

PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

Jesse Max Barber

journalist

“The attack occurred in a city with a growing and successful black community.”

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Background Information

Born: July 5, 1878; Died: September 20, 1949

Barber was born in Blackstock, South Carolina, to former enslaved parents. He worked as a barber while completing the teacher’s training course at Benedict College. He began his literary career at Virginia Union University where he was the student editor of the University Journal and President of the Literary Society.¹

Barber’s Resistance

After graduating from Virginia Union, Barber began working as a managing editor for the Voice of the Negro, which was a Black literary magazine founded in Atlanta in 1904. He ultimately became the editor-in-chief of the magazine, and he turned it into a platform to express progressive and radical views for Black liberation. In 1906, the Voice of the Negro became the leading Black magazine in the United States with an audience of about 15,000 people. Barber recruited young, Black radical writers for the magazine. After the Atlanta Riots in 1906, he unfortunately faced threats from white vigilantes and had to flee the city for his own safety. He settled back down in Philadelphia, PA. He was a founding member of the Niagara Movement, which served as an organization for Black radicals.² He was also a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. In 1919, he served as the President of the NAACP’s Philadelphia branch.²

Achievements

Barber was relied on his journalistic integrity and commitment to truth in order to advocate for African Americans in Atlanta, Georgia during one of its most violent eras in American history. Although he left the city after death threats, Barber continued to write and critique the communal violence and lack of governmental intervention in each city he ventured to. His commitment to Black liberation assisted in his intentional mission of ushering in young, Black talent to work as journalists in his magazine. Prior to his death, Barber was elected the President of the John Brown Memorial Association.

¹Blue, C. (2008, June 17). *J. Max Barber*. BlackPast. <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/barber-j-max-1878-1949/>

² Wikipedia contributors. (2019, May 14). Jesse Max Barber. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesse_Max_Barber

