

Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Inc. Fact Sheet

The *Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Inc. (now African American Life and History)* (ASALH) founded in Chicago, IL, September 9, 1915, then incorporated October 3, 1915, under the laws of the District of Columbia is a non-profit, tax-exempt professional organization. Its founder was the late Carter G. Woodson, a Harvard-trained scholar and international educator who was the son of former slaves. Woodson, like W.E.B. DuBois, realized early the important role of the African American (then “Negro”) in the history of the U.S. and world. He committed his life to research on the African American past and to the dissemination of knowledge about the African American in the new world. The work of the organization historically has been the conservation and preservation of African American history and culture.

The Mission of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Inc. (ASALH) is to promote, research, preserve, interpret, and disseminate information about Black life, history and culture to the global community.

The Vision of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History is to be the premier Black heritage and learned society with a diverse and inclusive membership supported by a strong network of national and international branches to continue the Woodson legacy.

Headquartered in Washington, DC, ASALH operates as local, state, and international branches promoting greater knowledge of African American history through a program of education, research, and publishing. ASALH:

- supports the study of African American history in homes, schools, colleges, churches, organizations, businesses, and government;
- provides a speakers’ bureau in support of Black History programs throughout the year;
- sets the annual theme for National African American History Month;
- sponsors specialized professional development curriculum workshops, institutes, and seminars;
- co-sponsors with the National History Day organization awards to high school students for winning projects, papers, or performances relating to African American History;
- sponsors an annual convention, a national venture of study, discussion and projection;
- supports diversity through dialogue and public education;
- sponsors undergraduate essay contests at annual ASALH convention;
- Carter G. Woodson Historic Site Fund.

Program Interests

Annual Conference ASALH host a national convention each year for five days in late September or early October. We visit cities that have historical relevance to the Black History Theme of the year, cities that hold significance in America’s History, and cities that have ASALH chapters, members and friends.

Black History Month Kit Since the establishment of Negro History Week by Carter G. Woodson in 1926, ASALH has promoted the celebration of Black History, expanding from week to month to year. It now prepares and distributes annually a kit based on the theme for educators, business and community groups, government agencies, and correctional institutions.

Professional Development and Networking for Teachers Workshops, seminars and institutes provide in-service and exchange opportunities for teachers on selected themes. Past themes have included “African Americans in World War II” and “The Middle Passage.”

Collaboration and Partnerships ASALH has worked with public agencies, including the National Endowment for the Humanities, Division of Education Programs; the Department of Defense; the National Park Service, Capital Region Area, National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Education Foundation, the U.S. Customs Service, and private foundations, including the Ford Foundation, John H. Johnson and Johnson Publications, the Mary McLeod Bethune Museum, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Farmers Insurance, Kiamsha Youth Empowerment Organization, the Emmett Till Annual Convention, Wachovia Bank and the Black African Arts and Culture Organization. ASALH welcomes joint ventures with programs and organizations interested in diversity issues and training through study, dialogue and public education.

Historical and Archival Collections, Publishing, and Materials Development ASALH publishes quarterly *The Journal of African American History* (formerly *The Journal of Negro History*), edited since 2001 by V.P. Franklin. Founded in 1916, the *Journal* is the oldest professional journal by and about African Americans. A second publication is the *Black History Bulletin* (formerly *The Negro History Bulletin*), co-edited by LaVonne Neal, Dean of Education at University of Northern Illinois and Alicia Moore, Southwestern University, and published at ASALH Headquarters in Washington, DC. The *Bulletin* was initiated in 1937 at the suggestion of Mary McLeod Bethune as a training tool published by teachers for teachers. ASALH inaugurated *Fire!!!* the first scholarly digital publication that includes multi-media in 2012. *Fire!!!* is co-edited by Dr. Marilyn Thomas-Houston.

Carter G. Woodson National Historic Landmark The Carter G. Woodson Home in Washington, D.C. was designated a National Historic Landmark on October 30, 1975. In January 2000 a bill was introduced by Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.) initiating a study to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to analyze the suitability and feasibility of designating the Carter G. Woodson Home as a National Historic Site. The Bill establishing the Home as a National Historic Site passed the House and finally the Senate in November 2003 and in 2006 it was named the 389th Unit of the National Park System. The Carter G. Woodson Home was the home of ASALH from 1923 until 1950 and has been the location of many famous meetings and events. In January 2006, an official ceremony transferred the ownership of the Woodson home from ASALH to the National Park Service to ensure its future preservation.

International Intercultural Development ASALH at times through the years maintained chapters in Nigeria, Liberia and Japan, thus highlighting the significance of international and intercultural understanding in the context of continuing global development. The task of overseas branches is to promote greater mutual knowledge and understanding of the relationship of American and African American history and culture and other cultures and nations, especially third world, developing and newly developed regions.

**The Association
for the Study of
African American Life
and History**

*A New History for
A New Century*

ASALH Milestones

- *the first academic organization devoted to
African American Culture
- *the first black-owned and-operated academic
publisher
- *the first academic journal by and about African
Americans
- *the first observance of Negro History in 1926
- *the first African American woman Mary McLeod
Bethune, to head a major organization
- *founded by Carter G. Woodson, first descendant of
slaves to graduate with a Ph.D. from Harvard