

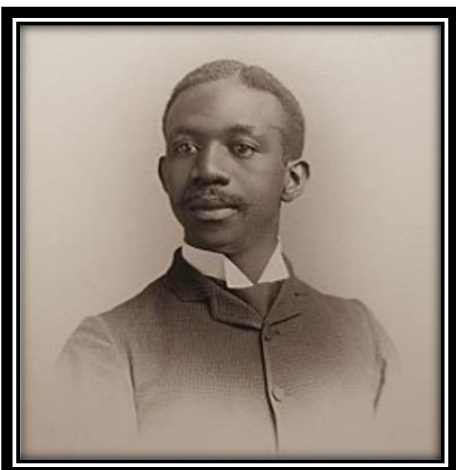
PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

Clement Garnett Morgan

lawyer, politician

*“On the bottom of my heart is written negro...
If any of you are ashamed of your blood it is cowardice.”*

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Background Information

Born: January 9, 1859; Died: June 1, 1929

Morgan was born into slavery in Stafford County, Virginia. After they were freed by the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, the family moved to Washington D.C. where he attended M Street High School. Upon graduation, Morgan moved to St. Louis, Missouri where he taught for four years at an all-Black school. Later he attended the Boston Latin School to prepare for college. During his time there, he earned a Franklin Medal and won Lawrence Prizes for declamation and reading. In 1886, he graduated with high honors and enrolled at Harvard University shortly after.

Morgan's Resistance

Morgan was one of the twenty-nine original members of the Niagara Movement. This was a civil rights organization founded by W.E.B DuBois. Morgan represented the Massachusetts chapter. He was a member of the Boston branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Alongside Butler R. Wilson, he led an effort to ban *The Birth of a Nation* from theaters in Boston. This film glorified white supremacy and the Ku Klux Klan. He demanded the recall of Mayor James Michael Curley, who refused to ban the film. In the early 1920s, Morgan and William Trotter allied with the Catholic Church and were able to get the film banned in New England.

Achievements

Morgan was the first African American to earn degrees from Harvard University and Harvard Law. He was the first African American to deliver Harvard's senior class oration.¹ He was the first African American alderman in New England after being elected to the Cambridge Board of Aldermen.

¹ <http://amsterdamnews.com/news/2020/oct/29/clement-morgan-harvard-first-attorney-and-activist/>

Essential Questions

1. Throughout his career, Morgan worked with multiple organizations to end racial discrimination in life and stereotypes in film.
 - a. Why is it important to be open to maintaining memberships and relationships with various groups?
 - b. Could there be any conflict of interest from working with multiple organizations?

2. Morgan and other African American activists worked to ban the film, “A Birth of a Nation” because of its racist portrayal of African Americans. Although this effort was not successful and the film was even shown in the White House, it mobilized others to join in activism to counter these narratives of African Americans. In the 21st century, these stereotypical images still exist in film and tv,
 - a. Should people of color place an emphasis on creating their own films depicting their lives and culture?
 - b. How can you work to resist racist, sexist or other demeaning stereotypes of people of color?

3. ***“On the bottom of my heart is written negro...If any of you are ashamed of your blood it is cowardice.”***
 - a. What message is Morgan conveying in this quote?
 - b. How does this quote pave the way for the later 1960’s “Black Pride” movement?

