

PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

Moorfield Storey

lawyer, activist

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Background Information

Born: March 19, 1845; Died: October 24, 1929

Storey was born in Roxbury, Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston. He attended the Boston Latin School and graduated in 1862. He went on to Harvard University, where he was a member of the Glee Club. Storey graduated from the college in 1866. Later, he studied law at Harvard Law School. At Harvard, he met his best friend Edward Waldo Emerson, the son of famous poet Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Storey's Resistance

Storey was an advocate for civil rights for African Americans, Native Americans, and immigrants. He opposed immigration restrictions and supported racial equality. He was the first President of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

He used this platform to launch an effective campaign against white supremacy. He guided the NAACP to legally challenge discriminatory laws that violated the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments. He was especially interested in the disenfranchisement and segregation of Black people in the South. Storey was successful and led multiple important legal victories for the NAACP. In particular, he was lead counsel before the U.S. Supreme Court in *Buchanan v. Warley*.¹ The Court unanimously overturned a Louisville law that racially segregated Black people by specific city blocks. Along with James Weldon Johnson, Storey organized the 1919 National Conference on Lynching. The goal of the conference was to pressure Congress to pass the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill.²

Achievements

Moorefield's leadership as the founding president of the NAACP set the pace for how the interracial organization would operate in its formative years. His insistence to partner with African Americans in political opposition to racism and racial violence also paved the way for other interracial organizations to be founded and funded through wealthy funders.

¹ Wikipedia contributors. (2021, January 1). Moorfield Storey. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moorfield_Storey

² Wikipedia contributors. (2020, December 1). National Conference on Lynching. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Conference_on_Lynching

Essential Questions

1. How did Storey use this membership within the NAACP to fight against racism and discrimination?

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2. The NAACP was an intergenerational and interracial organization of some of the most prominent voices of the era. The group worked to advance the rights and protections of African Americans, although its first president was Storey, who is white.
 - a. Should the leaders/spokesperson of organizations reflect its members?
 - b. What benefits could a non-person of color bring to an organization targeted towards people of color?

3. ***"When the white man governs himself, that is self-government, but when he governs himself and also governs another man, that is more than self-government- that is despotism."***

- a. Given what you know about Storey, what do you think he is trying to say here?