

Standing Up for Women's Rights and Suffrage



Nannie Helen Burroughs

Born 1879, Orange, VA– Died 1961, Washington, DC

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Burroughs' Fight for Negro Women's Rights (Home, Church, Workplace) and Suffrage

- Nannie Helen Burroughs (1879-1961) graduated from M Street High School, now Dunbar, in Washington, DC. in 1896. In 1897, she moved to Louisville, Kentucky to work as a secretary to the Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention(NBC).
- 1898: The Louisville, Ky. Courier Journal Newspaper, 1903: "...no Woman's Club in Louisville, or in fact, elsewhere is doing as much practical, far reaching good as 'The Industrial Club'... this band of women workers is in its fifth year and was established by Miss Nannie Helen Burroughs..." Nannie taught evening classes in Domestic Science and Millinery, and established a course of study entitled "Everyday Things Needed in the Home". The curriculum included sanitation, hygiene, suitable dress, care of children, cooking, sewing and laundry. To resource the venture, she used her own salary and charged the women 10 cents a week. This endeavor was a precursor for her future in education.
- 1900: No one seems to know how, but she ended up giving a speech at the National Baptist Convention meeting in Richmond, Virginia entitled: "How the Sisters are Hindered from Helping"
- 1902: She started the Women's Auxiliary to the NBC to give women a bigger voice in church affairs.
- 1907: In the Nineteenth Street Baptist Church, Washington, DC., she started "Woman's Day". The purpose was to teach women to be leaders in the community. She wanted "Woman's Day" to be one where the women in the church would deliver the message about their work in the community.
- 1909: She started "The National Training School for Women and Girls" in Washington, DC. Mission and criteria changed over the years, closing in 2013 as co-educational and kindergarten to sixth grade.
- 1923: Politics and Negro Women's Suffrage: West Virginia Woman's Voice Newspaper: "...white women and Negro women need to come together...There are real dangers ahead. Politics afford an opportunity for exploitation and bargaining..." After passage of the 19th Amendment, Burroughs joined forces with the white women of the Southern Baptist Convention(SBC) to continue the fight across racial lines for Negro women's justice. In addition to fighting racial issues together, these white women came to her rescue financially when the NBC terminated Burroughs' school funding in their 1934 meeting at Tuskegee Institute. In a 1934 letter from the women of the SBC: "Dear Miss Burroughs...Wish you were going to be with us...We are going to get \$10,000 for you out of the Jubilee...with love, Una R. Lawrence". In the same year, Burroughs became the first woman to give the Tuskegee Commencement Speech.
- 1926: The Nannie Helen Burroughs School for Women and Girls in Washington, DC had the contract for cleaning all of the White House laundry.

Nannie Helen Burroughs declared: "The women...They've made possible all we have around us – Home, Church, School, Business..."

Know Our History - Know Our Culture - Know Ourselves - Be Responsible - Be Proud
Colonel (Ret.) James E. Wyatt, Founder of The Nannie Helen Burroughs Project - nburroughsinfo.org
President, FAMC Class of 1953