



Foundation Document Overview

Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site

District of Columbia



Contact Information

For more information about the *Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site Foundation Document*, contact: anac_superintendent@nps.gov or (202) 472-3884 or write to:

Anacostia Park and Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens, 1900 Anacostia Drive SE, Washington, DC 20020

Purpose



The purpose of CARTER G. WOODSON HOME NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE is to inspire and educate through the preservation of the home, life, and legacy of the preeminent historian and educator Dr. Carter G. Woodson.



Significance

Significance statements express why Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

1. The Carter G. Woodson Home was the residence of Dr. Woodson from 1922 until 1950, serving as a center for his pioneering work on scholarly research of African American history and his groundbreaking educational programs that promoted an appreciation of African American culture and history throughout the nation and beyond.
2. The Carter G. Woodson Home was a community focal point in the Shaw area of Washington, DC, where the interaction of African Americans of diverse trades, professions, and economic backgrounds strongly influenced Dr. Woodson's work, research, and teachings.
3. While living at his home on Ninth Street NW, Dr. Woodson founded Negro History Week (now Black History Month), which continues to have a broad impact around the world and has inspired similar events celebrating cultural identity and awareness.
4. In 1915, Dr. Woodson founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, which operated out of his home after 1922. Now known as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, this organization continues to promote his scholarly work and vision.
5. Established by Dr. Woodson in 1921, Associated Publishers, Inc. was one of the first publishers to print and distribute the works of African Americans, women, and minorities, giving a voice to traditionally underrepresented groups.



Fundamental Resources and Values



Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Carter G. Woodson Home**
- **Education and Scholarship**
- **Connections to the Shaw Neighborhood**



Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- Dr. Carter G. Woodson was driven to change our understanding of American history, which had a profound and lasting influence on the cultural identity and awareness of the African American community in the United States and throughout the world.
- Dr. Woodson's scholarly work, organizational vision, and entrepreneurial spirit continue to influence a broad spectrum of society, including the African American community and historical researchers.
- A visionary, Dr. Woodson devoted his life to education and to influencing the content of our nation's educational curricula.
- The Woodson home served as a focal point for the African American community and provides contemporary visitors a tangible link to Dr. Woodson, his social focus, and his cultural legacy.
- A realist, Dr. Woodson recognized that he could not accomplish his visions of American history without the participation of others through organization and institution building.



Description

Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site was established by Congress on December 19, 2003, through Public Law 108-192. This site is intended to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Carter G. Woodson—a pioneering figure for the study and celebration of African American history and heritage. The home was designated a national historic landmark in 1976.

The Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site ensures the preservation of the Woodson home while promoting and interpreting the life, message, and legacy of Dr. Woodson and the work of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH). Woodson's home is one of three adjoining structures within the national historic site, which also includes two adjacent row houses, at 1540 and 1542 Ninth Street NW. These three buildings are components of a block of nine row houses on the street that originally had identical facades exhibiting the simple, vernacular, Victorian Italianate architectural style of the late 19th century. These structures were constructed between 1872 and 1874. The adjacent row houses will be rehabilitated for interpretive and educational use.

The Woodson home and adjoining row houses are undergoing significant rehabilitation and restoration efforts. The Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site are to be completed in full to include a restored home and visitor center that will include community meeting space and dynamic, interactive exhibits that take advantage of technology and focus on Woodson's message of higher education and preservation of history.

Through the rehabilitation of this site, the park is expected to inspire new generations to take up the struggle against oppression through the teachings of Woodson and his unrelenting commitment to education, scholarship, and agitation.

Dr. Woodson made the house at 1538 Ninth Street NW, in the historic Shaw area of Washington, DC, his home from 1922 until his death in 1950. Dr. Woodson established his home as the headquarters for the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. In 1926, it was here that he created Negro History Week, which later became Black History Month. Dr. Woodson founded the association to educate the American public about the extensive and positive contributions of African Americans to the nation's history and culture. The association also established The Associated Publishers, the first publishing company dedicated to the publication of research on African American history, and circulated two seminal periodicals on African American history, including the *Negro History Bulletin* and the *Journal of Negro History*. Dr. Woodson played a critical role in reducing prejudice and clarifying the need for civil rights remedies in America.

The son of former slaves, Dr. Woodson was denied access to education through his early youth in Canton, Virginia. In 1895, at the age of 20, he began his formal education, earning his high school diploma in Huntington, West Virginia, a bachelor's degree from Berea College, and AB and MA degrees from the University of Chicago. He then earned his PhD from Harvard University in 1912—only the second African American to do so, after W. E. B. DuBois. Dr. Woodson went on to become a renowned educator, historian, publisher, advocate, and prominent member of the African American community in Washington, DC.

