on her opponent whenever she lost a match or vocally disagreed with official decisions (Schoenfeld 7).

Crossing Racial Lines

As Gibson continued playing in local tournaments, a key figure in her life, Robert Walter Johnson, saw her play and immediately recognized her potential. Johnson was a well-respected Black physician and professional tennis player.

Johnson was searching for a young Black player with natural ability whom he could train. When Johnson saw Gibson's play, he immediately recognized that she was going to be “part of a historical plan” created by him and Hubert A. Eaton “to prepare Althea to make a cross-racial breakthrough.” As her two mentors were “about to change my [her] life,” Johnson willingly took her under his wing and served as her surrogate parent (Parihar 52). The oppressive Jim Crow Laws meant that breaking the color barriers would be extremely difficult. The three of them first targeted to win titles in prominent tournaments for Black athletes. As the teaching pro at the all-Black Cosmopolitan Tennis Club in Harlem, Johnson began to pay for her membership and sponsored her for ATA-sponsored tournaments, enabling her to win the all-black American Tennis Association (ATA) New York State Tournament at 18 in 1945. After being crowned champion, she entered her first interracial ATA New York State Tournament. This competition was held during the end of the segregation era, which allowed her to play against white athletes and helped her solidify the formative years of her professional tennis career. She won the championship on her first attempt and for six consecutive years. Her next tournament was the Cosmopolitan Tennis Club Invitational, a competition for black tennis players, and she won it again with relative ease (Ault). The tennis world could not ignore her for long.

A Turning Point for Black Female Athletes

Gibson was the first ever Black woman to qualify for the 1950 U.S. National Championships. Given her personal history and on-court behavior, she entirely stood out from her competitors. Throughout most of the 20th century, tennis fans expected finesse and timidity in the women's game. But Althea Gibson was an aggressive tennis player who hit powerful groundstrokes and was unafraid to charge the net. Due to Gibson's race and style of play, critics accused her of playing in an unfeminine way ("Leveling the Playing Field: Althea Gibson").

On August 28, 1950, Gibson officially broke the color barrier and walked onto the court, determined to win. She started strong in the championships by beating Barbara Knapp 6-2 in her first USLTA tournament match. Her subsequent match against Althea Louise Brough would be the showcase that Gibson and much of the anti-segregation movement had been waiting for. Gibson lost a tight match in the second round to Brough, three-time defending Wimbledon champion (Appendix A). Despite her loss, however, women's tennis became one of Black America's favorite sports almost overnight ("Althea Gibson becomes first African American on U.S. Tennis Tour"). Lester Rodney, journalist for the Daily Worker, considered how monumental this moment was by stating that "no Negro player, man or woman, has ever set foot on one of these courts. In many ways, it's even a tougher personal Jim Crow-busting assignment than was Jackie Robinson's when he first stepped out of the Brooklyn Dodgers dugout" (Stanmyre 28).

The following year, she won her first international title in the Caribbean Championship in Jamaica in 1951. After graduating from Florida A&M University in 1953, Gibson took a job teaching physical education at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri, but continued competing in tennis competitions. Gibson had no fears and did not feel obliged to share her spoils with anyone, contrasting with other influential Black sportsmen of the Civil Rights era, such as Joe Louis. She never gave up on tennis even though she might upset some in the white community; Gibson solely cared for her passions (Gray 125). Such fervor led her to receive an invitation from Ren McMann, the president of Forest Hills' West Side Tennis Club and a USLTA postenante, to represent the United States in a goodwill tour of Asia (Appendix B). Having a Black woman travel under the State Department's banner and talk up the American lifestyle had strong symbolic resonance both in the U.S. and abroad.

Gibson's Miracle Year

Once the tour was over in 1956, Gibson became the first African American to win the French Open. Later, in sensational style, she won the Wimbledon doubles title with Briton Angela Buxton, the Italian National Championship in Rome, and the Asian championship in Ceylon (Bond). However, her career went from strength to strength as she became the first Black athlete to triumph in a Grand Slam tournament. The following year, in 1957, Althea Gibson would achieve new milestones: winning at Wimbledon and the U.S. Open. Richard Nixon, Vice President of the United States, presented her with the trophy (Appendix C). When asked which victory that summer was more meaningful, she replied, “Winning Wimbledon was wonderful, and it meant a lot to me” (Brown 2). Additionally, at the All England Club, she won in front of Queen Elizabeth II, shaking hands with the queen of England,” she said, “was a long way from being forced to sit in the colored section of the bus.” When she returned to New York City on July 11, she became only the second Black American, after the 1936 Olympic champion Jesse Owens, to be honored with a ticker tape parade (Sokolowski). In 1958, she became the first Black woman to make the cover of Time and Sports Illustrated (Appendix D).

As racial tensions escalated in the United States, many expected Gibson to make a stand as she was now an admirable and determined athlete. However, she aimed to become a role model through her actions on the court, not her voice. According to Buxton, her focus was not on rectifying racial inequalities or fighting for equal rights for African Americans; instead, she was determined to excel in tennis, defeat every opponent, and “show that she was the queen bee, so to speak” (Rossingh).

Gibson’s Often Overlooked Legacy

In 1957, Althea Gibson was voted Female Athlete of the Year by the Associated Press, becoming the first African American to receive the honor, which she also won the following year (“Althea Gibson”). She formally retired from tennis in late 1958 after one of the most incredible careers ever and played many exhibition matches for money in the coming years. Gibson, somewhat unbelievably, in 1960, became a professional golfer, and while she had limited success, this feat alone shows how talented she was as an athlete.

In 1971, she was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame. However, even then, she was restricted from going to locker rooms, so she had to change in the kitchen and was not allowed in the tennis clubhouse. Despite winning eleven major titles, Gibson faced disparities in privileges and sponsorship compared to her white female counterparts. Even though she was arguably the top female player in America, Gibson had to withdraw from the tour at the peak of her abilities to support herself financially (Destin). Her legendary career was seemingly forgotten by many as the years progressed.

In the late 1990s, Serena and Venus Williams—the Williams sisters—made their tennis breakthrough. In 1999, Serena Williams won the U.S. Open, becoming the first Black woman to win a Grand Slam since Gibson, 41 years earlier. In 2000, Venus Williams became the first Black woman since Gibson to win Wimbledon. The sisters went on to become two of the best female tennis players and highest-paid female athletes in the world. In contrast, Gibson, the trailblazer who paved the way for many, experienced periods of great difficulties in the years following her tennis career. Despite initially gaining fame, she later felt a sense of abandonment by the tennis community (Henry). It would be difficult to disagree with this sentiment.

However, Gibson's legacy remains for those who wish to learn about her incredible life and career. While passing Venus Williams the torch, Gibson said, "You have now moved yourself to another level in your athletic adventure. You are now in the history books forever. I gladly pass the torch to you and Serena" (Brown 434). Billie Jean King, an American former number one player, proudly stated when a statue of Gibson was unveiled in New York in 2019 on Women's Equality Day: "I know I'm a white girl, but as a 13-year-old, she totally inspired me, and that can happen to anybody. I obviously have not had to deal with the challenges that my sisters of color and brothers of color have, but I think for young people, the more you know about history, the more you know about yourself. It helps you shape the future" ("This woman is extraordinary... she will inspire" - BJK on Althea Gibson's legacy").

Althea Gibson's enduring legacy continues to resonate in the modern world as a testament to her remarkable achievements on and off the courts. Her active role as a trailblazer and unwavering commitment to excellence despite racial segregation continue to inspire athletes and individuals around the world. Beyond breaking racial barriers, Gibson's legacy emphasizes the value of carving one's path with grit and determination. Her narrative encourages the world to challenge stereotypes, promote inclusivity, and strive for greatness, leaving a lasting influence on the ongoing pursuit of racial and gender equality.

Appendix A



Humanities, National Endowment for the. "Evening Star. (Washington, D.C.) 1854-1972, August 30, 1950, Page A-17, Image 17." *News about Chronicling America RSS*, W.D. Wallach & Hope, chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1950-08-30/ed-1/seq-17/.

Appendix B

<p>U. S. TENNIS GROUP OFF TO TOUR ASIA</p> <p>Perry, Karol Fageros, Althea Gibson Leave—Richardson to Join Them in London</p> <p>Sponsored by the State Department, three tennis players departed yesterday on a six-week tour of Asia arranged by the United States Lawn Tennis Association.</p> <p>The players were Robert Perry of Los Angeles, Karol Fageros of Miami, Fla., and Althea Gibson of New York. They left from the New York International Air-</p>	<p>port, at Idlewild, Queens aboard a Pan-American airliner for London.</p> <p>Hamilton Richardson, a member of the Davis Cup team and a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, will join the team in London as a fourth member.</p> <p>A former resident of Baton Rouge, La., whose family now lives in Westfield, N. J., Richardson left for Oxford at the close of the tennis season in September. He will serve as captain of the team.</p> <p>The trip was arranged at the request of the All-India Lawn Tennis Association. Its invitation was sent to the U. S. L. T. A. and to the State Department.</p> <p>The four players will leave London by plane tomorrow for Rangoon, Burma. They will also visit India, Pakistan and Ceylon.</p> <p>In addition to other tourna-</p>	<p>ments, they will compete in the India championships at New Delhi, Dec. 11 to 18, and in the Asian championships at Calcutta, Dec. 23 to Jan. 1.</p> <p>Their trip will end at Karachi, Pakistan, where they will play three days, Jan. 12 to 14. Richardson will return to Oxford. Possibly one or more of the others will compete in Egypt.</p> <p>Sports Today</p> <p>BOXING Carmen Basilio vs. Tony DeMarco, world welterweight championship, at Boston (Television—Channel 7, 10 P. M.).</p> <p>HOCKEY Rangers vs. Chicago Black Hawks, at Madison Square Garden, Eighth Avenue and Fiftieth Street.....</p> <p>OKLAHOMA TA</p>
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“U. S. Tennis Group off to Tour Asia; Perry, Karol Fageros, Althea Gibson Leave--Richardson to Join Them in London.” *The New York Times*, 30 Nov. 1955, www.nytimes.com/1955/11/30/archives/u-s-tennis-group-off-to-tour-asia-perry-karol-fageros-althea-gibson.html?searchResultPosition=3.

Appendix C



Walker, Malea. “Althea Gibson: Tennis Turmoil and Triumph: Headlines & Heroes.” *The Library of Congress*, 8 July 2021,
blogs.loc.gov/headlinesandheroes/2021/07/althea-gibson-tennis-turmoil-and-triumph/.

Appendix C



“Magazine; Sports Illustrated (Althea Gibson) - Time Inc. - Google Arts & Culture.”

Google,

artsandculture.google.com/asset/magazine-sports-illustrated-althea-gibson/VQHsIIMCaSU

Ksw.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources

Brown, Ashley. *Serving Herself: The Life and Times of Althea Gibson*. Oxford University Press, 2023.

- *Serving Herself: The Life and Times of Althea Gibson* is a book dedicated to Gibson's life, ranging from her childhood to the numerous accolades that she had received throughout her successful tennis career. This book provided multiple quotes from Gibson and those who knew her, solidifying her position as a pioneer for female African American athletes.

Gray, Frances. *Born to Win: The Authorized Biography of Althea Gibson*. Wiley, 2004.

- *The Authorized Biography of Althea Gibson* is a book explaining Gibson's tennis career and life in general with direct quotes she had mentioned in her autobiographies and from her surrounding people. I found this book interesting because it provided insight on how ironically her impoverished living conditions significantly contributed to her triumphant tennis career.

Humanities, National Endowment for the. "Evening Star. (Washington, D.C.) 1854-1972, August 30, 1950, Page A-17, Image 17." *News about Chronicling America RSS*, W.D. Wallach & Hope, chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1950-08-30/ed-1/seq-17/.

- I found this image in the Library of Congress Newspaper Database. Althea Gibson and Althea Louise Brough are portrayed alongside one another with a caption mentioning Gibson's loss against Brough in Wimbledon. This image depicts one of Gibson's most momentous trailblazing moments.

"Magazine; Sports Illustrated (Althea Gibson) - Time Inc. - Google Arts & Culture." *Google*, artsandculture.google.com/asset/magazine-sports-illustrated-althea-gibson/VQHsIIMCaSUKsw.

- I found this image in Google Arts & Culture. I chose this image because this was the first time Time and Sports Illustrated had a Black woman on the cover, which was Althea Gibson.

Rossingh, Danielle. "Althea Gibson, the Forgotten Pioneer." *Wimbledon.Com*, www.wimbledon.com/en_GB/news/articles/2019-06-29/althea_gibson_the_forgotten_pioneer.html.

- This article helped me understand Althea Gibson's tennis career through direct quotes from the people surrounding her like Althea Buxton. I found this article interesting as I was able to learn more about not just her potency in tennis, but also her personality.

Stanmyre, Jackie. *Althea Gibson and Arthur Ashe: Breaking Down Tennis's Color Barrier (Game-changing Athletes)*. Cavendish Square Publishing, 2016.

- *Althea Gibson and Arthur Ashe: Breaking Down Tennis's Color Barrier (Game-changing Athletes)* is a book delving into the tennis careers of Arthur Ashe, the only Black man to win the single titles at Wimbledon, and Althea Gibson. It was interesting to learn that Gibson was not just the first Black female player, but also the first Black player in general to break the racial barrier by competing in interracial tennis tournaments.

"U. S. Tennis Group off to Tour Asia; Perry, Karol Fageros, Althea Gibson Leave--Richardson to Join Them in London." *The New York Times*, 30 Nov. 1955, www.nytimes.com/1955/11/30/archives/u-s-tennis-group-off-to-tour-asia-perry-karol-fageros-althea-gibson.html?searchResultPosition=3.

- I found this news article in the New York Times Article Archive. The news article provides information on Althea Gibson's departure to a six-week goodwill tour in Asia coordinated by the United States Lawn Tennis Association (USLTA). This article conveys Gibson's involvement in the tour with white tennis players Robert Perry and Karol Fageros, contributing to her feat in breaking racial barriers.

Walker, Malea. "Althea Gibson: Tennis Turmoil and Triumph: Headlines & Heroes." *The Library of Congress*, 8 July 2021, blogs.loc.gov/headlinesandheroes/2021/07/althea-gibson-tennis-turmoil-and-triumph/.

- I found this image in the Library of Congress Newspaper Database. Althea Gibson is receiving a trophy from Vice President Richard Nixon after being entitled the first Black player to win the National Women's Tennis Championship at Forest Hills. Nixon is looking at Gibson with respect and delight, while Gibson is looking at her trophy with pride and grace.

Secondary Sources

Here put all your secondary sources in alphabetical order, and write 2 or 3 sentences for each.

"Leveling the Playing Field: Althea Gibson." *National Museum of African American History and Culture*, 15 July 2020, nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/leveling-playing-field-althea-gibson.

- This article provides information regarding Althea Gibson's unfeminine behavior in the courts unlike what was expected from female players. The fact that Gibson never ceased to portray her authenticity and how she barely cared about her image to the public motivates me to never coward away from being myself.

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Jackie Robinson". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 27 Feb. 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jackie-Robinson>.

- This article talks about Jackie Robinson and his accomplishments of breaking the racial barrier in baseball. I wrote about Robinson in the beginning to introduce the topic of breaking racial barriers as he is more well known to the public than Althea Gibson.

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Althea Gibson". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 19 Oct. 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Althea-Gibson>.

- This article gives a more in-depth description of Althea Gibson's life. I found it compelling how Gibson grew in unstable living conditions and was not a well-tolerated student and daughter.

Destin, Y., Dyer, E. The Legacies of Tennis Champions Althea Gibson, Arthur Ashe, and the Williams Sisters Show the Persistence of America's Race Obstacles. *Race Soc Probl* **13**, 195–204 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12552-021-09334-3>

- This article mentions the hardships Althea Gibson had to endure despite being entitled champion in multiple renowned tennis competitions and being a prominent figure in the athletic realm. I found it unfortunate how Gibson still had to struggle through racial segregation even in the courts where she was supposed to feel the most comfortable and confident.

Althea Gibson - Tennis, Quotes & Facts, A&E; Television Networks, 2 Apr. 2014, www.biography.com/athletes/althea-gibson.

- This article mentions Althea Gibson being the first African American to receive the honor of being voted the Female Athlete of the Year by the Associated Press. Her recognition in prestigious institutions further strengthens her role as a trailblazer to the African American community as she stands as an example of racial integration.

“Interview with Althea Gibson (Video).” *Interview with Althea Gibson*, repository.wustl.edu/concern/videos/8s45qd665.

- This video clip of an interview conducted with Althea Gibson introduces how Gibson got into tennis, which she claims that it started from playing in a paddle tennis court in her neighborhood. I found it interesting how Gibson was able to become a paddle tennis champion as well, which suggests her innate talent in any form of tennis.

Parihar, Rajendra. *The Althea Gibson Narrative and Race, Class, and Gender in the Twentieth Century America*, 2018, mac.du.ac.in/pdf/journals/JournalMarch2017.pdf.

- This article talks about Althea Gibson’s life-changing encounter with Robert Walter Johnson and Hubert A. Eaton. They served as her coaches and prepared her well to win in all-Black tennis competitions at first, which was part of their plan for making her break the color barrier in tennis. I chose to reference this article because it provided details about their relationship and how the three of them shared an extremely close-knitted bond.

Magazine, Smithsonian. “Sixty-Five Years Ago, Althea Gibson Broke the Color Line at the French Open.” *Smithsonian.Com*, Smithsonian Institution, 1 June 2021, www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/sixty-five-years-ago-althea-gibson-broke-color-line-french-open-180977859/#:~:text=Gibson%20came%20to%20the%20attention.her%20for%20ATA%2Dsponsored%20tournaments.

- This article lists all the awards and recognition she had received from the beginning of her tennis career. Such information helped me with having a better understanding of her timeline and how she grew as a tennis player as time progressed.

“Althea Gibson Becomes First African American on U.S. Tennis Tour | August 22, 1950.” *History.Com*, A&E Television Networks, 24 Nov. 2009, www.history.com/this-day-in-history/althea-gibson-becomes-first-african-american-on-u-s-tennis-tour.

- This article provided information about how Althea Gibson played an enormous role in making tennis one of the most recognized and loved Black sports during that period. Such details gave me a better understanding of the resounding impact she had left to the Black community.

Bond, Zanice. “Althea Gibson (1927-2003) •.” *Blackpast*, 26 Aug. 2020, www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/gibson-althea-1927-2003/.

- This article provided context on the recognition she had received after winning the Wimbledon Championships. Knowing this allowed me to visualize an image

of what her entire career looked like and how she proved herself as a true trailblazer until her last moment as a tennis player.

Sokolowski, Alexandre. "26 June, 1951: The Day Althea Gibson Became the First Black Player to Compete at Wimbledon." *Tennis Majors*, 26 June 2022, www.tennismajors.com/wimbledon-news/26-june-1951-the-day-althea-gibson-became-the-first-black-player-to-compete-at-wimbledon-421114.html.

- This article looks thoroughly into Althea Gibson's victory at Wimbledon and what it looked like when she was announced winner in the championships. This information let me know what she grappled with under the Jim Crow Laws despite winning at Wimbledon. I found it interesting how Gibson shook hands with the queen of England once she had won the competition.

"Althea Gibson." *WHYY*, 20 July 2020, why.org/episodes/althea-gibson/.

- This short, but compelling article helped me learn about Althea Gibson's life and the recognition she had received throughout her tennis career.

Henry, Karen. "'The Most Important Pioneer for Tennis' - Althea Gibson's Great Legacy." *Women's Tennis Association*, 25 Aug. 2020, www.wtatennis.com/news/1739180/the-most-important-pioneer-for-tennis-althea-gibson-s-great-legacy#:~:text=Players%2C%20including%20the%20Williams%20sisters,She%20won%20Wimbledon%20in%201958.

- This article provides details about the legacy Althea Gibson had left as a trailblazer for aspiring Black female athletes and the recognition she deserves from the public in the modern world the more she slips away from our memories. I chose this article because it provides me quotes on what others living in the same generation as myself think of her and what they believe is the most effective method to preserve her legacy.

"'This Woman Is Extraordinary... She Will Inspire' – BJK on Althea Gibson's Legacy." *Women's Tennis Association*, 26 Aug. 2019,

www.wtatennis.com/news/1445879/-this-woman-is-extraordinary-she-will-inspire-bjk-on-althea-gibson-s-legacy.

- This article praises Althea Gibson's tennis career and the powerful impact she had given to the previously racial segregated world. I figured out that there is a statue dedicated to Althea Gibson in the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center.

