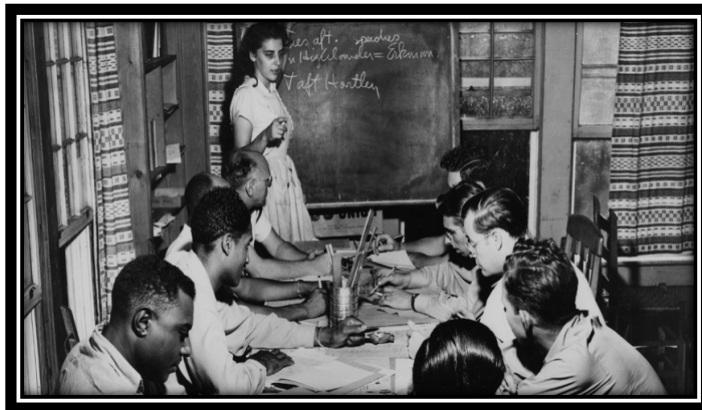


PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

HIGHLANDER RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CENTER



COURTESY OF HIGHLANDER RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL CENTER



COURTESY OF WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Highlander's Resistance

The Highlander Research and Education Center, originally called Highlander Folk School, was founded in 1932 by Don West and Myles Horton. West and Horton originally worked with unemployed people, workers and union leaders. They helped individuals use their own experiences to help build a more peaceful, democratic society. There were no grades. Highlander focused on educating to the specific needs of their students. Workshops focused on skills based learning and local content to educate students. For example, union leaders focused on leadership and protesting strategies from local activists to improve working conditions.

In the 1950s, Highlander focused on racial inequities in the US. They taught desegregation workshops and non-violent tactics and helped potential Black voters develop their skills for literacy tests. Highlander prepared students for the test with Black history and literature. Countless students of all ages, genders and races attended workshops from Highlander.¹

Highlander faced pushback from local communities and politicians through various threats. Highlander was regarded by some as a Communist training school and was closed in 1962. The school was then moved to Knoxville Tennessee and renamed.²

Achievements

Highlander educated individuals like Rosa Parks and John Bevel, with visits from activists like Eleanor Roosevelt and Martin Luther King Jr. Highlander has fought for social justice for almost ninety years.³

¹ Highlander Folk School. (2018, May 22). Retrieved November 12, 2019, from <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/highlander-folk-school>.

² Glen, J. M. (2018, March 1). Highlander Folk School. Retrieved November 12, 2019, from <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/highlander-folk-school/>.

³ HIGHLANDER FOLK SCHOOL. (n.d.). Retrieved November 12, 2019, from <https://highlanderfolkschool.weebly.com/>.

Essential Questions

1. How did the Highlander School work to change to the status quo and act as a force of resistance from the early 20th century to today?
2. Why is it so important that the Highlander School developed literacy classes with Black literature?
3. Highlander originally worked with union workers and leaders because of the expertise and background knowledge of organizing workers that Horton and West had prior to creating the Highlander School. They developed the school based off of a need and a set of experiences they had. If you had the opportunity, what would you create with the experiences and knowledge that you had? (for example, a school, business, or a community center)