

PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

HALLIE QUINN BROWN

educator, writer, activist, elocutionist

“Women, step forward! Grasp your opportunity, grapple at short range and the victory is yours.”



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Background Information

Born: March 10, 1849; Died: September 16, 1949

Brown was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to two formerly enslaved parents. She attended Wilberforce University and graduated as one of only six people in her class in 1873 with a Bachelor of Science. She began her career as a teacher in South Carolina. She then transferred to a school in Mississippi, and then again to a school in Ohio. Due to health reasons, she resigned and began travelling on a lecture tour associated with Wilberforce University. She was offered a full-time position at this university but declined to work at the Tuskegee Institute instead. She then became the first woman to receive a Master of Science from her alma mater.¹

Brown's Resistance

Brown was a skilled elocutionist. She delivered speeches in a way that truly moved and inspired the audience. She spoke on issues of temperance, women's suffrage, and civil rights. Her skill taught thousands of African Americans the power spoken language can have. Further, it challenged the narrative that African Americans were not expected to be a political force.²

Brown also used her voice to advocate in a legislative manner. She mobilized and led allies in the NAACP to protest a monument dedicated to the Lost Cause through writing a legislative bill. The bill died in the House of Representatives but served as an early step to denouncing symbols of white supremacy. She then went on to produce, in collaboration with more than 25 other women, a 250-page book called *Homespun Heroines* to counter the limited stereotypes that existed for African American women at the time. This book showcased the real lives of Black women and their activism, through essays, poems, and sketches.²

Achievements

Brown received international acclaim for her skill as an elocutionist, as well as for her written works. Additionally, she was honored when the first library at Central State University was named in her honor.³

Essential Questions

1. How are Brown's actions acts of resistance?
 - a. Why were her actions impactful on a larger scale for all African Americans?

2. What is an injustice Black women still face today?
 - a. How can you use Brown's example to resist injustices?

3. ***"Women, step forward! Grasp your opportunity, grapple at short range and the victory is yours."***
 - a. Given what you know about Brown, how does this quote symbolize her resistance?
 - b. How can this quote be applied to modern society?

¹ Scruggs, Lawson Andrew (1893). *Women of Distinction: Remarkable in Works and Invincible in Character*. L. A. Scruggs.

² Hallie Quinn Brown. (n.d.). Retrieved October 06, 2020, from <https://www.nps.gov/people/hallie-quinn-brown-ca-1850-1949.htm>

³ Hallie Quinn Brown. (n.d.). Retrieved October 6, 2020, from <https://remarkableohio.org/index.php?%2Fcategory%2F478>