

## **NATIONAL HERITAGE SITES RESEARCH COMMITTEE (NHSRC) UPDATE**

**June 2020**

**Submitted by Dr. Bettye Gardner and Barbara Spencer Dunn**

Committee Members: Bettye Gardner, Co-Chair, Barbara Spencer Dunn Co-Chair, Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, Vincent Deforest, John Whittington Franklin, Jarvis Givens, Cheryl Gooch, Dale Green, Sharon Harley, Jim Harper, Robert Harris, Ida Jones, Lionel Kimble, Lopez Matthews, Janet Sims-Wood, Gabrielle Tayac, Francille Wilson, Ex-Officio: Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, President, Sylvia Cyrus, Executive Director

Two Task Agreements were completed in January – Cowpens and the Woodson Landmark Nomination Update. The following three Task Agreements are ongoing:

1. Acadia National Park
2. The Buffalo Soldiers
3. Lafayette Square Park

Additionally, there is one new Task Agreement with Valley Forge National Park titled Historic Resource Study for African American Participation in the Valley Forge Encampment. This is the first Task Agreement that a Park has engaged one of our ASALH Branches, the Phila-Montco Branch of ASALH in Philadelphia, PA. Phila-Montco has decided to invite all of our Pennsylvania Branches to join them in collaboration on this project. [Additional branches: Phila-Heritage Branch in Philadelphia, PA and Edna McKenzie Branch in Pittsburgh, PA]

The grant submission to the National Park Foundation Service Corps 2020 (an annual request for proposals) was not funded under this source, but was referred to the National Park Foundation (NPF) Fund 2 for consideration. We received word from the Director of Resource Management, National Park Foundation that after careful review, NPF decided to fully fund this project entitled: Place-based Curriculum and Kiamsha Peer-to-Peer Historical Student Scholars and Docents Documentary Project. This project engages the Kiamsha Youth Empowerment Organization youth as peer mentors/trainers to the students at Dunbar High School, Washington, DC, especially those in the newly formed Carter G. Woodson Black Studies Academy. Through knowledge transfer, the entire school will be impacted. We engaged several ASALH scholars/historians/activists as lecturers/trainers for this project and all have been contacted with the news.

The schedule is being rearranged by the lead teacher at Dunbar and the Executive Director of Kiamsha to accommodate present realities. Since the project is starting after its original date, it will extend into 2021. Because the project will not end in December 2020 as originally planned, instead of a releasing the documentary at the Annual Carter G. Woodson Birthday Celebration, it will be premiered at ASALH's Annual Black History Luncheon in 2021.

We look forward to the historical context this project will provide to the Historic Dunbar High School during its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and the opportunity to introduce our founder, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, ASALH, and the Historic Woodson Home to a new generation of leaders. In keeping with the plans of Superintendent Tara Morrison, to promote the life and legacy of Dr. Woodson and increase visitation to local historic sites, corps participants' completed documentary project

will be shared broadly, and this peer-to-peer training module and African American place-based curriculum can be replicated nationally by the National Park Service.

**The Woodson Landmark Nomination update** is significant to the Woodson Home Site which will open within the next year and a half.

Of the Task Agreements that we are engaged in with the National Park Service (NPS), the Woodson Landmark Nomination Update is significant to the Woodson Home Site as the renovations on the Home move towards completion. This updated Woodson Landmark Nomination builds on and expands the 1976 nomination, using up-to-date documentation standards and criteria of the National Park Service (NPS) NHL program. It is also informed by recent studies on the Carter G. Woodson Home including a 2001 Special Resource Study, a 2008 Historic Structure Report, and a 2012 Historic Resource Study. In 2016, the NPS completed an extensive restoration and rehabilitation of the house after decades of neglect and damage from a 2011 earthquake and hurricane. This update fully addresses the physical characteristics of the building, identifies the current condition and results of the restoration and rehabilitation efforts, and provides a clear and thorough understanding of the NHL's historical significance and connection to Carter G. Woodson and his outstanding accomplishments in scholarship and in the advancement of African American Civil Rights. The house is located within the locally-designated Shaw Historic District and the Mount Vernon West National Register Historic District. It was listed in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites on March 3, 1979, and was documented by the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1983, with additional study in 2012-2013.

From his "office home," Woodson created and maintained a space for himself and dozens of women and men to work collectively to write and publish hundreds of books and articles; to promote the importance of black history through lectures, presentations, newsletters and history kits; to research, collect, archive and display a wide range of textual and visual material; and to provide venues for scholars to present and publish their work.<sup>1</sup> From 1922 until his death in 1950, Woodson, who was active in civil rights and black freedom struggles in Washington, D.C. and nationally, believed that education was central to combating racism and white supremacy, and achieving true freedom as guaranteed by the Constitution.