



NHL Executive Summary



- Name of Property:** Carter G. Woodson House (NHL update)
City, State: Washington, D.C.
Period of Significance: 1922-1950
NHL Criteria: 2 and 3
NHL Theme:
- II. Creating Social Institutions and Movements
 - 1. clubs and organizations
 - 2. reform movements

 - III. Expressing Cultural Values
 - 1. educational and intellectual currents
 - 3. literature
 - 4. mass media

 - IV. Shaping the Political Landscape
 - 4. political ideas, cultures, and theories
- Previous Recognition:** 1976 National Historic Landmark/National Register designation
2003 National Historic Site designation
2013, 1983, 1979 Historic American Buildings Survey
- National Historic Context:** Civil Rights in America
Rekindling Civil Rights, 1900-1941
The Birth of the Civil Rights Movement, 1941-1954



NHL Significance:

- The Carter G. Woodson House is the former home, office, and workplace of Carter Godwin Woodson (December 19, 1875 -- April 3, 1950), also known as the “Father of Black History.” Woodson purchased the house in 1922 to serve as his residence and a home base for pursuing his lifelong commitment to the professionalization and promotion of black history. He lived and worked there until his death in 1950.
- The home served as the headquarters of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH), co-founded by Woodson in 1915; the *Journal of Negro History*, started in 1916; Associated Publishers, Inc., incorporated in 1921; and Negro History Week, co-founded in 1926. ASNLH is still in existence; now operating as the Association for the Study of African American Life & History (ASALH). Negro History Week has become Black History Month and it continues to be celebrated each year in February.
- 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.
- Woodson was active in civil rights and black freedom struggles in Washington, D.C. and nationally, and believed that education was central to combating racism and white supremacy and achieving true freedom.
- This updated NHL nomination builds on and expands the 1976 nomination, using up-to-date documentation standards and criteria of the National Park Service (NPS) NHL program. Revisions include correcting the period of significance, expanding the evaluation of the property’s significance under Criterion 3, 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.

Integrity:

- The house retains a high level of integrity of location and setting. The house remains in its original location on Ninth Street in a predominantly residential block. All nine row houses built concurrently with the Carter G. Woodson House remain intact. The adjacent row houses at 1540 and 1542 Ninth Street, NW are owned and managed by the NPS as part of the Carter G. Woodson National Historic Site but are not part of the nominated NHL property.
- Between 2015 and 2017, the NPS completed an extensive restoration and rehabilitation of the house after decades of neglect and in response to 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.
- While some of the original materials of the house have been lost due to deterioration and damage caused by water, termites, neglect, and other factors, the 2015-2017 rehabilitation/restoration meticulously restored much of the original building fabric. When materials were not salvageable, similar materials were used. In the instance where modern materials were needed, such as for structural stabilization, the materials are not visible.



- Following the recent restoration, which returned significant spaces and features to the period of Woodson's occupancy, the Carter G. Woodson House conveys a strong feeling and association with the time that the prominent scholar, historian, and activist lived and worked in the house.

Owner of Property: National Park Service

Acreage of Property: Less than one acre

Origins of Nomination: Through a partnership with the National Park Service, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) completed this nomination update, building on the work done in 1976 by the Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation, and later research and documentation conducted by and for the National Park Service.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: This update to the NHL nomination will provide expanded and more detailed documentation to allow for fuller interpretation to the public of Carter G. Woodson and his national significance. Plans are underway to install exhibits and interpretive materials to create a historic house museum, interpretative center, and office space.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None known.

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of October 21, 2021):

- Tara Morrison, NPS, Superintendent, National Capital Parks East
- Evelyn Higginbotham Brooks, President, Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH)

Landmarks Committee Comments:

- Add to the nomination that Woodson was teaching in segregated schools.
- Add a sentence or two about the other founders of the ASALH.
- Should be some discussion of Woodson's role in the professionalization of Black History and also his overall importance in the rise of public history.
- More information about the white murder spree of blacks and the decimation of their properties in East St. Louis in 1917 would help provide helpful context.

Landmarks Committee Recommendation:

The Committee recommends that the National Park System Advisory Board recommend to the Secretary of the Interior the acceptance of the NHL updated documentation for the Carter G. Woodson House National Historic Landmark in Washington, DC, with any additions and corrections as noted by the Committee being made prior to the nomination being forwarded to the Secretary of the Interior for action.

Advisory Board Recommendation: