

PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

IDA GIBBS HUNT

educator, civil rights activist, pan-Africanist

“...few colored people [are] rich and... they have so many problems to fight at home that only the “elite” felt any great interest in a Pan-African Association.”



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Background Information

Born: November 16, 1862; Died: December 19, 1957

Hunt was born in Victoria, British Columbia to Mifflin Wistar Gibbs and Maria Alexander. In her youth, she studied at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. She then transferred into the local public-school system in 1876, where she stayed until 1879. For her final year of high school, she attended the Oberlin College's Preparatory Department, where she later stayed as a college student. She graduated from Oberlin College in 1884 with both a bachelor's and a master's degree in English. Throughout her time in college, Hunt was close friends with fellow civil rights activist and women's rights leader Mary Church Terrell, who was part of her graduating class.¹

Hunt's Resistance

Hunt's resistance began with her academic path. She was enrolled in what was called the “gentlemen's course” or traditional course of study in order to receive her degrees. This field, which included “Latin, Greek, modern European languages, literature, philosophy, science, and advanced mathematics,” had previously been dominated by men. Acting as a trailblazer in her time, Hunt was one of the first African American women to obtain a degree in this field.¹

Hunt pursued civil activism through many avenues. In 1905, she became one of the founders of the first Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) for African American girls in Washington, D.C. She was also involved in the Niagara movement, the Femmes de France, the NAACP, and the Women's International League of Peace and Freedom.¹

Beyond her local activism efforts, Hunt became involved with W.E.B. DuBois in advocating for racial equality at an international level. She supported DuBois in organizing multiple Pan-African Congresses², as well as acting as the primary translator at the 1919 Paris Pan-African Congress.³

Achievements

Hunt was a prolific writer and published articles in the “Journal of Negro History” and in the “Negro History Bulletin”, as well as “The Crisis”. She was instrumental to the success of the organizations she served in. Hunt amplified the voices of African American women during a time when many were not known.

Essential Questions

1. How are Hunt's actions acts of resistance?
 - a. How can you resist in a similar way?

2. What is an injustice that you face?
 - a. How can you use your individual skills/talents to fight injustice in your daily life?

3. ***"...few colored people [are] rich and... they have so many problems to fight at home that only the "elite" felt any great interest in a Pan-African Association."***
 - a. What is Hunt trying to convey with this statement?
 - b. How does being "elite" pose an advantage in activism work?
 - c. Do you think this issue is still relevant today?

¹Hunt, Ida Alexander Gibbs (1862-1957). www.blackpast.org. Retrieved 28 October 2020.

²Lemay, Kate Clarke, 1978- (2019-03-26). *Votes for women! : a portrait of persistence*. Goodier, Susan; Jones, Martha S.; Tetrault, Lisa; National Portrait Gallery (Smithsonian Institution). Princeton, New Jersey. ISBN 9780691191171. OCLC 1051137979

³Dunstan, Sarah Claire (2016). "Conflicts of Interest: The 1919 Pan-African Congress and the Wilsonian Moment". *Callaloo*. 39 (1): 133–150. doi:10.1353/cal.2016.0017. S2CID 159668506. ProQuest 1790184012.