

# Creating the Julius Rosenwald & Rosenwald Schools National Historical Park



“All the other pleasures of life seem to wear out, but the pleasure of helping others in distress never does.”  
JULIUS ROSENWALD

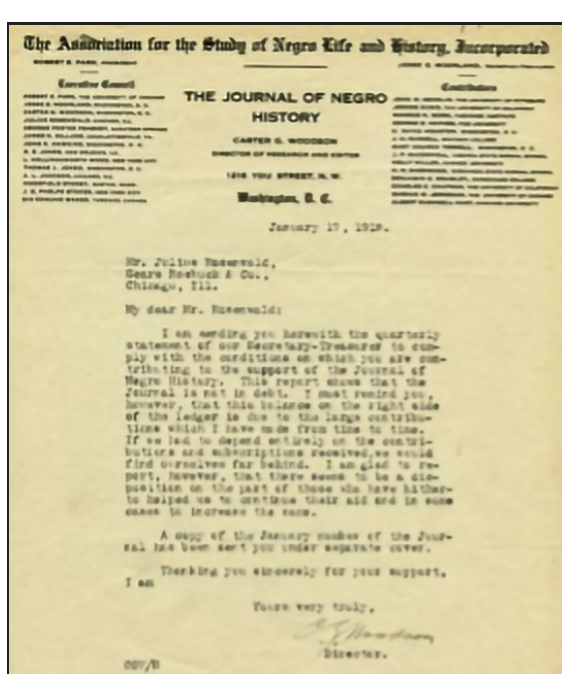


## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

### Celebrating the Connection Between Carter G. Woodson and Julius Rosenwald

That Americans today celebrate February as Black History Month is a legacy from the remarkable career of historian and activist Carter G. Woodson. Born in 1875 in rural Virginia to parents who had been enslaved, Woodson longed for education and worked hard to attain it. He attended Berea College in Kentucky for a time and then went on to earn both Bachelor's and Master's degrees at the University of Chicago. He became the second African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard (the first being W.E.B. DuBois). His passion was the history and experience of Black Americans, a subject hardly considered worthy of academic study at that time and not taught at all in public schools. Woodson was determined to change that.

In 1915, in Chicago, Carter Woodson founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH, now the Association for the Study of African American Life and History) and created The Journal of Negro History and the Negro History Bulletin, both of which are still being published. Among those to whom he turned for financial support was Julius Rosenwald who responded with years of donations.



Letter of January 17, 1918  
University of Chicago Library

Woodson had stayed at the Wabash Avenue YMCA in the Bronzeville section of Chicago while establishing ASNLH. This was one of the first YMCAs built following Julius Rosenwald's offer, in late 1910, to contribute \$25,000 to any city in the country that would raise \$75,000 independently to build a YMCA for African Americans. Ultimately, YMCAs were constructed in 24 cities through Rosenwald's challenge grants. They offered Black Americans opportunities for lodging, recreation and fellowship that were otherwise unavailable to them due to segregation. Rosenwald became a steady financial supporter of The Journal of Negro History and served on the Executive Council of the Association.

In 1921, Woodson launched Associated Publishers Inc., to enable publication of African American historical research and scholarship that was routinely rejected by the major white publishing houses. He taught briefly at Howard University (1919-20) but spent most of his career working as an independent scholar. He authored hundreds of monographs and dozens of books, including *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, which is still in circulation and often cited by other scholars.



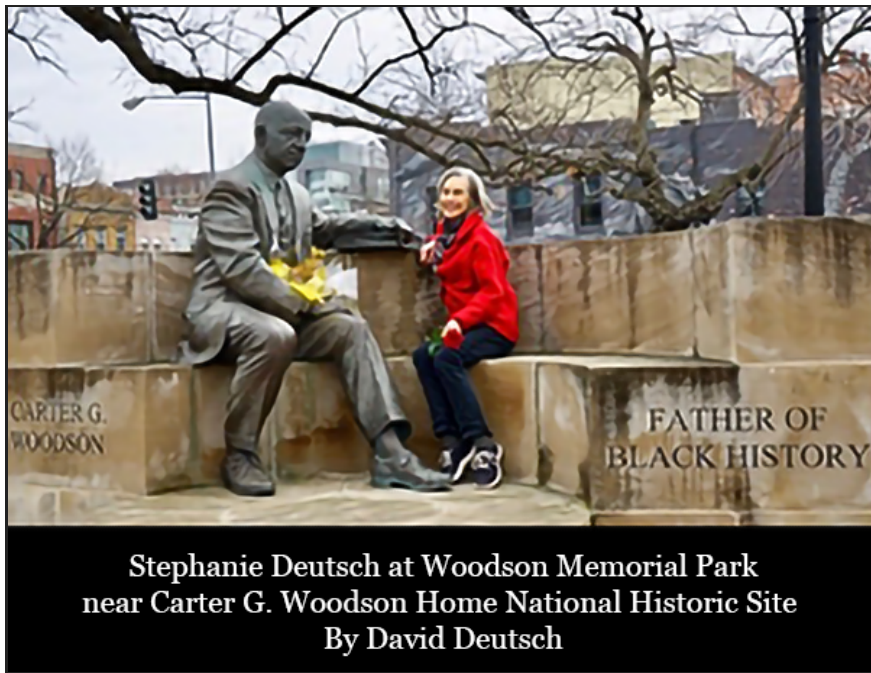
Photo of Woodson in his office  
National Park Service

In 1926 Woodson created Negro History Week, choosing mid-February because it includes the birthdays of both Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. The observance slowly gained acceptance in schools and workplaces and since 1970 February has been officially recognized as Black History Month.

In 2006 Woodson's home at 1538 9th St, NW, in Washington, DC, became the 389th unit of the National Park System. Several years ago, Dorothy Canter visited the National Historic Site and was surprised and delighted to discover on a table an old photograph of Woodson in his office with a framed photograph on a nearby wall of a person he knew and admired - Julius Rosenwald.

The connection between Carter G. Woodson and Julius Rosenwald existed on multiple levels. Among those who considered Woodson a mentor were historian Rayford Logan, writer Zora Neale Hurston, poet Langston Hughes and Howard University librarian Dorothy Porter Wesley – all recipients of Rosenwald fellowships.

The two men shared a commitment to having the United States live up to its ideals by offering equality of opportunity and respectful attention to all citizens, regardless of race.



Stephanie Deutsch at Woodson Memorial Park  
near Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site  
By David Deutsch

Stephanie Deutsch, editor

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For questions and suggestions, please write to [info@rosenwaldpark.org](mailto:info@rosenwaldpark.org).