Background
In the late 19th and early 20th centuries women had a much different role in society than they do today. Women were expected to raise children, take care of the household, and not question the male figures in their lives. Women were expected to act in a respectable, “ladylike” way. Women were advised against participation in athletics by men and doctors due to their “frail” bodies and “weak demeanor.” Furthermore, the competitive attributes that came out while participating in sport were deemed “unladylike” by society.

In December of 1891, James Naismith developed 13 original rules for the sport of basketball.
Original Rules

Women started to play basketball almost immediately after Naismith invented the game. Women in the late 19th and early 20th centuries faced many barriers and limitations in their pursuit of participation in the sport of basketball.

Using the documents below, decide whether or not you think that women’s participation in early basketball continued to limit women’s participation in sports or liberated women to break the barriers that limited their participation and push for equality.
As you look at this source think about how the women are dressed. What are the women doing? Do their actions seem limited due to any physical limitations based on their gender? How might the girl stepping over the other girl be controversial?
Document 2: Women Basketball Players 1924. Photo by E Eicha who photographed African American cultural life in Harlem. Found: Schlesinger Library Sally Fox Collection

Things to Think About
How does this image break barriers? What opportunities did women have to participate in sports in the 1920s? What opportunities did African Americans have to participate in sports in the 1920s?
Things to Think About
What types of barriers did the women at Stanford face in playing basketball? Who do you think made up the faculty athletic committee?
“Girls’ football,” as the popular basketball is called by patronizing college students of the stronger sex, is, although shorn of some of the rougher features that make the former a menace to life and limb, not precisely a drawing-room performance. It is usually played in colleges for women between the juniors and the sophomores in the gymnasium and in gymnasium dress. There are intense excitement, shrill feminine screams and hurrahs, waving of class banners, and encouragement of favorite players. The agility and strength displayed at a recent contest were remarkable, and spoke highly for the development of the new woman.

Things to Think About
What were the expectations of women in the time period, and how did playing basketball challenge those expectations? What barriers were women breaking down by playing basketball? What does the author mean by “the new woman?”
Things to Think About
What does Miss Lucille Eaton Hill think of basketball? Are you surprised by her opinion? Think about how the women who continued to play basketball broke barriers.
Things to Think About

What barriers did the women’s basketball team from the University of California face in 1896?
What prevented them from being treated equally to the men?
Things to Think About
How does Alice Ballard feel about basketball? What does she describe as some of the benefits of basketball? What barriers did women break by playing basketball?
GIRLS! NO MORE BASKET-BALL.

That's the Cry in the Women's Colleges Now Because of the Brutality Attending the Seemingly Harmless Game.

IT'S WORSE THAN FOOTBALL.

Serious Injuries Said Often to Follow the Strenuous Punching and Hair-Pulling Which Attend the "Mild" Athletic Exercise.

Basket-ball, the great athletic sport for women, has been placed under the ban. A wave of protest has arisen in various women's colleges.

The grounds for disapproval are that injuries and serious results from violent playing, and that when young women who have played the game in schools where a close watch has not been kept upon the progress of the sport enter college their physical condition is such as to render them unfit to cope with the routine of college life.

When basket-ball was invented ten years ago it was heralded as a sport which afforded plenty of opportunity for good, healthful exercise. It was especially recommended because it was devoid of rough features and yet thoroughly scientific.

Women who loved athletics plunged into basket-ball, and every college in the United States introduced the game for the benefit of the girl students.

"Washed Up by High Schools."

Then high schools took up. Students became enthusiastic. It was such fun, and it was such a close connection of football that the embryo new women felt herself dignified by being allowed to throw a ball in conventionalities and appear in bloomers to indulge in the exciting sport of getting the pigskin into the wicker-baskets known as the goals.

And now comes the awful blow which places it in the same class of brutality as football.

What football is to masculine athletics so is basket-ball to feminine sports. The warning cry of Miss Lucretia Hill, director of physical training at Wellesley College, who has strongly objected to basket-ball for girls, has been echoed by numerous authorities in New York. Miss Hill assures that the playing of basket-ball in secondary schools, without proper supervision, has resulted in students coming to Wellesley whose physical condition was ghastly. They came with fractured bones and other marks showing the evil results of excessive playing.

Therapy and athlete who is opposed to basket-ball said:

moderation. The opportunities for brutality are powerful, and girls become as eager as in the sport that they are the only principles of health and physical law. The testing and pulling, the twisting and falling, results most seriously and I have had cases where a girl has been made an invalid through the indiscriminate sport. Basketball is not a good game. The severe injuries that occur are too often constructed to be subjected to the rough handling and pounding in basket-ball.

Not Watched in High School.

In college the students may be properly watched at all times, but I know that many a young woman has started in college with impaired health simply because she has played basketball too recklessly in her high school sports.

The cry that basketball tends to make young women rough and sporty in their inclinations is also brought out strongly against the game. Miss Hill's warning is that when young women enter college they are not to be treated against young female athletes and that with general approval from educators who have been long waiting for a crusade against the game.

Girls have lost all control of themselves in basketball games. Games were played at Sprague High School in the Wakefield High School and the Deaconess Training School and a general agitation arose to end the game.

Devotees Make a Protest.

In opposition to the protest against basketball comes an indignant volley from the other side and the crusade may be as interesting an encounter as the game itself.

On one side are ranged the athletes and physical educators who maintain that basketball, whose aim and object is to toss a ball into a wicker basket, is the greatest physical exercise woman could find. On the other hand comes the crusaders who maintain that basketball has been degraded below the level of football; that it makes invalids of women, and that it is unhealthful. They think that they are giving them a sport of roughness and carelessness and that it is entirely too strenuous for the feminine constitution.

"The best way out of it," said a prominent doctor, "is for women to confine themselves to some less hospital games and all troubles will be avoided."

NORTH APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF CENSUS.

President Names Chief Statistician of Manufactures of the Bureau to Succeed Marriam.

WASHINGTON, March 17.—The President has tendered the position of Director of the Census to S. N. North, formerly chief statistician of manufactures of the Census Bureau, to succeed Director Marriam, resigned.

Mr. North has accepted and will enter upon his duties some time in May.

SIGN THE PLEDGE

If You Will, but That Don't Cure Drunkenness!

Drunkenness is a disease and is recognized by the medical profession. The diseased condition of the organs of the body and organs of the stomach furnishes more than will-reveals to

Things to Think About
What is the focus of this article? How does this article highlight the ways in which basketball allowed women to break barriers?

**Document 9:**
1902 Ivory Soap Advertisement

**Things to Think About**
How does this advertisement break down barriers for women and their participation in sports?