

PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

Nannie Helen Burroughs

activist, educator

“Sometimes you have to budge people into doing the right thing—either by example or in a more obvious way.”

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Background Information

Born: May 2, 1879 in Orange, VA

Death: May 20, 1961 in Washington DC,

Nannie was born in Orange County Virginia into the family of two former enslaved people: John and Jennie Burroughs. Her father died when she was young, so Nannie and her mom moved to Washington DC. While there, Nannie attended M Street High School, one of the first schools for African Americans. Upon graduation, she wanted to be a science teacher, but was told her skin tone was too dark.¹

Burroughs' Resistance

Nannie decided to move to Kentucky where she worked as a secretary for the National Baptist Convention. Then, she decided to open her own school, the National Training School in 1908. At this school, she was a principal and teacher who taught young, black women both academic and work-based skills. Classes included dress making, machine operating, music, physical education, and allowed students to work on a school newspaper. Most women at this time were only taught how to do housework, so this was a big deal! Women from the National Training school went on to work in government settings and make impacts by showing that they could do more than just housework.² Nannie was also a clubwoman, working with the National Association of Colored Women. (NACW)

Achievements

Nannie Burroughs is most well-known for creating the National Training School for Women and her work with the National Association for Colored Women. She was also hired by President Herbert Hoover to help the public modify housing in Black communities. Burroughs' interviews and published works were included in a well-known journal about Black lives during the era. An accomplished writer and public speaker, she had many published speeches that brought her fame during the early 1900s.³

¹ "Nannie Helen Burroughs." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 31 Aug. 2020, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nannie_Helen_Burroughs.

² Walker, Jordan. "Nannie Helen Brroughs." *Arlington Public Library*, 17 Sept. 2020, library.arlingtonva.us/2020/05/21/this-week-in-19th-amendment-history-nannie-helen-burroughs/.

³ "Nannie Helen Burroughs -." *Archives of Women's Political Communication*, awpc.cattcenter.iastate.edu/directory/nannie-helen-burroughs/.

