

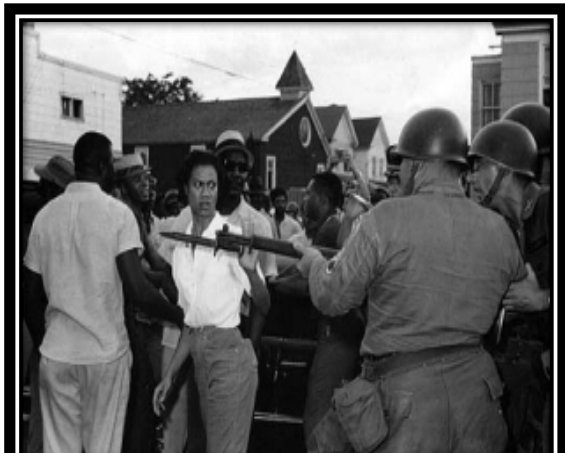
PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

GLORIA RICHARDSON

civil servant, activist,

"We weren't going to stop until we got it, and if violence occurred, then we would have to accept that."

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COURTESY NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

Background Information

Born: May 6, 1922

Richardson received her bachelor's degree in sociology from Howard University in 1942. After graduating from Howard, Richardson worked as a civil servant for the federal government during World War II in Washington, D.C. When she returned to Cambridge, Maryland, she struggled to find a job, even with the political and economic influence of her family. A major contributor to this struggle was that she was Black and she faced racial discrimination¹. She got married and started a family.

Richardson's Resistance

Richardson's daughter was involved in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. In support of her daughter's efforts, she worked to create the Cambridge Nonviolent Action Committee (CNAC), the first adult-led wing of SNCC. They not only focused on voter registration but also economic equality, housing, education, employment and healthcare. Beginning in 1962, she led protests in Cambridge, Maryland, around these issues. These protests would sometimes escalate, and unlike other Civil Rights protests, protestors would sometimes meet violence with violence; they did not shy away from a fight. The protests escalated to the point the Maryland National Guard was even sent in and President Kennedy demanded the protests stop. Richardson responded, "Go to hell."² The protests continued until the federal government intervened.

Achievements

Her leadership led to the Treaty of Cambridge, which laid out a plan for equality for Black people in Cambridge, including integrating schools, libraries, and hospitals. Richardson came to be known as one of the "Negro Women Fighters for Freedom" and become a prominent figure during the civil rights movement. Although Richardson is not well known, her fight made a lasting impact on others who followed her³. Her determination, even in the face of extreme violence and brutality was inspiring to others. She encouraged others to be purposeful and radical in their efforts and to increase the pace of change.

¹ Anderson, E. (2019, June 19). Gloria Richardson (1922-) BlackPast. Retrieved from <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/richardson-gloria-1922/>.

² ^ deMause, Neil (2007-03-02). "Elders of the New Left". In *These Times*. ISSN 0160-5992.

³ Gloria Richardson. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://sncc.org/people/gloria-richardson/>.

Essential Questions

1. Richardson did not completely endorse non-violent tactics. What is your stance? Do you think one should always remain non-violent or there is justification for responding with violence? Why?

2. What actions make Richardson an actor of resistance?

3. *“We weren’t going to stop until we got it, and if violence occurred, then we would have to accept that.”*
 - a. Should one expect violence when fighting for justice? Should one continue to fight even at the risk of violence? Why or why not?