

## Carter G. Woodson (Historian/Activist)

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Born December 18, 1875 in New Canton, Virginia, Carter Godwin Woodson founded The Journal of Negro History in 1916 and began Negro History Week (later became Black History Month) in 1926, earning him the nickname **"The Father of Black History."** The son of enslaved African Americans, Carter Woodson earned undergraduate degrees at Kentucky's Berea College in 1903. He served as an education administrator in the Philippines from 1904-1907 and earned another undergraduate degree at the University of Chicago in 1907. He also studied at the Sorbonne in Paris, and after he earned a graduate degree at Chicago (1908), he went on to earn his doctorate in History from Harvard University in 1912. He was the second African American to earn a Ph.D. at Harvard, the first was W.E.B. DuBois.

Woodson taught in public schools in Washington, D.C. and served as a dean at both Howard University and the West Virginia Collegiate Institute. But his greatest impact was as the leader of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, an organization he founded in Chicago in 1915. (The name was changed to the Association for the Study of African American Life and History -- ASALH -- in 1972.) Woodson and his colleagues were energetic advocates for the study of black history as its own field, and they spread the word through their Journal, as well as through articles in Marcus Garvey's Negro World, public lectures and an ambitious community outreach program that welcomed students and non-academics. He also used the study of history as a spark for social activism, as evidenced in his most famous book, *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (1933). Carter Woodson began Negro History Week in 1926, designating a week in February, because that month held birthdays for Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington. That went on to become Negro History Month and then Black History Month, designated as February each year by presidential proclamation. Carter G. Woodson died April 3, 1950 at the age of 74.