

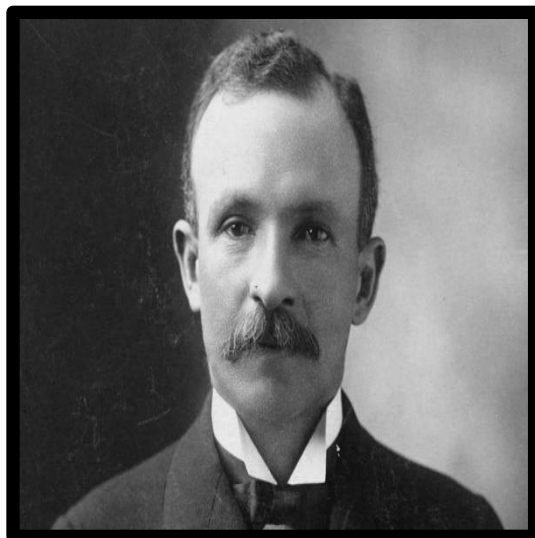
PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

Charles W. Chesnutt

author, lawyer, activist

"We sometimes underestimate the influence of little things."

Page | 1



COURTESY OF LIBRARY OF AMERICA.COM

Background Information

Born: June 20, 1858

Death: November 15, 1932

Chesnutt was born in Cleveland Ohio in 1858. His grandmothers were both mixed-race and his grandfathers were likely white slaveowners. This is why his appearance resembles a white man. When he was eight, his family moved to Fayetteville, North Carolina where his father opened a grocery store. Charles attended Howard School nearby. It became Chesnutt's responsibility to work and help earn money for the family after his mother died when he was fourteen. Unfortunately the family grocery store also went out of business. In 1877, he returned to Fayetteville, NC and began teaching and eventually became principal at the Fayetteville

State Normal School for Negroes¹. While there, he married a fellow teacher, had four children, and decided to move back to Cleveland, Ohio.¹

Chesnutt's Resistance

While in Ohio, Chesnutt passed an important examination that allowed him to open his own court reporting firm. The firm was very successful!² At this time, Chesnutt also began writing. His first famous work was a story called "The Goophered Grapevine". This story was published by the *Atlantic Monthly* became the first work by an African American to be featured in that magazine.³ Chesnutt's works often dealt with heavy subjects like illegitimacy, racial identities and social place throughout his career.³

Achievements

Chesnutt went on to author many short stories, speeches, novels, and essays, all exploring the subject and issues of race in America. He also served on the General Committee of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People. Throughout his life, Chesnutt was a prominent activist and commentator whose legacy lives on today.³

¹ Charles W. Chesnutt: African American Writer, www.myblackhistory.net/Charles_Chesnutt.htm.

² Charles Waddell Chesnutt, 1858-1932, docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/chesnuttcolonel/bio.html.

³ Andrews, William L. "Chesnutt, Charles Waddell." *NCpedia*, www.ncpedia.org/biography/chesnutt-charles-waddell.

