



Carter G. Woodson

Carter G. Woodson, known as the "Father of Black History," dedicated his career to the field of African American history and lobbied extensively to establish Black History Month as a nationwide institution.

Carter Godwin Woodson was born in New Canton, Virginia. The son of former enslaved people, young Woodson worked as a sharecropper and a miner to help his family. He began high school in his late teens and completed a four-year course of study in less than two years.

After attending Berea College in Kentucky, Woodson worked for the U.S. government as an education superintendent in the Philippines. He later earned bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Chicago.

Woodson received a doctorate from Harvard University in 1912, becoming just the second African American to earn a Ph.D. from the prestigious institution, after Du Bois. After finishing his education, Woodson dedicated himself to the field of African American history.

In 1915, Woodson helped found the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (later named the Association for the Study of African American Life and History), which had the goal of placing African American historical contributions front and center.

Woodson established the scholarly publication *Journal of Negro History* in 1916, and to help teachers with African American studies, he created the *Negro History Bulletin* in 1937. Woodson also formed the African American-owned Associated Publishers Press in 1921.

Outside of his writing pursuits, Woodson held down several positions in academia. He served as principal of the Armstrong Manual Training School in Washington, D.C., before becoming a dean at Howard University and the West Virginia Collegiate Institute.

Woodson wrote more than a dozen books over the course of his career, most notably *Mis-Education of the Negro* (1933). With its focus on the Western indoctrination system and African American self-empowerment, *Mis-Education* has become required reading at numerous colleges and universities.

Woodson lobbied schools and organizations to participate in a special program to encourage the study of African American history, which began in February 1926 with Negro History Week. The program was later expanded and renamed Black History Month. (Woodson had chosen February for the initial weeklong celebration to honor the birth months of abolitionist Frederick Douglass and President Abraham Lincoln.)

Woodson died in 1950, a respected and honored figure who received accolades for his vision. His legacy continues on, with Black History Month being a national cultural force recognized by a variety of media formats, organizations and educational institutions.

Woodson's accomplishments are also remembered through the University of Virginia's Carter G. Woodson Institute for African American and African Studies, and the Dr. Carter G. Woodson African American Museum in St. Petersburg, Florida. Source: www.biography.com/scholars-educators/carter-g-woodson



Wilbert Tucker Woodson

Wilbert Tucker Woodson was born in Crozet (*krow-zay*), Virginia in November 1893. He graduated from the College of William and Mary and served in the U.S. Army during World War I. In 1925, Woodson was hired by FCPS to assist Superintendent M. D. Hall as a supervisor and later served as clerk of the Fairfax County School Board. In 1929, Woodson was promoted to Division Superintendent, a position he held for 32 years.

Woodson led FCPS during the consolidation era when FCPS closed its last one-room schoolhouses and introduced county-wide school bus transportation. During the Great Depression, Woodson struggled with scarce funding for public education, a regional drought that dried up drinking water wells at schools, and food insecurity that plagued students and their families.

During World War II, Woodson battled staffing shortages as male teachers, custodians, bus drivers, and principals were drafted into the armed forces, and some female teachers left for higher paying jobs in the Federal Government.

The post-war Baby Boom brought the challenge of rapid student enrollment growth. During his time as superintendent, student enrollment in FCPS rose from about 4,700 to 60,000. From 1929 to 1961, Woodson oversaw the construction of 89 school buildings, of which 57 remain in use by FCPS as schools today. Woodson opened the county's first special education center, Belle Willard, in 1955, and the county's first intermediate schools in 1960.

It was in his final year as superintendent, 1960-61, that FCPS began the court-ordered process of the racial desegregation of the county's public schools. Woodson was opposed to desegregation. After the court pronounced its judgment, Woodson announced his retirement, effective June 1961. Before his retirement, in December 1960, the School Board went against policy and named the new high school under construction near Fairfax "The W. T. Woodson High School." Up until his death in 1983, Woodson was a frequent guest at the school. He holds the distinction of being the second-longest serving superintendent in FCPS history.

Source: FCPS *What's in a Name* (<https://youtu.be/ibVHdLcgKhk>)