

Office of Cultural Diversity

Springfield Public Schools

Dr. Nate Quinn, Coordinator of
Cultural Diversity

Ms. Gwen Marshall, Cultural
Diversity Specialist

Mrs. Ana Perry, Cultural
Diversity Specialist



Crispus Attucks, a sailor of African descent and a former slave, is considered the first casualty of the Revolutionary War. He died March 5, 1770, in the Boston Massacre.

Entrepreneur and philanthropist Sheila Crump Johnson, co-founder of Black Entertainment Television, is the only African-American woman to hold ownership in three professional sports teams: the WNBA's Washington Mystics, the NBA's Washington Wizards and the NHL's Washington Capitals.

Black History Month

By Jennifer Rosenberg, About.com Guide

"The origins of Black History Month can be traced back to a man named Carter G. Woodson (1875-1950). Woodson, the son of former slaves, was an amazing man in his own right. Since his family was too poor to send him to school as a child, he taught himself the basics of a school education. At age 20, Woodson was finally able to attend high school, which he completed in just two years.

He then went on to earn a bachelor's and master's degree from the University of Chicago. In 1912, Woodson became only the second African American to earn a doctorate from Harvard University (W.E.B. Du Bois was the first). Woodson used his hard-earned education to teach. He taught both in public schools and at Howard University.

Three years after earning his doctorate, Woodson made a trip that had a great impact on him. In 1915, he traveled to Chicago to participate in a three-week celebration of the 50th anniversary of the end of slavery. The excitement and enthusiasm generated by the events

inspired Woodson to continue the study of black history year-round. Before leaving Chicago, Woodson and four others created the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH) on September 9, 1915. The following year, the ASNLH began publication of the *Journal of Negro History*.

Woodson realized that most textbooks at the time ignored the history and achievements of blacks. Thus, in addition to the journal, he wanted to find a way to encourage interest and study of black history. In 1926, Woodson promoted the idea of a "Negro History Week," which was to be held during the second week of February. The idea caught on quickly and Negro History Week was soon celebrated around the United States. With a high demand for study materials, the ASNLH began to produce pictures, posters, and lesson plans to help teachers bring Negro History Week into schools. In 1937, the ASNLH also began producing the *Negro History Bulletin*, which focused on an annual theme for Negro History Week.

In 1976, the 50th anniversary of the beginning of Negro History Week and the bicentennial of the United States' independence, Black History Week was expanded to Black History Month. Ever since then, Black History Month has been celebrated in February around the country.

When Is Black History Month?

Woodson chose the second week of February to celebrate Negro History Week because that week included the birthdays of two important men: President Abraham Lincoln (February 12) and Frederick Douglass (February 14). When Negro History Week turned into Black History Month in 1976, the celebrations during the second week of February expanded to the entire month of February."

<http://history1900s.about.com/od/1920s/p/blackhistorymonth.htm>