

## PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

### Charlotte Hawkins Brown

author, educator

*"I have devoted my life to establishing for the Negro youth something superior to Jim Crowism"*

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#### Background Information

Born: June 11, 1883

Death: January 11, 1961

Brown was born in Henderson, North Carolina in 1883 but moved to Massachusetts shortly after to avoid the discrimination common in southern states at that time. She attended high school in Cambridge, Massachusetts and during her senior year, she met a woman who would become her mentor: Alice Freeman Palmer, first woman president of Wellesley College. Palmer helped pay for Brown to attend the Salem State Normal School, a school for teachers. In 1901, she accepted a teaching position in North Carolina.<sup>1</sup>

#### Brown's Resistance

The school she worked at closed because there was not enough money to support it. After this, she stayed in North Carolina and opened her own school for Black children called the Palmer Institute, named after her mentor. This was the only school for Black children in the area.<sup>2</sup> She worked hard to make sure the children felt safe, could get a proper education, and developed responsibility through daily chores. The Palmer Institute was also one of the only schools in North Carolina to offer college preparatory courses. Brown became nationally famous for her work in education and by 1920, the school became a boarding school, attracting Black students from around the country.<sup>3</sup> <sup>1</sup> She also published a book about her school and methods she used to teach. She was passionate about her work supporting Black people and was involved with national organizations like the Southern Commission for Interracial Cooperation and the Negro Business League.<sup>3</sup>

#### Achievements

In 1961, after her death, North Carolina declared the Alice Freeman Palmer Institute the first North Carolinian historical landmark associated with a Black American.<sup>1</sup> Additionally she was the first Black woman named to the Young Women's Christian Association.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Espiritu, A. (2007, March 06) *Charlotte Eugenia Hawkins Brown (1883-1961)*. Retrieved from <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/brown-charlotte-eugenia-hawkins-1883-1961/>

<sup>2</sup> *Charlotte Hawkins Brown, Legendary Educator* | NC Museum of History. (n.d.). North Carolina Museum of History. <https://www.ncmuseumofhistory.org/charlotte-hawkins-brown-legendary-educator>

<sup>3</sup> Wikipedia contributors. (2020a, September 20). *Charlotte Hawkins Brown*. Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlotte\\_Hawkins\\_Brown](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlotte_Hawkins_Brown)

