

Celebrate Black History Month with The News Argus

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Why We Celebrate Black History Month

By Linda McKnight
Staff Reporter

As you, the students of Winston-Salem State University celebrate Black History Month, do you actually know why we celebrate this occasion? Are you aware of who made this occasion possible? Or do you just celebrate because it's that time of year again? As you think about these questions, you may find the you are unable to answer one or all of them.

The idea of Black History Month began in February 1926 by the late historian and educator Dr. Carter G. Woodson. For his efforts, he is called the "Father of Black History".

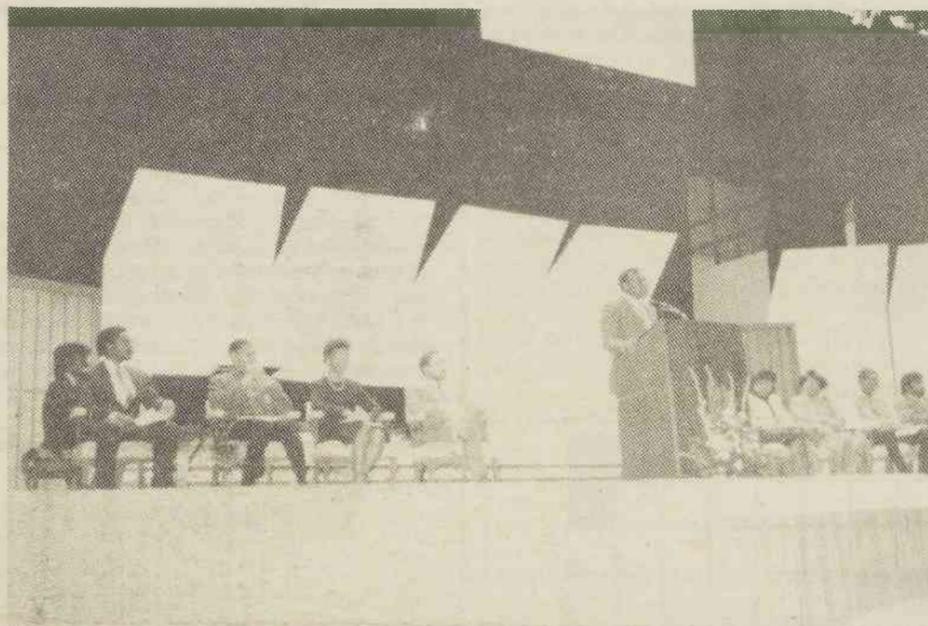
He first initiated Negro History Week in February 1926 to bestow an emphasis upon the contributions Blacks have given American life. This week long celebration later expanded into Black History Month in 1976 in relation to the Bicentennial the nation had already been celebrating.

Woodson, also a noted author, wrote a book in which he described how whites have systematically mislead and miseducated blacks making them feel inferior. In his book "The Miseducation of the Negro" he wrote: "The Negro's mind had been brought under the control of the oppressor. The problem of holding the Negro down, therefore, is easily solved. When you control a man's thinking, you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him to stand here or to go yonder. He will find his proper place and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. In fact if there is not a back door, he will cut one for his special benefit. His education makes it necessary."

"The same educational process which inspires and stimulates the oppressor with the thought that he is everything and has accomplished everything worthwhile, depresses and crushes at the same time the spark of genius in the Negro by making him feel that his race does not amount to much and that it never will measure-up to the standards of other people. The Negro thus educated is a hopeless liability of the race."

Woodson wanted blacks to break free from these bonds and to learn to appreciate and uplift themselves in every positive way possible. He therefore wanted the annual Black History celebration to inspire Blacks to remember that they, too, have a proud rich history and have made valuable contributions to America. He not only started the celebration, but created the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History now the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History. This organization is responsible for setting the theme for Black History Month. Bonnie J. Gillispe is the organizations director.

Lerone Bennett, Jr., Senior Editor of the popular Black magazine EBONY and a noted historian, has served as a significant leader in his efforts to popularize black history. He praised Woodson in the February '83 issue of EBONY in these



Dr. Ballard addresses students, faculty and staff at Assembly.

Photo By: Wilson

words: "In an extraordinary career spanning three crucial decades, the man and the history became one- so much so that it is impossible to deal with the history of Black people without teaching it at some point in the personal history of Carter Woodson, who taught the teachers, transformed the vision of the masses and became, almost despite himself, an institution, a cause, and a month."

Bennett and Woodson have played a significant role in the popularizing of Black History and making it available to large masses of people. He has also written books to support this cause. One of his classics is "Before The Mayflower". This book includes many new ideas of Black History which he feels are important for an understanding of Black and White identity. In the Feb. 16, '87 issue of JET, the author discussed many important ideas about his book which he recently revised in order to project a new idea about Black History. "First of all it is impossible to celebrate this month with a whole heart if we don't remember and give thanks to Carter Woodson and the institutions and men and women who have made this month possible," explained Bennett.

Other essential points he makes include:

1. This is a national celebration with national implications. For "Black History is not an intellectual ghetto or a missionary endeavor. On the contrary, Black History commemorates one of the greatest stories in the history of the world, and no American-Black or White- can understand himself or herself without some understanding of what Black people have dreamed and done here. And from this standpoint it is impossible to understand George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, the U.S. Constitution, the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln, Charleston, Boston, Atlanta, New Orleans or the face of contemporary America without some understanding of the Black experience. That

experience-including the gifts of jazz and Spirituals, the gift of scientists and inventors like Charles Drew and Garrett A. Morgan (the inventor of the three-way automatic stop sign)-have colored dyed, browned, and blackened the whole of the American experience and all Americans are called in this month to the national task of understanding the black gift to America and the living challenge that the Gift and the history pose in our own lives."

2. That he said, is the second point: "We are dealing here with a living history and a living challenge. And we ought to hear in this month the voices of the slaves and martyrs and dreamers, the voices of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X and Harriet Tubman, saying, "O Sinner, please, don't let this haves' pass."

3. Black History Month is the beginning of a year-long celebration. "Reporters," he said, "are always asking me, 'Why are we celebrating Black History Month? We don't celebrate White History Month.' And I tell them that we celebrate White History Month every day of the year and that we will not be safe in this country until Black History has equal time." Bennett feels that through their efforts to win freedom and justice for themselves, "Black Americans have expanded the boundaries of freedom for all Americans, and continue to be the most passionate and articulate spokesmen for what people call the American Dream."

**Have A
Great
Spring Break**

Do You Know These Black Facts?

By Carter Cue

Since February marks Black History Month, it is important that people of African descent and other nationalities remember the African contribution given to world civilization.

Did you know, according to history that:
-Skeletal remains found by archeologist prove Africa is the cradle of civilization.

-Euclid, the father of geometry and Diophantus, the father of algebra were Africans living in Kemit.

-The first calendar was invented by Africans along the Nile.

-Africans were the first people to smelt iron.

-Saint Augustine came from Carthage and two other Christian church fathers, Cyprian and Tertulian were Africans.

-Ludwig Van Beethoven was very dark and called "Black a Moor" by his contemporaries. His father was a Moor-like Othello.

-There were three African Popes of Rome: Victor (186-197), Melchisedech (311-314) and Saint Gelasius (492-496).

-Two of Greece's most famous citizens-Aesop and Sappho, both writers, were African.

-The first civilizers of Europe were the Moors (Africans). They built Europe's first university, the university of Salamanca in Spain. It was built after they conquered Spain in 711 A.D.

-Ancient Rome had several African emperors: Septimus Severus, Macrinus, Firmus, and Pescennius Niger.

-Modern western military scientist use concepts formed by the African Hannibal. (He crossed the Alps on elephants).

-Writing paper (papyrus), pens were invented by Africans along the Nile. But a Black American by the name of W.B. Purvis invented the ink pen.

-Jesus wasn't portrayed with blue eyes, white skin, and blonde hair until Michelangelo painted him in the Sistine Chapel. His uncle was his model. (Read the book of Revelations-Chapter 1).

-The Pope of Rome bows down to the Black Madonna whenever he goes to Poland.

-Bilal the first convert to Islam was an African, as was Muhammad's maternal grandmother.

-The first clock in America was made by Benjamin Banneker. This African-American was also the surveyor of Washington D.C. (Washington D.C. should be called Banneker City).

-The first Christian church was the Copac in Ethiopia.

-According to the book of Genesis the Garden of Eden is in Africa (Pay attention to the location of the rivers).

History-"Of all our studies, history is best qualified to reward all research."
Malcolm X