

In South Carolina, numerous African-Americans have made significant contributions to society. African Americans have set the groundwork for this country and are highly influential in music, culture, and revolutionary changes. Many historical African-American figures continue to serve as role models for us today in various ways. One of which has motivated and inspired me is Charlotta Bass, a native of South Carolina.

Charlotta was born in Sumter, South Carolina, on February 14, 1879. During the civil rights movement of the 1960s, she was an outspoken journalist and political activist. She eventually left South Carolina and moved to Los Angeles in 1910, where she took a five-dollar-a-week job selling subscriptions at the newspaper "The Eagle." She led an African American newspaper during rampant racism, advocating for civil rights for the disadvantaged. This newspaper is one of the country's oldest black newspapers, covering women's suffrage, police brutality, the Ku Klux Klan, and unequal hiring and housing practices. A year later, she bought the newspaper for \$50 and renamed it "The California Eagle."

Her newspaper career spanned four decades, encompassing World Wars I and II, the Great Depression, and the early years of the Civil Rights movement. "The California Eagle" was Charlotta Bass's voice for African Americans, workers, women, and other minorities throughout these turbulent times. She did not, however, stop at describing unjust conditions. She used her weekly column, "On the Sidewalk," and other editorials to advocate for direct action campaigns in her 1931 "Don't Shop Where You Can't Work" Campaign.

In 1952, Charlotta Bass became the first African American woman to run for the United States vice presidency. Her campaign slogan was "Win or lose; we win by raising the issues." She was unafraid of the consequences of speaking out against discrimination in all aspects of life. Her unwavering opposition to racial injustice puts her life in danger on numerous

occasions. She was labeled a communist, and the FBI placed her under surveillance for allegedly disseminating subversive literature. She was, however, unwavering in her pursuit of justice. Her writing and political activism paved the way for the civil and political liberties we have today.

The heroine, Charlotta Bass, has placed South Carolina on the map and has influenced many individuals from here, including me. She exemplifies how no limitations are imposed on you regardless of your origins or race unless you set them on yourself. The dedication and hard work she demonstrated in the past motivates me to continue pushing forward to make my dreams a reality. Her slogan, "Win or lose, we win by raising the issues," is one that I have used in the past as the Boys & Girls Club of America's representative. I came in second place as the winner of a scholarship there, but I won in the end by raising awareness about our organization's deficiencies in Orangeburg County. Charlotta Bass's legacy will continue to spread just as it helped to shape me into the strong-willed and determined young lady I am today.