

## Then & Now - How it All Began (updated 8/2025)

According to "Princeton and the High Road" by George Bumgardner, during the boom times of the 1870's tennis was introduced to the people of Princeton by a wealthy fabric manufacturer from New York named William Langley. It was played on the smooth (for Princeton) grass in front of the Wachusett House Hotel which was located on the south end of the common where



the Dingman Park is today. The players used concave English rackets and the net was a string with multi-colored tassels tied and dangling down from the string.

Summer tournaments began during the 1890's and brought together players from many of the [Princeton Hotels](#), and surrounding communities reaching as far away as Worcester and Fitchburg.

***"Call to Tennis. Not only is it a health-giving sport, but also it is darn good fun.  
What more can one ask for 'in the good old summer time.'"***

In 1912 the Labor Day tennis tournament was begun and deemed the Princeton Tennis Tournament (PTT), and it was won by Everett W. Needham and Eleanor W. Allen. Unfortunately, there seems to be no record of where they played, how many other



teams competed, or who won the tournament from then until 1933.

Starting in 1933, until 1961, Chandler Bullock served enthusiastically as this tournament's staunch promoter, supporter, and archivist. In 1962, it was renamed the Chandler Bullock Tennis Tournament and a trophy commissioned in his honor. During that time period, the

tournament was played on 5 to 7 private clay courts around town with the finals being held on the asphalt Bullock court that was located at the end of Bullock Lane. They used to judge the success of each years tournament by the number of cars parked in the Bullock fields. For example, in 1957, 80 individuals played in the tournament, there were 96 automobiles parked in the fields, and 240 spectators were at the finals. Each year the Bullocks served ginger ale and sherbet to all that attended.

***"One feature which makes the Chandler Bullock Tennis Tournament so very special, is that even players who no longer live in town, go out of their way to make the time to play in it."***

In 1965 the finals were moved to the Thayer/Whitham/Gwinn/Patten/O'Brien court location on Gregory Road, which was originally a cork court and latter converted to stone dust. This was done for two reasons: first, the participants felt that because all the preliminary rounds were played on clay, then the finals should also be played on a clay court; and secondly, the Bullock courts asphalt surface was in need of great repair. Over the past years the finals have been held at the Dan Hart Memorial Court besides the Prince of Peace Church in the center of town and at the private club courts of Pine Hill and PTC depending on weather and court conditions. Many thanks go to Terry Hart and his volunteers for maintaining the Prince of Peace court and to Steve and Sharon Recupero for providing fresh fruit at this annual Labor Day event.

**Please send your checks in care of Princeton Labor Day Committee Inc.** (rather than to the Chandler Bullock Fund as in the past).

If mailing a check, please send it to:  
**Princeton Labor Day Committee, Inc.**  
**P.O. Box 58**  
**Princeton, MA 01541**