

A promotional graphic for the Mariposa READ program. It features a silver and black Blue Yeti microphone on a wooden surface next to an open book. The background is a blue gradient with white stars. Text includes the program name, dates, and instructions for listening and finding transcripts.

Mariposa READ
(Read, Enjoy, And Discover)

Thursday, January 16, 2023 at 7:30 PM
Sunday, January 19, 2023 at 2:30 PM

Black History Month

To listen, tune in to KRYZ Radio or log onto www.kryzradio.org
For Transcripts:

- Go to the event on our Facebook Page: Mariposa Adult & Family Literacy
- Go to our website: www.mariposalibrary.org under the Adult Literacy tab, Mariposa READ
- Pick up a print copy from the Adult Literacy cart in front of the Mariposa Library, M-F, 9-4



Black History Month

In the United States, February is Black History Month. Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and a time for recognizing their central role in U.S. History.

Carter G. Woodson was a Harvard trained historian. In 1915 he participated in the Lincoln Jubilee in Bronzeville, Chicago. This was a summer-long celebration of the 50 years since emancipation from slavery. The Lincoln Jubilee drew thousands of attendees from across the country to see exhibitions of heritage and culture. Woodson was so impressed that he wanted to bring more organized focus to the history of black people. In 1925, he created Negro History Week to be celebrated the second week in February. The week chosen was to include the birthdays of both Abraham Lincoln, February 12th, and Fredrick Douglas, February 14th. Black communities had already been celebrating these two days to honor these men. Woodson wanted to raise awareness of African Americans' contributions to civilization and to be sure that school children were exposed to black history. He wanted to educate that there is more to Black history than enslavement and colonialism. Woodson also founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH). This organization was dedicated to researching and promoting achievements by Black Americans and other peoples of African descent. Woodson's hope was to use history to prove to white America that blacks had played important roles in the creation of America and thereby deserve to be treated equally as citizens.

Woodson's idea was well-received and Black history clubs were formed in many schools. Teachers demanded materials to instruct their students and progressive white people stepped forward to support the effort. Newspapers played a huge role in the publicity of the event. Churches also played a large role in the distribution of literature about the event. Throughout the following decades the popularity of Negro History Week grew and mayors of cities across the country began issuing yearly proclamations recognizing "Negro History Week." By the time of Woodson's death in 1950, Negro History Week had become a central part of African American life and many more Americans came to appreciate the celebration.

The Civil Rights movement focused Americans of all colors on the subject of the contributions of African Americans to our country's history and culture. With the Civil Rights movement and a growing awareness of Black identity, "Negro History Week" evolved into Black History Month on many college campuses by the late 1960's. In 1976, during the year of our nation's bicentennial, President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month and called upon the public to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history." Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month.

When it was first established, Black History Month resulted in some controversy. Some critics refer to the celebration as a form of racism. Others were concerned that it could reduce complex historical figures to simplified objects of "hero worship". Many felt it was not okay to limit the celebration of Black history to just one month. Black history should be in mainstream education all year and Black history is American history. The ASNLH changed its name to the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) and its aim is to promote the study of Black History all year.

When Negro History week began in 1926, Carter G. Woodson realized that having a theme for the week would focus the attention of the public. The first recorded theme was in 1928 and it was "Civilization: A World Achievement" The ASALH chooses the theme each year and since 1976, each president has endorsed that theme. In 2022 the theme was "Black Health and Wellness", and it focused on medical scholars, health care providers, and health outcomes. In 2023 the theme is "Black Resistance: A Journey to Equality" and the focus is on how African

Americans worked collectively to serve and strengthen their communities. It explores how African Americans have resisted historic and ongoing oppression, in all forms. It is said that by resisting, African Americans will continue to mobilize resources and shape social movements to create a space for Black Americans to thrive.

While the idea of Black History Month originated in the United States, other countries around the world have recently begun to devote a month to celebrating Black history. This includes Germany, France, and several African countries. Canada honors Black Canadians and chose February to celebrate Black History Month since 2008. Some countries choose to celebrate in October. Traditionally, African chiefs and leaders gather in the month of October to settle their differences. So October is a great month to reconnect with roots on the African continent. October is also the anniversary celebration of Caribbean emancipation. The United Kingdom has celebrated since 1987 and chose October for Black History Month. The Republic of Ireland also celebrates in October and began in 2010 in Cork. That city was a leader in abolition and anti-slavery societies.

Black History Month is recognized by The Library of Congress, National Archives and Records Administration, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution, and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. There is a lot of Black history around World War II, both with the African Americans who fought the Germans and served in the U.S. military, and for those who fell victim to Nazi racism in Germany. We encourage you to find more materials to read on this subject as there is much to learn about that era of history. Buffalo Soldiers is another fascinating bit of history that deserves more research. You may also like to research such historical figures as Harriet Tubman, Malcolm X, Sojourner Truth, Marcus Garvey, Martin Luther King Jr., and Rosa Parks,

Huge changes in race relations have been made in our lifetime, yet Carter G. Woodson's vision for black history as a means of change is still relevant. We will always have the need to draw inspiration and guidance from the past. Black History Month is a time to honor the contributions and legacy of African Americans across U.S. history and society. We honor the African American activists, civil rights pioneers, leaders in industry, politics, science, culture, and more who have helped to form this great country. Thank you!