

## A TIMELINE OF THE FATHER OF BLACK HISTORY



*Carter G. Woodson*

Known as the “Father of Black History,” Woodson (1875-1950) was the son of formerly enslaved people and understood the importance of gaining a proper education when striving to secure and maximize one’s divine right of freedom.

# 1875

**Carter Godwin Woodson was born on December 19, 1875, in New Canton, Virginia, to formerly enslaved parents Anna Eliza Riddle Woodson and James Woodson. As the fourth of seven children, young Woodson worked as a sharecropper and a miner to support his family.**





# 1897

**Though he entered high school later in life, he made up for lost time, graduating in less than two years. After attending **Berea College** in Kentucky, Woodson worked as an education superintendent for the U.S. government in the **Philippines**.**

**1908**

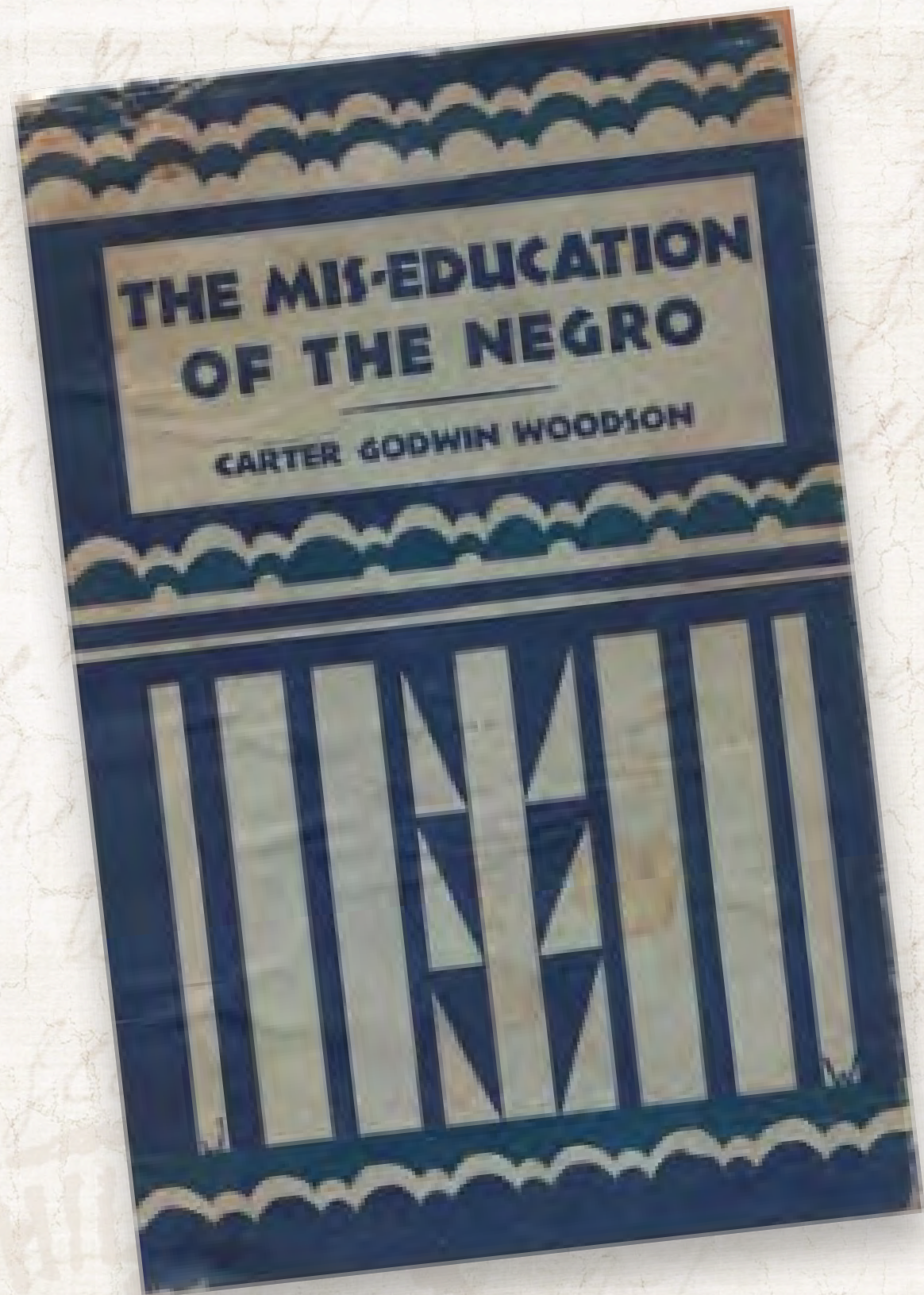
**Enrolled at the University of Chicago  
and earned a second bachelor's  
degree and a master's degree in  
European History in the spring of 1908.**





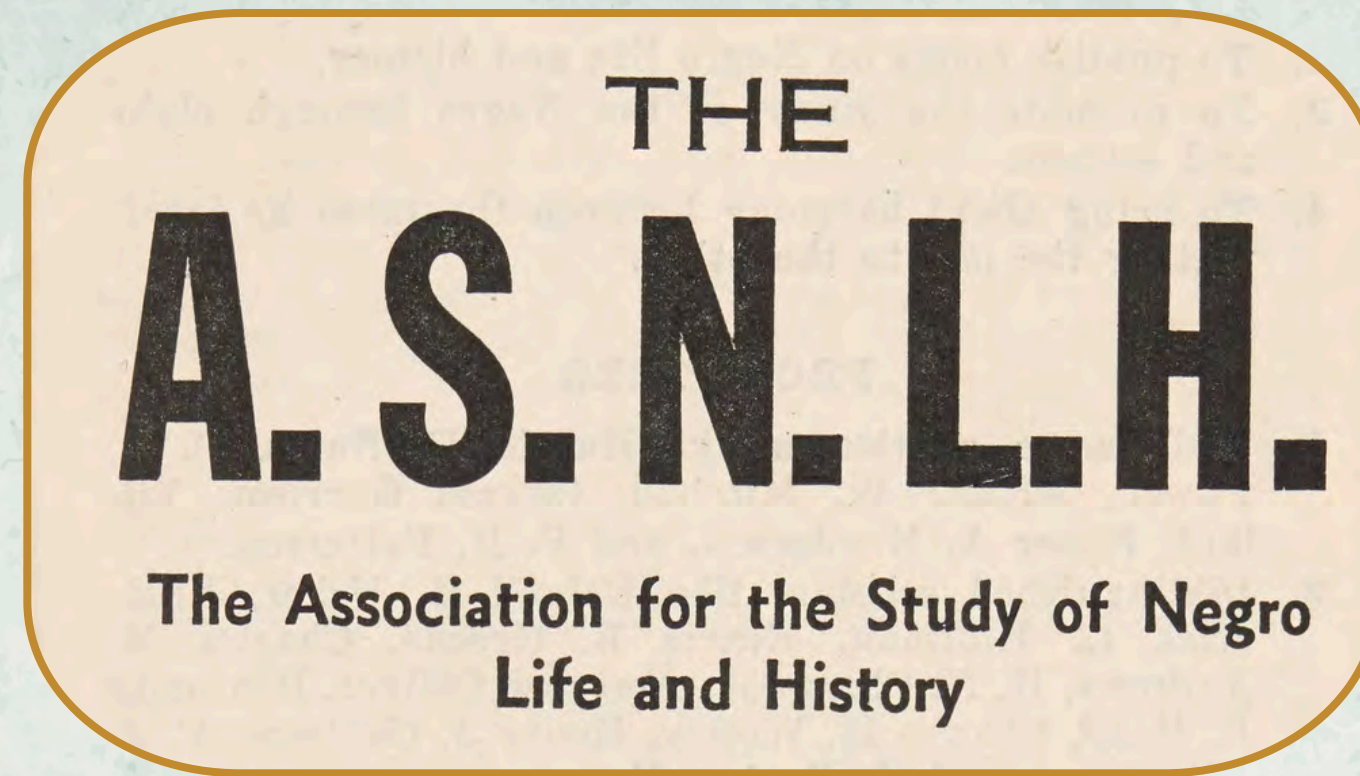
# 1912

**Became the second African American (after W.E.B. Du Bois) to receive a PhD from Harvard University. He was also the first child of enslaved parents to earn a doctorate in history.**



**1915**

**Published *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, his first book.**



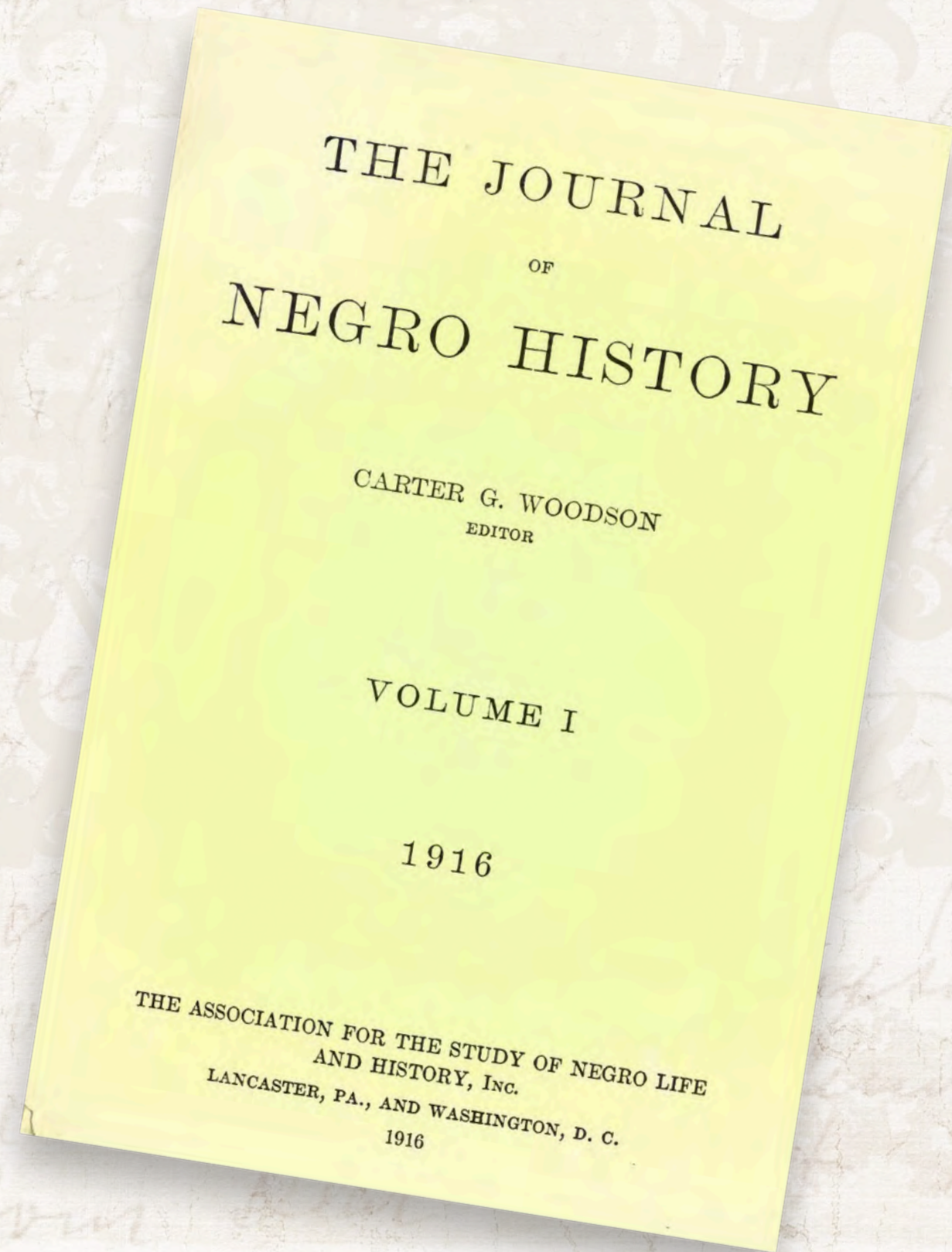
# September 9, 1915

**Founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History.**

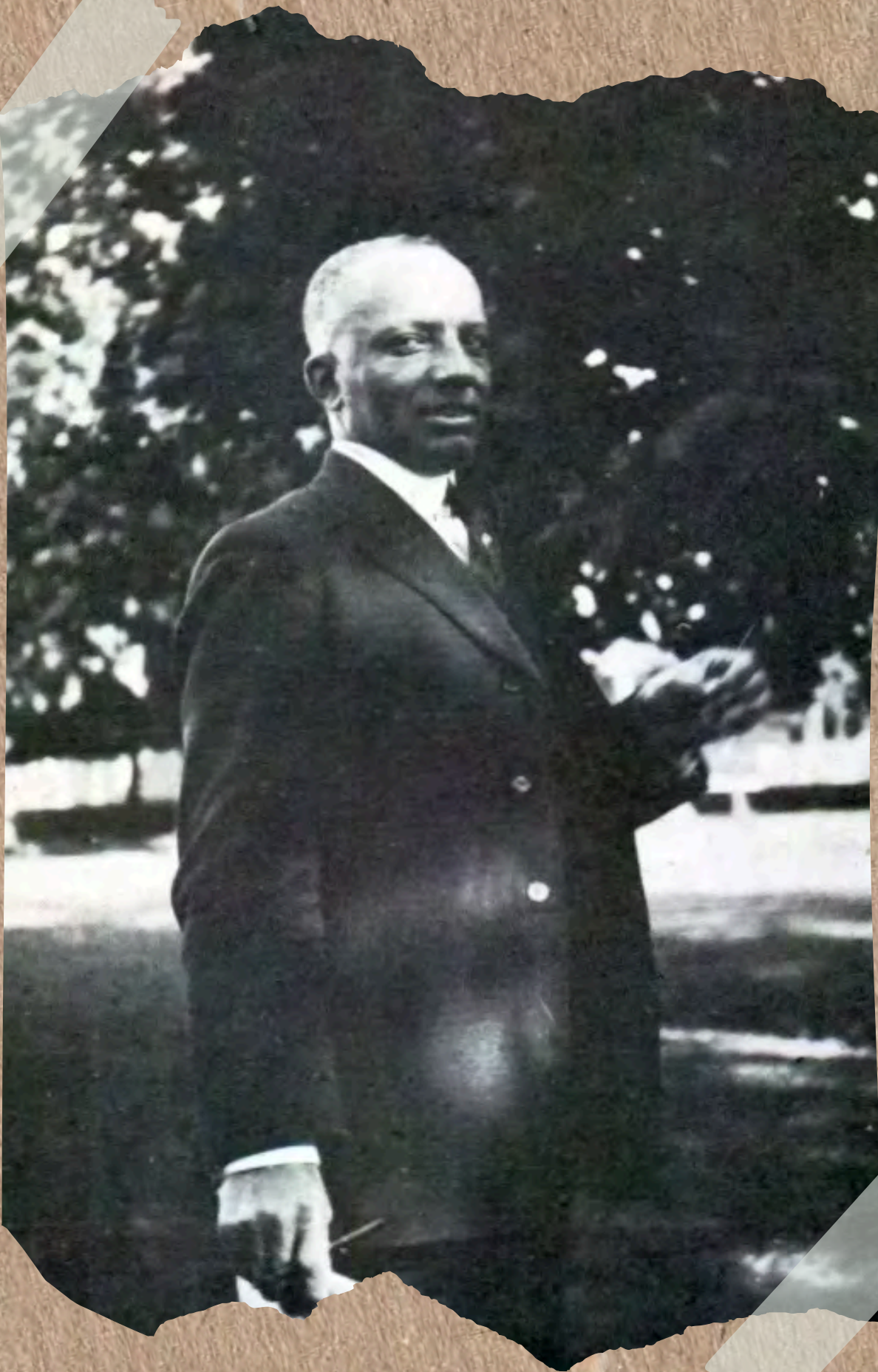
**Today, known as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), it is the oldest organization dedicated to studying and promoting Black History.**

**1916**

**Published the first issue of  
*The Journal of Negro History.***







# 1918

**Moved to Washington, D.C., where he taught American history, English, French, and Spanish languages at the M Street School (now known as Paul Laurence Dunbar Senior High School) and then worked as a principal at the Armstrong Manual Training School.**

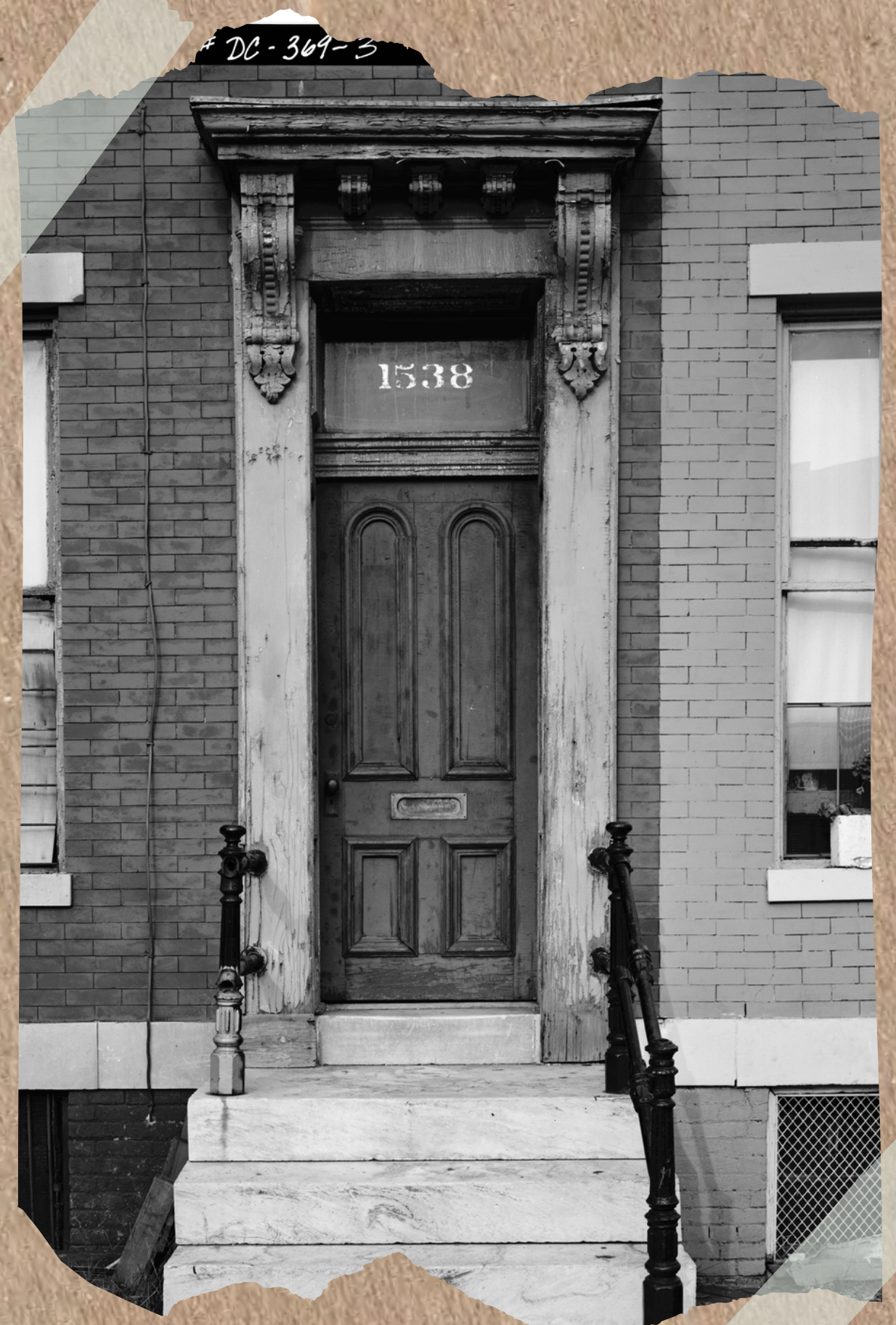
1920

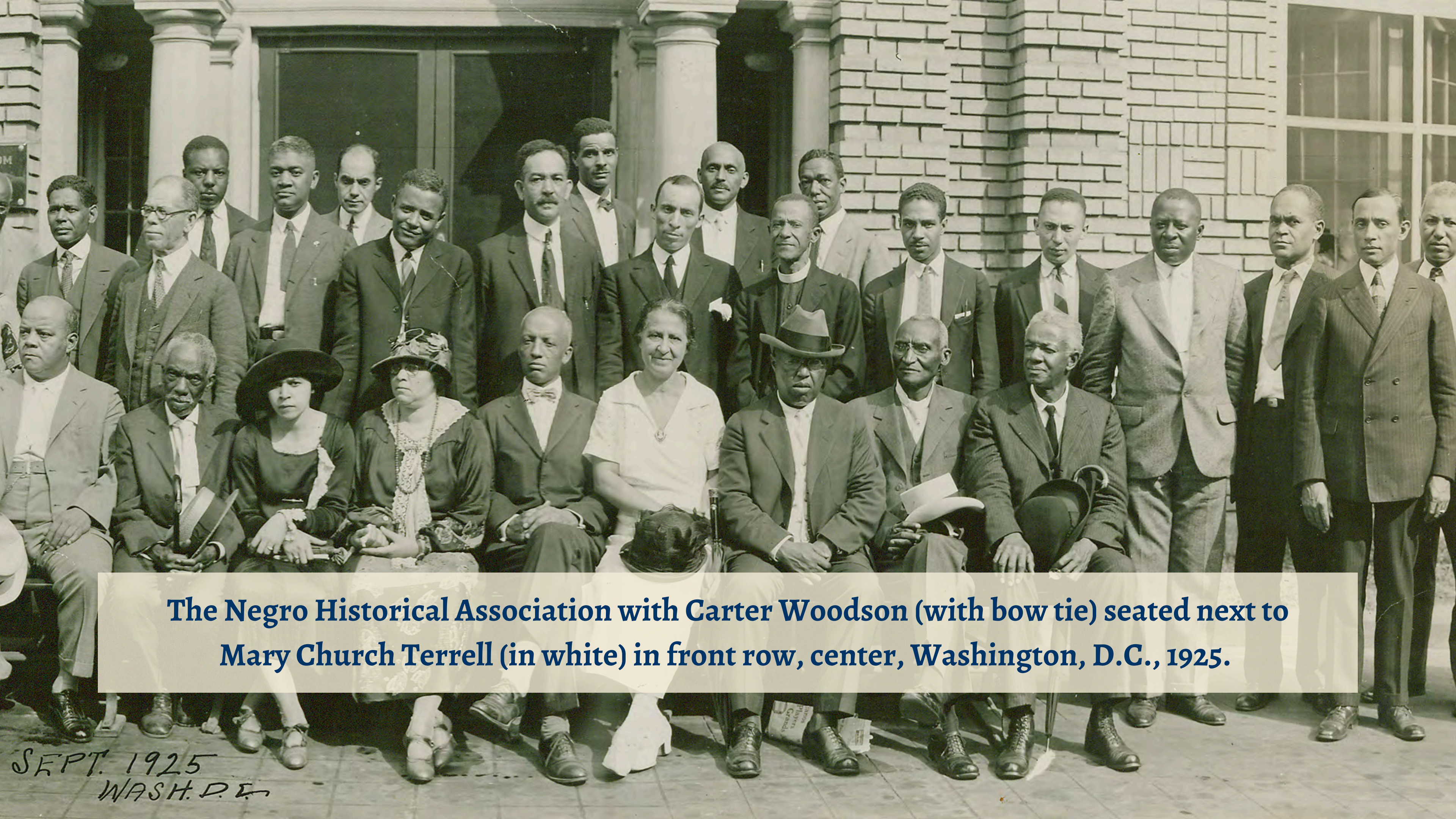
**Dr. Woodson became Dean  
at the School of Liberal  
Arts and Head of the  
Graduate Faculty at  
Howard University.**



# 1922

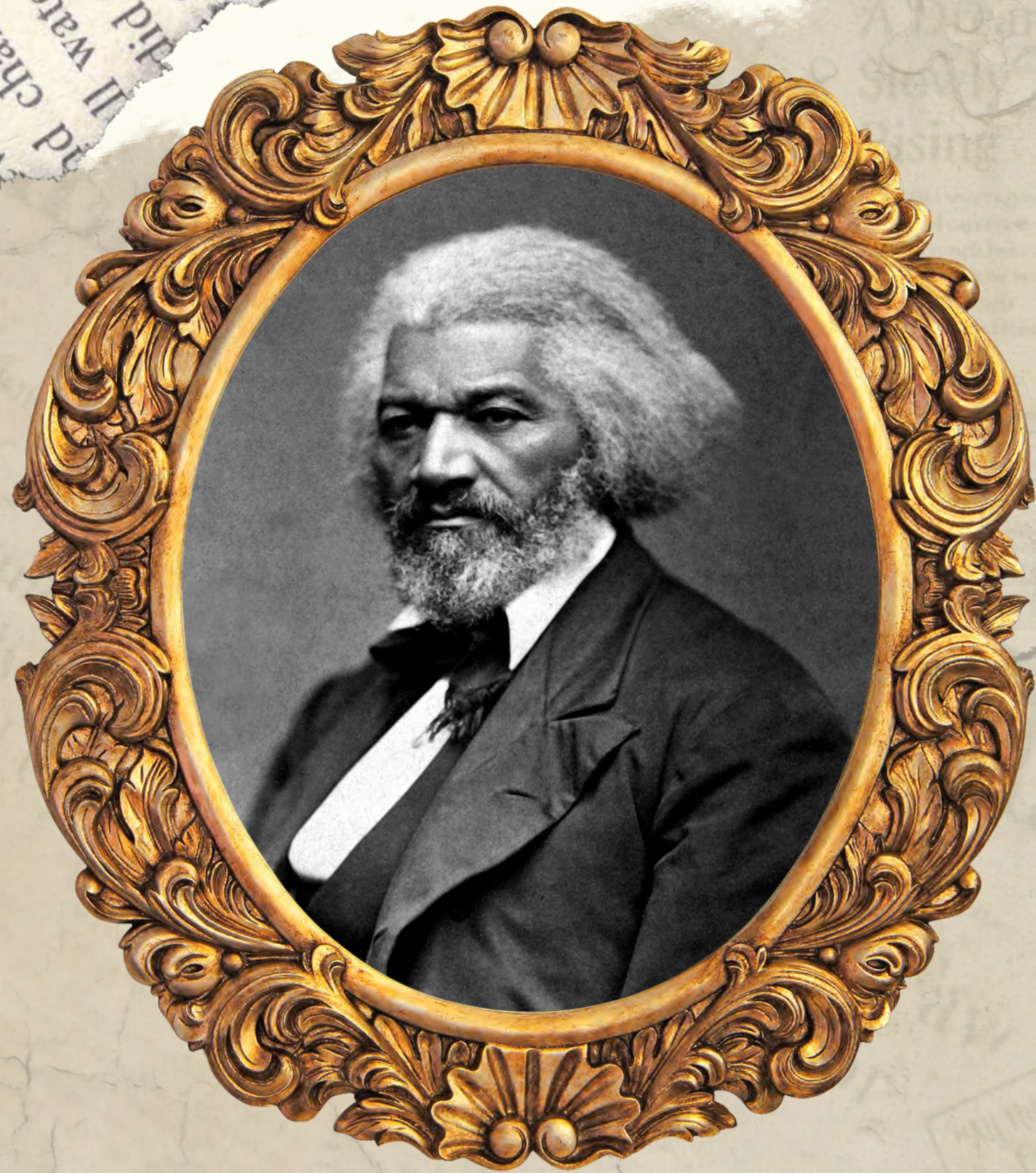
**Bought a home at 1538 Ninth  
Street NW in the Shaw  
neighborhood of Washington, D.C.  
Dr. Carter G. Woodson's home was  
designated a National Historic  
Landmark in 1976.**





**The Negro Historical Association with Carter Woodson (with bow tie) seated next to Mary Church Terrell (in white) in front row, center, Washington, D.C., 1925.**

SEPT. 1925  
WASH. D.C.

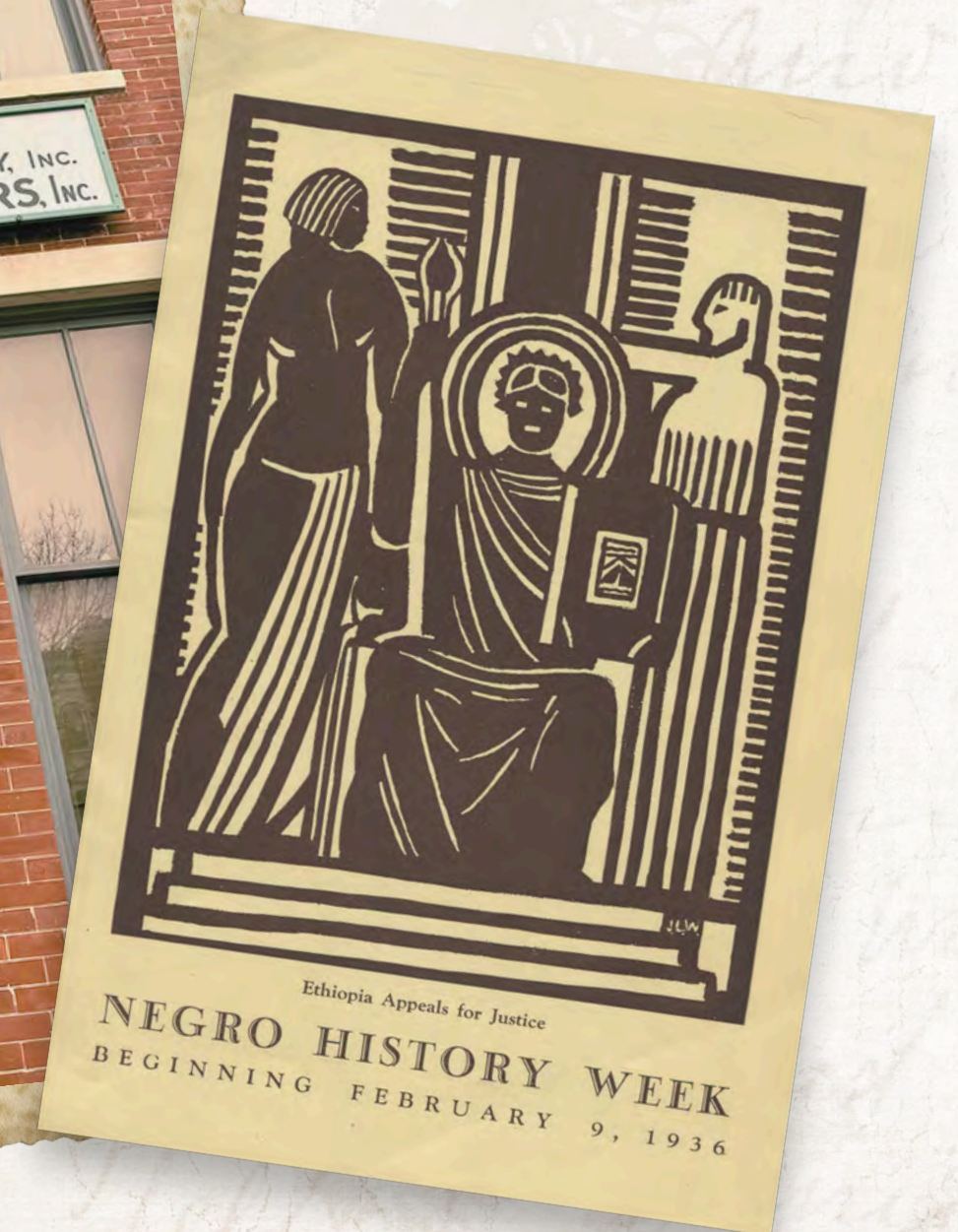


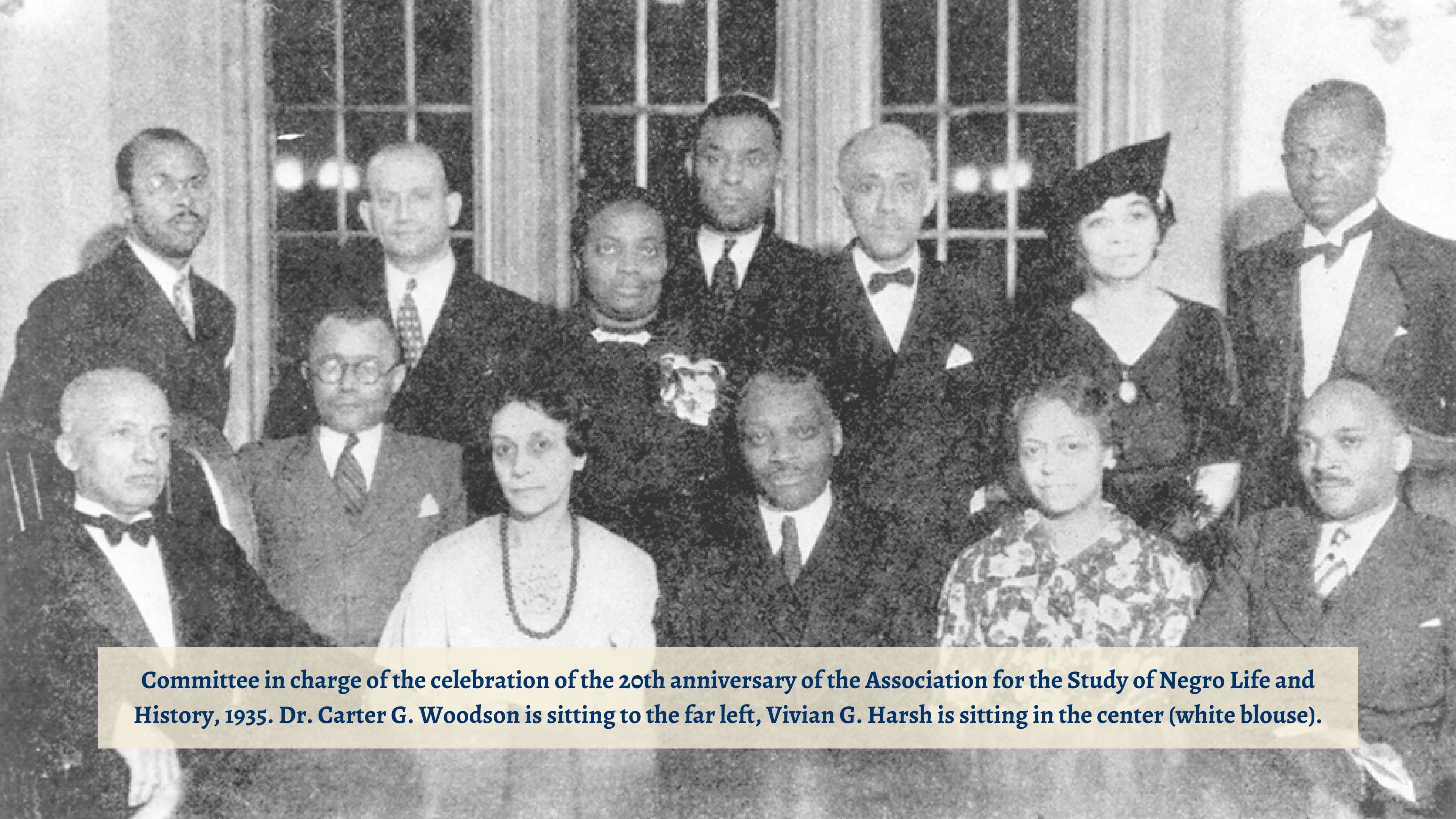
# 1926

**Founded Negro History Week in February to honor of the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln, two key figures in the fight for freedom and equality, a tradition that later evolved into Black History Month.**

# 1930s

Woodson's home served as the headquarters for **ASNLH (now ASALH)**. It also housed **Associated Publishers**, a publishing company focused on African American culture and history, at a time when many publishers rejected such works.





**Committee in charge of the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1935. Dr. Carter G. Woodson is sitting to the far left, Vivian G. Harsh is sitting in the center (white blouse).**



# 1937

At the urging of **Mary McLeod Bethune, Woodson** established the ***The Negro History Bulletin***, which focused on the annual theme. ***The Negro History Bulletin*** was a monthly newsletter for high school teachers, with articles providing ideas for lessons on African American history. ASALH still publishes this educational resource as the ***Black History Bulletin***.



# THE NEGRO HISTORY BULLETIN

Published Monthly

Vol. I, No. 1.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

October, 1927

## The Thrilling Escape of William and Ellen Craft



ELLEN CRAFT

**W**ILLIAM CRAFT, a smart, polite, intelligent young man, and Ellen, a gentle, beautiful young woman, were slaves on the same Georgia plantation. Their master knew they loved each other, so he gave them permission to marry.

One day, William said to his wife, "Ellen, our master has allowed us to marry. But in slavery we can never really be man and wife. We do not belong to each other. We belong to our master. We are his property. He can sell us whenever he wishes. We are happy now, but tomorrow you may be sold away from me, or I may be sold away from you. Our happiness may end at any moment. There is only one way to avoid this. In some way we must become free."

"I understand you perfectly, William," said Ellen, "but there is no way for us to be free. Why worry about things which you cannot change? You cannot destroy slaves. Those slaves who have tried to strike down their owners have failed. Upstairs which they have planned have been checked at the start. A few slaves have worked hard for years and with their savings have purchased their freedom. Occasionally others have been freed by kind masters whom they have rendered faithful servants. A number of fug-

itives, following the north star and assisted by friends, have reached the land of freedom, but tears come to my eyes when I see that all these ways seem closed to us."

"I have the idea," said William. "It came to me last evening when I was asleep. We shall run away."

"How shall we do it?" asked Ellen. "I have solved the problem of our freedom," said William. "Here is how we'll do it. You will dress up like our young master in one of his suits. You will have your hair cut like that of a young man. You are fair enough to be taken for white. Ellen, then, you will look like a young planter elegantly dressed in a cloak and high-heeled boots."

"Freedom is dear," said Ellen, "and we should do every thing possible to obtain it; but how can a woman stand such a long and hard journey from Macon, Georgia, to some northern point in New York, Massachusetts or Canada? How can I maintain pretenses that I am a man when I am questioned at those ranges or when I am approached as if I were a man?"

"That will be easy," said William. "Muffle your face so if you are inter-

fering from a toothache. This will prevent people from finding out who you are. This will also keep persons from knowing that you haven't a beard."

"That sounds all right for the traveling from place to place," said Ellen. "But what about stopping here and there for food and shelter? There are well-to-do free Negroes in Charleston, Richmond, and Baltimore, but a 'young white master' could not safely stop with them. He would be taken for one of them. Many free colored people are almost white. We shall have to stop with white people or at hotels. How can I register at one when I can neither read nor write?"

"I have thought of that, too," said William. "You will put your right arm in a sling, keep a little with a cane in your left hand, act as if you were injured on the way, pretend that you are a little hard of hearing, keep those green spectacles over your eyes, and about that you must depend upon me, your servant, for everything you want. The clerk will sign the hotel book for you, and will be no wiser by it to give you close attention."



WILLIAM CRAFT

Ellen agreed to make the dash for freedom. The clothes were brought, the carriage was prepared, and they decided to leave on the following Saturday. This would give the run-aways forty-eight hours to travel before their escape would be known. There was to be a holiday from Saturday evening until Monday when they would be missed for the first time.

Ellen was ready at the appointed time. She looked like the young master. William, full of pluck and natural ability, was a fine, strong man. He was very attentive to his "young master." He was eyes, ears, hands and feet for "him." Ellen had little to say or to do except to attend to the "attendants" which she was supposed to have and to act like a master. She would not accept acquaintance with those attracted to her and would pretend to be deaf while William, the "servant," explained the bliss of the "young master." Many instances of the kind occurred, but William was always ready to make an explanation which presented their approach with his master.

"We are now approaching a city," said William. "This is Charleston. I know a little about the place. My master once brought me here as his servant."

(Continued on page 5)



ON THE WAY TO FREEDOM

Copyright 1927, by the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Inc.

# THE NEGRO HISTORY BULLETIN

Published Monthly

Vol. II, No. 6

WASHINGTON, D. C.

March, 1939

## The Negro in Art From Africa to America

**A**RT probably appeared first in ornaments for the body. Personal adornment, developed to the extent of becoming decorative art—decorating not only the body itself but clothing, jewelry, tools and utensils. It is difficult to think of a time when man did not appreciate the value of making a good appearance—of decorating himself and things about him so as to improve their attractiveness.

The ideas as to what was attractive and what was not differed in ancient times as they do now. Even today there are tribes which believe that it adds to personal adornment to wear heavy earrings which pull the lobes of the ears downward and make them grow into flaps resting on the shoulders. There are women who consider it an improvement of their beauty to put large disks in their lips so that they grow wide enough to look like saucers or plates. Beauty, then, is a relative rather than an absolute term.

Among the most striking manifestations of African art are often pointed out the excellent small sculptures in stone, wood, ivory or metal, in wax, clay or metals. In all these the Negroes have shown themselves to be "ingenious workers, powerfully helped by inspiration, a sharp sense of detail and a very profound conception of the form to be given to their ideas," says Delafosse in his *Negroes of Africa*.

"At the side of religious art or art for art's sake there is another domain in which the Negroes are past-masters: It is that of the industrial arts, represented by work in clay, wood, iron, copper, gold, leather, and textiles. Ornamented and glazed pottery of all forms and dimensions, finely carved spoons, pongs, staffs of command, low or high stools each one of which is a masterpiece of patience and elegant execution; harmoniously slender paddles, straight or curved knives having handles made of wood incrustated with metal, lances with multiple blades of graceful contours, axes for war or parade, small objects in molded or hammered copper; golden jewelry of filigree or made in a

mold, rings and bracelets with delicately wrought openwork, cushions, saddles, boots and sheaths in supple leather diversely colored; curious boxes of oxys skin, trays and mats colored reeds, fabrics of cotton, wool or raffia that are veritable tapestries with motifs as subtle as they are varied and of a very sure taste in coloring, silk or cotton embroideries of a singular richness and happy design."

It is said, however, that what we speak of as fine arts developed first in connection with architecture. In

the organization of social and political institutions it became necessary to have palaces for the kings and nobles, temples for the priests, and shops for the mechanics, artisans and merchants. In the course of time, too, the lowest elements of the population, the serfs and slaves, represented in our day by the laboring classes, had to have better homes than the hovels in which the first had to live. As these buildings became more important and useful they were made more and more beautiful by decorations. This task required deep thought.

In these buildings, especially in temples, were often placed statues. By and by, as in ancient Egypt, these sculptures were changed to portrait statues to preserve for posterity the images of the deceased. In the course of time such portrait statues were used to adorn public buildings without special likeness of any individual. Sculpture began, then, to lose its independent character. This sculpture is seen as such today in the form of what is called relief. Relief here means the projection of the sculptured figures from the wall on which they are carved. If the figures project half of the circumference the sculpture is high relief. If the figures lie practically flat it is called low relief. If they are midway between the high and the low the form which they assume is called half-relief. Other designations are employed for the degree of projection. When color was added to the figures lying flat on the surface on which they were made sculpture became painting. Such wall paintings were referred to later as murals.

Sculpture reached its first high level in ancient times under the Egyptians. The Sphinx near the Pyramids of Ghizeh, the Temple at Luxor, the Rock Temple at Abu-Simbel and the Obelisk show the greatness of Egyptian architecture and sculpture. Building upon what these Africans achieved in Art, the Greeks handed down through the Romans the Doric, Ionic and Corinthian styles of architecture which Europeans and Americans have modernized.

While the Egyptians were modified racially by Europeans and Asians who brought them some new ideas to change somewhat their way of doing things the native Africans below the Sahara and in the interior could not be reached by such influences. Yet in their way the Africans of the interior produced certain types of art which some believe passed through Egypt into the Mediterranean world to influence modern European nations and Americans of today. Some of the earliest efforts of the Africans in both architecture and sculpture appear in the fine figures of Sher-



EXPRESSING THOUGHT THROUGH SCULPTURE

Copyright 1939, by the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Inc.

# 1940s

**Woodson continued to publish and remain active in civil rights, supporting the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) anti-lynching efforts. During this time, ASNLH (ASALH) steadily grew, establishing branches in every major northern city and dozens of cities and small towns across the South, ensuring that Negro History Week would not end with Woodson's passing.**



*Mary McLeod Bethune, Lucy Harth Smith, and Dr. Carter G. Woodson at ASALH's Annual Conference in Chicago, Illinois in 1940.*



# 1950

**Dr. Carter G. Woodson passed away on April 3, 1950, at the age of 74 in his living quarters at the Association's Headquarters in Washington, D.C.**



[asalh.org](http://asalh.org)