



One of the earliest Images of an African-American Women's Basketball Team

[Portrait Photograph]: B.H.S. Black Women's Basketball Teams

[1907]

\$900



Gelatin silver image on thick card. Approximately 4½" x 3¼". A little rubbing along the edges, very good or better. A nice image of 13 young African-American women. In the center of the photo, one woman holds a basketball lettered "B.H.S. 1914."

According to the website “The Brooklyn Game” (<http://thebrooklyngame.com/brooklyns-first-basketball-team/>): “Brooklyn was home to a historic basketball first, way back in 1906, when the Smart Set Athletic Club of Brooklyn, an African American social and sports organization, launched the first formally organized and independently run all-black basketball team... [they] played their first game in 1907 as part of a dynamic all-black Olympian Athletic League.” The article also mentions: “Like many Black Fives Era men’s basketball teams, the Smart Set Athletic Club had a sister team called the Spartan Girls Athletic Club. The Spartan Girls were one of America’s first all-black women’s basketball teams.”

According to the Black Fives Foundation, dedicated to the history of African-Americans in basketball: “...the very first all-black female basketball team — the New York Girls (1910-1914), champions of New York and New Jersey in 1910! There were dozens of other early African American women’s teams, including the Spartan Girls (1910-1914)...”

We have had in inventory, a 1907 photograph of a black women’s team, this image is seven years later, and is just four years later than the image that had previously been considered the earliest. While the location of this image is unknown, it wouldn’t seem so far-fetched to think it might be taken in Brooklyn or the Bronx, and that “H.S.” stands for “High School.” [BTC#403906]