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The Legacy of Carter G. Woodson

Carter G. Woodson, often called the "Father of Black History," was a historian, author, and journalist who believed deeply in the importance of documenting African American contributions to history. Born in 1875 to formerly enslaved parents, Woodson overcame significant obstacles to become one of the first African Americans to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University.

In 1926, Woodson launched "Negro History Week" to highlight the achievements of Black Americans. He chose the second week of February to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, two figures deeply connected to the history of African Americans. Woodson's goal was not only to celebrate Black history for one week, but to ensure it became a fundamental part of American education.

By the 1970s, thanks to the efforts of educators, activists, and the civil rights movement, Negro History Week evolved into what is now celebrated as Black History Month in the United States. It is a time for reflection, education, and appreciation of the historical and cultural contributions of African Americans.

Today, Black History Month is observed not only in schools but also in museums, government institutions, and community organizations. It serves as a reminder that Black history is American history — integral to the nation's story, and not confined to just one month.

Comprehension Questions:

1. Who was Carter G. Woodson and why is he important to Black History Month?
2. Why was February chosen for the original "Negro History Week"?
3. What was Woodson's primary goal in creating Negro History Week?
4. How did Negro History Week evolve over time?
5. According to the passage, why is Black History Month significant today?
6. What challenges did Carter G. Woodson likely face as a Black scholar in the early 20th century?
7. How did the civil rights movement contribute to the expansion of Negro History Week into a month-long observance?
8. Why is it important that Black history is not confined to just one month, according to the passage?
9. What does the passage suggest about the relationship between Black history and American history?
10. What role do schools and institutions play in the modern celebration of Black History Month?