

# THE HISTORY OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH



*Black History Month* is a celebration of achievements by African Americans and a time for recognizing the central role of blacks in U.S. history. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as *Black History Month*. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating Black history.

*Dr. Carter G. Woodson, a Harvard-trained historian and founder of Negro History Week, the precursor to the modern Black History Month.*

1915

*Carter G. Woodson* and *Jesse E. Moorland*, a minister, founded the *Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH)*, an organization dedicated to researching and promoting achievements by Black Americans and peoples of African descent.

1926

With the ASNLH, Woodson announced *Negro History Week* in 1925. The event was first celebrated in **February 1926**, encompassing the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. The response was overwhelming: Black history clubs sprang up; teachers demanded materials to instruct their pupils; and progressive whites, not simply white scholars and philanthropists, endorsed the effort.

1950

By the time of Woodson's death in 1950, Negro History Week was a central part of African American life. Mayors of cities nationwide issued proclamations noting Negro History Week.

1960

**The Black Awakening** of the 1960s expanded the consciousness of African Americans about the importance of Black history, and the **Civil Rights Movement** focused Americans of all color on the subject of the contributions of African Americans to our history and culture.

1976

The celebration was expanded to a month in 1976, the nation's bicentennial. **President Gerald R. Ford** officially recognized **Black History Month**, urging Americans to "*seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.*"



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