

# BETWEEN THE COVERS RARE BOOKS

112 Nicholson Rd, Gloucester City, NJ 08030 (856) 456-8008 [betweenthecovers.com](http://betweenthecovers.com)

*[Photographs]: Early African-American Tennis History at the Cosmopolitan Club in Harlem*

\$2500



A collection of 21 gelatin silver photographic snapshots. The majority are 3½" x 3½", a few are slightly smaller. Evidence of having been mounted in an album, slight creases or scuffs, overall very good. Each image is identified in pencil on the verso, either in a contemporary hand, or copied from a caption in the now perished photo album. Undated but circa 1945. On July 29, 1940 American professional tennis was integrated for the first time when interracial matches were played on the courts of the Cosmopolitan Tennis Club on Convent Avenue in Harlem.

According to a story in the “Brooklyn Eagle”: “The color line was erased, at least temporarily, for the first time in the history of American Tennis yesterday. Don Budge, greatest tennis player in the world, encountered Jimmy McDaniel, Negro National Champion, defeating him, 6-1 and 6-2.” In 1940 bandleader Buddy Walker bought two tennis racquets for Althea Gibson and introduced her to the Cosmopolitan Tennis Club where she was coached by Fred Johnson, the one-armed club pro.

While some are captioned rather generically “Womens Doubles Champ” or “Nat. Women Champ”, many are identified. Among those pictured here, either in action shots, collecting trophies, or posing with others after matches are:

Desmond Margetson, Captain and #1 singles player for NYU, who competed in the U.S. National Indoor Championships on four occasions, each time making the round of 16.

Bob Ryland, who made the semifinals of the NCAA Championships, and became the first black male professional player. He was one of the world’s best players, but was hampered by not being allowed to compete in whites-only events. In 1959, five years after Althea Gibson broke the color barrier, he became the first black male to compete in an international event when he played in the U.S. National Championships.

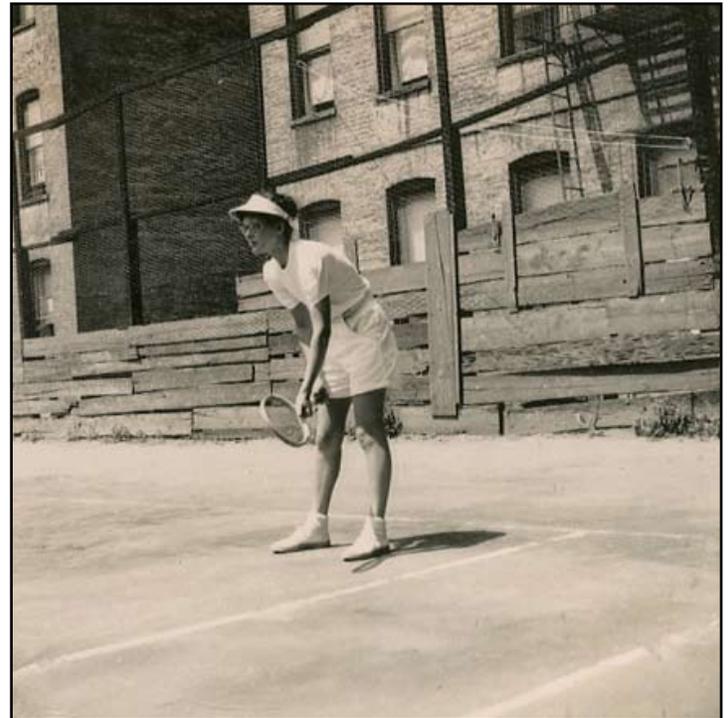
Dr. Reginald Weir, Captain of the CCNY Tennis team and was the first black man to play in a USLTA National Tournament, he was known as the “Black Bill Tilden”.

Buddy Walker is pictured in the front row of the audience at a trophy presentation.

Also pictured are: Louise Graham, the 1948 N.J. State Champion; Dr. Ubert Vincent, Columbia University tennis star, a highly ranked ATA player, and the first African-American doctor assigned to a white hospital in New York City; Joan Floissac, Brooklyn College tournament player; Gloria King; and Jean Sarreals (featured to the right).

We believe a couple of images are of Nina Davis, who defeated Althea Gibson in her first tournament match, and another of Dr. Dick Cohen, a national doubles champion best-known as a competitor in the historic doubles match at the Cosmopolitan Tennis Club in 1940 (Cohen and McDaniel vs. Budge and Weir), as well as another image of an unidentified blonde white woman serving as a lineswoman or referee. Several of the images are unidentified, and we believe additional research would produce results.

Interesting and early primary source material on African-American tennis. [BTC#400377]





“Junior Champs”



“Louise Graham & Joannie  
Tennis Club / Harlem ca. 1945”



“Joannie Floissac & Louise Graham  
Cosmopolitan ca. 1945  
Tennis Club / Harlem”



“Referee”



“Vetern & Junior Champ”



“N.J. State Champion 1948 Louise Graham”



“Bobby Ryland on right”



“Davis?”



“Davis?”



“Ubert V.  
Member Cosmo Tennis Club  
Bobby Ryland (right)  
(Conrad)  
Dr. Ubert Vincent (left)  
Harlem”



“Cosmo Club”



“Nat. Womens Champ & Runner Up”



“(Margetson)  
Desmond M. (center) &  
(baldingman) (right) Dr. Weir 1945  
Reginald 1st black to play in U.S. indoor lamm tennis  
Won 5 nationals assc.  
City College 1931-1945”



“Nat. Women Champ”