

PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

MAUDE E. CRAIG SAMPSON WILLIAMS

suffragist, teacher, civil rights leader, community organizer and activist

“Any great change must expect opposition because it shakes the very foundation of privilege.” -Lucretia Mott



FAIR USE IMAGE; MAUDE E. WILLIAMS
(LEFT)

Background Information

Born: February 1880; Died: March 13, 1958

Maude was born to Marie and George Craig in February 1880. She and her siblings grew up in Austin, Texas. Her father, who worked as a grocer, was able to send her and many of her siblings to college. In 1900, Maude graduated from Prairie View State Normal College, which was the state school for African American teachers at the time. After graduation, Maude moved to El Paso, where she became a teacher at the Frederick Douglass School. Then, in 1907, she married Edward D. Sampson. After Sampson's death, she married Emerson Milton Williams in 1929.¹

Williams's Resistance

She served as vice president of the El Paso chapter of the NAACP from 1917 until 1924. She used this position to advocate for women's suffrage, and hosted meetings in her home. These meetings also served to provide women with election information. In 1918, Williams advocated that black women should be able to serve as election clerks in an upcoming county election. However, the county chairman refused to allow this. Williams fought this by writing letters to the states National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) in an attempt to enroll her local league as an auxiliary branch to the national suffrage organization. However, again, her actions were not fruitful, as NAWSA amended its constitution in 1917 to prevent African American leagues from associating with the national organization. However, none of this kept Williams from continuing to pursue political action.

Following the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment, Williams served as a precinct campaign organizer for a Democratic candidate. She also continued to be involved in the El Paso chapter of the NAACP, which won a Supreme Court Case in 1927, *Nixon v. Herndon*. This case played a major role in allowing non-whites to vote in primary elections.¹

Achievements

Williams served as the chair of the Legal Redress Committee of the El Paso NAACP and worked to ensure the city provided public leisure facilities for Blacks. The Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance in El Paso created a Memorial Scholarship Fund for students attending the University of Texas at El Paso in honor of civil rights leaders in 1968.¹

Essential Questions

1. How are Williams' actions acts of resistance?
 - a. Should activists prioritize one type of discrimination over another?

2. How can you use William's example to fight injustice in your daily life?
 - a. Which of your individual skills/talents would best help you?

3. Do you think any systematic change can happen without the support of the privileged?
 - a. Why or Why not?

4. ***Any great change must expect opposition because it shakes the very foundation of privilege.*** -***Lucretia Mott***
 - a. In Williams' era of activism, who were the privileged?
 - b. How did Williams work to resist systemic racism within the suffragist movement?

¹Jessica Brannon-Wranosky, "Williams, Maude Evangeline Craig Sampson," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed November 09, 2020, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/williams-maude-evangeline-craig-sampson>.

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