CARTER G. WOODSON: A BIOGRAPHY

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Patricia Watkins Romero, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1971

Approved by

[Signature]
Adviser
Department of History
Copyright by

Patricia Watkins Romero

1971
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my thanks to the many people who have aided me in my quest for information on the life of Carter G. Woodson. Especially I would like to thank Charles H. Wesley for the loan of his personal papers that include correspondence with Woodson over a period of more than thirty years. I am obligated to many librarians for their kindness and help and particularly to Dan Williams of Tuskegee Institute. To Mrs. Callie Barnett of Huntington, West Virginia who supplied much of the background material regarding Woodson's family and his youth I am grateful. To the other family members with whom I talked and corresponded, Nelson Bickley, Belva Clark, Nelson Barnett and Carl Barnett I also wish to extend my appreciation. A further note of thanks is due to those friends and associates of Woodson's who granted me personal interviews and who wrote to me concerning their personal relationships with him.
VITA

July 28, 1935 . . . Born - Columbus, Ohio

1964 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . B.A., Central State University, Wilberforce, Ohio

1964-1965 . . . . . . Instructor, American History, Central State University, Wilberforce, Ohio

1965 . . . . . . . M.A., Miami University, Oxford, Ohio

1965-1968 . . . . Research Associate and Associate Editor, Negro History Bulletin, Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Washington, D. C.

1969 . . . . . . . Visiting Lecturer in Black Studies, Findlay College, Findlay, Ohio


PUBLICATIONS


"Martin Luther King and His Relationship to White America,"  *Negro History Bulletin* XXXII (May, 1968), 81-85.

**FIELDS OF STUDY**

Major Field: The Old South and Slavery

Colonial Latin America. Professor Stephen Stoan

American Colonies and the Revolution. Professor Paul Bowers

Jeffersonian-Jacksonian America. Professor Bradley Chapin
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ................................................................. ii
VITA ......................................................................................... iii
INTRODUCTION .......................................................................... 1

Chapter

I. IN THE BEGINNING ............................................................. 9
II. IN THE VINEYARDS OF THE LORD ................................... 30
III. STUDENT AND SCHOOLMASTER ....................................... 52
IV. THE BIRTH OF BLACK PRIDE ........................................... 82
V. PROGRESS AND PROSPERITY ........................................... 114
VI. RECOGNITION AND ADVANCEMENT ............................... 148
VII. THE CONTROVERSIAL YEARS .......................................... 174
VIII. EDITOR, HISTORIAN, POLEMICIST ............................... 216
BIBLIOGRAPHY ........................................................................ 264
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the life and work of Carter Godwin Woodson. It is designed to give insight into the life of the man who initiated the scientific study of Negro contributions to American life and history.

The story of this "Father of Scientific Negro History," as he is called, is needed in an era where there is so much uncertainty about the goals of Negro life. It is more than a biography. It is a picture of the evolution of a man, his struggles, his adjustments, his successes and failures as he laid the foundation for a kind of revolution in American education. It also is the story of the spread of history among Negro-Americans when they were in need of it. Since he left no autobiography and no writings about his life, it has been a great challenge to complete this task.

It is said there is no more interesting literature than biography with its blending of heredity and
environment, of capacity and opportunity, of achievement
and defeat and of expression in books, letters, and public
services. An effort was made to explore every available
source for Woodson's personal life. These have been re-
searched, described, and explained. No biographical study
can be complete without the interweaving with the narrative
of the words, spoken and written, of the subject. This has
been my goal, as far as the sources would permit.

Carter G. Woodson had a varied career extending
over his life span from coal miner and student to teacher,
author, historian, scholar, editor, organizer, and public
speaker. The rich tapestry that is presented in this dis-
sertation shows the wide sweep of his interests and activ-
ities. They reveal that he did the work of more than one
man.

Among the scholars of the late nineteenth century
and first half of the twentieth century, few are more de-
serving of recognition than he. As time has passed, the
content of his life and work has become more recognized by
the general public. The time is overdue when there should
be a biography of the man. He was the pioneer of a move-
ment that has concerned masses of people who might
otherwise have been neglected by historians.

Because he undertook this endeavor and made it his goal, this biography was undertaken. The effort has been to write of him and the unusual services he rendered to Americans of all races.

While he especially addressed black Americans, he never failed to note that he expected to have whites and blacks as his readers. In this, he was attempting to influence and persuade his readers to see the truth about black America, as he had studied it. At first he did not plan to deal with Negro subjects. There is no record at either the University of Chicago or at Harvard University to suggest otherwise. His selected subjects for research were historical in the main and he treated them as others would do. According to those who knew him he had little interest in Negro subjects in these preparatory years as an undergraduate or a graduate student. One searches in vain for papers written by him in this area of history.

His doctor's thesis at Harvard was *The Disruption of Virginia*, completed and submitted in 1912. It described the debates over the slavery question as they arose in the legislatures, but little notice was taken of the Negro
people. When Charles H. Ambler, Professor of History at
the University of West Virginia, published his \textit{Sectionalism
in Virginia from 1776 to 1861}, Woodson abandoned the idea
of eventually publishing his thesis.

Woodson's education to 1912 was that which any
American student would have been required to pursue for the
degrees awarded to him. It does not appear in any of his
records, letters, or papers that he was following a single-
minded purpose of directing a new start in American history
or fulfilling any selected special goals with reference to
black people. This is one of the emphases of this disserta-
tion. Unlike the great man in history who sets a goal in
early life and attains it, Woodson was a scholar who
-evolved. But once having found his subject he concentrated
on it single-mindedly.

His first book, published prior to the organization
of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History,
was \textit{The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861}. He had been
researching this book for about two years, particularly at
the Library of Congress. He had found no book on the sub-
ject other than the reports of the United States Commis-
sioner of Education. He saw the emptiness in this field
and decided to fill the vacuum with his work. He did not believe, as noted in his preface, that his work was either "comprehensive or thorough," and he hoped that he could interest "some young master-mind in this large task" of exhausting the subject.

The reception and acclaim that this volume received account for Woodson's decision to dedicate himself to the cause of Negro history, to organize it and publish it for the people, both white and black.

It has not been the purpose of this author to write a history of the Negro history movement, as important as such a history might seem to some readers. The effort has been to concentrate on Woodson with the purpose of revealing that he was the moving spirit behind and within the movement. The central theme here is the man as historian and author, and accordingly it is a study in American historiography.

There is no other book on Carter G. Woodson and none on the Negro history movement. This manuscript then ploughs a new furrow. The personal papers Woodson offers are few, carefully selected by him, and placed in the Library of Congress. There are over 5,000 items in this
collection at the library, but most of these do not relate to Woodson. Much of his correspondence has disappeared from the Association's office. These are among the reasons why no published biography has appeared. Only a few articles have been written about him, and most of these are written in general terms and not from documentary sources. The main sources are the fifty-four volumes of the *Journal of Negro History* and the reports available at the headquarters of the Association. It has been necessary to gather fragments of biographical information from widely scattered places and from individuals who worked with him.

Travel has been undertaken to Virginia and West Virginia, the places of his birth and early childhood, and especially to Huntington, and Charleston. Since he served as Dean of the College of Liberal Arts of West Virginia State College, I visited that institution.

Visits were made to his living relatives, one a cousin by marriage, who could talk about him but had no source materials. Days were spent visiting and searching in the hills of West Virginia, as I was sent from place to place in search of snatches of fact, hoping always to uncover some information.
Employment at the Association headquarters for three years as a research associate brought me into contact with information that had not been available to others, and I profited by this contact. I also used the Moorland Collection of Negro materials at Howard University, which is one of the best sources in this field. This was also where Woodson had served as Dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

Woodson had studied and researched in Paris, and I went there, especially to the Sorbonne, which he made his retreat at times for research purposes. I visited Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee, a source of the material that I have used in the study of the relations of W. E. B. DuBois and Woodson. The Schomburg Collection at the New York Public Library has many newspaper articles written by Woodson and about him. I traveled to Cambridge, Massachusetts, where at Harvard University I obtained his records, a copy of his doctoral dissertation, and other information about him. Also I went to New Haven, Connecticut, in search of material relating to the Woodson-DuBois Encyclopedia of the Negro controversy. Berea College in Kentucky, Hampton Institute in Virginia, and
Tuskegee Institute in Alabama were other places where I gathered information. The University of Chicago sent me data about his course of study, which I was able to check against Woodson material in Washington.
CHAPTER I

IN THE BEGINNING

The year was 1875. For ten years the nation had been in the throes of reunification following a bloody and demoralizing Civil War. During this year the United States Congress passed a Civil Rights Bill that was intended to guarantee the legal rights of former slaves, many of whom were still suffering the stigma of their past designation. The new law, however, did not serve to rectify relations between black and white--in the North or the South. The country was straining at the seams in these years, on the one hand being politically reunited and on the other being socially divided along racial and class lines.

In this period of change and counter-change Carter Godwin Woodson was born in rural Buckingham County, near New Canton, Virginia, December 19, 1875. ¹ This was the

¹Who's Who in Colored America, I (New York, 1927-28), pp. 227-28: Biographical Sketches written by Carter G. Woodson, many copies of which are on file at The
year that Booker T. Washington graduated from Hampton Institute and launched his career. In the next twenty-five years Washington would influence millions of people while Woodson was just beginning to grow and develop, understandably somewhat under the influence of this dynamic black leader. Washington lived to enjoy his own glory and fame, dying in 1915. Woodson is only starting to be appreciated for his significant achievements. Thus from the State of Virginia, home also of some of our greatest white leaders, came two men, Woodson and Washington, who, though not always in agreement philosophically and perhaps not even acquainted, would be applauded nationally for their roles as black educators and leaders.

Woodson's story, like that of so many blacks born following slavery, begins with only a limited number of

facts. His paternal grandfather, Carter, was a slave on a plantation somewhere near Richmond, Virginia. Trained as a cabinetmaker, the older Woodson was spared the rigors of field work. He may have been related to the white master. Although no records bear this out, Carter Woodson, Sr., was said to have fought and beaten the plantation overseer. When the incident was reported to the master, the slave was given a stern lecture and warned about future acts of this kind. A mild reaction such as this on the part of the master was most unusual, especially in Virginia in the 1830s following so closely Nat Turner's insurrection.

By the 1830s Virginia no longer offered fertile soil for planting as it had done in the 17th and 18th centuries. Therefore a slave population developed which served an economic purpose to the slaveowners through profits gained from the sale of these slaves into the deep South. Many slave owners, too, contracted with local industry to hire their slaves out on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis, extracting the benefits from the work accomplished by their slaves. Such was the case with James

\[2\text{Walter Goodwin, } \textit{Black Bondage, The Life of Slaves in the South} \text{ (New York, 1969), p. 72.}\]
Henry Woodson, son of Carter, the cabinetmaker, and father of Carter Godwin. James Henry was owned by Jack Toney, master of a small plantation in the 1860s, who contracted with a man named Stratton for the hire of Toney's slaves.

Years later, son Carter would write that in this capacity his father "was debased to the level of ditch digger." James Henry Woodson, trained by his father in the art of wood carving and cabinetmaking, worked by day for Stratton and in the evening enjoyed a bit of private enterprise. He made fish traps and rough furniture, which he sold for his own pocket change. When Stratton came upon the woodcarver and caught him "wasting his time," he summarily began to beat the slave. James Henry, exhibiting the same spunk his father had mustered under attack from a white man, struck back. After successfully whipping Stratton, Woodson fled to the Toney plantation, where he told his master that he and Stratton had fallen out. Before the full truth could reach Toney, Woodson seized his few belongings from the cabin and ran into the woods,

---

hoping, as he later told his son, to reach Richmond.⁴

The Civil War was being fought and many of the slaves were aware of the presence of the Union Army when it was in their territory. Woodson probably learned they were fighting in his area through the grapevine that was so common among slaves in those days. Using back roads and wooded routes for his covert journey, Woodson came across a cavalry unit of Union soldiers. After determining that Woodson was a runaway slave and hearing his story of the encounter with Stratton as well as Woodson's fears for his life if recaptured by Toney, the Union troops decided to return to the plantation with Woodson in tow. When they arrived they seized Toney, whipped him, and tied him to a tree.⁵ This was the first fleeting taste of freedom experienced by James Henry Woodson and surely it made its mark after a youthful life lived under the threat of lash and chain. Following this encounter, James Woodson remained with the cavalry group and served as a scout for the men, leading them on at least one mission in which they

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 104.
destroyed Confederate supplies.  

The early life of Carter Woodson's mother, Anne Eliza Riddle, was but confirmation of the hardships endured under slavery. Born in 1833, in Buckingham County, Virginia, the young girl lived on the plantation of a poor and indebted planter who eventually concluded that he would have to sell Anne's mother in order to meet his obligations. Anne, who by this time had been joined by several brothers and sisters, vainly tried to prevent her mother's separation from the other children by offering to be sold herself. Because no one would purchase Anne, the mother and two of the younger children were sold to a planter for $2,300.  
Young Anne and perhaps some of the others remained in Buckingham County losing all trace of their mother and her children, one of whom was brother Robert D. Riddle.

Following the Civil War James Woodson settled in Buckingham County, Virginia, where he married Anne Eliza Riddle in 1867. From this union there came nine children, two of whom died in infancy. According to some accounts

6Ibid.

7Ibid.; Belva Clark, Huntington, West Virginia, to the author, April 2, 1970.
that Carter Woodson gave of himself, he was the second of
nine. In others he refers to himself as the last male
child, and that would place him third in line following
brothers Robert and William. He was then followed by
sisters Cora, Susie, Bessie, and Jane, and the two children
who succumbed in early infancy.8

The Woodson family history becomes tangled at this
point. When Anne Eliza Riddle's family was disrupted
through the sale of the mother and two of the children, a
new master took the place of Riddle, the former master.
After slavery, when the family was re-united in Buckingham
County, some of the children took the name of Barnett, the
new master, while some retained the original name of
Riddle. Woodson's mother did the latter, and some of her
brothers followed her example. Some of the children,
including brother Nelson, called themselves Barnett. In
addition, Carter Woodson's father, James, was the brother
of Nelson Barnett's wife, Bettie. In any event Anne Eliza

8Mrs. Callie Barnett, private interview held at
Huntington, West Virginia, February 1, 1970. Mrs. Barnett,
aged one hundred in 1971, is the first cousin by marriage
to Carter G. Woodson and is the sole surviving family mem-
ber of his generation. Nelson Bickley, private interview
held at Morgantown, West Virginia, January 31, 1970. Mr.
Bickley is a grandnephew of Woodson.
Riddle and James Woodson were related through the marriages of her brother to his sister, and the families have maintained close contact throughout the years since slavery.  

These families were all living in Buckingham County in 1870. Sometime early in the 1870s Nelson Barnett, along with other blacks from rural Virginia, got word of the new railroads being laid in West Virginia, and, with his family, walked all the way in search of work. This "walk" amounted to a trek of over 210 miles over mountain trails covered by brush. These must have seemed formidable barriers to the little band in their search for a new social and economic climate. The fact that West Virginia was more inviting than Virginia to the freedmen in the post-Civil War years is borne out by the population statistics which showed that the black population increased from 17,980 in 1870, to 43,499 in 1890.  

Woodson's parents elected to remain in Virginia, farming a small plot of land that they by this time had

---

9 Belva Clark, to the author, April 2, 1970.

10 Barnett interview; Woodson, "My Recollections"; Bickley interview; for further reading on this early migration, see Thomas E. Posey, *The Negro Citizen of West Virginia* (Institute, W. Va., 1934).
acquired. James Woodson also was in the possession of an advantage and status symbol quite beyond the reach of the majority of his peers in the surrounding rural areas: he owned a team of horses and a wagon that were surely of benefit not only in performing his own farm labor but, in line with the customs in rural communities, were used by his neighbors in return for a small payment in crops or cash.

The Virginia countryside was not all that freedom, as envisioned during slavery, had promised. Bands of whites preyed on the helpless blacks; lynchings replaced the overseers' lash, and gradually the contract labor system took the place of slavery. How Woodson's family was able to thrive even financially, at this period, is not known, for there must have been at least the vaguest sense of fear for their lives and property. Perhaps this explains why, when Nelson Barnett, by this time a foreman with the C & O Railroad, returned to Buckingham County, the James Woodsons hitched up their team and drove off for work on the railroad.\(^{11}\)

\(^{11}\)Woodson, "My Recollections"; Carter G. Woodson, The Miseducation of the Negro (Washington, D. C., 1933), p. 71; for a limited political background study of Virginia
They arrived in Cabell County, West Virginia, about 1872, and Barnett put James Woodson to work laying ties for the Chesapeake and Ohio line. The line terminated at the Ohio River where the town of Huntington had earlier been laid out in 1870. According to Carter G. Woodson many of the original settlers of the area were Negroes with Nelson Barnett and James Woodson prominent among them. 12

Woodson and his wife remained in Huntington only two years. In 1874, presumably after the completion of the railroad, he returned to his Virginia farm with sons Robert and William. The following year son Carter Godwin was born, and he was followed in rapid succession by six sisters. Not much is known of Woodson's life from his birth in 1875 through the years that saw him grow to manhood. However, we do know that he worked on the farm along with his brothers and that he attended the local school run by his Riddle uncles, John Morton Riddle, and James Buchanan Riddle. In later years he was to write of this experience:

———

in this period see C. Vann Woodward, Reaction and Reunion (Boston, 1951), and for a detailed study of blacks see Alruthes A. Taylor, The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia (Washington, D. C., 1926).

"I had the good fortune of being well grounded in the fundamentals taught in the rural schools of my native home by my two uncles..."\textsuperscript{13}

Where the two uncles acquired these basics Woodson did not say. It is possible that they attended one of the schools set up under the auspices of the Freedmen's Bureau and run by northern missionaries. For Carter Woodson and his brothers and sisters school attendance was limited to rainy days or other times when their labor was not needed on the farm.

There is some evidence that Carter may have been a frail child and therefore more protected by his mother than his older brothers were. He always showed an interest in learning beyond the expectation of most children of ex-slaves. He remembered that when he was but a small boy he read the newspapers to his father.\textsuperscript{14} Poverty in rural Virginia was fairly widespread at the beginning of the 1890s, especially for the black population. Although populism had taken root throughout the West and lower South, the small farmers of the upper South did not form cohesive

\textsuperscript{13}Woodson, "My Recollections," p. 116.

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid.
unions for mutual progress as was sometimes done elsewhere. The blacks and poor whites in central Virginia were little better off than in early post-Civil War years. Because of the poverty and lack of opportunity in rural Virginia, Carter and his brother Robert set out for West Virginia. Then they would work laying railroad ties from Thurmond to somewhere up Loup Creek, a bit east of Charleston.

The ability to read was to provide immediate compensation to Carter Woodson when he reached West Virginia. He established a relationship with an old Union Civil War veteran, Oliver Jones. Jones, an illiterate black, in exchange for hearing the news from Woodson, would give the young man all he wanted to eat from Jones' ice cream, fruit and watermelon stand. Woodson later wrote:

> When Oliver Jones learned that I could read he soon engaged me to inform he [sic] and his friends as to what was in the daily newspaper. . . . Whenever a veteran of the Civil War came out as a candidate for office or achieved distinction, I had to look him up in the books. . . . Jones was especially anxious to hear about those veterans who, like himself, were in battle array to attack Lee's army the morning he surrendered. . . . This service for a friend was decidedly educational for me.15

Indeed it was; it was the beginning of a historian.

15Ibid.
The Woodson brothers were not long in discovering that railroad work in the 1890s was not as lucrative as coal mining. Woodson and his brother spent only part of the year 1892 in the employ of the Chesapeake and Ohio. They moved to Nutallburg, in Fayette County, near Huntington and went to work in the mines. In 1893 they brought the remaining members of the Woodson family back to West Virginia where they established roots in Huntington that exist until this day.  

When the Woodson brothers entered the West Virginia coal mines, labor unions were just beginning to form. The working days were long, sixteen to eighteen hours, and the pay was not equal to the risk involved, although a poor man from a small Virginia farming community must have found the pay attractive by comparison. Woodson wrote that he worked in the mines from 1892 until 1895, when he had accumulated sufficient money to return to school and earn his high school diploma. Other sources indicate that Woodson worked in the mines for educational money but that

---

16 Ibid.

17 Winthrop D. Lane, Civil War in West Virginia: American Labor from Conspiracy to Collective Bargaining (New York, 1969), passim.
when he returned to school he was partially supported by his brother Robert. In any event, Carter graduated from Frederick Douglass High School in 1897, completing the four-year program in the course of only two.\textsuperscript{18}

Carter Woodson attended the only Negro high school in Huntington. In his brief time at the Frederick Douglass school he was again under the tutelage of a family member. This time he was instructed by Uncle Carter Harrison Barnett. This uncle, a graduate of Dennison University in Ohio, may have been the first of the combined families to have obtained higher education. He later became principal of the Sumner High School in Petersburg, Virginia, and probably served as an early influence in the life of young Carter, his nephew and namesake.\textsuperscript{19} Another Uncle, Nelson Barnett, was one of the founders and early pastors of the First Baptist Church of Huntington, where Carter was a devout worshipper.\textsuperscript{20}

While the majority of the family labored in the

\textsuperscript{18} Barnett interview.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{20} Woodson, "Early Negro Education," p. 30; Barnett interview.
shops, Carter, still bent on pursuing education, enrolled at Berea College in Kentucky. He happened to see a magazine article that told of Berea's program of interracial education. Berea was unusual in many respects. The school was founded by John G. Fee prior to the Civil War and served as a center for abolition in Kentucky, as well as an educational center for the children of the abolitionists who came down into Kentucky carrying their message of freedom. Later a few young black children, whose families found refuge on Fee's estate, attended the school. Thus Berea became the first and only integrated school in the state. In 1868 the school was reorganized as a college but maintained its preparatory academy for those in need of tutorial work. Berea College was heavily funded by the Freedmen's Bureau, following the Civil War, serving poor southern whites and freedmen.²¹

By the time Woodson enrolled at Berea in 1897, the school had changed under the leadership of President William Goodell Frost. Although the school was attended by both black and white, Frost did not share the desires of

²¹Elisabeth S. Peck, Berea's First Century, 1855-1955 (Lexington, Ky., 1955), chaps. i-iii, passim.
his predecessors to keep the school racially balanced. Upon assuming the presidency in 1893, Frost had commented that there was an "air of dilapidation about the place."\(^{22}\) Apparently his remedy was to increase the white enrollment of local mountain folks. Ten years later, in 1903, Woodson's last year, the enrollment showed a large majority of 804 white students as opposed to 157 black. The following year, 1904, witnessed the passage of the Day Act by the Kentucky legislature, which outlawed integrated education altogether.\(^{23}\)

When Woodson enrolled at Berea he was placed in the preparatory division at what would then have been the junior year of high school. His record indicates that he earned considerable amounts of what today would be called advanced academic credit through testing by his professors and that he stayed in residence only two-thirds of his first year's enrollment. His work that year emphasized the Greek classics, but it also included a touch of the contemporary era with study of sociology and economics.\(^{24}\)


\(^{24}\) Transcript of Woodson's scholastic record, Berea
Woodson was not enrolled in Berea again until 1901 when he was registered as a junior in the college. He was still being tested in the interim; he also took courses in residence at the University of Chicago in the summer of 1902, and transferred back to Berea four college credits, which are in themselves interesting due to their diversity—Educational Psychology, Rural Communities, Plato, and Trigonometry. Although Berea was not academically on a par with the University of Chicago, it had specific requirements for graduation, and Woodson met them all by 1903. The years 1898-1900 found Woodson teaching in a small school at Winona, West Virginia. In 1901, before returning to Berea but after teaching for two years, Woodson was certified for teaching by the Huntington Public Schools, obtaining an average grade of 91% over all the material on which he was tested.

---

25 Berea College transcript; transcript of Woodson's scholastic record, University of Chicago.

26 Berea College transcript.

In the years 1901-1903 young Woodson was able to attend Berea College part-time and the University of Chicago one summer. He was also teacher and principal at the Frederick Douglass High School in Huntington. The records at Berea are not dated properly; his own biographical material on this matter is sketchy; and the old records at Frederick Douglass no longer exist. Every written summary of Woodson's life, as well as his own writings, state that he taught at the Frederick Douglass school, later became its principal, and, in 1901, signed the diploma of his sister Bessie.  

Although Carter Woodson was not the oldest child in his family, he was the first to leave the maternal nest. When he went away from home to enter Berea College, a giant step for him and a source of pride for his family, his mother, sad at the sight of his departure, pulled her long hair over her face and hid the falling tears. Young Carter was one of his mother's favorite children, and perhaps her added interest in him served as impetus in his

---

28 Carter G. Woodson, Foreword to Bessie Woodson Yancey's Echo from the Hills (Washington, D. C., n.d.), p. i; Barnett interview; Bickley interview; Belva Clark letter.

29 Bickley interview.
accomplishments.

This strong attachment between mother and son may also account for the fact that Woodson did not marry. When he was a young man in Huntington, he was nearly always busy working and studying. He had little extra time for social activities. But he did at least have a passing interest in some of the local belles. At one time he kept company with Sarah Wilkins, a young Huntington beauty, who, rumor has it, married another man and caused Woodson some discomfort in the process.\(^{30}\)

He was also attentive for a time to the sister of his cousin Nelson's wife. What happened to that brief romance is not known. Carter Woodson would get acquainted with girls, and then brother Robert would frequently end up courting them. This happened with one charming young woman who eventually became Robert's wife. When asked, years later, why he had not married the attractive maiden, Carter replied, "I'm glad I didn't. She'd have been in hell and I in the penitentiary had we married."\(^{31}\) Plainly Woodson was not ready to settle down and be tied to anything so

\(^{30}\) Barnett interview.

\(^{31}\) Ibid.
restricting as a woman.

All evidence about the young Woodson reveals him to have been reticent and somewhat withdrawn, even with members of his family. He might have been described as having a quiet perseverance, a person who took life seriously, even in youth, and who at the same time was pleasant and courteous. As he reached manhood, he was of medium height and slender build. His skin color was light brown, and he had large, dark brown eyes. A striking, rather high forehead ringed with dark curly hair, framed handsome facial features. His mouth was set in the same stern fashion that would characterize him as he grew older. When he smiled, he revealed strong, even, white teeth, while his eyes showed a veiled sensuousness that must have enveloped many a young girl in the Huntington of his day.\textsuperscript{32}

As a child Carter had been brought into the Baptist Church by his parents, and he acquired a deep and abiding interest in religion. He was a devout churchgoer, attending the First Baptist Church in Huntington with regularity.

As a young man he preached several times in this church, and members of his family thought, for a time, that he would follow in the footsteps of his uncle Nelson Barnett, and pursue a career in the ministry.  

By 1903 Carter Woodson, at twenty-eight years of age, had completed the first stage of a hard battle for higher education, but he was not yet ready to settle into a career. He had worked on a farm, on the railroad, in the coal mines, and in the schoolroom, all in the constant and undeviating quest for this education. With his degree, Bachelor of Literature, from Berea, he was now ready to step out into the wider world and seek the faraway places about which he had been so ardently and doggedly studying.

---

33 Barnett interview; Bickley interview.
CHAPTER II

IN THE VINEYARDS OF THE LORD

Sometime during Carter Woodson's school days he learned of attempts on the part of the United States government to establish schools in the Philippine Islands. The Philippines had come under American jurisdiction, along with other Spanish territories, at the conclusion of the brief Spanish-American War in 1898.

While Woodson was teaching in West Virginia and obtaining an education in Kentucky, the country's leadership had been sorely struggling with the problems of subduing and acquiring these islands in the Pacific.¹ President William McKinley was forced finally to call on the Almighty for divine revelation for help in determining the fate of the "little brown brother" across the ocean. Much of the attendant newspaper coverage at the time

dwelled on assuming the "White Man's burden," the prospects of converting the Igorotes, and the various stages of savagery that existed among the people.²

Finally the Philippine question was resolved in such a manner that God and country could be proud. At least President McKinley was satisfied that such was the case. To a Methodist church group he revealed the way he had arrived at his decision to annex the islands: "And one night late it came to me this way--I don't know how it was, but it came . . . there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos for whom God also died."³

For a man as deeply religious as Woodson with a sensitivity toward underprivileged people, the choice to apply for a position as teacher in the Philippine Islands is of little surprise. Woodson's missionary zeal, however, was tempered with knowledge learned from first-hand experience. He had developed his own ideas of the educational needs of deprived people. Having himself been closely associated with the privations and undereducation of

²Ibid.

³Quoted in Ibid., pp. 473-74.
ex-slaves as well as having been a teacher, he realized that they might benefit more from learning how to improve their daily existence than from a classical education.

Woodson's religious convictions as well as his desire to teach the Filipinos, motivated him to leave family, friends, and familiar surroundings for an unknown territory half-way around the world. A further inducement for the young teacher was the large salary offered to those who were employed by the War Department. Woodson had taught unlearned blacks, first in Winona at the rate of thirty dollars per month, and later in Huntington for the grand sum of sixty-five dollars per month (this included compensation for his administrative duties). Performing the same service for people equally in need at a monthly stipend of one hundred dollars would be no more difficult, and this would be minus the administrator's headaches.\(^4\)

Prior to embarking on his new career as a civil servant, Woodson enrolled once again at the University of

Chicago in the summer of 1903. His courses were not listed in the transcripts, so what he studied then is not known. He was not a man to waste time when his burning thirst for learning remained unquenched. He applied for the teaching position in the Philippines some time after graduation from Berea College in 1903. His notification of acceptance prepared in August arrived in the form of a letter addressed to Woodson as the Principal of Douglass High School at Huntington. Since he had again assumed the scholar's mantle and was far away on the South Side of Chicago, the letter did not reach him until some time in September. In October Woodson wrote the War Department that he was "honored" to accept the position of teacher of English at the rate of twelve hundred dollars per annum.

He devoted much of the time between the acceptance date and sailing to preparation for the long journey. He had first of all to undergo the required physical examination in order to show his fitness for the assignment; there were all the bureaucratic forms to secure and complete; and

---

5 David P. Barrow to Carter G. Woodson, August 31, 1903, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.

6 Carter G. Woodson to David P. Barrow, October 17, 1903, RG 8898 NA.
he had to secure personal recommendations for proof positive of his ability as a teacher. It was during this time, too, that Woodson discovered he was color blind, a by-product of the physical examination he had taken.⁷ A letter written by W. H. Cole, Superintendent of Public Schools in Huntington in November, 1903, recommended him for the position. Cole stated that "Mr. C. G. Woodson was for three years Principal of the Douglass High School... is an excellent scholar, a superior teacher and disciplinarian, an irreproachable Christian man whose influence over the young is very salutory..."⁸

Whether or not the young adventurer returned to his home in West Virginia before sailing is not known. His father had died earlier in the year, leaving Carter's beloved mother alone at the family home on Tenth Street in Huntington.⁹ All of the communications between Woodson and the Department of Education--which came under the War Department in this case--were carried on between Chicago

---

⁷Contract and letter stating the physical examination was completed, RG 8898 NA.

⁸W. H. Cole, unaddressed, November 6, 1903, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.

⁹Belva Clark to the author.
and Washington. When Woodson accepted his commission in October, he had just over one month to make his final arrangements for leaving the University of Chicago in addition to handling his preparations for the trip. Floods of circulars, letters, and instructions from Washington reached him within this brief time and all called for some action or plan on Woodson's part.

Since he did not have much money, Woodson was forced to borrow the necessary travel funds from the government against the pay he would receive. His transportation by train, traveling first class from Chicago to San Francisco, followed by steamer to Manila, was one hundred sixty-five dollars. This amount was considered large, and the War Department routinely arranged for those who could not bear the expenses themselves to receive an advance. The sum was then deducted from this salary at the rate of ten per cent monthly until repaid.10

For the most part Woodson's plans for going to the Philippines went smoothly. The traveler managed to get his papers in order and notified his new employer he would be

10 Carter G. Woodson to Colonel C. R. Edwards, October 22, 1903, RG 8898 NA; W. Pepperman to C. G. Woodson, October 26, 1903, RG 8898 NA.
ready to sail from San Francisco on November eighteenth. This meant leaving Chicago around the thirteenth to allow ample time for checking in with Pacific Mail Steamship Company prior to sailing. He was assigned to the SS Korea, which was bound for Hong Kong. From there he was to catch another steamer for Manila after a layover of a day or two in Hong Kong.\textsuperscript{11} Travel to romantic San Francisco, an ocean voyage with meals served in his state room; and that followed by a brief stop in Hong Kong must have been exciting for a man so recently removed from the privations of the West Virginia hill country.

A last minute complication arose when Woodson failed to receive confirmation of his travel plans.\textsuperscript{12} This was taken care of by a government agent, and he sailed from San Francisco on the morning of November 18. The entire trip, including the delay in Hong Kong, lasted one month and one day putting him in Manila on his birthday.

\textsuperscript{11}L. H. Nutting to C. R. Edwards, November 2, 1903, RG 8898 NA; C. R. Edwards to C. G. Woodson, November 2, 1903, RG 8898 NA.

\textsuperscript{12}C. R. Edwards to L. H. Nutting, November 6, 1903, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.
December 19, 1903.\footnote{Woodson Personnel File, War Department, Bureau of Insular Affairs, RG 8898 NA.}

Woodson's first assignment was to a school in San Isidro, Nueva Ecija, where he taught English to a group of Spanish-speaking Filipinos. Being master of his subject was one thing, but communicating in a foreign language presented difficulties. Therefore, the itinerant teacher, seeking to overcome the barrier to the success of his mission, enrolled at the University of Chicago Extension Division for a course in elementary Spanish. At the same time he decided to further broaden his linguistic abilities and also enrolled, under the same plan, for a course in elementary French. Surprisingly, he was able to complete the French course in nine months, but took one year to finish Spanish.\footnote{University of Chicago Certificates #2569 and #2450, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.}

During the first year in the Philippine Islands Woodson was given a teacher's examination by the Civil Service Commission. He did well in English, receiving a rating of 88.3%; history, though, seemed sour as he made only 65%—his lowest mark on the examination. Overall he
averaged a total of about 83% on subjects ranging from science of teaching to penmanship.\footnote{Report of Ratings, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.}

Perhaps Woodson's greatest ability was his understanding of the people with whom he was working and living. Years later, when reflecting on these years in the Philippines, Woodson wrote, "During his life the author has seen striking examples of how people should or should not be taught," and he then described the manner in which a successful teacher dealt with his students in the islands.\footnote{Woodson, \textit{Miseducation of the Negro}, pp. 152-54.}

This procedure was simply for a new teacher in a strange culture to first educate himself by acquainting himself with that culture. Woodson related the advice he had received on board ship from an experienced missionary to China, as he was traveling to the Philippines. This man had concluded that success for teacher and pupil alike followed teaching about heroes and events that were familiar to the pupils instead of teaching about American heroes like George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.

Woodson also wrote of an insurance man who went to the Philippines for business purposes. Upon seeing the
miseducation of the natives as practiced by some American school teachers, this insurance man abandoned his own work and tried to educate the islanders through familiar stories, legends, and songs. Woodson concluded that "this man, and others who saw the situation as he did, succeeded, and the work of the public schools in the Philippines is today the outstanding achievement of the Americans in that country." 17

Learning about the Filipinos--their customs and history--along with teaching his pupils and working on his correspondence courses should have been sufficient to keep even the energetic Woodson busy. And probably in combination they did. All did not go smoothly that first year. In the month of May, a time of national festivities and celebration, Woodson took a trip to San Juan de Guimba, a town located on the southeastern coast of Luzon near the city of Bataan. There he came into conflict with another man over an unknown set of circumstances--since neither Woodson nor the Bureau retained the ensuing correspondence.

This much is known of the incident. In May, Woodson left San Isadro for Manila and began lodging

17 Ibid., p. 154.
complaints to the Department of Education against Marcos Ventus, a clerk in the Executive Bureau in Manila. Ventus, a native Filipino, was from the town of Rizal and only recently had been employed by the United States Census Bureau, having arrived on the scene in January of 1903. His records indicate that he was not only very bright but ambitious, and that he enjoyed a spotless reputation with the United States government except in connection with this mysterious dispute with Woodson.

At the time of filing his charges against Ventus, Woodson asked for a transfer to another Bureau in the islands. He could hardly have considered returning home, for he would have been more in debt than out, owing as he did the balance of his transportation costs. An investigation of the charges, never mentioned in detail, was launched and finally reached the office of Governor James Lowe. Woodson, in Manila, received a telegram, the substance of which informed him that all guilt in the affair had been placed on Ventus, who had been suspended by the Commission.  

18 RG 8898 NA; Telegram, Thomson to Woodson, May 21, 1904, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.
There was nothing for Woodson to do but return, unhappily, to San Isadro, because no action was taken at that time on his request for transfer to another bureau. In mid-June, however, a letter arrived from the General Superintendent of the Bureau of Education notifying Woodson that his subsequent request for relocation had been acted upon. Soon thereafter he was assigned to Pangasinan where, the Superintendent informed him, he would "be free from the hardships and troubles that [were] encountered in Nueva Ecija."19 The letter brought Woodson additional satisfaction in the Ventus matter as it contained these final words on the subject, "a communication . . . relative to the trouble . . . entirely exonerates [Woodson] from any blame in the matter."20

A clue to the possible circumstances surrounding this feud is found in a telegram sent in September, 1903, after Woodson had been accepted in the teachers corps, from C. R. Edwards of the War Department to Governor William Howard Taft. Edwards wired Taft, "One of the teachers

19David P. Barrow to C. G. Woodson, June 15, 1904, Ibid.

20Ibid.
certified is a Negro--what do you desire?" Taft's reply, which came too late to stop the wheels of bureaucracy from turning, if the Negro in question was Woodson, stated: "Filipinos object to negro school teachers, think it bad policy to appoint them."21 If this statement reflected the feelings of any of the islanders, then perhaps it explains the feud and Woodson's desire to transfer. What really happened is locked in the past with the participants and will remain their property.

The new assignment in Pangasinan took Woodson to the next northern province on the island of Luzon. Both Pangasinan and Nueva Ecija were located a bit north of Manila in the central plains. This was the site of extensive farm land, farmed by a peasant class who were, like Woodson's own family, just barely ahead of perpetual debt. Most of the land was owned by large plantation aristocrats and worked by the peasants either on the shares or as tenants. Some men owned their own small piece of land, but rarely did that ownership exceed five acres.22

21 RG 470 NA.

The move to Pangasinan in the summer of 1904 brought Woodson into contact with farmers who raised some of the same types of crops that he had helped his father produce in Virginia—vegetables and tobacco. Because of the tropical nature of the climate, even in the central plains, sugar cane and rice were also staple products of the area. When he stopped and thought about it, it must have seemed ironic to this son of ex-slaves that, at a distance half-way around the world, he was in a culture producing crops familiar to the American South and working with a people regarded by many whites in the same negative manner as they regarded his own folks back home.

Among the first of the black leadership in the United States to exhibit interest in the Philippines was Booker T. Washington. He wrote the War Department in January, 1901, inquiring about opportunities for his Tuskegee students and asking for all pertinent information. He was not alone among black people in posing this same question to the government. Many others also saw the acquisition of these islands as providing opportunities for blacks who had trouble getting decent jobs at home. And contrary to Governor Taft's negative attitude regarding
blacks coming to the Philippines, many did so, especially in the later years of American occupation. Woodson probably was the first black teacher to be sent to the Philippines.

Whatever his thoughts on the subject over the next three and one-half years, Carter Woodson taught English to a native population and helped sow seeds of progress in the minds of its sons and daughters. It is probable that the teacher conducted his classes in a bamboo hut covered by a thatched roof and raised from the ground by long wooden stilts. The houses were all raised from the ground to escape flooding from the heavy torrential rains. He was joined in these surroundings by other teachers. A typical school curriculum consisted of instruction in manual labor, in physical training and health habits, as well as in the English language.23

Shortly after Woodson settled in Pangasinan, members of his family decided to join him. In August, 1904, sister Bessie and brother Robert wrote to the Civil Service Commission seeking employment for themselves and for one other, unidentified, sister. Bessie, in her

23 Ibid.
letter, informed the Commission that "our family has decided to remove there as a whole in case three more of us . . . can get employment there as teachers or in the Civil Service."\textsuperscript{24} In September of that year a member of the Commission replied to the Woodsons telling them that nearly all of the positions in the Philippines were filled.\textsuperscript{25} Their applications were never submitted, and brother Carter remained alone throughout his nearly three and one-half years of service.

These years were free from further conflict for the teacher, and aside from frequent trips within the islands his life was subdued and studious. Continuing his correspondence work at the University of Chicago, Woodson was educating himself while at the same time instructing his pupils. He did not deviate from his determination to achieve as much education as he could even at a distance of over 5,000 miles from Chicago.

Finally, in December 1906, having signed up for an

\textsuperscript{24}Bessie A. Woodson to Bureau of Insular Affairs, August 30, 1904, RG 8898 NA; Robert H. Woodson to Bureau of Insular Affairs, August 31, 1904, RG 8898 NA.

\textsuperscript{25}W. Pepperman to R. H. Woodson, September 6, 1904, \textit{Ibid.}
additional tour of duty when his original term expired in 1905, Woodson submitted his resignation to the Bureau of Education. In his request he asked permission to return to the United States for a visit and requested that his service be continued until the acquired leave time expired. The leave was granted and the resignation accepted; assurance was given that should he so desire in the future, he could return to the Civil Service as his work had been satisfactory.  

26 Although no official records indicate any illness as cause for resignation, Woodson later made reference to this when he requested readmission to the Civil Service Commission as a naturalization examiner. He wrote: "I have the honor to say that I have completely recovered from the illness on account of which I had to resign my position in the Islands . . . ."  

27 If Woodson returned to the United States at the time of his departure from Civil Service, it was only briefly. He spent much of the year 1907 in travel abroad with correspondence study at the University of Chicago.

26 Special Order #395, Bureau of Education, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.

27 C. G. Woodson to The Honorable Director of Education, Manila, P. I., June 19, 1908, RG 8898 NA.
carried on simultaneously.

The travel undertaken by the lone adventurer amounted to an education in itself. He described this year in a letter to the Bureau of Insular Affairs:

Since I left the Philippines I have not been idle. I spent a year travelling and studying in Asia and Europe. While in the St. Settlements and India I made a special study of their school systems. Not a little of my time was spent in Palestine, Egypt, Greece and Italy. I was in Europe about six months. For one semester I was a special student of European history in the University of Paris. . . .

It was during this year of travel that Woodson became acquainted with people who would later serve him as researchers in the various libraries of the world. He saw himself primarily as an educator in those days. His extraordinary intellectual curiosity led him to spend time in the national libraries of Spain, England, and France. In the course of these investigations he learned of the abundance of unpublished materials available on Africa and

28C. G. Woodson to The Honorable Director of Education, Ibid; Ralph W. Bullock, In Spite of Handicaps, p. 123, writes that Woodson studied under Professors Diehl, Limmonneir, and Bouche-Leclerc at La Sorbonne. The evidence, including Woodson's own statement, does not support this assertion.
the world's black people.\textsuperscript{29}

While Woodson was traveling, broadening his own knowledge, blacks in the United States were facing a crisis in leadership and undergoing a transition in ideology. Booker T. Washington, proclaimed by many as the leader of his people, was enjoying the benefits of his precipitous rise to power following the 1895 Atlanta Cotton Exposition address. Washington, principal of Tuskegee Institute, was a strong advocate of economic advancement through technical and industrial education. He had a large following, especially among southern blacks because he understood the conditions in which they had to live among the southern whites. Among some northerners he was not so popular although the poor blacks everywhere felt he represented their common cause.\textsuperscript{30} His was the voice of compromise, a necessity in the South to escape annihilation. But because of Washington--his oratory, his popularity with much of the white leadership, his ability to reason where there was no

\textsuperscript{29}Charles H. Wesley, private interview held at Washington, D.C., June 25, 1970. Dr. Wesley is executive director, ASNLH.

reason—a new, more militant group was able to emerge. By the time Woodson was completing his European travel, Washington's influence was somewhat on the wane. William Howard Taft, the new President, was not as enthusiastic as Theodore Roosevelt had been about carrying on consultations with the Tuskegee principal concerning appointments. A rift had developed between the black scholar W. E. B. DuBois and Washington, and the star of DuBois was on the rise. DuBois opposed, among other things, Washington's educational philosophy. DuBois was born and raised in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, and traveled to the South only when he enrolled at Fisk University in his late teens. He was unaware, at least from his own experience, of the system of accommodation by which blacks conducted themselves in an area still hostile to their freedom. Life in Nashville was a revelation. Appalled at the subservient manner in which even educated blacks had to act in their relations with whites, DuBois developed a courteous contempt for them, as well as for the system under which they lived. His idea of providing a black leadership class based on the "Talented Tenth" was
a reaction to what he saw and learned in the South.31

Woodson was a product of the thinking of both Washington and DuBois. He was born and raised in the South and had seen countless poor folks who could indeed have profited from Tuskegee's educational structure. He was, however, an educated man himself and therefore sympathetic to the idea of creating a Negro elite similar to that advocated by DuBois.

Studying antiquity in its place of origin led Woodson to the realization that Africa was not ranked among the areas which had contributed to the advancement of civilization only because historians had failed to investigate periods earlier than the era of Colonialism. The imperialism which had taken United States power—and Woodson—to the Philippines was being criticized by the DuBois factions at home. DuBois focussed his criticism on European domination of Africa. He had served as secretary of the first Pan African Congress in 1902 and had become an ardent spokesman for the alignment of American blacks

with Africans. At the age of thirty-two Woodson returned to the United States for further study. These factors in operation among blacks at home were to have no immediate effect upon Woodson when he returned to the United States and to the schoolroom. But they influenced his later opinions which were revealed in much of the material that he wrote in the 1930s.

---

CHAPTER III

STUDENT AND SCHOOLMASTER

Returning to the United States in the fall of 1907, Carter Woodson immediately enrolled for further study at the University of Chicago. Unfortunately his degree from Berea College was not accepted by the University as valid evidence of undergraduate work—at least in preparation for graduate study. Woodson had known of this problem since the summer of 1903, when he had taken additional courses at Chicago before the Philippine Islands appointment. How unfair life must have seemed to him, as a poor black man, restricted to inferior schools, yet full of ambition to be equally prepared for the challenge that he wished to meet!

The first set-back had occurred after graduation from Frederick Douglass High School. His early life had been devoted to the pursuit of education, much of it self obtained; and the formal schooling had been purchased through hard and dirty work in the coal mines. Woodson
accepted the facts of life, worked hard, studied long into
the night, and finished high school in two years. Then
upon his arrival at Berea the realization came that he was
not prepared to undertake the school's conception of a
college curriculum. This was disheartening news at best
and enough to turn away many a promising scholar who would
be too frustrated at the barriers erected in his path. Not
Woodson, however, for whatever misgivings he may have had
within himself were released in the flurry of preparation
for admittance to the college program.

Having taken the required course of study and
earned the degree of Bachelor of Literature in 1903,
Woodson barely had time to breathe the sigh of relief with
which all students are so familiar before going off to the
University of Chicago and finding yet another stumbling
block before him. The University would accept the course
work earned at Berea, but it found the scholar deficient in
required subjects. He would have to re-enroll in the
undergraduate program in order to acquire the called-for
studies, before being allowed to pursue his graduate
degree.

Woodson's undergraduate study at Chicago was
limited to enrollment in the Extension Division, except for the brief period of personal attendance in the summers of 1902 and 1903. The Philippine years and the ones that followed, with Woodson traveling extensively, were never bereft of study. He enrolled for and completed a total of fifteen extension courses. They included those in elementary French and Spanish which he began on his arrival in the Philippines, and the history of Medieval and Modern Europe.¹ Woodson's primary interest, in his undergraduate years, was the study of foreign languages. He concentrated a great deal of his course work on Latin, both at Berea and at Chicago. The offerings in languages at Berea were limited in those years to Greek and Latin and were part of the standard curriculum. At Chicago the language offerings were more varied, but Woodson's first preference was still that of the classicist. In 1904, Woodson successfully completed three courses, elementary French and Spanish, and the "Satires and Epistles of Horace." The year 1905 saw him continuing his chosen double major of Latin and the romance languages as he chose course work in Cicero and

¹Fifteen Correspondence Course Certificates, Woodson Papers, ASNLH; Albert M. Hayes, Registrar, University of Chicago, to the author, June 20, 1970.
intermediate French.²

Because he had slowed down to two courses in 1905, Woodson doubled his correspondence work in the following year and for the first time selected courses in the department of history--taking Medieval Europe followed by an outline of Modern Europe. He did not forsake his primary interest in languages, however, as he also completed Phormio by Terence as well as "Modern Spanish Novels and Dramas."³ Plainly he was under the heaviest of academic burdens, studying such difficult and unrelated areas so far from the source of help, if needed, from instructors at the University of Chicago.

After Woodson resigned from the Philippine service in early 1907, he continued piling up the course work which would bring the long desired bachelor's degree from Chicago. Throughout his travels in 1907, he managed to keep up the flow of mail which carried his assignments and the responses to the same back and forth to the United States. The tenacity exhibited by this man, who met each frustration with increased vigor, is best exemplified by

²Hayes to author, Ibid.

³Ibid.
his managing to plod on through the endless amounts of study without the usual motivation of lecture, or the exchanges with a peer group undertaking the same courses that would have been available on a university campus.

Correspondence courses required a great deal of humdrum reading and regurgitation of facts, all done in solitary fashion, and they required endless amounts of writing, since all knowledge gained had to be transmitted back to the instructor, who in Woodson's case, was thousands of miles away. He was able to find many uses for the knowledge of Spanish acquired during the Philippine years. Woodson's life at this time was probably lonely, engaged as he was hour by hour in some quiet place in the study of Horace, Cicero, and other ancient writers.

Having established a pattern of isolation by his studies in the Philippines, Woodson was accustomed to being alone before he roamed over much of the Old World seeing the remnants of the past. His early patterns of living abroad were beginning to become permanent fixtures in his life. Throughout his travel Woodson plied on with his learning and maintained a discipline over his personal life that resulted in the completion of four more areas of
course work from Chicago. In June 1907, from somewhere across the world, Woodson completed his only course in English, a bit late for help in teaching the subject in the Philippines, but a necessary requirement for the degree. He lingered through the remaining courses of Tacitus, more Cicero, and further French until December, 1907, when at the time of their completion, he was in France.\(^4\) For one semester during 1907 he also attended the University of Paris, where, he later stated, he studied a single course in Modern European History.\(^5\)

Woodson relegated the frivolities of Paris, including the Folies Bergere, as well as the resting places on the beautiful banks of the River Seine, to second place. He was more intent on exploring the inner sanctum of the Bibliotheque Nationale. Quite possibly during this time he found live companionship for discussion of "Modern French Novels," for he completed this last correspondence course

\(^4\)Ibid.

\(^5\)The records for this period at La Sorbonne in Paris were destroyed during World War II, and no record is available for the time that he was there in 1907. M. Henri de Rouen, interview held at Paris, France, May 28, 1970.
abroad.\textsuperscript{6}

The lingering thoughts of romantic Paris, if they lasted a few more months, were at last put to rest when his correspondence course in "Modern Dramas and Lyrics of Advanced French Reading" was completed in February, 1908.\textsuperscript{7} By this time Woodson was back in Chicago, living on the south side, a world away from Paris in both atmosphere and distance. But that was of little consequence for, finally, after nearly six years and thousands of miles of travel, Woodson was able to finish another Bachelor's Degree. In March, 1908, after a period that must have seemed staggering in length and self defeating to even Woodson, he received the degree. Part of its significance was that it made possible his obtaining the Master's Degree from Chicago in August of that same year.\textsuperscript{8}

Finding that he had more than sufficient course work to enable him to finish the graduate degree for which he originally came to Chicago six years previously, with but a minimum of additional study, he pressed on. Armed

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{6}Correspondence Course Certificates, Woodson Papers; Hayes to author, June 20, 1970. \\
\textsuperscript{7}Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{8}Hayes to author, June 12, 1970.
\end{flushleft}
this time with high spirits and, finally, a goal that would
not be set aside by higher authority, Woodson squeezed more
language study and history into his solitary life and raced
through the Master's program in what for him, at least, was
record time. In those days residency requirements were not
strict, and a student could take work for graduate credit
while still an undergraduate. This is what Woodson did,
taking graduate work in French and Spanish in the first
semester of his return to Chicago.\(^9\)

Woodson also began the serious study of history at
this time, taking his first course in American History from
Professor Edwin Erle Sparks.\(^10\) By the time he received the
Master's degree in August, he had sufficient credits for a
double major--in History and Romance Languages.\(^11\)

Woodson also studied under Thomas A. Jenkins of the
Department of Romance Languages and Literature at Chicago
who may have supervised some of his correspondence study.
In April of 1908, Jenkins wrote a glowing letter of praise

\(^9\) Transcript, University of Chicago.

\(^10\) \textit{Ibid.}; Edwin Erle Sparks, unaddressed letter of
recommendation, March 30, 1908, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.

\(^11\) Hayes to author, June 12, 1970, Woodson Papers.
about Woodson in an open letter of recommendation. Stating that Woodson had taken graduate courses in his department and that he had "shown himself an intelligent and appreciative student" the teacher went on to describe his student in a way that typified him throughout his life:

I have been particularly impressed with his regularity, carefulness and determination to take advantage of every opportunity to learn. He has therefore shown himself to possess the qualities which make success in whatever field he puts his knowledge and abilities to use.\(^\text{12}\)

Jenkins could hardly know the price Woodson paid for the success gained thus far, nor the extent that it would reach before his life was ended.

In the conservative manner of historians, Sparks wrote a restrained statement which, in spite of its ambiguousness, recommended Woodson because "his wide experience both in this country and abroad, has fitted him in a peculiar way for the profession of teaching."\(^\text{13}\) It would be interesting to speculate what turns Woodson's life might have taken had he stayed with his concentration on languages instead of turning full force to the pursuit of

\(^{12}\)Thomas A. Jenkins, Letter "To Whom it May Concern," April 30, 1908, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.

\(^{13}\)Sparks, unaddressed letter, March 30, 1908, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.
objective facts through the then-current scientific method of studying history.

The outside factors that served to influence Carter Woodson toward history were very much in operation at the time of his departure from Chicago. Through the Niagara Conferences, in 1905, 1906, and 1907, DuBois was calling for black unity, and his concept of the "Talented Tenth" was catching on in the black pulpit and the Negro press, and among some educators. Taft was elected President of the country in 1908, and all hopes within the black community were centered on him to continue the progressive politics of his predecessor, Theodore Roosevelt. Negroes were, in those years, getting a small piece of the American pie.

It was, in short, a time when the nation's eyes were at least in part focused on black people. And although not all were sympathetic, many who were swept up in the current of reforms in general, were at least not actively opposed to the progressive ideologies which seemingly encompassed blacks. During this time, however, a serious blow was dealt to blacks in general and to a certain group in particular through the actions of the President in relation to the Brownsville incident in 1907.
Roosevelt's mass expulsion from the Army of the Negro soldiers stationed in Brownsville was widely discussed in the press, served as a factor producing solidarity among black people, and helped fire the flames of black militancy.

The times, however, encouraged individual endeavor by some blacks. Woodson, having pushed forward so hard and so long, did not allow his own ambition to be crushed by the defeats suffered by the others. In the summer of 1908, having already applied for re-admission to the Civil Service, he also played a long shot and made application to Harvard University for further advanced study. His gamble paid off. Harvard answered his application by admitting him to study in its Department of History. This made Woodson the second black man in the over two hundred years of Harvard University's existence to study in the hallowed halls of its graduate school. DuBois, class of 1895, was the first man to make it through this same department. DuBois, however, would devote himself almost exclusively to the study of sociology and contemporary problems; Woodson would become and remain the historian. In September, 1908, with the remainder of his savings going for tuition,
Woodson began the final climb toward his last degree. His area of concentration was American History. He alone among the blacks earning doctorates in history from Harvard completed his doctoral thesis on a non-racial subject in 1912.\textsuperscript{14}

Because admission to Harvard graduate school and to the Department of History especially was for so many years unavailable to blacks, acceptance there was considered as almost the highest possible award that could be obtained academically. Many probably never applied for admission because they assumed rejection from the beginning. A few applied, were accepted, and then for various reasons did not complete the requirements for the doctorate. DuBois, a native of Massachusetts having friendships with local youths who went to Harvard, probably did not perceive his acceptance with as much awe as Woodson, who came from the

\textsuperscript{14}DuBois' Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1895, was entitled "The Suppression of the African Slave Trade"; Woodson's, Harvard, 1912, was titled "The Disruption of Virginia"; Charles H. Wesley's, Harvard, 1926, was "Negro Labor in the U. S."; Rayford W. Logan's, Harvard, 1936, dealt with "Diplomatic Relations of the United States with Haiti"; John Hope Franklin's, Harvard, 1941, was titled "The Free Negro in North Carolina"; Jerome Jones', Harvard, 1960, was "The Established Church in Virginia."
impoverished South.

Attendance at the University of Chicago had prepared Woodson for an urban campus; experience with old, gray, and dingy buildings in Paris helped diminish his surprise on arrival at a campus that looked every one of its two hundred seventy-two years. And, having spent his last few months at Chicago in Divinity Hall, Woodson was at least familiar with dormitory living. Most of the years, 1897-1908, when Woodson was preparing himself for graduate education had found him unable to experience the common lot of most university students--co-existing in communal quarters, separated, of course, in those years by sex. At Harvard Woodson resided in College House, a graduate dormitory-like structure where he would have the so-often missed opportunity to partake in exchanges with other scholars.15 Whether or not the quiet loner ever took advantage of this fact is a matter of conjecture; but if not, at least he was surrounded by the aura of fellowship and common cause that had been missing throughout much of his college life.

15 C. G. Woodson to Chief of the Bureau of Insular Affairs, September, 1908, RG 8898 NA.
Soon after arriving in Cambridge, Woodson received word from the Bureau of Insular Affairs that he had been reinstated to the Philippine service. His reply to this communication was an interesting one. He accepted the position, but asked if he could do so on the basis of receiving a year's leave of absence, effective immediately. He told the Chief of the Bureau that not hearing from them he had "arranged to study a year in Harvard." "Harvard," he wrote, "is not like many other institutions," and the expenses for the "year or rather the greater part of them must be paid at the beginning ...." If he left at that time, Woodson would lose his money because no refunds were granted. "It is useless for me to enlarge on this matter," Woodson continued, "for you can see my predicament .... I am still plodding along."\(^{16}\)

Scholarship and economic provision for the future could both be served, Woodson believed, by his remaining at Harvard. He closed his letter with the plea, "I am sure this arrangement would be acceptable to the Director of Education as he knows that I am struggling to prepare

\(^{16}\)Ibid.
myself for the highest and best service."17

The Director of Education did see the value in Woodson's continuing with his education, and though he was not given the requested leave of absence, he was told that in June he would be reinstated and could return to the Philippines in the summer of 1909.18

In 1908 the History Department at Harvard University included some of the most prolific and soundest historical scholars of the time. Frederick Jackson Turner, though not noted for the quantity of his writings, was acknowledged as a great authority and innovator on account of his interpretation of the influence of the frontier in American History. There also were Edward E. Channing, whose volumes on American history poured out in endless fashion, and the much revered student of history and editor of the American Nation series, Albert Bushnell Hart.

Of those American historians, Woodson took classes only from Channing, but in addition he studied European history under Professor Charles Gross, ecclesiastical and

17 Ibid.
18 David P. Barrow to C. G. Woodson, November 14, 1908, RG 8898 NA.
medieval history with Ephraim Emerton and W. B. Munro.\textsuperscript{19} During that year Woodson was enrolled in six history courses and one in government; he attained a B average in all of his subjects and met the requirements for candidacy for the doctorate.\textsuperscript{20}

Years later, in November, 1943, an old classmate of Woodson's, Bowdoin College President Orren C. Hormell, wrote Woodson recalling that they were classmates in four courses at Harvard in 1908-1909. Hormell in referring to the past said, "I have never forgotten . . . and especially do I remember my pleasant associations with you during that year."\textsuperscript{21} So the lonely scholar made at least one friend who, though he did not keep up the contact directly, remembered Woodson. Hormell added that he had "followed with a good deal of interest your work as an author and editor

\textsuperscript{19} Bullock, \textit{In Spite of Handicaps}, p. 124.

\textsuperscript{20} Marion Belliveau, Associate Registrar, Harvard University, to the author, September 28, 1970.

\textsuperscript{21} Orren C. Hormell to Carter G. Woodson, November 19, 1943, Woodson Papers, ASNLH. Woodson kept this letter, one of the very few pieces of personal correspondence he retained, along with an attached commendation regarding the bravery of Hormell's son, a physician, in tending a Negro soldier in World War II.
of the Negro Magazine. . . . "22

In April, 1909, before his school year was completed, Carter Woodson received notification from the Bureau of Insular Affairs that he was to sail for the Philippines in June. Woodson immediately contacted the Bureau advising them that he would still be involved with class work until June 30, and if he was forced to go in that month "I had just as well gone to the Philippines last October." He advised that any arrangements made for July would be satisfactory.23

Arrangements were made, once again, by the Bureau to defer Woodson's reinstatement and travel until he was through at Harvard. Anxious to go and be earning some money, Woodson complied with all the requirements, once again submitting the physician's report, the oath of allegiance, and a signed contract. He also requested the same advance transportation funds as before to provide for his travel expenses.24

---

22 Ibid.
23 C. G. Woodson to Chief of the Bureau of Insular Affairs, September, 1908, RG 8898 NA.
24 Physician's report (n.d.); Oath of Allegiance (n.d.); Civil Service contract, July 9, 1909; all in RG 8898 NA.
Illness, however, prevented the teacher from carrying out his duties with the Bureau. After dates for sailing, advance arrangements, and all the particulars had been attended to, Woodson, at the last minute, sent a physician's statement attesting to a stomach ailment.25

Woodson's illnesses, especially this one, make interesting speculation. The physician's report, issued four days prior to his scheduled date of departure from Seattle, was signed by Dr. C. C. Barnett of Huntington.26 This Barnett was Woodson's first cousin, the son of his mother's brother and his father's sister.27

In his report to the Bureau, Dr. Barnett stated that he had been treating Woodson for stomach trouble since July 16, and had advised the teacher against returning to the warm climate where his condition might become aggravated.28 Woodson then resigned from the position for which

25 Carter G. Woodson to Bureau of Insular Affairs, July 15, 1909, Ibid.

26 Unaddressed letter from C. C. Barnett, M. D., July 15, 1909, Ibid.


28 Barnett interview, February 1, 1970.
he had not formally reported and decided instead to take a teaching position in Washington, D. C., which would enable him to be near the Library of Congress for research on his dissertation.\(^{29}\)

September, 1909, brought Woodson to the city that would be his permanent home for the rest of his life. Upon his arrival he rented a room on T Street, N. W., and began teaching at the M Street High School. On account of his proficiency in languages Woodson was assigned to teach French and Spanish. He later taught, also, English and history.\(^{30}\) The public schools of Washington in 1909, and in fact until 1954, were segregated by race. Blacks had to attend schools designated especially for them. These schools were administered by an Assistant Superintendent in charge of Negro education. Roscoe Conkling Bruce, a Harvard graduate, was the Assistant Superintendent when Woodson was hired and remained in that capacity throughout the ten-year span that marked Woodson's employment. Bruce was the son of Senator B. K. Bruce of Mississippi and had

\(^{29}\)Bullock, *In Spite of Handicaps*, p. 124; resignation submitted July 15, 1909, RG 8898 NA.

\(^{30}\)Bullock, *In Spite of Handicaps*, p. 128.
served on the Tuskegee Institute faculty prior to assuming control over the Negro schools in the District of Columbia. Among Woodson's colleagues at the M Street school were three daughters and one son of John W. Cromwell, who was associated with the American Negro Academy, a loose organization of scholars dedicated to the concept of the "Talented Tenth." In his new position Woodson was in contact, then, with the ideas of Washington and DuBois, and a growing consciousness of the need for the study of Negroes was developing within him.\textsuperscript{31}

The M Street High School, whose name was later changed to the Paul Laurence Dunbar School, was the center of learning for blacks in Washington who were preparing for higher education. Through its doors passed the children of the black elite. According to historian Rayford W. Logan, the M Street School "prepared more Negro students for the best New England colleges than did any other Negro high school."\textsuperscript{32}

Woodson taught school by day and did research at

\textsuperscript{31}August Meier, \textit{Negro Thought in America}, p.213.

night and on weekends at the Library of Congress, where he could get the necessary reference materials for his dissertation on the "Disruption of Virginia." Summers spent in West Virginia not only brought him near to his family but provided access to the unpublished sources that he needed for his study of the creation of the state. In June, 1912, all the research, writing, and examinations having been completed, Woodson was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from Harvard University. His reading committee for the dissertation consisted of Edward Channing, Chairman, Albert Bushnell Hart, and Frederick Jackson Turner.

He had met these three giants of American historiography on their ground with his study of the political severing of ties between Virginia and West Virginia, the Civil War, and expansion of the West. He had passed the test of scholarship. Then as Doctor Carter G. Woodson he returned to the M Street school where he taught history, French, and Spanish for the next six years. In 1918,

33 Carter G. Woodson, "The Disruption of Virginia" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1912), passim.

34 Acceptance Page preceding dissertation, Ibid.
Woodson was appointed principal of the Armstrong Manual High School in Washington where he served one year.\textsuperscript{35}

Prior to the completion of the doctoral degree, however, Woodson had again made application to the Bureau of Education in the Philippines. In April of 1912, after submitting the required work at Harvard, he wrote to the Bureau concerning employment. The response, which came in June, was not the previously warm and "anxious-to-have-you" type that had greeted him in earlier occasions. This letter, from the Acting Director of Education, notified Woodson that no assurance could be made of an appointment for the latter part of 1912 or early months of the next year. If he was accepted, the salary would be the twelve hundred dollars per year that he had earned upon first going into the teaching corps in 1903. And, if Woodson was interested in pursuing the matter further, he was advised to contact the representative of the Bureau of Education who was responsible for selecting teachers.\textsuperscript{36} Woodson had considered returning to the Philippines seriously enough to

\textsuperscript{35}Bullock, \textit{In Spite of Handicaps}, p. 128.

\textsuperscript{36}Acting Director of Education to Carter G. Woodson, June 24, 1912, RG 8898 NA.
have taken the teachers' examination in December of 1911 in order to qualify for admission. He received a teacher's rating of eighty-five and one-half per cent.\textsuperscript{37}

The salary of twelve hundred dollars a year offered by the government was still more money than Woodson was making in Washington, even with his additional education of the intervening five years. At the M Street school he had been hired at ninety-five dollars a month, which amounted to eight hundred fifty-five dollars for the school year, and by 1912 he was making about nine hundred ninety dollars annually.\textsuperscript{38}

In those years the salary he was earning as a teacher in the public schools was more than he could have hoped to receive at a Negro college. Thus, in July of 1912, when notified by Dean Louis B. Moore of Howard University that he had been "elected" to fill a vacancy in the Teacher's College, Woodson may have turned it down for financial reasons.\textsuperscript{39} He remained at the M Street school

\textsuperscript{37}Resume on Woodson compiled by Civil Service Commission, \textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{38}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{39}Lewis B. Moore to Woodson, July 17, 1912, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.
until 1919, when he did go to Howard University as Head of the Graduate School and Dean of the College of Liberal Arts.40

In the meantime, in 1915, three years following his graduation from Harvard and while continuing to teach in the District schools, Woodson's first book was published. He wrote The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861 in his spare time between 1913 and late 1914. His publisher was G. P. Putnam and Sons of New York. Woodson paid the costs of publication and circulation.41 This was to be the only book that Woodson ever published through a commercial publishing firm. The fact that he had to pay his own printing costs may have motivated him to start an organization for the purpose of publishing his own books. In October, 1915, in conjunction with several friends he organized the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. In January, 1916, he issued the first volume of


41 Accounting sheet from G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, July 15, 1916, to Carter G. Woodson covering the number of volumes sold and earnings due Woodson after deducting costs of printing and distribution, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.
the *Journal of Negro History*. While carrying on these projects in addition to his teaching, he published, through the Association, *A Century of Negro Migration*, in 1918; and *The History of the Negro Church*, in 1921.42

The year Woodson spent at Howard was hectic for him. Under his guidance as Head of the Graduate School the first faculty committee on graduate subjects was established; Arnett Lindsay, the only candidate that year for a master's degree, was his student; and he carried out his many duties as Dean in the College of Liberal Arts.43 These burdensome tasks were all undertaken while Woodson was editing the *Journal*, writing articles for inclusion in it, and trying to manage as well as publicize the Association.

In the spring of 1920, Woodson became involved in an unpleasant incident with Howard's President, J. Stanley Durkee. Woodson criticized Durkee's abilities as administrator of the University in a somewhat tactless way, thereupon Durkee, offended by Woodson's statements,

42See biographical material cited n.1, chap. i.

demanded that the Dean apologize to him in writing.

Woodson refused to do so; the conflict between the two men was finally referred to the Board of Trustees for settlement. The Board notified Woodson in June that the continuation of his employment was dependent on this written apology. Woodson persisted in his refusal, and his employment was terminated.\footnote{Logan, The First Hundred Years, p. 208; Charles H. Wesley, private interview held at Washington, D. C., March 25, 1971. Dr. Wesley recalled that Woodson had told him years ago that he had criticized "Durkee's administrative ability and actions"--thus the reason for Durkee's attitude toward Woodson's apology.}
D. C. Secretary of the Colored YMCA, John W. Davis, for the post. When Davis was subsequently chosen by the Board of Trustees, he contacted Woodson and asked him if he would be available for help since Davis had had no experience with college administration. Woodson agreed that he would come to Institute for a brief time at least, to help the new president organize the college department.45

In June of 1920, Davis was writing to Woodson in expectation of his coming to join him at Institute. At the same time, Woodson was writing to Wilberforce University, in Ohio, stating that he would "be glad" to give consideration to serving as superintendent of the Combined Normal and Instructional Department at that school.46 Furthermore, he was in contact with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in New York, telling them as early as May, 1920, that he was giving up his position at Howard University and asking about the possibility of linking his Journal with the NAACP Department of


46 Carter G. Woodson to F. W. Johnson, June 12, 1920, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.
Woodson told the NAACP that he had some time earlier discussed with W. E. B. DuBois the prospect of joining with their Publications Department but, at that time, had not thought it would be possible to work with DuBois. Upon reconsideration, he wrote, he had decided it might be possible, and if he could be allotted a salary of twenty-four hundred per year to continue editing the Journal, he would be willing to discuss the terms of a merger. The NAACP apparently did not respond to Woodson's letter, or if personal communication took place, it has been lost. Woodson did not join with the NAACP, and he went to Institute as Dean of the College at a salary of twenty-seven hundred dollars.

While serving for two years (1920-1922) as Dean of the West Virginia Collegiate Institute, Woodson was joined by six new faculty member, all of whom held Masters

---


48 Ibid.

49 John W. Davis telegram to C. G. Woodson, June 23, 1920, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.
degrees, whom Davis had hired to help reorganize the college department. Under Woodson's direction the college expanded its offerings in these two years and recruited about fifty more students in the second year as a result of the improvements made in the first.50 While Davis was actively encouraging Woodson to join him at Institute, he had been emphatic in his promises that Woodson would not be forced to let his work with the Journal or the Association suffer. He initially stated that he did not expect Woodson to stay long at the college; a year or two of the historian's presence would be enough, if that was all Woodson could give to launch the college program so important to Davis.51

Woodson remained until the end of the school year in 1922. He had had President Davis's support and the free time that he needed for carrying on his work in Washington, but that was not enough. Woodson wanted freedom from outside employment to devote all of his energies to reading


51John W. Davis to C. G. Woodson, June 27, 1920, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.
and writing, and publicizing of his studies on the Negro. He left his last position within the academic community and returned to Washington to begin his real life's work.
CHAPTER IV

THE BIRTH OF BLACK PRIDE

Carter Woodson's Association for the Study of Negro Life and History was preceded by earlier historical societies which had been founded and supported by blacks. The first attempt among blacks to organize a historical society for the study of the Negro people came at the National Equal Rights Convention held in December, 1873. At this meeting a resolution was adopted which stated that it was then "a proper time to create a national historical and statistical association . . . having its membership throughout each state . . . for the reference of all who desire to know the true history of what our life-long opponents have conceded to be the most remarkable race measured by their surroundings and advantages our country has produced."1

1New National Era and Citizen (New York City), December 18, 1873.
The outgrowth of this resolution was the formation of a committee which never did more than contemplate the possibilities for such an organization. The first concrete attempt at organization occurred in Philadelphia in 1892 when the American Negro Historical Society was established. It was a local movement, however, and most of its collection centered on pamphlets and photographs of people in the immediate area.\(^2\)

In 1897 the American Negro Academy was founded in Washington, D. C. This society was composed of "authors, scholars, artists, and those distinguished in other walks of life, men of African descent, for the promotion of letters . . . and for the promotion of the publication of works of merit . . . ."\(^3\) An effort to carry out these announced purposes was the publication of John W. Cromwell's *The Negro in American History* published by the Academy in 1912.\(^4\) This organization, limited to fifty


\(^3\)Constitution, The American Negro Academy, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.

members, published a number of occasional papers all of which dealt with some phase of Negro life or history. The membership roster contained a number of the most prominent blacks then living: Kelly Miller of Howard University; W. E. B. DuBois, who was then at Atlanta University; W. S. Scarborough, President of Wilberforce University of Ohio; Jesse E. Moorland, of Howard and a collector of volumes written by or about Negroes; and the noted attorney A. H. Grimke. 5

The American Negro Academy was limited, as the American Negro Historical Society had been, to regional membership. Although its occasional papers reached much of the small, closed society of educated Negroes, little attempt was made to reach a national audience or to extend the membership. It was a product of DuBois' concept of "The Talented Tenth" and as a result of its policy of excluding others from its ranks it gradually faded into non-existence.

Parallel to the Academy's productive years was the organization of the Negro Society for Historical Research  

established in Yonkers, New York under the leadership of
the journalist John Edward Bruce. This group, again local
in character and makeup, also published occasional papers
and held meetings among limited membership with emphasis on
the history of the Negro.\(^6\)

A paper published in pamphlet form by Arthur
Shomburg, secretary of the Society, in 1913, entitled
\textit{Racial Integrity - A Plea for the Establishment of A Chair
of Negro History in Our Schools and Colleges}, was read at
Cheney Institute in Pennsylvania in the summer of that
year.\(^7\) One school, at least, tried to answer Shomburg's
plea when Alain Locke submitted a request for a course in
inter-racial history at Howard in 1915. The Board of
Trustees rejected Locke's proposal and a subsequent one
presented in 1916.\(^8\)

\begin{flushright}
Organizations among blacks in the Progressive Era
\end{flushright}

\(^6\)Ibid.

\(^7\)Arthur A. Shomburg, \textit{Racial Integrity -- A Plea for
the Establishment of a Chair of Negro History in our
Schools and Colleges}, Society for Historical Research,
Occasional Paper No. 3 (New York, 1913). A copy of this
pamphlet is in the George Foster Peabody Collection,
Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia.

\(^8\)Logan, \textit{Howard University}, p. 171.
were not confined to the scholarly academies and societies. In 1905 W. E. B. DuBois called together a group of black men for a conference which met on the Canadian side of Niagara Falls in the summer of that year. This became known as the Niagara Movement. Subsequent meetings were held at Storer College in Harper's Ferry, West Virginia—the scene of John Brown's martyrdom—in 1906; Boston's Fanueil Hall in 1907; Oberlin College in Ohio, in 1908; and Sea Isle City, New Jersey, in 1909. The purpose of these meetings was to "turn toward the nation and again ask in the name of ten million the privilege of a hearing."10

The Niagara Movement caused considerable conflict within the Negro community, pitting DuBois against the "Tuskegee Machine" — the long political arm of Booker T. Washington. It served to align factions supporting either Washington or DuBois and in so doing brought attention to the programs of DuBois, who emerged as a leader in his own right. Concurrent with the struggle for leadership among blacks were the rise of racial disorder and the increase of lynchings. These two terrors of racism were prime topics


10Ibid., p. 249.
of the Niagara Conferences and led to the founding in 1909 of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.\(^1\)

This organization, interracial in make-up and heavily supported by wealthy northern whites, included DuBois as a founding member. In 1910, he became editor of the Crisis, the NAACP journal and official voice. This publication, devoted in large part to current events, also served as a vehicle for providing black writers and poets an opportunity for publication.\(^2\) Along with its publication, the NAACP formed a legal committee, organized protests, and sought to enroll the masses across the country in support. One way to achieve a massive membership was by the establishment of branches in major cities.

This same structure of organization was used by the National Urban League, founded two years after the NAACP,


in 1911, and also composed of an integrated leadership. The purpose of the Urban League was mainly to find jobs and housing in cities for newly arrived black migrants flowing in from the rural South. Eugene Kinkle Jones, the first field secretary of the Urban League, began immediately establishing branches across the country to carry out the policies of the Urban League and to enlist the support of local blacks as well as white businessmen.\footnote{National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes, \textit{Report 1910-1911} (New York, 1911), passim.}

These two major organizations in the early twentieth century, each with different goals, had in common their interracial make-up; support from interested, wealthy whites; appeals to blacks through the local branches; and a house publication (\textit{Opportunity} was not started by the Urban League until 1922) to carry its message to the public.

Therefore, when Carter Woodson founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History on September 9, 1915, it was only natural that he would pattern his organization after the successful NAACP and National Urban League. Long titles for organizations were then in vogue among these groups, the Urban League having begun as
the National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes.\footnote{14}{\textit{Ibid.}}

These opening years of the twentieth century witnessed renewed growth and development of white philanthropic interest in the Negro. They were also the period when new, black self-help organizations were formed. The appearance of so many newly organized groups was in harmony with the Progressive movement's overall concern for reform. On the one hand, Negroes were being recognized as victims of society, and many were applying their energies to help overcome injustices rendered them; on the other hand, racist ideas were commonplace, and many were ready to block all efforts at racial progress. In this period race riots increased in both number and severity. They occurred in the North as well as the South.\footnote{15}{Gunnar Myrdal, \textit{An American Dilemma} (New York, 1962), passim; Charles Crowe, "Racial Violence and Social Reform: Origins of the Atlanta Riot of 1906," \textit{Journal of Negro History}, LIII (July, 1968), p. 234; James L. Crouthamel, "The Springfield Race Riot of 1908," \textit{Journal of Negro History}, XVL (July, 1960), p. 164.}

By 1910 near-disfranchisement of the Negro had been accomplished by every southern state. Although lynchings were fewer in the first decades of the twentieth century
than the last in the nineteenth, there was no concerted effort on the part of the United States government or the public to pressure those in control in the South to stop them. In 1915 a terror of the past was revived in the form of the Ku Klux Klan. This time the Klan did not limit its activities to the South, but found a ready membership in the North and Midwest as well.¹⁶ The best propaganda the Klan could have had came to the moving picture houses in 1915 through the release of "Birth of a Nation." This film, based on the novel, *The Clansman* by Thomas R. Dixon, glorified the Klan and the Old South, while it cast blacks during Reconstruction in both a humorous and malevolent light. According to Dixon, the purpose of the film was to "revolutionize Northern sentiments. . . . Every man who comes out of one of our theatres is a Southern partisan for life. . . ."¹⁷ The NAACP, as a group, and individual blacks, protested against showing of this film as damaging


to Negroes. Despite all the protest raised, including floods of telegrams to President Woodrow Wilson, only a few minor cuts were made in the film; and it was shown in every major city of the country during that year.\textsuperscript{18}

There was a need to show the Negro in a favorable light to counteract the effect of this film and others of its type which were released within the decade. DuBois, writing in the \textit{Crisis}, called for blacks to use their money for films, poetry, music, and their own history.\textsuperscript{19} In October of 1915 a group of Negroes in Washington, D. C. began preparation of an all-Negro pageant as a reaction to the "Birth of a Nation" and its slanderous attack on them.\textsuperscript{20}

It was in the midst of this protest, following all the negative policies of the Wilson administration toward the Negro, that Woodson founded his Association. The fact that the initial organizational meeting took place in Chicago in the office of the Wabash Avenue YMCA secretary, 


\textsuperscript{19}DuBois Editorial, \textit{Ibid.}, p. 77.

\textsuperscript{20}Ibid.
A. L. Jackson, and was attended by four others, is of little consequence. The Association was from the first the product of Woodson's thinking and remained, until his last breath, his organization.21

According to James L. Stamps, one of the founding members, a group of men, among them Woodson, were sitting around in the lounge of the YMCA in Chicago one evening. They were discussing racial matters in general and "Birth of a Nation" in particular. All at once Woodson spoke up, suggesting that they form an organization which would offset the attacks made by whites upon blacks and that this organization set forth the true nature of their past through specialization in Negro history. They discussed the matter at some length with rising enthusiasm, and moved into Jackson's office where they held the first meeting.22

Stamps, who was elected Secretary of the


Association, wrote in the minutes that the meeting was called "by Dr. Woodson . . . for the organization of a society, which should publish a magazine devoted to the study of the Negro. . . ."\textsuperscript{23} Those present at the first meeting were Woodson, Stamps, Dr. G. C. Hall, A. L. Jackson, and W. B. Hartgrove. Dr. Hall (a physician) was elected temporary chairman and, later, first president of the Association. Although he was not in attendance, Howard University professor J. E. Moorland was made Secretary-Treasurer, and a motion was passed "in a reply to a request from Dr. Moorland that we offer to cooperate with Howard University along lines satisfactory to the Executive Council."\textsuperscript{24} This statement indicates that Woodson had already discussed his plan for forming an organization before actually doing so in Chicago.

Of the members present only W. B. Hartgrove was left out of any further structural participation in the organization. Jackson was placed on the Executive Council along with J. A. Bigham, G. N. Grisham, and Miss S. P.

\textsuperscript{23}Wesley, "Woodson As a Scholar," p. 18; copies of the Minutes of this first meeting, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.

\textsuperscript{24}Wesley, "Woodson As a Scholar," p. 19.
Breckinridge. None of the last three ever occupied positions of importance with the Association and soon faded from the scene. Jackson, Moorland, and to a lesser degree Stamps, continued to work with Woodson and the Association through the years.25

The new Association was officially incorporated in the District of Columbia in October of 1915, and the first issue of the *Journal of Negro History* was published in January, 1916. When the *Journal* appeared in print, no one was more surprised than the members of the Executive Council. They had not been told by Woodson that the "magazine" was so far advanced toward publication, and as a result Miss Breckinridge resigned from the Council.

Probably also unknown to the Executive Council was the fact that Woodson borrowed four hundred dollars against a two-thousand dollar life insurance policy with New England Mutual, to bring out this first issue and others subsequent to it.26 This was not the first time that


26J. A. Barbey, Secretary, New England Mutual, to Carter G. Woodson, December 24, 1915; Receipts for partial payment on Note dated January 10, 1916, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.
Woodson had borrowed against insurance policies for funds to carry on his work. In December, 1914, he had borrowed two thousand dollars from the Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company of Philadelphia, presumably to pay for the publication of *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861.*

The birth of the Journal was to Woodson literally something more than a mere publishing event; throughout his life he devoted himself to the Journal as most men would to a family. When he had conflicts with other men, or organizations, he would turn to the "Notes" section of the Journal to unburden himself. A lonely man except for his work, he used the Journal as some men might a wife as an emotional outlet. When he died, Woodson left all of his money to the Association, and he included in his will the request that he be remembered as the founder of the *Journal of Negro History.*

Time did not allow Woodson to do much more than edit the Journal and begin a limited publicity campaign for the Association in its early years. Teaching at the

---


M Street school, at Howard and at Institute in addition to his school administrative work, and writing while soliciting articles and book reviews was more than full-time work. He never had an office separate from his living quarters except when he was living in West Virginia during 1920-1922. The first headquarters for the Association was in his rented apartment at 2223 - 12th Street, N. W., until 1919. Later, he moved to 1216 U Street, N. W., and in 1922 he finally was able to purchase a building at 1538 Ninth Street, N. W., that served both as home and office until his death in 1950. ²⁹

One founding member of the Association who was not surprised at the issuance of the Journal was W. B. Hartgrove. His article on Maria Louise Moore and Fannie M. Richards appeared in the first issue, along with two articles dealing with Africa by Monroe Work and A. O. Stafford. Woodson not only wrote the lead article on "The Negroes of Cincinnati Prior to the Civil War" but submitted

²⁹Premium Notice, Standard Life Insurance Company, Atlanta, Georgia, to C. G. Woodson, October, 1918, Woodson Papers; correspondence from the Association beginning 1919 at the "U" Street address, Woodson Papers; C. G. Woodson to Washington Gas Light Company, December 13, 1922, instructing the company to turn on the gas, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.
forty-three pages of documents as well as writing one book review. 30 Roland C. McConnell of Morgan State College tells that in the early years of the Journal's publication, it was rumored that in the first issues he wrote most of the articles, and merely obtained the permission of friends to use their names so as not to make it appear a one-man venture. An examination of style, along with the articles carried in the first issue reveals that Hartgrove, however indebted he might be to Woodson for editorial assistance and research referral, wrote his article. His style was more immature than that of Woodson and the coverage not as conclusive as Woodson's work. Monroe Work, the bibliophile and renowned editor of the Tuskegee Yearbook, certainly contributed work that was his own. Stafford's brief four-paragraph introduction to a series of African proverbs was of a looser style than that of Woodson. However, the title of his article may have been chosen by the editor--"The Mind of the African Negro as Reflected in His Proverbs"--since in the next decade Woodson would bring out a volume of similar title--The Mind of the Negro as Reflected in

His Letters. 31

The same conclusion could be drawn about all the articles contributed to the Journal in that first year with the possible exception of Louis R. Mehlinger's article in issue number three entitled "The Attitude of the Free Negro Towards African Colonization." There is a striking similarity in style between Woodson and Mehlinger; and the depth of research used in compiling facts for the article seems a bit beyond the research qualifications of an attorney in the United States copyright office. 32

Hartgrove later contributed an article on Josiah Henson to Volume III of the Journal. For this study Woodson wrote a brief note stating that Hartgrove was taken ill and that he "had to turn over his unfinished manuscript to the editor, who completed it." 33 Had Woodson been "ghosting" for Hartgrove, it seems unlikely he would have made such a statement. On the other hand, it is suspicious


that in writing his second article for the Journal (Volume I, Number 2) Hartgrove cited documents published by Woodson in the same issue and referred to them in his notes as "See 'Documents' in this number." 34

In 1916, Woodson announced that he was writing a volume to be called The Negro in the Northwest Territory. This book never appeared. It is possible that he conceived of it while researching "The Negroes in Cincinnati Prior to the Civil War," and did not have the time to pursue the research at its sources any further. Or he may have begun researching that study and changed his topic to Negro migration because that offered more appeal to him. He did bring out A Century of Negro Migration in 1918. This was the first book published under the auspices of the Association. 35

During its first year the Association was composed of an all-Negro Executive Council, and most of the articles in the Journal came from blacks. The comments that Woodson wrote in each issue of the Journal, which he labelled


"Notes," contained information on works written by both whites and blacks. His criterion for mentioning them was their relevance to the Negro.\textsuperscript{36} Interestingly, he sent the first issue of the \textit{Journal} along with a request for funds to sustain it to a highly integrated group. The comments of praise came from both groups, but for the most part the money for operating the \textit{Journal} came from whites.\textsuperscript{37}

In July of 1916, in addition to his other tasks, Woodson delivered a paper at the University of Chicago on "The Varying Attitude of the White Man toward the Negro in the United States."\textsuperscript{38} Unfortunately no copy of that paper remains; it was one of the few times that Woodson undertook to analyze white racial attitudes and the only paper he ever wrote with emphasis on the majority group.

The year 1917 was an important one for the newly organized Association. The first meeting of "all persons seriously interested in the study of Negro history" was

\begin{footnotes}
\item[\textsuperscript{36}] "Notes," \textit{Journal of Negro History}, I (January, April, July, October, 1916), pp. 98, 223, 345, 448.
\item[\textsuperscript{37}] \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 225-32.
\item[\textsuperscript{38}] \textit{Ibid.}, p. 451.
\end{footnotes}
held in Washington during the month of August. Although Woodson stated that "some of the leading historians of the United States have been invited to address this body," he settled for leading citizens. Those in attendance at the meeting represented practically every field of American endeavor from officials in government, to college presidents, to white philanthropists. Monroe Work read a paper on "The Negro in the World War," and Woodson spoke on the purpose of his new organization.

The Director told his audience that one of the primary functions of the Association was to "save the records of the black race so that the Negro may not, like the Indian, leave no written account of his thoughts, feelings, aspirations, and achievements." In order to carry on such a large undertaking, Woodson spoke of the need for help from trained investigators. He was supported in this statement by Thomas Jesse Jones, a white educator then


40 Ibid., p. 208; Ibid., II (April, 1917), p. 333.

41 Ibid., p. 333.

42 Ibid.
working with the Department of Education on a survey of Negro education. Jones spoke highly of Woodson's efforts to gather materials relating to black people and "how important it is for a race to know and write its own history, for because of race prejudice, a man of one race cannot easily tell the truth about one of another." 43

Woodson also was pleased to note the attendance of and remarks by philanthropists George Foster Peabody, Julius Rosenwald, and James H. Dillard. It was from these men that he hoped to receive the financial help necessary to carry on the programs of the Association. Rosenwald praised the Journal and told the group that after having received the first issue, he had "decided to contribute one hundred dollars to its support every quarter." 44

The nominating committee, entirely black in its membership, put forth the name of Robert E. Park, Professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago, as President after it was announced that Dr. Hall wished to retire. Park was not in attendance at the time, but was elected. Moorland was re-elected as Secretary-Treasurer, and Woodson

43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
was re-elected as Director and Editor.

Following the pattern of the NAACP and the Urban League, the Executive Committee became interracial in its make-up when Rosenwald, Dillard, Peabody, Moorfield Storey, Jones, and J. G. Phelps-Stokes joined John R. Hawkins and A. L. Jackson of the old Council. The new black member was R. E. Jones of New Orleans. One foreigner, Sir Edmund Walker, of Toronto, Canada, was also named to the Council.\textsuperscript{45} The names of those whites elected to the governing body are indicative of the way Woodson hoped to fund his organization. Each of the white men was noted for supporting Negro organizations, and Peabody was known for his interest in and contributions to the field of education. Thomas Jesse Jones was not rich but was thought to have influence over the contributions made by many of the philanthropists to various causes.

Woodson was at this stage of development courting any and all whites who could and would aid him. But it is interesting to note that in this period, he did not follow the same procedure with the black people of importance who came to his first meeting. All the black college

\textsuperscript{45}\textit{Ibid.}, II (October, 1917), p. 447.
presidents—Byrd Prillaman, Nathan B. Young, and W. J. Hale—were excluded from the governing body; as were prominent men like Monroe Work, George E. Haynes, Kelly Miller, Benjamin Brawley, and Bishop I. N. Ross. This seems to indicate that from the beginning Woodson was anxious to maintain absolute control over the organization by excluding blacks who might wish to dictate policy, or who because of their own importance in the black community, might overshadow him. He could, on the other hand, include very important whites who probably would not do more than supply the hoped-for funds. The business matters of the new historical society were attended to with the adoption of a constitution (the same one that had been drawn up before incorporation with minor changes), and a decision to hold biannual meetings.

The following year, 1918, saw the formal conclusion of the First World War. There was a flurry of activity on the part of Negroes to record the experiences of, and roles played by, blacks in the war. Part of the interest resulted from the efforts by blacks during the War to

---

46 Ibid., II (April, 1917), p. 333.

establish an officer training corps for training Negro officers. This had been done, reluctantly, and only after major endeavors by pressure groups.\footnote{Emmett Scott, \textit{Scott's Official History of the American Negro in the World War} (Washington, D. C., 1919), p. 83.} There had also been several racial conflicts between black and white soldiers in Europe during the War, and as a result Emmett J. Scott, long-time secretary to Booker T. Washington, was appointed a Special Assistant to the Secretary of War (Newton Baker) to investigate these matters.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, Title Page and passim.}

Because the war in 1918 was a topic of interest among all groups in this country, and also because Negroes had always written accounts of their participation in United States wars, it was only natural that many were interested in doing so at this time. Kelly Miller, W. Allison Sweeney, Emmett Scott, Carter G. Woodson, and W. E. B. DuBois each decided to write a history of the black soldier during the war. Monroe Work had previously presented his paper on the Negro in the World War at the Association's Annual Meeting in 1917. The field was rapidly filling with histories of black participation in
the war. When DuBois learned of the many efforts underway, he contacted Woodson with a proposal that the NAACP fund a series of volumes on this subject and suggested that a board of editors be established to bring together all those separately treating the topic so as to insure cooperation.

DuBois, meeting with Woodson personally in October, 1918, apparently suggested that he, DuBois, serve as managing editor of the project and that Woodson be one of the editors. DuBois told Woodson that a sum of five thousand dollars was to be appropriated by the NAACP for the purpose of underwriting this project. Their talk must have led to the understanding that Woodson would be responsible for considerable amounts of research as well. The same day of their conversation, Woodson wrote DuBois that in thinking the matter over, "I did not make it clear to you that, should I undertake this work and do it myself merely with the advice of you and the other friend [Scott] mentioned as an editor, I would have to receive full credit for all of the work."50 Woodson had taken a position from which he did not deviate as the matter recurred in further

correspondence. However, after several letters between DuBois and Woodson and personal meetings of these men and Emmett J. Scott and James Weldon Johnson, it was discovered that Scott was as adamant as Woodson concerning his independence. Scott had a publisher (the American Negro Academy) and had signed a contract; he would accept financial support from the NAACP and would credit it. But he was not willing to be involved in this multi-volume project if it meant forsaking his own project. DuBois would not take second place to Woodson, but when, finally, Woodson agreed to serve as co-editor with DuBois, it looked as if the multi-volume history might get underway.\textsuperscript{51}

But the two men could not long remain out of conflict. In mid-November, Woodson sent DuBois his "conditions" for working in the project. He also explained why he had felt it necessary that he be named sole editor when he wrote that, "Da [sic] Vinci could not have painted

\textsuperscript{51} Memorandum, undated, DuBois to NAACP officials; DuBois to Woodson, November 8, 1918; DuBois to Scott, November 8, 1918; Woodson to DuBois, November 9, 1918; Scott to DuBois, November 10, 1918; DuBois to Woodson, November 12, 1918; J. E. Moorland to DuBois, November 25, 1918; DuBois to Moorland, November 29, 1918; memorandum, DuBois to Messrs. Villard, Peabody and Wood, November 16, 1918, DuBois Papers, Fisk University.
Mona Lisa, if he had employed some one to work on the hands while he was retouching the face." He continued, "The task requires . . . one organizing mind [Woodson's] to digest all available data and arrange it in readable form." The "Confidential" letter was a revelation of Woodson's lack of tact in dealing with others, as well as an illustration of his "go-it-alone" attitude. He wrote, "If you object to these terms contained in the enclosed agreement, remember that you are seeking me. . . . I am merely accepting an invitation on certain conditions. . . ." 54

Woodson also told DuBois that he had agreed to let Scott use the Association "as an agency in the collection of material" for his book and that Woodson might criticize Scott's manuscript before it went to press. Scott's history, he wrote, would not be "a definite history" but, instead, a "well illustrated popular work of one volume." 55


53Ibid.

54Ibid.

55Ibid.
He concluded by requesting DuBois let him know exactly what he wanted to do about this matter as Woodson had "another proposition" before him.\textsuperscript{56} The agreement written by Woodson was an equitable one, in terms of shared responsibility and credit lines. What turned DuBois and the NAACP away from it was the extraordinarily large sum of money that Woodson expected from the five thousand dollar appropriation. He asked fifty per cent of the amount as his share, with half of that payable in advance. Then, Woodson expected that all his expenses--stenographic and travel for research--should come from the remaining fifty per cent left to DuBois and the NAACP for carrying out their end of the editorial work.\textsuperscript{57}

On the same day that Woodson sent his agreement to DuBois, DuBois wrote a memorandum to Oswald Garrison Villard and George Foster Peabody, of the NAACP. He attached a circular announcing the forthcoming publication of Scott's history. And although DuBois had acknowledged receipt of Scott's letters telling him the book was under

\textsuperscript{56}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{57}Memorandum of Agreement made November 16, 1918, between Carter G. Woodson and NAACP, DuBois Papers, Fisk University.
contract and would come out, DuBois wrote the Board as though he had not been informed previously. He told them that he had "no desire at all to interfere with Mr. Scott's wishes . . . but he has been . . . lacking in frankness in going ahead with a plan almost identical with that of the N.A.A.C.P. . . ." 58 DuBois told the Board members that "Mr. Woodson has apparently acted in the same ungenerous manner," and then recommended that either the cooperative history be dropped or that an immediate conference be called with Woodson and Scott. For his part, DuBois thought that he could cover the "French side" and suggested that he be sent to France to collect the material, and then "do what I can at the Peace Conference for the African Colonies." 59 It appears that while Woodson was looking for money in entering this agreement, DuBois was anxious to travel through the same arrangement.

DuBois, however, was more generous in the final analysis than Woodson. When approached by J. E. Moorland, Secretary-Treasurer of the Association, concerning the


59 Ibid.
history, DuBois wrote Moorland that the need for a "scientific history" was so great that if it could be accomplished best by his withdrawal from the program, he would do so.60

Scott's history was published in 1919. In the preface he credited Woodson with "cooperation."61 Woodson, in turn, took to the Journal to refute the rumor that he had collaborated with Scott "as has been reported throughout the country."62 In January, 1919, he had placed a notation in the Journal that the Association would publish "a scientific history" of the Negro in World War I.63 At the same time, he published a report that DuBois was collecting data to compile a history on the same subject.64 And, again, in April of that year Woodson notified the Journal's readers that the DuBois volume was underway and

60DuBois to J. E. Moorland, November 29, 1918, DuBois Papers, Fisk University.

61Scott, Official History, p. 10.


63Ibid., IV (January, 1919), p. 108.

64Ibid., IV (October, 1919), p. 474.
would be available in October. The conflict among black historians over the Negro soldier in World War I took on proportions almost equal to the battles about which they were writing.

As late as 1924 both men were still dealing with the subject, very much on an individual basis. Neither Woodson nor DuBois published a volume on the war. Woodson did not write his. DuBois completed the manuscript, which is in the archives at Fisk University, but never brought it out.\(^65\)

Woodson made another overture to DuBois the next year when he wrote the NAACP to propose that his Journal be merged with their publications department. Since it was obvious to DuBois that Woodson could not work well with others, he discouraged this alignment even though it was considered by Mary White Ovington.\(^66\) By the 1920s DuBois

\(^{65}\)DuBois probably lacked funds for publication. The NAACP withdrew support from the multi-volume project and offered to sponsor only the first. After DuBois made his trip to Europe, he spent all but about $186.00 of $500.00 appropriated for beginning the project; memorandum, DuBois to John R. Shillady, April 24, 1919; Shillady to DuBois, May 2, 1919, DuBois File, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress.

had the ear of the white philanthropists from his position as editor of the Crisis. However, much of the time he spent with the NAACP saw him experiencing his own difficulties with the leadership due to what they considered his radical approach to race relations. Therefore, with his own position often tenuous, DuBois saw no need to venture out too far on a limb to help the somewhat erratic Woodson. According to Herbert Aptheker, "There appeared a certain tightness in their relationship but from what I have seen so far [in the DuBois Papers under his control] this seems to have sprung more from Woodson's 'touchiness' than DuBois. . . ."67

CHAPTER V

PROGRESS AND PROSPERITY

The *Journal of Negro History* from its establishment was to be Carter Woodson's major interest. To it in its first years he gave much of his time when he was not engaged with the arduous task of administrative work at Armstrong High School, later at Howard, and finally at West Virginia Collegiate Institute. He did not let the Association rest on the laurels of the *Journal*, however, as he continued trying to increase the Association's membership and to interest the public in its programs.

In 1919 he hired a field agent, J. E. Ormes, whose responsibility it was to organize history clubs among the people, and to sell books and subscriptions to the *Journal*.¹ By that time the Association had extended its interests to publishing and had brought out two books by

outside authors as well as Woodson's *A Century of Negro Migration.* The policy adopted by the NAACP and the Urban League of forming local branches was also carried into the work of the Association. In 1918 Woodson had formed a local club in Washington and became its Director in addition to his larger work with the national headquarters.

The qualifications for the organization of these branches called for five or more persons who desired to study Negro history joining together for group membership. Upon the payment of two dollars each they would receive the *Journal of Negro History* and would be allowed to "call upon the Director for such instructions as could be given by mail." Woodson outlined the benefits to be derived from club membership and set up a flexible organizational structure that allowed each branch to establish its own criteria for study. Nonetheless he called for the election of a president, secretary, treasurer, and instructor for each group. Regarding the instructor, he wrote that "the last

---


named official should be the most intelligent and the best informed member of the group. It would be interesting to know how the most intelligent member of the group was chosen from among his peers.

The years 1919-1922 in which Woodson was employed as a Dean at both Howard and at the West Virginia Collegiate Institute, were vital years in the growth of the Association and the promotion of the Journal. Woodson continued contributing articles to the Journal writing the "notes" section, doing many of the book reviews (in 1919 he wrote fourteen of the sixteen reviews published), and in addition to writing two books, he also wrote all the publicity for press releases and mailers to the subscribing public.

Fund raising was another important part of the Director's work. Rosenwald continued to donate one hundred dollars a quarter toward the publication of the Journal.  


5 Ibid., Publicity circulars for The Negro Church and A Century of Negro Migration, Woodson Papers, ASNLH; Circular entitled "A Valuable Book" on The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861, Woodson Papers, ASNLH; Advertisement listed as selling for $2.00, Crisis, VIII (June, 1917), cover page.
In addition the other members of the Board made contributions, with the exception of the Canadian member who was dropped at the second biannual meeting in 1919. Other men of substance also contributed to the work of the Association, among them Cleveland H. Dodge and James Storrow, each of whom gave four hundred dollars. Still others gave amounts ranging from one hundred to two hundred fifty dollars.

Woodson tried to set up a permanent endowment for the Association through solicitation of large donations. He was unsuccessful in doing so in the early years, and all of his efforts toward this end were thwarted throughout his life. The reasons for refusal given by the philanthropic organizations in the beginning probably remained valid in the years to come. Woodson would not attach his organization to a continuing project, as the NAACP had done, and he would not align his organization with a formal educational institution. Woodson dominated the Association. It was feared that if he retired from it, no one would carry it

---


on, and the organization would founder. However, Woodson believed that he could influence the philanthropists to be more generous if the market for his books and the *Journals* increased.

The Association's second historical meeting, held in Washington, was successful in drawing large crowds. Robert E. Park was again absent but was re-elected President. Albert Bushnell Hart, of Harvard, and several black men were placed on the Executive Council. The Constitution was amended for the second time in as many meetings, and it was decided to hold annual meetings beginning with the next year.

The third meeting of the Association was again held in Washington in November of 1920. The Director reported that the Association was suffering a deficit in the amount of twenty-five hundred dollars due to lack of donations. Woodson was then living in West Virginia. The work of the Association was being handled by Woodson frequently traveling back and forth to Washington and keeping in constant

---


touch with his secretary, Alethe H. Smith. It must have been difficult for him to watch the finances flounder while he was so far away and not able to give as much personal direction as he had done since the Association was organized.

Woodson reported that during the period 1919-1920 the Journal had not increased its subscribers—a fact he attributed to rising costs of printing and hence an increase in subscription price. He was, however, pleased with the progress made in the general area of Negro history. He told his audience that "there is . . . a healthy public opinion in favor of prosecuting the study of Negro history more vigorously . . . while this Association does not claim credit for all which has been accomplished in the field, it has certainly given a decided stimulus to the work."  

Park, noted for his liberalism and scholarship on the Negro, was once more elected President of the Association although he had yet to attend a meeting. At this


12 Ibid.
particular function he was supposed to have read a paper on "The Negro in America." In his absence Woodson spent the allotted time discussing the writing of Negro history, stressing scientific investigation of facts.  

13

The programs of these early meetings deviated from those of the other historical societies. After or preceding each session a musical selection was rendered by a local singer or church group. This was very much in keeping with the tradition within the Negro society of the time and probably was not considered unusual by most of those in attendance. The meetings throughout Woodson's life were held in segregated facilities, although the membership included members of both races. This was because blacks were not welcome in the major hotels and little choice of acceptable space was open to them.

The first three annual meetings were held in different locations on successive days. Often churches were used because they accommodated a large number of persons. The church also provided a measure of community support. The 1919 meeting alternated between the local Negro YMCA

13 Ibid., p. 128-29.
and the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church.\textsuperscript{14} In later years the Association frequently met on predominantly Negro college campuses but continued to hold at least one evening meeting, usually the opening session, in a local church. It was not until 1964 that the Association, always integrated in its membership, met and held its programs in a major hotel.\textsuperscript{15}

Woodson launched a fund-raising drive in early 1919 with appeals to readers of the \textit{Journal} and to prominent people among both blacks and whites. This was in addition to his direct appeals to the philanthropists for large sums. He set his goal at two thousand dollars, and by March he had raised twelve hundred.\textsuperscript{16} In a letter to Colonel Charles Young, highest ranking Negro in the military service at that time, Woodson wrote:

you may be surprised to learn that every penny of the $1200 already pledged has come from white persons. . . . This may apparently indicate that the white race is more interested in the Negro than the race is itself.


\textsuperscript{15} The 49th Annual Meeting, Detroit, Michigan, 1964.

\textsuperscript{16} C. G. Woodson to Charles Young, March 11, 1919, Carter G. Woodson Collection, Library of Congress.
This does not necessarily follow, for few Negroes are in a position to make contributions.\textsuperscript{17}

By playing on race pride, Woodson succeeded in getting a contribution from Colonel Young. Young proposed that a "round robin" be established. "We as colored men want to make up the other $800.00," Young wrote, "and not have the whites do it all."\textsuperscript{18} He sent a check for eight dollars and told Woodson that he was writing to a friend in New Orleans, asking him to write a friend and so on, with each in turn sending eight dollars.\textsuperscript{19}

Whether this plan of Young's was effective in raising the eight hundred dollars is not known. It did, however, fit with Woodson's concept of fund raising. In the next years, particularly after 1930 when he went more often directly to the people, Woodson would set the figure desired and then ask for contributions in specific amounts. For instance, he would request that two hundred people give ten dollars; five hundred people give five, and so on.

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{18}Charles Young to C. G. Woodson, March 20, 1919, Woodson Collection, Library of Congress.

\textsuperscript{19}\textit{Ibid.}
down the line.  

In the first seven years of the Association's existence, Carter Woodson never received a salary. In fact he donated much of what he earned to the organization. Beginning with the four hundred dollar loan that launched the Journal, he frequently made up the difference between what was needed to operate the Association and what was in the treasury. For instance in the first quarter of 1918, Woodson contributed two hundred and eighty dollars; the first quarter of 1919 he gave three hundred thirty-seven. Since he gave this much at the beginning of both years, it can be assumed his donations increased toward the end when it was necessary to balance the books. DuBois, not a Woodson admirer, wrote sympathetically following the Director's death that:

> it is probable that he lived many years on not more than one thousand and probably never as much as five thousand. . . . He concentrated his time, his energy and his little money in building up his enterprise. . . .

---

20Fund-raising flyers, n.d., Woodson Papers, ASNLH.


Woodson worked at Howard University in the dual capacity of Dean and Head of the graduate school during the academic year 1919-1920 mainly for the money it provided him to carry on the work of the Association. Whatever hopes there were among the philanthropists that he would bring the Association to Howard were quashed when he resigned under pressure.

When Woodson made known his plans to go to West Virginia to reorganize the college department, he was in the process of trying to obtain a sustaining grant from the Carnegie Corporation for the Association. The directors of this foundation may have wondered how its money could be used to the advantage of an organization located in Washington, with its sole organizer and director in West Virginia. Consequently pressure was put on Woodson to hire a business manager who could directly oversee the work in Woodson's absence. This stipulation was not acted upon by the Director during the first year that he was in West Virginia. Probably the realization that the work was suffering in his absence, as well as pressure from the foundation, prompted him to act. Reluctantly Woodson sought such a person and finally located in New York a man he thought
might be capable. 23

Victor R. Daly, Industrial Secretary of the Urban League, was interviewed first by John W. Davis, who happened to be in New York on business. Daly impressed him favorably. Woodson, acting on Davis' recommendation, sent for Daly to come to Washington for an interview. 24 The two talked at length for several days in August concerning Woodson's needs, Daly's responsibilities, and, of course, salary. Daly had asked twenty four hundred per year. Woodson offered eighteen hundred (he was making only twenty seven hundred himself in West Virginia as Dean). After a bit of discussion the two men agreed on the salary Woodson offered because Daly wanted to come to Washington. 25 Daly was told that his first and major job was to develop business for the Journal. 26 He was to be given his travel expenses and "one dollar a day" for living expenses when he

23 C. G. Woodson to A. L. Jackson, April 26, 1922, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.

24 C. G. Woodson to Victor Daly, August 2, 1921; Woodson to Daly, August 9, 1921, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.

25 Woodson to Daly, August 9, 1921 and September 6, 1921, Woodson Paper, ASNLH.

26 Ibid.
was traveling for the Association.  

The relationship between the two began smoothly. Woodson seemed to be making a genuine effort to restrain himself from making tactless criticisms, and to allow Daly an opportunity to carry out his responsibilities without too much dogmatism on the part of the Director. At one point, in the beginning of Daly's employment, Woodson wrote him to the effect that "I must let you figure out these things [advertising methods] for yourself." It was almost as if Woodson was telling himself that as much as Daly. As the months rolled by, however, Woodson had more and more difficulty in practicing restraint. His correspondence with Daly became harshly critical in some cases, and his comments began to be tinged with sarcasm. Woodson kept tight control over the Association's purse strings and constantly reminded Daly of the necessity to economize.

According to Daly, Woodson did not keep records of any sort in the office. No one knew the financial situation except the Director, and he doled out money for  

27Ibid.  
28Woodson to Daly, October 26, 1921, Ibid.  
29Woodson to Daly covering period November through March, 1920-1921, Ibid.
running the office to Miss Smith, as well as postage and
tavel money to Daly. When Daly, a Cornell graduate, first
came to work at the Association, he thought he was going to
keep books in addition to selling the Journal. Instead he
found himself making day-by-day reports of his own ex-
penditures, which he transmitted to Woodson for his rec-
ords. "It was," said Daly, "a one man operation."^{30}

During the year in which Daly worked for Woodson,
the Association held its annual meeting for the first time
out of town—in Lynchburg, Virginia. At this meeting
John R. Hawkins replaced Park as President and Samuel W.
Rutherford, a businessman, was elected Secretary-Treasurer
in place of Hawkins. John W. Davis, President of the West
Virginia college where Woodson worked, was placed on the
Executive Council along with four other Negro members. The
old Council members were retained, bringing the total
governing body to nineteen men with the balance decidedly
leaning toward the larger Negro following that was
developing.^{31} Woodson wrote that the income of the

---

^{30} Victor R. Daly, private interview held at Wash-
ington, D. C., April 6, 1971.

^{31} "Report of the Director," Journal of Negro
History, VII (January, 1922), p. 120.
Association was about twelve thousand dollars that year and "this substantial uplift has come in part from a large number of Negroes who now more than ever appreciate the value of their records and the importance of popularizing the study thereof." 32

At this meeting Woodson informed the membership that the Carnegie Corporation had appropriated five thousand dollars a year for five years to the work of the Association and that all the debts were paid with the exception of a bonus promised the Director for the years 1919-1920 and 1920-1921. Although Woodson failed to get past due amounts he was owed, he did have the assurance of an income for the next few years. This made it possible for him to announce that he would be able to receive a salary from the Association, and therefore "as soon as practicable" he would sever his connections with all outside work and devote his time "to the prosecution of Negro Life and History." 33

It was during this year, 1921, that Woodson also founded the Associated Publishers. The Association had

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid., p. 123.
published some books prior to his establishing a publishing firm, but he had decided that the role of the Association should be distinguished from that of publisher. This was especially true in relation to outsiders wishing to publish through his organization. Rayford W. Logan, later a researcher under Woodson and briefly his successor at the Association, wrote that Woodson founded the Associated Publishers because Negro scholars encountered difficulty in publishing their works. There were, at that time, few places to which blacks could turn for publication, partly, said Logan, because few of them were trained scholars and partly because other publishers thought that they would not write objectively about themselves.\(^{34}\) According to Logan, Woodson believed that publishers of major firms did not think books written by Negroes, especially books of a scholarly nature, would sell to other blacks because they did not read volumes of this sort. Furthermore, it was thought whites and blacks were more interested in stories about Harlem dives than in scholarship. Woodson not only published the works of promising Negro historians, he also

aided them financially at times so that they could spend time on research.\textsuperscript{35}

The Associated Publishers was incorporated in the District of Columbia on May 28, 1921. Officers for the new company were Woodson, president; John W. Davis, treasurer; and Louis R. Mehlinger, secretary.\textsuperscript{36} A stock offering was made to a limited number of people, with the Association (through Woodson) retaining the controlling interest. Although Woodson listed the capital of the new company as amounting to twenty-five thousand dollars, in actuality it was only twenty-five hundred.\textsuperscript{37} The shares were sold for one hundred dollars each. John W. Davis subscribed for ten shares on paper, but purchased only one; Alethe H. Smith bought one share and was given another in lieu of salary at a time when the Association's treasury was too empty to pay

\begin{footnotes}
\item[35] Ibid.
\item[37] "Report of the Director," \textit{Ibid}; Subscription List, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.
\end{footnotes}
Mehlinger and Woodson subscribed for the largest number of shares, one hundred five and one hundred twenty-eight respectively. Mehlinger did not personally buy any stock; therefore it must be assumed that he was acting for the Association in conjunction with Woodson. The only other person who purchased any stock on its initial offering was Mordecai Johnson, later the first Negro President of Howard University. He bought and still owns one share. Victor Daly, while working for Woodson, bought three shares which he sold to Woodson's student, Arnett Lindsay, in the 1960s. Other initial subscribers, of whom there were four, never purchased their stock. It then appears that the Associated Publishers was a publicly-owned company with four investors owning seven shares, with a total investment of seven hundred dollars, and the Association, through Woodson, owning the balance of the company.


40Daly interview.
In 1922, when a new building was purchased by Woodson for both the Association and the Associated Publishers as well as a home for himself, it was bought in the name of the Associated Publishers. The building at 1538 Ninth Street, N. W., gave the publishing company borrowing power and increased its assets. The Association was then made the recipient of all profits derived from the Associated Publishers. In some years it loaned money to the Associated Publishers for its work.41

The first book issued by the Associated Publishers was Woodson's *History of the Negro Church*. Daly was to sell this book in addition to the bound volumes of the *Journal*. He was instructed on virtually every move that he made in this area by Woodson, who sent him names of possible purchasers, advertisements, and other forms of advice from West Virginia.42 Daly was told to contact all the ministers in the city for possible sales through their congregations. He was to send letters to other ministers

41Idem.

42Idem; C. G. Woodson to Victor R. Daly, December 16, 1921, December 18, 1921, January 12, 1922, January 16, 1922, January 19, 1922, February 7, 1922, February 8, 1922, March 22, 1922, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.
whose names were supplied by Woodson, and he was to see to it that the book was reviewed wherever possible.\textsuperscript{43}

The Reverend Reverdy Ransom, later a Bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, wrote Daly asking him for a copy of the book to review in the AME \textit{Quarterly}. Before Daly could send the requested work, he first had to write Woodson and gain his permission. Upon the receipt of Woodson's affirmative reply (stating that Ransom was "an honest man"), Daly then sent the book for review.\textsuperscript{44} This is an example of how Woodson personally continued to control almost every detail of activity in the Washington office.

A rather humorous incident occurred with the first publication issued by the Associated Publishers. The J. F. Tapley Company of New York was chosen by Woodson to mechanically produce his volume. Apparently the company did not follow Woodson's voluminous requests and orders regarding the actual manufacturing of the book, especially his desire to see all proofs, including illustrations. Therefore,\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{43}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{44}Reverdy C. Ransom to Victor R. Daly, December 24, 1921; Daly to Woodson, December 26, 1921; Woodson to Daly, December 28, 1921; Daly to Ransom, December 31, 1921, \textit{Ibid.}
when the first fifty copies arrived from the Tapley
Company, Woodson complained that by not following his in-
structions they had ruined his book. The illustrations and
their text did not match. Woodson wrote the company:

Now, you have done the very thing that I thought
you might do. The second illustration in the book
"The Oldest Negro Baptist Church in the United
States" carries at the bottom of it the inscription
"Uncle Tom's Cabin" a thing that I never dreamt
of. . . .45

Furthermore, the company had erred by labelling the picture
of Josiah Henson, supposedly the prototype of Uncle Tom in
Uncle Tom's Cabin, on the following page as "A Pioneer
Methodist Preacher in Canada."46

It was fortunate for Woodson that he had a sound
constitution, for the anger that he unleashed on the
printers was considerable. He had paid for the books, a
fact that he regretted in several paragraphs; the printers
had acted precipitously and without his final authority;
he would take them to court if these errors were not imme-
diately corrected. He sent them instructions as to how
they could change the errors since they did not seem to

45 Woodson to J. F. Tapley Company, December 16, 1921, Ibid.
46 Ibid.
know even the basic steps in creating a book.\textsuperscript{47}

The book was somehow changed to Woodson's satisfaction and began to sell. The next publication by the Associated Publishers was Woodson's first textbook, \textit{The Negro in Our History}, released in March, 1922. This volume joined \textit{The Negro Church}, and within the year the entire first edition was sold out while a second edition was almost exhausted by September, 1923.\textsuperscript{48}

By mid-1922 Woodson had received notification from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund that the Association was to receive a grant of twenty-five thousand dollars, paid at five thousand a year over the next five years, in addition to the Carnegie money. His books were widely reviewed and enjoyed a large reading audience. The \textit{Journal}, however, was not as successful as Woodson desired, considering that he was employing a business manager for the purpose of increasing sales and subscriptions.

In April, 1922, Woodson decided to relinquish the services of Daly and wrote his Board of Directors to that

\textsuperscript{47}\textit{Ibid.}

effect. His explanation that financial exigency required Daly's release was a bit questionable. Woodson pointed out that he would never have hired a business manager had not the President of the Carnegie Corporation insisted upon it. The Director did not have kind words for Daly's ability to perform in the role of business manager and apparently used Daly's request for a raise in salary as a pretext for firing him. 49

He took refuge behind the "management of the Association" in denying Daly's raise, a course that seems hardly creditable since Woodson did not allow the management a voice in any of his policies or actions. 50 The letter of dismissal to Daly was but the beginning of the kind of subsequent actions Woodson would take toward others who worked for him through the years. He had no desire to share his organization with another, especially one who would question his orders and decisions. This weakness on Woodson's part was to cause him considerable difficulty in the future, as it did in the beginning with

49 C. G. Woodson to A. L. Jackson, April 26, 1922, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.

50 C. G. Woodson to Victor R. Daly, May 13, 1922, Ibid.
The firing of Daly was not received well by the Carnegie Corporation, especially after it was learned that he was not to be replaced with another business manager.\footnote{Daly interview.} Two members of the Executive Council resigned, one of whom was Albert Bushnell Hart.\footnote{A. L. Jackson to James Weldon Johnson, May 25, 1922, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.} Since Daly was originally hired on a contractual basis, he could easily have been removed by merely not renewing his contract. Woodson not only created hard feelings within his organization, but he further slighted Daly be refusing to pay his last month's salary: "This firm . . . does not find that, according to the manner in which you have served, any amount can be due you."\footnote{C. G. Woodson to Victor R. Daly, June 10, 1922, \textit{Ibid}.} According to Daly, Woodson would send him to very poor southern schools with back issues of the \textit{Journal} in bound form, and expect him to make a sale where there was not even enough money, in some cases, for food. Woodson once sent him to a school in Tennessee that was so poorly financed that the entire library was made up of forty hymn
books, and the meal which Daly shared with faculty and students consisted of corn meal and milk.\textsuperscript{54}

Daly recalled that Woodson was:

thoroughly embittered against Negro society. He frowned on my calling on individuals such as physicians and lawyers when I went South, not realizing that they were the people who had the money to spend for these volumes.\textsuperscript{55}

Daly described Woodson as:

a hard man to get along with. He was not a lover of his fellow man. He had to scruffle for what he got. If I had to characterize Dr. Woodson in those days I would say he was a lonely man; never had any close friend; never had anyone he could confide in. Charles H. Wesley and I were among the few who could see he had a good heart beneath a brusque exterior.\textsuperscript{56}

One of the very few associates whom Woodson was somewhat close to over the years came to work for the Association in the summer of 1922. Alrutheus A. Taylor had been on the faculty of West Virginia Collegiate Institute while Woodson was there as Dean. He had served on a committee with Woodson to study education in West Virginia during the period they were both at the school. Taylor, a

\textsuperscript{54}Daly interview.

\textsuperscript{55}Idem.

\textsuperscript{56}Idem.
product of the Washington, D. C. schools and a graduate of
the University of Michigan, held a Master's degree from
Harvard University. Woodson was in need of an investigator
in order to comply with the requirements of the Spelman
grant. Taylor had become involved in an argument with
President Davis at West Virginia Institute and resigned at
the end of the term.\textsuperscript{57} Woodson invited him to work at the
Association in the field of Negro Reconstruction history,
and encouraged Taylor to return to Harvard for further
study for which he supplied some of the tuition money from
the Spelman grant.

Woodson took interest in Taylor's work at Harvard.
He wrote to each of Taylor's professors inquiring about
the student's progress in his courses. He wrote the gradu-
ate school at the conclusion of the school year in 1923,
requesting that Taylor's grades be forwarded to him. Both
the graduate school and individual professors complied with
Woodson's requests and forwarded progress reports.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{57}John W. Davis to C. G. Woodson, May 21, 1923, and
C. G. Woodson to John W. Davis, June 21, 1923, Woodson
Papers, ASNLH.

\textsuperscript{58}George W. Robinson "To Whom It May Concern,"
June 18, 1923; Edward Channing to Woodson, June 27, 1923;
Abbott Usher to Woodson, June 21, 1923; George W. Robinson
During the year, Taylor had become ill and had not been able to complete all of his examinations. Nevertheless, he had compiled a satisfactory record, and Woodson wrote him a rare note of praise.\textsuperscript{59} He also took another step in Taylor's behalf when he wrote the student's wife, who was living at Institute, to refute the rumor that Taylor had failed in his course work at Harvard.\textsuperscript{60}

In addition to Taylor, there was another Harvard student who was being financially aided by Woodson and the Association. Hosea B. Campbell, candidate for the doctorate at Harvard, was a second investigator whom Woodson hired. Campbell did not measure up to Taylor in academic accomplishment, therefore Woodson discontinued his assistance at the end of his first year in graduate school.\textsuperscript{61}

Campbell was also negligent in his work for the

\textsuperscript{59}C. G. Woodson to A. A. Taylor, June 21, 1923, \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{60}C. G. Woodson to Mrs. A. A. Taylor, June 28, 1923, \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{61}C. G. Woodson to W. C. Abbott, June 28, 1923, \textit{Ibid.}
Association. He and Taylor were assigned research topics which were to be carried out through the use of the Widener Graduate Library at Harvard. Taylor completed two semesters, did his graduate work well, and endured a brief period of illness. Campbell did not send any results of his research to Woodson. This, in addition to his poor grades, marked him for failure with the Director. 62

Woodson tried to help these students, as he did others in later years, but memories of his own hard work and difficulties made him unsympathetic to their particular weaknesses. He had the drive to overcome almost any negative circumstance. This and a single-minded approach to the work of the Association made him somewhat intolerant of the human frailties of others with less dedication.

Prior to Woodson's permanent return to the Association, he started a series of Spring Conferences which were similar to the Annual Meeting. The first Conference was held in New York City in June of 1922. Daly was provided with a vast array of instructions in order to carry out preparation for this meeting. He was sent to New York,

62 C. G. Woodson to A. A. Taylor, June 28, 1923, Ibid.
where he contacted as many Negro church pastors as possible. It was Woodson's plan to recruit the same types of people he had drawn to his Annual Meetings—both the unlettered and the intellectuals. Daly carried membership blanks, subscription forms, and books to sell. It was his responsibility to enlist as many paying members as he could, while Woodson handled the program. After Daly was fired, Woodson himself carried all the printed materials to these meetings and made personal pleas to those in attendance to support his organization and buy his publications.

The Spring Conferences lasted through 1927 and then were disbanded. The second meeting, held at Morgan State College in 1923, was the first attempt to use a college campus for such purposes. However, he continued to solicit community support by holding the evening sessions at a local church. These conferences were

63 C. G. Woodson to Victor R. Daly, April 7, 1922; April 21, 1922; May 3, 1922; May 12, 1922; May 20, 1922; May 28, 1922, Ibid.

64 Daly interview; Wesley interview, March 25, 1971.

successful in terms of attendance, and they were interesting on account of the widespread audiences that they drew. The practice of local "branch" members joining with scholars at the meetings still prevails as part of the Woodson legacy. It reflects a genuine interest on the Director's part in influencing a large black public, and it presented a way of interesting them in their history.

Woodson took a more active role in the *Journal of Negro History* upon his return to Washington from West Virginia. He continued writing the majority of book reviews that appeared in the *Journal*. He had under his guidance Taylor at Harvard working on the Reconstruction period and George Francis Wos, a researcher who was compiling material on the free Negro prior to 1861.\(^6\) The Director, who had placed himself on the Rockefeller grant for research, compiled and later published a study of free Negro heads of families before 1830.\(^7\) In 1923 he had substantial aid in research, but the duties of the office remained his alone. There was no one except two stenographers working under his direction with him in the office.

\(^6\)"Annual Report," *Journal of Negro History*, VIII (January, 1923), p. 120.

\(^7\)Ibid.
until he hired another young assistant to aid in general office tasks.

Langston Hughes, later a major Negro poet, came to work for the Association when Woodson was in the process of compiling the statistics for the *Free Negro Heads of Families in the United States*. It was Hughes' job to arrange in alphabetical order the names of all these persons (of whom there were about 30,000 according to Hughes).\(^68\) He also had such general duties as banking the fire in the evenings, opening and closing the office, and handling the wrapping and mailing of books for the Associated Publishers.\(^69\) Woodson was not the kind of employer who kept his workers tied to a single task when there was much work to be done. But the Director worked at these lesser tasks along with his staff. He worked from early morning to very late at night and did everything from sweeping the floors to caring for the furnace. Plainly he did not require others to perform jobs that he would not do himself. He was not, however, a friendly man with his

\(^{68}\) Langston Hughes, private interview held at New York City, September 18, 1966; Langston Hughes, "When I Worked for Dr. Woodson," *Negro History Bulletin*, XIII (May, 1950), p. 188.

\(^{69}\) Hughes, "When I Worked," Ibid.
staff. He was distant and, according to Hughes, when he was engaged in research, "he did not say much more than 'Good morning' for days on end."\(^{70}\) Hughes left upon the completion of his indexing the *Free Negro Heads of Families*, as he put it, "before he was fired." But had he not worked for Woodson and the Association, Hughes recalled, he might not have had the opportunity to meet Vachel Lindsay and begin his own climb to fame.\(^{71}\)

In 1924 Woodson published *Free Negro Owners of Slaves in the United States Prior to 1830*. This was the first publication to be released as a result of the Laura Spelman Rockefeller grant. In 1925, he published the aforementioned *Free Negro Heads of Families* and in the same year he brought out *Negro Orators and Their Orations*.

The latter volume has an interesting anecdote attached to its publication. In early 1923 a former Howard professor, G. D. Houston, approached Woodson about the publication of such a work. It was to draw primarily on the published speeches of public officials and would illustrate a continuing trend of protest among prominent black

\(^{70}\)Ibid.

\(^{71}\)Hughes interview.
people. Woodson agreed to the publication and offered to help Houston with its preparation. He also published a five-page advertisement in the June, 1923, issue of the Journal announcing its publication in December of that year. Soon orders for the volume began to appear, although Houston had not produced any copy for the book. Woodson had previously had the experience of advertising a volume which he never wrote (the Negro in the World War) and knew that his business would suffer if this type of misleading advertising persisted. Therefore, after several attempts to wrest a manuscript from Houston, the President of the Associated Publishers prepared the manuscript himself and brought out the volume, under the same title, in 1925.72

In the three years after assuming fulltime work with the Association as Director and with the Associated Publishers as President, Woodson more than made up for whatever opportunities he lacked in his earlier life. These years were among the most prosperous for the organizations and probably some of the most pleasurable for Woodson. He had not, however, finished the period of

72Wesley interview, March 25, 1971; Handwritten account of the Associated Publishers, n.d., Woodson Papers, ASNLH.
innovation; nor had he begun to receive the full apprecia-
tion that he deserved for his many achievements.
CHAPTER VI

RECOGNITION AND ADVANCEMENT

The year 1926 was of special significance for Carter Woodson. In February of that year he planned and successfully executed the first celebration of Negro History Week. This particular observation included the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, who chose February 14 as the day on which he thought he was born. Of the many contributions that Woodson made in his lifetime, Negro History Week ranks near the top. The first Negro History Week beginning on February 7, was an outgrowth of an annual celebration, Negro History and Literature Week, that had been started by a Negro fraternity, Omega Psi Phi, in 1920, as the result of a lecture given by Woodson to his fraternity brothers in Nashville, Tennessee that summer. Woodson called on the fraternity to become more actively involved with the history and culture of blacks. The Omegas responded by initiating exhibits and
forums in schools, churches, and public meeting halls.¹ They continued holding Negro History and Literature Week until 1925, when the Grand Conclave of the fraternity decided to abolish the celebration.²

Woodson, as an honorary member of the Omegas, was aware that this event was not to take place in 1925. He decided that the Association would step in and promote a national Negro History Week beginning in February of the next year. The fraternity in its 1926 meeting decided to continue its own promotion of an event centered around Negroes, but out of deference to Woodson, called its celebration National Negro Achievement Week and emphasized how blacks "had persevered in spite of handicaps..." The motive behind the celebration was race pride.³ This, too, was Woodson's purpose when he sponsored the first celebration of Negro History Week. He hoped to interest the branches in promoting celebrations in schools, churches, and in local groups. He put together a brochure which was


²Ibid.

³Ibid.
mailed to ministers, teachers, and others whom he believed would help promote a special emphasis on the role of blacks in this country. The first brochure, about four pages, contained a brief history of the Association as well as a curriculum in black history to be followed in the schools. This curriculum contained a list of books that were to be read in conjunction with the topics studied, a carryover from Woodson's days as an educator. Various black persons who had contributed to some particular facet of American growth, such as Matthew Henson the explorer, were singled out for special notice.4

In the ensuing years Woodson put together Negro History Week Kits which contained pictures of outstanding Negroes, past and contemporary; more stories about achievers for children; and further study guides for adult groups. This experiment in education led Woodson to write and publish books for children in the elementary and secondary schools.5 Perhaps these efforts were more successful


than lectures or scholarly books in fostering a group pride among black people.

Rayford Logan called Negro History Week "the best work of propaganda" that had been done for the Negro. He stated that:

literally tens of thousands of people have come to have . . . a higher appreciation of the achievements of the Negro. . . . If Negro History Week has done nothing else, it has removed this inferiority complex from the thinking of large numbers of Negroes and has given many others a sense of pride and optimism.  

DuBois praised Woodson for his work in this area by writing that as his "crowning achievement he established Negro History Week."  According to DuBois, the Director "literally made this country, which has only the slightest respect for people of color, recognize and celebrate each year . . . the effect the American Negro has upon the life, thought and action in the United States."  

DuBois concluded his comments on Negro History Week by stating, "I know of no one man who in a lifetime has, unaided, built up such a

---

8Ibid.
national celebration."\textsuperscript{9} Considering the rivalry between the two men over the years, this was high praise from the historian-sociologist who was, himself, much of a propagandist. DuBois even joined in the celebration of Negro History Week by making trips into the South and speaking during the annual celebrations.\textsuperscript{10}

The public received this particular week aimed at creating black pride in several ways. The New York branch of the Association began a Negro History Week annual breakfast to which speakers were invited to address the audience on some particular phase of black history. By the early 1940s these breakfasts were subscribed to so far in advance that many people went without seats in order to take part in the celebration.\textsuperscript{11} This particular event in New York was of benefit to the Association in more ways than propaganda. A percentage of the profits from the breakfast were, and still are, given to the national headquarters as a donation to help further the work of the Association.

Dr. Woodson was frequently a speaker on the New

\textsuperscript{9}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{10}Redding, "Twenty-Five Negro History Weeks," p. 179.

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 178.
York breakfast programs and was in demand elsewhere each year to bring the message of racial pride to his audiences. Although Woodson had mastered the art of public speaking by the time he initiated Negro History Week, he had not been a willing speaker in the early years of the Association. When he first came to West Virginia Collegiate Institute, he was invited to speak and declined because he was not comfortable in that role. John W. Davis encouraged Woodson to practice and to speak to small audiences until he had mastered the art. Gradually Woodson learned to utter his thoughts publicly, but he usually spoke in a subdued tone, without the touch of the orator. His audiences were interested in what he had to say, and it was his message rather than his manner of presentation which carried him from one engagement to another during Negro History Week. Woodson could not keep the many engagements to which he was invited yearly; therefore he sent his proteges to fill in for him as far and as frequently as he could induce them to do so.12

The Southern states and Eastern cities promoted the Week with unusual vigor from the beginning. The schools in

12 Davis interview; Wesley interview, March 25, 1971.
the South were segregated, and Negro History Week soon took on the proportions of a major celebration in black schools. Negro newspapers carried an advance announcement of the Week and usually helped promote whatever special programs were being performed in their locale. In later years local radio stations carried programs consisting of roundtables and speeches in connection with Negro History Week.\textsuperscript{13}

Woodson always asked those who participated in Negro History Week observances to donate their time so that, with the exception of the New York breakfasts, the meetings would be open to the public free of charge. He resisted efforts to exploit the Week for profit because he believed that the message was more important than the financial profit that could be derived from it.\textsuperscript{14} The Association did profit, however, because as a result of Negro History Week more and more people across the country


\textsuperscript{14} Redding, "Twenty-Five Negro History Weeks," pp. 178-79.
came to know of the Association. They subscribed to its publications, purchased its books, and became supporters of Woodson and his work.

One of the favorite speakers, aside from the Director, was Charles H. Wesley, who had the ability to motivate his audiences to a high pitch through his oratorical abilities. Wesley was especially important in the area of fund raising for the Association for this reason, and he was called upon often by the Director to speak for both purposes. In addition to Wesley, other of Woodson's younger disciples, A. A. Taylor, Rayford W. Logan, Lorenzo J. Greene, and Luther P. Jackson, went on the lecture circuit the second week in February to promote Negro History Week.¹⁵

As the celebration became better known, it took on political value for those who represented Negro voters. The significance of helping to promote or sponsor Negro History Week was not lost upon those politicians. The Mayor of New York began issuing Negro History Week Proclamations in the 1930s; soon thereafter the Governor of New York followed suit. Frequently mayors and other

¹⁵Ibid.
elected officials would attend the celebrations and thus help spur interest in the observance. In the 1940s it became the custom to ask the governors of the various states to issue proclamations marking the observance. Many did so in the Eastern states, but it was not until after the Civil Rights crusade of the 1950s and 1960s that whites showed much interest in the project. Woodson received special gratification for his innovation when the Jews began a Jewish History Week in 1947 and wrote him that his Negro History Week had motivated them toward this end.\footnote{Ibid.} Today many people who celebrate or are aware of National Brotherhood Week can look back to Carter Woodson’s first Negro History Week in 1926 and realize where it had its start.

In 1914 the NAACP had established an award, The Arthur P. Spingarn Award, named for one of its founders. Each year a medal and a certificate of honor were awarded to an outstanding contributor of African descent in the area of human rights. In 1926 Carter G. Woodson was chosen as the recipient of the Spingarn medal and honored by the NAACP at its annual meeting held in Chicago on June 29th of
that year. W. E. B. DuBois was the speaker for the occasion and chose as the subject of his address "Criteria for Negro Art."

During the course of his speech, DuBois mentioned Woodson by name and by specification as the honoree exactly once. This slight may have been precipitated by Woodson's review of DuBois' Darkwater which was printed in the Journal in 1920. The review was not complimentary and was not likely to better their already strained relations. Woodson wrote that DuBois was "at best a popular essayist with a bit of poetic genius. . . . In all of his discussions of the race problem his mind has not as yet been adequate to the task of scientific treatment of the question. . . ." Consequently, it is not difficult to understand DuBois' one-sentence recognition of the distinguished honoree in 1926, although he was a member of the Committee which chose Woodson for the award.


By the time Woodson received this award, he had written eight articles for the Journal of Negro History; read and reviewed over ninety books; and published six volumes which he either wrote or compiled. The sixth book, The Mind of the Negro As Reflected in His Letters Written During the Crisis, was released in 1926. The citation given with the Spingarn award read: "For ten years' service in collecting and publishing records of the Negro in America. . . ."20

In the preceding year Woodson had written an article for the Journal on the topic for which he was honored. Entitled "Ten Years of Collecting and Publishing the Records of the Negro," the article surveyed Woodson's work. He traced the founding of the Association and the Journal. He described how the Journal was received by the reading public and wrote that what they saw was "a well-printed scientific magazine, presenting scholarly current articles and valuable documents giving facts scarcely known."21 The Journal's publication and subsequent appeal

20Ibid., p. 544.

convinced the public, according to Woodson, that "the need of the hour was not to write books from the scant material available, but to collect and preserve sufficient data... on the Negro to enable scientifically trained men to produce treatises based upon the whole truth."  

Woodson told of the discouraging obstacles he encountered in raising the initial funds for the Association's work and for printing the Journal. In 1916 he wrote two hundred letters to various philanthropists and received fourteen dollars as a result.  

Woodson told of Rosenwald's initial interest in the Journal and how he became the first large supporter, a role that he continued until the 1930s when a controversy arose between Woodson and the administrators of the Rosenwald fund.  

Concerning finances, in general, Woodson related that he had to pay, from his own pocket, most of the four hundred dollar debt that was incurred in bringing out the early issues of the Journal. Furthermore, in the first three years of the operation the

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.; Edwin R. Embre to C. G. Woodson, May 23, 1932, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.

Director had to make up deficits of from twelve hundred to fifteen hundred dollars per year. Woodson wrote that in 1925, he was still paying interest on some of the money borrowed in the early years.

In addition to Rosenwald's contribution, the Director named others who had aided the Association substantially. These included the three-time President of the organization, Robert E. Park, as well as Harold H. Swift, Jacob H. Schiff, and others named earlier. With these contributions, the money from the Carnegie Foundation, the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund, and lesser amounts from many small contributors, the Association had operated on an income of around twenty thousand dollars per year between 1921 and 1926.

Woodson also detailed the work of his staff, which had been able to publish several documentary studies and monographs as a result of the increased income. A researcher in the archives of Seville, Spain, Irene S. Wright, had accumulated a considerable number of original sources dealing with blacks in relation to the Spanish

\[25\text{Ibid.}\]

\[26\text{Ibid.}\]
empire. Woodson and several researchers had acquired sufficient documentary materials to produce the large volume composed of letters written by Negroes before and during the Civil War; and they had produced the statistical studies on *Free Negro Owners of Slaves* along with *Free Negro Heads of Families*. A. A. Taylor had produced two studies on the role of the Negro in Reconstruction. Both of Taylor's works were published in the *Journal* before being placed in separate volumes for sale individually. Woodson had also published his two statistical studies in the *Journal* before having them bound in pamphlet form and sold as separate works. In so doing he was able to get a larger reading audience for the publications as well as increase his subscription lists for the *Journal*. This method of publication also increased sales for the Associated Publishers.

According to Woodson, many libraries with white patrons subscribed to the *Journal* and purchased volumes from the Associated Publishers. Southern white university professors had indicated an interest in the Association by

---

attending its annual sessions and subscribing to its publications. Thus a nationwide interest had been accruing in the area of Negro history. Nearly all of the Negro schools, libraries, and even some businesses subscribed to the Journal and most bought the Association's other publications.\(^{28}\) Since the Association served as a reference center, many people called upon Woodson and his limited staff for free help in preparing lessons, manuscripts, and the like. The Association was able to render this service because it had collected a large number of documentary sources and rare books.\(^{29}\)

Woodson collected many, many different kinds of materials. If all of his other scholarly contributions were placed aside, the over five thousand items that he amassed and later turned over to the Library of Congress for the use of others, would mark him for distinction.\(^{30}\) When most historians were writing elitist history, concentrating their interpretation on the words and acts of

---

\(^{28}\)Woodson, "Ten Years of Collecting and Publishing," p. 604.

\(^{29}\)Ibid., p. 605.

leaders, Woodson was collecting records of the masses. Most of the letters, diaries, and manuscript materials that he collected were published in the Journal prior to being handed over to the Library of Congress. Beginning in 1920 and continuing for several years Woodson added a section to the Journal which he called "Undistinguished Negroes." These selections carried letters from lesser known persons to each other, to persons in the leadership class, and to Woodson. Some contained information about living conditions in the South; others were in answer to advertisements for workers in the North and gave insight into literacy among the black masses. One of the most remarkable items in his collection is a Diary beginning in the year 1794, kept by a Negro family.

It is probable that Woodson's collection is unique in providing material on the thinking of ordinary Negroes. The collection, however, is not restricted to unknown blacks alone. There are numerous letters to Woodson from people of importance. For instance, soon after James Ford

---


32 Ibid.
Rhodes published his volume, *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850 to the Final Restoration of Home Rule at the South in 1877*, John R. Lynch, former Congressman from Mississippi, took offense at some of Rhodes' insinuations concerning the role of blacks in Reconstruction. He wrote Woodson to that effect. Woodson and a Cleveland, Ohio, barber, George A. Meyers, who served as an intermediary in the controversy, corresponded. Lynch wrote Meyers; Rhodes dealt with Meyers; and both wrote Woodson. A lengthy rebuttal ensued—all of which was printed in the *Journal*. The original letters from Meyers, from Rhodes, and from Lynch are all in the Woodson collection.\(^{33}\)

Thomas E. Miller, Congressman from South Carolina during Reconstruction, corresponded with Woodson on the role of blacks in his state during the Civil War and Reconstruction about a paper Miller had read at the tenth annual Meeting of the Association. His correspondence is in the

Collection.

Lynch wrote Woodson over a period of twelve years and although the letters are of little importance for the facts they contain, they do give us insights into the personality of the ex-Congressman. One of the most touching letters in Woodson’s collection comes from Lynch when he wrote that he was then in his ninety-third year and could no longer see to read. He was, therefore, cancelling his subscription with regret.  

There is a letter from Booker T. Washington’s third wife, Margaret, to Woodson telling him of her interest in Negro history and advising him that one of her club groups had begun to study the subject.  

Woodson seemed to have kept a close interest in Tuskegee Institute. He may have done this in the early years because he thought that contacts could be made with the philanthropists through Principal Robert R. Moton,

---


35 Margaret M. Washington to C. G. Woodson, August 24, 1920; Ibid.
successor to Booker T. Washington. Woodson and Moton corresponded through the years, and Moton tried to aid Woodson in obtaining money from the George Foster Peabody Fund.\textsuperscript{36} It may have been at Moton's suggestion that Woodson placed Peabody and the other philanthropists on his Executive Council in the first place.

Woodson offered Moton a seat on the Executive Council in 1917, but the Principal declined, citing as his reason the large amount of work at Tuskegee.\textsuperscript{37} In 1926 when Woodson was awarded the Spingarn medal, Moton wrote him a warm note of congratulations. He told the versatile Woodson that "the recognition which has come to your work is quite timely, and I trust that it will encourage you in what you are doing."\textsuperscript{38} Woodson replied that Moton's kind words would cheer him "on his way."\textsuperscript{39}

Woodson corresponded with Moton as well as with other school and college heads, attempting to instill an

\textsuperscript{36}Robert Russa Moton to George Foster Peabody, May 28, 1918 (Copy); Ibid.

\textsuperscript{37}Moton to Woodson, May 17, 1917; Ibid.

\textsuperscript{38}Moton to Woodson, October 18, 1926; Ibid.

\textsuperscript{39}C. G. Woodson letter to R. R. Moton, October 23, 1926; Ibid.
interest in them toward the support of his organization. He would usually write one form letter, each addressed separately, in which he would make a plea for members of an institution--students and faculty--to attend his yearly historical meetings. When he published new books, he would send copies to the leadership of these institutions asking that they examine the contents and place their orders. For instance, in 1925, he wrote Moton several letters of this sort and it is assumed he corresponded with others at the same time.

He contacted Moton regarding the "forthcoming Decennial," which was the celebration of the tenth year of operation for the Association. The Director requested Moton's presence at this meeting along with his students and faculty.40 He also wrote to A. H. Holsey, then a Tuskegee student, inviting him to participate in the program.41 In this case it is doubtful that Woodson meant to ask a student to participate, but was instead only sending a general form letter to those individuals on his

40 Woodson to Moton, August 28, 1925, Woodson Papers, Carnegie Library, Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama.

41 C. G. Woodson to R. A. Halsey, June 26, 1925; Ibid.
subscription list, and this young man happened to be among the subscribers.

When Woodson was compiling material for The Mind of the Negro, he wrote Moton, as he must have also contacted other prominent Negroes, asking for letters that were written by blacks before the Civil War. Woodson wrote that "without such historical evidence the world will have little appreciation of what the Negro actually was. . . . A letter of any sort is valuable . . . whether it treats of business, friendship, condolence, or love."42 This method of obtaining source material in the area of Negro history is an interesting revelation of the Director's methods of research. The conclusion that this was largely done through a form-letter approach is supported by Moton's receipt of two identical letters, neither of which contained any personal message to the Tuskegee Principal.43

In 1927 Woodson established an extension division at the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. This division, known as the Home Study Department, was another of Woodson's singular attempts to aid Negro people

42 Woodson to Moton, July 22, 1925; Ibid.
in pursuing their history. So many requests for information were coming into the office from individuals and from the branches that Woodson decided to begin the department. He probably drew on his own experience with correspondence courses at the University of Chicago in instituting the courses. His promotional literature advertised that "Instruction by correspondence has become well established in America." 44

The courses cost twenty dollars for one, thirty-five for two, and fifty-two for three, with a five dollar registration fee required in addition at enrollment. The instructional staff, according to Woodson's advertisements, consisted of "distinguished scholars like Charles H. Wesley, Dr. Alain Locke, . . . Mr. E. Franklin Frazier, Mr. Charles S. Johnson . . . and Dr. Carter G. Woodson." 45 In reality the few students who enrolled dealt directly with Woodson, and the "distinguished scholars" were not involved. They had nothing to do with the curriculum offered and


directed no students in their studies. An elaborate curriculum was worked out by the Director and sent to the branches. This same program was published in the Journal. It is evident that Woodson had hopes of inaugurating a university-type curriculum which would establish the Association as an educational institution. Unfortunately, the enrollment was minimal, confined mostly to the branches, and the Department of Home Study never lived up to the Director's expectations.

The summer of 1927 was productive and busier than usual for Woodson. He was chosen, along with Charles S. Johnson and Monroe N. Work, to serve on an advisory committee for the Social Science Research Council. The Council met at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire in August, but much paperwork and many proposals for studies in addition to fellowships were handled by members prior to the meeting. Woodson was the secretary of his Committee. This office took much of his time.

46 Wesley interview, June 25, 1970.


That summer several recognized black scholars as well as younger ones requested fellowships from the SSRC for further study and research. Among them was Alain Locke, who received money for a substantial study of African art and culture.\textsuperscript{49} Charles H. Wesley requested funds to begin a study of Negro labor, but was turned down because the Council had been supporting a similar project carried on by Sterling Spiro.\textsuperscript{50} Luther P. Jackson requested a "junior fellowship" to pursue further study at the University of Chicago, and a grant was made to him for this purpose.\textsuperscript{51} Woodson had recommended that the Committee aid Jackson with a fellowship and wrote a personal letter stating his feelings on this matter to the Council.\textsuperscript{52} A plan for intelligence studies of Negro children submitted by R. R. Moton was approved. Also, Charles S. Johnson was given funds for a preliminary study to develop a system for 

\textsuperscript{49} Alain Locke to the Social Science Research Council, June 3, 1927, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.  

\textsuperscript{50} Charles H. Wesley to the Social Science Research Council, June 28, 1927; \textit{Ibid.}; "Report of the Committee on Interracial Relations (n.d.), n.p.; \textit{Ibid.}  

\textsuperscript{51} Luther P. Jackson to Committee on Problems and Policy, Social Science Research Council, June 10, 1927; \textit{Ibid.}  

\textsuperscript{52} C. G. Woodson to Social Science Research Council, August 24, 1927; \textit{Ibid.}
measuring interracial attitudes. These approvals were among the seven final recommendations made by the Committee and adopted by the Council. Woodson received from the Council a four-thousand dollar subsidy for aid in collecting manuscripts and rare books on the Negro for his collection at the Library of Congress.53

In addition to his work with the Council that summer, Woodson spent a month in Alabama studying the social and economic conditions of the blacks in that state.54 He was in the first stages of preparation for a study which would eventually be titled The Rural Negro. Woodson had hired a new assistant in 1927, Lorenzo J. Greene, who was to aid him in this research, and he had sponsored another graduate student in the person of C. Glenn Carrington, who was studying anthropology in the Harvard graduate school.

The Journal was being circulated to a large number of institutions and individuals. The Association was becoming a well known and respected institution. The

53"Final Report of the Chairman of the Committee on Interracial Relations" (n.d.), n.p.; Ibid.

Annual Meetings were attracting top scholars of both races. The Harlem Renaissance was helping to increase interest in Negro literature. The Association and its Director were enjoying the benefits of this upsurge in public attention. These were the peak years for Woodson and his projects, he had sufficient money for operation, and a growing coterie of young followers were aiding the Director insofar as it was possible to do so on his terms.
CHAPTER VII

THE CONTROVERSIAL YEARS

While Woodson was formulating new programs and policies to be carried on through the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, he still maintained his active leadership of, and interest in, the *Journal of Negro History*. He continued to be the sole judge of all articles that were placed therein, and followed the same policy of reviewing the majority of books. The documents section, which has provided much valuable assistance to scholars in the field, slowly disappeared from the *Journal* after 1929. This was primarily due to the cost of reproducing them as well as the expenditures necessary to locate the materials.

A tight budget was always a problem for Woodson as he tried to carry out the Association's multifarious programs. He calculated that in the first twenty-five years of operation, counting all monies received, the Association's average budget was about thirteen thousand five
hundred dollars per year.¹ This amount included the years in which the Association received relatively large foundation grants. One of the lingering resentments that Woodson fostered dealt with the sizable grants given to other educational societies and institutions while he had such difficulty obtaining even minimal funds for his research projects. The fact that the foundations continued to encourage Woodson to align his organization with a Negro college or university rankled him, while he remained adamant in his "go-it-alone" policy.²

Beginning about 1930, when the nation was beset with economic problems, Woodson encountered his own problems with the philanthropists. He had continued to receive personal support from Julius Rosenwald for the Journal but had not been successful in soliciting support from the Rosenwald Foundation, with the exception of twenty-five hundred dollars given in 1925.³ Rosenwald, according to


³R. Embree to C. G. Woodson, March 30, 1925, Rosenwald Paper, Fisk University.
Woodson, did not believe in the "printer's ink method of helping the Negro." In addition to the sizable grants made to the Association through the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund and the Carnegie Fund, Woodson had received an appropriation of thirty-seven thousand five hundred dollars from Leonard Outhwaite. This generous grant was used to support the research activities underway in the mid-20s and helped subsidize the young assistants that the Association aided in graduate studies. In 1929 and again in 1930 the Rockefeller Foundation made substantial grants to the Association in the amounts of ten thousand dollars and a further appropriation of twenty-two thousand five hundred over a five year period. The latter grant was made on the condition that it be matched dollar for dollar.

It was partly on account of the twenty-two thousand five hundred grant and its conditions that Woodson lost the support of the foundations. He was anxious to raise the

---


5 Ibid., pp. 424-25; H. M. Gillette to Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, August 7, 1929, Woodson Papers, ASNLH; Edmund E. Day to ASNLH, August 13, 1930, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.
matching amounts as specified by the Rockefeller Foundation. He sent a letter to the Rosenwald Fund in which he requested support for a study on the Free Negro in 1860 that would complement his earlier findings on Free Negro Heads of Families in 1830. The Director also asked for a twenty-one thousand dollar grant to develop his Home Study Department.  

Edwin R. Embree, former Berea classmate of Woodson, answered for the Fund and advised Woodson that "it seems a little like beating around the bush for one foundation to match the conditional gift of another. . . ." But the basis of the refusal was buried in his statement that "... the Rockefeller group is quite as much committed to the general idea of building up such research under strong University auspices as we are."  

In April, 1930, Sydnor Walker, of the Rockefeller Fund, wrote Embree regarding the Rockefeller Foundation's attitude toward Woodson and his independent policies.

6C. G. Woodson to E. R. Embree, March 18, 1930, Rosenwald Collection, Fisk University.

7Ibid.

8Ibid.
Walker stated that originally the Foundation had decided to make no more grants to Woodson and his Association because it was a one-man organization. However, as a result of an appeal from Woodson, the Foundation was waiving the stipulation that the Association's research program become part of a university.

This decision was made, Walker wrote, for two reasons:

If Mr. Woodson were a different type of man, it would seem simpler to work out an affiliation at the present time, but everyone appears to agree that neither Howard nor Fiske [sic] nor Atlanta University is carrying graduate work which would enrich the research program of the Association. Mr. Woodson probably is not the individual to subordinate his interests to those of a university and would be reluctant to have all of the benefits flowing from and not to him.9

Walker emphatically stated that while the Rockefeller Foundation had not given up its contention that university affiliation was desirable, for the time being, Woodson was doing the universities a service. Walker then invited the Rosenwald Fund to join in and match its funds.10

Two days after Walker wrote Embree, Woodson again

9Sydnor Walker to E. R. Embree, April 24, 1930, Ibid.
10Ibid.
approached the Rosenwald Fund. In a long letter he spelled out all the programs carried on under the auspices of the Association. He told Embree by not matching the Rockefeller grant that the Rosenwald Fund was defeating its own purpose of aiding Negro education. Woodson informed Embree that he had received word from the Rockefeller Foundation that it would not press for affiliation with a university at that time, but believed that in five years time it should be done. Woodson thought it would be longer than that before any Negro college was sufficiently developed to offer the kind of research program that was afforded through his Association. Perhaps, the Director wrote, this would be possible "by 1950." Whenever affiliation came, he conceded, "I am willing to cooperate with all concerned in bringing this to pass."\(^{11}\)

Woodson outlined his objections to aligning with a college at that time by pointing out that an affiliation with one school would not profit the others. He told how the Association had paid for the training of some men who were then serving as heads of departments at various

\(^{11}\)C. G. Woodson to E. R. Embree, April 26, 1930, \(\text{Ibid.}\).
schools. Others were making contributions as teachers. Both Fisk and Hampton Institute had offered him part-time lecture work if he would bring the Association to their schools. He had declined. One of his trainees, A. A. Taylor, was then head of the history department at Fisk; another young man—Lorenzo Greene—was then in training with Woodson and soon would go out to make his place in the world bringing his rich experiences at the Association with him.\textsuperscript{12}

When it came to pleading his cause, Woodson was not above stretching the truth a bit to serve his purposes. For instance, he implied that the Association had paid the tuition expenses of Wesley at Harvard. Wesley stated this was not true. Furthermore, he wrote that "the Association has just assisted an instructor of Howard University in the development of his dissertation which we have published.\textsuperscript{13} He had reference again to Wesley, whose dissertation was not published through either the Association or the Associated Publishers.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{14}Wesley interview, March 25, 1971.
Embree answered Woodson's final request in July of 1930 in a negative reply. He told the Director that his appeal had been carefully considered but due to the limited scope of activities that the Fund could sponsor it was impossible to help the Association at that time. Embree hoped that Woodson would understand that "no institution can do all of the good things that are called to its attention."  

Woodson did not understand. He wrote Embree, "I regret very much that the Fund does not see its way clear to make an appropriation to support the Association. . . . I am sure that you will live long enough to regret it also."  

He then elaborated on the numerous small contributions that had helped to support the Association. It was not necessary to obtain all the matching funds from one source, he said, "although I have not as yet begun to appeal to individuals."  

It was at this point that Woodson turned, by and

---

15 E. R. Embree to C. G. Woodson, July 16, 1930, Rosenwald Collection, Fisk University.

16 C. G. Woodson to E. R. Embree, July 19, 1930, ibid.

17 ibid.
large, from whites to his own people and began to solicit the nickel-and-dime support that kept the organization in operation throughout the rest of his life. For some reason known only to him, Woodson blamed Thomas Jesse Jones, former Council member and early supporter, for the loss of foundation support. Woodson believed that Jones had personally acted against him. If Jones did so, there is no record of it. The correspondence between Embree and Walker indicates that the foundations had their own misgivings without outside interference.\(^1\) 

Woodson wrote in apparent bitterness toward the foundations that he "began to organize the Negroes of the country to obtain from them what the interracialists had succeeded in diverting from this effort."\(^2\) Financial support from blacks was not easily secured, especially during the Depression, and it was necessary for Woodson to disclose "the underhand [sic] methods operating against the publication of the whole truth. . . . "\(^3\) This was a reference to Jones and what Woodson believed he had done to the

\(^{1}\) *Ibid.*


\(^{3}\) *Ibid.*
Association. Because Woodson so often rushed to judgments, and in this case was vehement in his attitude toward Jones, thus making racial slurs, DuBois drew the conclusion that Woodson developed a "deep-seated dislike, if not hatred for the white people. . . ." 21

Woodson did not cease his efforts to obtain foundation support even though he did turn more and more to the Negro people for contributions. In 1931, after his hostile letter to Embree the year before, he wrote again to the Rosenwald Fund for help in matching the Rockefeller grant. Embree this time was able to find twenty-five hundred dollars that could be appropriated and thus aided the Association for the last time. 22 In 1936 the final break occurred between the two college classmates when Embree wrote to Woodson resigning from the position he had accepted two years previously on the Association's Executive Council. He told Woodson that he had found it impossible to attend the Council meetings and "since I am otherwise unable to be of constructive service I resign . . . . I


22 C. G. Woodson to E. R. Embree, August 12, 1931, Rosenwald Collection; E. R. Embree to C. G. Woodson, April 14, 1931, Rosenwald Collection, Fisk University.
am unwilling to appear as a member of an organization unless I am able to do something of value for it. . . ."

Although Woodson understood this statement to imply that Embree wished to control the Association, he wrote a warm letter in return in which he expressed regret over Embree's decision. The next day the Director sent Embree copies of his latest book, The African Background Outlined, and wrote his real feelings regarding the resignation. He wrote sharply:

"I am not sure that it will interest you because your philosophy with respect to the uplift of the Negro is different from mine. You believe in helping the Negro do what he is told to do or what you want him to do. I am trying to help the Negro help himself."

He concluded with the prophecy that "The verdict of history is with me and against you. You may live long enough to see the error of your way."

There is merit in Woodson's attitude toward the foundations' insistence upon his joining with a university.

---

23E. R. Embree to C. G. Woodson, August 5, 1936, Ibid.

24C. G. Woodson to E. R. Embree, April 7, 1936 and April 8, 1936, Ibid.

25Ibid.
He had struggled, almost alone against the world, for years with very little support from the public at large or the university community. This was with the exception of certain young professors who had worked with him on an individual basis. To Woodson being forced to give up control of what had become his sole reason for living was unthinkable. The foundations were using their money as leverage to force him to move in their chosen paths for his research work and with his *Journal of Negro History*. A man of Woodson's character would conclude that they were operating in at best an insensitive manner, and at worst, that they were whites ordering the Negro around as in slavery.

Woodson's weakness in dealing with the whites was at the same time his virtue with Negroes. He did not know how to be politic and exercise the tact that might have kept him in control of his organization and still obtain the necessary money. He wrote and said what he thought, even though it often hurt his cause. DuBois said of him in this respect, "Woodson did not prove to be the ideal recipient of philanthropy... He was not a follower of Booker T. Washington and had neither the humility nor the finesse of social uplifters." DuBois captured another
facet of Woodson's personality when he wrote, "His independence of thought and action was exaggerated; he went out to meet opposition before it arose. . . ." This statement, written as it was on Woodson's death, was perhaps derived from the several conflicts in which Woodson was involved over his lifetime. Having to work, struggle, and sacrifice as he did in order first to make his own way, and later to establish his organization and publications, Woodson became almost obsessive in anticipating difficulties. This obsession extended itself to his personal relationships where he sensed disloyalty in others where it was non-existent.

In 1928 Woodson hired Lorenzo J. Greene, a graduate student at Columbia University who held the Master's degree from Howard. Greene and his mentor, Charles H. Wesley, were put to work on a Negro church study, the research for which was supported by the Institute for Social and Religious Research of New York. Greene was sent to Baltimore to study the urban church. Wesley, under whose


27Wesley interview, March 25, 1971; Lorenzo J. Greene, "As I remember Dr. Woodson," Paper read before the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, October 9, 1970. Unpublished manuscript courtesy of the author.
supervision Greene was working, was placed in the Virginia rural areas to study their operation. At the time he undertook this study Wesley was pastor of an AME church in Washington, D. C. as well as a professor at Howard University. Woodson had tried to pressure Wesley into resigning his pastorate and his position at the university in order to devote full-time work to the survey. In addition, Woodson did not believe that Wesley could function as an objective observer while so closely tied to the AME church. Wesley, the father of two children, could hardly afford the sacrifices of the unmarried Director and declined to do either. 28

The survey got underway, and all went well until June of 1928 when Wesley was chosen by his church to be a presiding elder. This proved too much for Woodson, who sensed disloyalty in Wesley for his having accepted an elevated position in the AME church when he knew Woodson was opposed to his pastorate. Woodson said not a word to Wesley, but instead telegraphed the funding agency in New York to withdraw the Association from the project. Wesley learned of this action on the Director's part through the

Council of Social and Religious Research, which then approached him to carry on the project directly with them. He declined because he "had no desire to continue the work under a white organization." 29

Woodson's sometimes precipitous actions and lack of sensitivity toward those who worked for him was again exhibited when he summarily fired Greene. According to Greene:

I left the office at seven-thirty having spent the last hour in a pleasant conversation with Dr. Woodson. Arriving home I found a letter awaiting me from the Association. . . . I read "Mr. Greene; This is to inform you that the Association is terminating your services, effective as of today." 30

A phone call from the Director the next day informed the amazed young employee that the Association was without funds. Greene was fired on other occasions, but always managed to come back to work for he realized that the cause was an important one. 31 Wesley, too, accepted Woodson's idiosyncrasies and continued to labor in the work of the Association. 32

---

29 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
not to himself but to his cause. Greene remembered that, "Many admired Woodson, but few could love him ... on several occasions he cruelly hurt me, I remained faithful to him but only because of the movement he personified." 33

However difficult Woodson was to work for, no one could criticize him for lack of performance. He worked hard; he maintained long hours; and there was no part of the work for which he was too dignified. Besides editing the Journal, writing books, supervising research, turning out articles, and running a publishing company, Woodson also did manual and physical labor on the Association premises. According to Greene, "He drove himself mercilessly, regularly working sixteen to eighteen hours a day." 34 He told Greene that his work in the coal mines had given him the strength to carry on; but few would doubt that a vision for the future combined with a tremendous drive to provide this strength. No work was too menial for the Director to undertake in keeping his organization going. He continued to do the jobs that had characterized the early days when the Association was struggling to live.

33 Greene, "As I Remember," p. 22.
34 Ibid.
He wrapped books, often carried his own mail to the post office (for exercise), and cooked his own meals. He also cleaned his own quarters and those downstairs of the Association and publishing company. Greene recalled that during his employment, "not infrequently on a morning I encountered him attired in pajamas and a shabby bathrobe, broom and dustpan, or mop and pail in hand, cleaning the office."\(^{35}\) One morning the research assistant arrived to find the Director "down on his hands and knees oiling the floors, and, of all things, the floor of my office which adjoined his."\(^{36}\) Greene, embarrassed and ashamed at seeing him do such lowly work, immediately offered to take the Director's place and finish the job. Woodson gruffly told the young man, "Mr. Greene, I did not hire you to be a janitor."\(^{37}\)

Another young associate of Woodson's in the early 30s recalled Woodson's "Spartan-like" existence.\(^{38}\) Rayford Logan, a graduate student at Harvard in 1932, was

\(^{35}\) Ibid.

\(^{36}\) Ibid.

\(^{37}\) Woodson, quoted ibid.

approached by the Director to serve as his assistant. He accepted the opportunity to work with the historian, staying with him until the fall of 1933. Both Logan and Greene recalled Woodson's eating habits. His breakfasts, according to Greene, "were hearty."\(^{39}\) By the time Logan came, Woodson's stomach problems had necessitated his taking fruit juice for breakfast, a concession to his elimination problems as well as to his stomach condition.\(^{40}\) The evening meal, usually taken at the Phillis Wheatley YMCA on the corner, was a hearty one.\(^{41}\)

By the time Greene and Logan worked with Woodson, he was a confirmed bachelor. In 1930 he was fifty-five years old and married, if such is possible, to his work. Several individual accounts of Woodson's romantic episodes indicate that he had once been in love with a woman and she had jilted him to marry someone else. Greene recalled that for a time he showed an interest in a widow from West

\(^{39}\) Greene, "As I Remember," p. 27.


Virginia but nothing came of the relationship. Earlier, during Daly's period with the Association, Woodson had exhibited an interest in his secretary, Alethe Smith. At one time he invited her to attend a ballgame with him. She turned him down because, in those days, women were not much informed nor interested in sporting events.

Logan recalled that Woodson, in a rare moment of confidence, told him that during one of his frequent summer vacations in Atlantic City, he saw a woman who looked familiar to him. He approached the lady in the time-honored manner by asking her if he had met her somewhere before. "'Indeed you have!' answered the woman, "'you once proposed to me.'" Whether this was the young lady whom Woodson visited several times in Chicago is not known. But he did have a romantic interest there until he discovered that he was not the lady's only suitor. He was in Chicago, intent on visiting the young woman and was informed one night that she had pressing family plans that precluded seeing him. In the fashion of a man in love, Woodson

---

42 Greene, "As I Remember," p. 29.

43 Daly interview.

walked by her house consoling himself for not being with her. To his surprise and consternation, mirrored in the window was not only the young woman but another man in her embrace. Woodson caught the next train to Washington.\textsuperscript{45}

It is doubtful that Woodson could have divided himself between his obsession for his cause and the demands of a wife and family. Possibly he knew this better than anyone else because he frequently alluded to being wedded to his work.\textsuperscript{46} He never allowed himself to become familiar with those who worked for him, always keeping a veiled distance in relationships. He referred to Taylor, Greene, Logan, Wesley, Luther P. Jackson, and others as "his boys," but the familiarities ran in only one direction--his.\textsuperscript{47}

He spent the summers of 1932, 1933, 1935 and 1937 in Paris. During these years he was obtaining the last of the foundations' financial support for the Association. It is probable that Woodson was as penurious with his own limited earnings as he was with those of the Association.

\textsuperscript{45} Wesley interview, March 25, 1971

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.; Greene, "As I Remember," p. 28.

He spent practically no money for personal pleasure except for a brief summer vacation in the years he was able to get away from his work. Even in Paris Woodson combined pleasure with work and spent many hours burrowed in the library seeking information on the Negro abroad. He also bought a number of rare books bearing on the Negro in Europe, African materials, and other related volumes which would increase his collection and aid him in his research.  

How his sensitive stomach reacted to the rich French food is not known. But he considered eating well one of the major attractions of his trips. He seems to have indulged himself, for at least once he visited a physician, Docteur D. Bines, for a prescription to offset his discomfort. In the summer of 1935, Charles H. Thompson, editor of the Journal of Negro Education, and his wife were in Paris at the same time as Woodson. Both the Thompsons and Woodson happened to be walking near the Place de la Concorde when they encountered one another. They walked together briefly and upon reaching the beautiful


49 Prescription signed by Dr. Bines (n.d.), Ibid.
marble statues located in the Place de la Concorde, Woodson embarked on a lesson in history for his companions. When he finished his discourse, he invited the Thompsons to join him at dinner the following Sunday.

As Thompson recalled the dinner, it was of "seven or more courses" with wine and liqueur also provided. The restaurant was an out-of-the-way place not usually on the tourist beat; yet the meal was "an epicurian delight" with the waiters providing the type of attention given to a frequent and popular guest. Thompson and his wife found a side of Woodson known to very few. He revealed a human-ness which Thompson said surprised them both. It was a "very great pleasure to learn that Dr. Woodson's asceticism was more apparent than real, and that he was a 'regular fellow' as well as a distinguished scholar."

Another indication of Woodson's interest in French cuisines were the notes that he took while eating in the cafes. One day he lunched at Le Triomphe on the Champs

---


51 Ibid.

52 Ibid.
Elysees and managed to fill two sides of a single menu with research notes in the process. On another occasion while dining at Wepler's Cafe, he reviewed a volume dealing with the Christian shame of slavery. Here was a lonely man, in beautiful Paris, eating fine food, and yet never far away from the cause to which he was devoted.

When Woodson visited Paris, he stayed in Montmartre, on the right bank, where it was cheaper to live and away from the traditional tourist hotels. When in Paris he lived in a small room on the rue Roussel, and sent his sister Bessie postcards so that she might share his experience.

Even when Woodson was away on vacation in Paris, he supervised the Association's business offices as he had done since he fired Daly. He regularly sent instructions back to his staff and expected reports in return on the progress of the work. While Logan was employed, Woodson left him in charge of the office. At other times he had

---


persons he trusted in Washington look in. The important thing was to be sure that everyone put in a full day's work.\(^55\)

Logan, too, experienced his difficulties with Woodson. These did not come until after Logan had finished his apprenticeship with the Director, but they were of such magnitude that their relationship was severed as a result. The break had its antecedents in a project that was begun before Logan came to work for Woodson.

In 1931 Anson Phelps-Stokes, head of the Fund bearing that name and Dean of the Washington Cathedral, called a conference for the purpose of beginning an Encyclopedia of the Negro. Neither Woodson nor DuBois was invited to attend the initial meeting. Several prominent blacks were, however. Among them were James Weldon Johnson, at that time a literature professor at Fisk University; Mordecai Johnson, President of Howard University; Kelly Miller, professor at Howard and an author; Benjamin Brawley, another Howard professor and author; Walter White of the NAACP; and Eugene Kinkle Jones of the National Urban

DuBois believed that he had been omitted from this first meeting because of the criticism that he had leveled against the Phelps-Stokes Report on education for Africa which, by and large, stressed the old industrial type education rather than teaching the Africans so that they might assume control over their own countries. Woodson, too, had been highly critical of the Phelps-Stokes Report, but only after he became estranged from Thomas Jesse Jones who compiled the Report. Many of the blacks at the planning meeting were acquaintances of Woodson. Brawley, Miller, and Johnson were all at one time or another affiliated with the Association. Woodson's noticeable absence, as well as that of DuBois, was discussed. Both men, along with Alain Locke, sociologist from Howard, were invited to the second meeting. DuBois and Locke attended; Woodson did not. Instead he became highly incensed that others were trying to usurp his field of study. He took the projected encyclopedia to be compiled by an outside group as a personal


57 DuBois, Editorial, Crisis, pp. 86-89.
affront. According to DuBois, who talked to Woodson hoping to convince him to join in, the Director declined for two reasons. One, he considered it a white enterprise forced on Negroes; and two, he was collecting material for his own encyclopedia.\textsuperscript{58}

The question as to whether or not Woodson was actually in the process of compiling such a project at that time is one that cannot be answered satisfactorily. He may have thought of doing such a project by using the material he had for the \textit{Journal}. He had advertised the \textit{Journal} as a "Veritable Encyclopedia of the Negro" in various quarterly issues. And he later stated that after 1921 he had proposed bringing out the \textit{Journals} through the Associated Publishers as a kind of encyclopedia. In 1926, he had been approached by the editor of the \textit{Dictionary of American Biography} to suggest names and prepare some biographical sketches on Negroes.\textsuperscript{59}

If Woodson followed his usual pattern of thinking at that time, the idea of compiling a volume of Negro


\textsuperscript{59}Allen Johnson to Carter G. Woodson, April 15, 1926, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.
biographical materials in encyclopedic form probably occurred to him then. He complied with the request and submitted several biographies to the Dictionary of American Biography, but more important he made a list of some one hundred and fifty others which he submitted. Some of the names were so obscure it is doubtful that any scholar in the field, then or now, would have known who they were, except Woodson. The editor replied in time that there was no material available on these people whom Woodson was suggesting for the Dictionary of American Biography. (What the editor did not state was that nearly one quarter of the names on Woodson's list were not Americans.)

Over the next four years Woodson contributed additional articles to the Dictionary. In addition he may have begun assembling biographical sketches on his own for the volume he hoped to compile. But examination of the evidence available, including three drawers of unpublished encyclopedia materials, leads to the conclusion that Woodson did not actively begin his encyclopedia until after the Phelps-Stokes project was proposed. However, it is certain

---

60 "Suggested List of Biographies of Negroes," Woodson Papers, ASNLH; Johnson to Woodson, May 1, 1926, Ibid.
that he already had on hand at that time large amounts of collected materials.

In August 1931, seven months after the Phelps-Stokes initial meeting, Woodson wrote Embree a touching letter in which he stated:

I am now fifty-five years old, and before I begin to decline I want to write the history of the Negro in five large volumes. . . . As I grow older . . . I have become more and more appre-hensive of the loss which may be sustained in my carrying to my grave the vast amount of information I have collected during the last generation.61

He may have had in mind competing with the encyclopedia project through the multivolume work which was never funded or written.

The summer trips to France, begun as they were after the Phelps-Stokes project was underway, suggest that the Director was using his vacation time to locate materials for his own encyclopedia. Some of his purchases in France lend support to this theory as he bought several volumes dealing with Africa, and much of his unpublished work is concerned with African tribes, nations, and

61 C. G. Woodson to E. R. Embree, August 12, 1926, Rosenwald Collection, Fisk University.
leaders.62

Another interesting feature of the encyclopedia controversy is the fact that none of Woodson's board members was even vaguely aware of his plan to compile an encyclopedia prior to the Phelps-Stokes project. Anson Phelps-Stokes wrote Edwin Embree in reply to a letter from Embree regarding Woodson's omission from the project to this effect. According to Phelps-Stokes, "Not a single member of the Conference, including the Officers of his Association, ever heard of his proposed Encyclopedia until the receipt of his letter."63

Woodson was courted by various members of the board of editors of the Encyclopedia of the Negro. John Hope, then President of the Association and a member of the Board, tried to induce the Director to join with the project. James Dillard, a white member of the Executive

62 Sales slip, Librairie Coloniale and Orientaliste, September 6, 1937, Woodson Papers, ASNLH; sales slip, Librairie Roret, Woodson Papers, ASNLH; "Encyclopedia Africana," (unpublished manuscript), Woodson Papers, ASNLH.

63 Anson Phelps-Stokes to Edwin R. Embree, January 12, 1932, Anson Phelps-Stokes Collection, Historical Archives Section, Sterling Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.
Council and longtime supporter of the Association visited the obdurate historian, as did DuBois. It was all to no avail, as Woodson would have no part in sharing someone else's work. Phelps-Stokes believed that Woodson should represent the Association in the project but, he wrote, "We all know his very strong points and all know his extreme peculiarities. The colored members of our conference have spoken of the latter even more than the white members."  

The matter was still not dropped, and efforts continued to persuade Woodson to come into the group. The Director, on the other hand, tried to convince the Editorial Board that they should turn their project over to him. Woodson wrote Anson Phelps-Stokes and DuBois to that effect in 1933. DuBois was by this time serving as editor of the encyclopedia project. He was anxious to cooperate with Woodson but not willing to give the entire work over to him; nor, of course, was Phelps-Stokes, who wrote DuBois, "Of course I agree with you that we could not possibly hand over the Negro Encyclopedia project to

---

64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
Dr. Woodson; on the other hand, we want to do everything reasonable to secure his cooperation." 66

The controversy continued over the years, although it became less heated until 1936, when Woodson's former protege, Rayford Logan, joined the Board of Editors of the Encyclopedia of the Negro. Logan was at that time a professor of history at Atlanta University and Assistant Editor of the Journal of Negro History. When Woodson learned of Logan's defection to the other camp he became enraged. He fired Logan (who was receiving no funds from the Association) by removing him from the Journal's assistant editorship. The breach between the two men was so deep and Woodson so volatile in expressing his displeasure that the other members of the Association were concerned that the organization would be crippled through internal dissension. 67

66 W. E. B. DuBois to Anson Phelps-Stokes, February 17, 1933, Phelps-Stokes Collection, Yale University; Anson Phelps-Stokes to DuBois, March 6, 1933, Ibid.

67 Rayford W. Logan to Charles H. Wesley, December 14, 1936; Charles H. Wesley to Luther P. Jackson, January 27, 1937; Luther P. Jackson to Charles H. Wesley, January 31, 1937, Charles H. Wesley Papers.
Following this initial outpour of anger, Woodson wrote three press releases to the Baltimore Afro-American, in which he chastized Logan (although not by name), DuBois, and Brawley. The most scathing and demeaning remarks were reserved for DuBois and Brawley, both of whom he accused of selling out to the whites for a few dollars. The years of strain and struggle had taken their toll on the Director, and his criticisms were so extreme that the newspaper did not print any of his releases.68

DuBois, without ever seeing any of Woodson's encyclopedia, stated the limitations he believed it would have. He stated that "we knew that one man and especially one man with a rather narrow outlook which had been forced upon him, could not write a scientific encyclopedia of sufficient breadth to satisfy the world."69

The last years of the historian's life were devoted in large measure to gathering material for his encyclopedia. In make-up it was to be topical, biographical, and international. The facts that he amassed concerning the African tribes are probably not matched anywhere today.

68 Copies of releases, Wesley Papers.

Much of the biographical material that he compiled was published in other forms but retained in his files for the encyclopedia. He intended to include material on both blacks and whites. Not only did he research and write sketches on such whites as John Brown, William Lloyd Garrison, Elijah Lovejoy, and other abolitionists, but he also requested articles from contributors on John G. Whittier, John Ruskin, and Thomas Carlyle. 70

Woodson wrote, in addition, a sketch of Thomas Jesse Jones that would not have been published by any editor, had not the author also been the editor. It was this predilection to write what he thought on subjects that he chose, a characteristic DuBois understood, that is the limitation of the entire work. A brief illustration of another weakness is the peculiar choices that Woodson exercised in non-controversial subjects. He wrote a selection on Abbeville, South Carolina in his "A" section. The sketch contains the location of Abbeville within the State, the size of its population, and a description of the town. However, Abbeville is the only city, town, or hamlet that

70 "Encyclopedia Africana"; C. G. Woodson to Osborn Smallwood, January 1, 1950, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.
he included under "A." He omitted Atlanta, Georgia, which is certainly more pertinent to such an encyclopedia, and by size alone more important. He omitted Abbeville, Louisiana, and so on.\footnote{71}{Woodson to Smallwood, \textit{Ibid.}}

One method Woodson used to obtain material for this project was to take reprints of the \textit{Journal of Negro History}, scratch out all headings and footnotes and place the article in its appropriate spot in the files. He did this with Henry Noble Sherwood's article, "The Formation of the American Colonization Society," excerpted from Volume II of the \textit{Journal}. To this particular article Woodson added bibliographical citations at the bottom of the last page in his own handwriting, obviously to be included upon publication.\footnote{72}{\textit{Ibid.}}

In other instances Woodson wrote articles himself for inclusion, based, of course, on what he thought pertinent to the encyclopedia. One article that he wrote, entitled "Co-Education of the Races in America," begins:

Co-education of the races in America is still a problem. Race hate resulting from a false theory of superiority and inferiority of races and the unfortunate experiences of the enslavement and
exploitation of the blacks by the whites has kept the races apart.\textsuperscript{73}

However true this statement may have been, it is hardly an example of the scientific history that Woodson insisted he was producing. The first sentence is in no way a suitable beginning for an encyclopedia article. The balance of the sketch briefly describes segregation in the schools beginning with the English settlers and follows with an attack on the southern school systems.\textsuperscript{74} It is understandable that Woodson felt deep hostility toward a system that created unfair and unequal learning situations, but he had assumed the role of propagandist and lost the mantle of the scholar in the process of compiling his encyclopedia. DuBois best expressed this disintegration when he wrote, "Woodson illustrates what race prejudice can do to a human soul and also what it is powerless to prevent."\textsuperscript{75}

In 1949, after years of writing, compiling, and editing materials for this project Woodson decided to establish a board of editors for his encyclopedia. The first

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.

meeting was held at Association headquarters on June 18 of that year. Members in attendance were Dorothy B. Porter, Sadie St. Clair, Mercer Cook, Ambrose Culiver, Benjamin Quarles, Lorenzo Greene, and the Director. It is doubtful that Benjamin Quarles realized the amount of work Woodson already had done when he proposed that the Board endeavor to cover every area of contributions by blacks. The minutes of the meeting read as if it was about to start the work from the beginning. An excerpt from the minutes states: "All material included shall be written from a scientific approach. All articles are to be comprehensive, clear, readable, uniform in style and documented."

Later that month, Woodson contacted other members of the editorial board who had been selected at the initial meeting. These included Charles H. Wesley and John Hope Franklin. Had this particular board worked together with

76 "Minutes of the Meeting of the Editorial Board," Woodson Papers, ASNLH.

77 Ibid.

the Director over a period of time, the project might have eventually reached publication with a valuable contribution to the field of Negro history. But time was not on their side: the Director died less than a year after he had finally reached out to others for aid in bringing together his long delayed project.

The final innovation that Woodson gave to the Association came in the form of The Negro History Bulletin established in October, 1937. The Bulletin was an outgrowth of Negro History Week, whose popularizing called for more material to be aimed at the elementary and secondary schools. It was published nine times a year, the dates of publication coinciding with the school year. In its early stages it more closely resembled a "Weekly Reader" type of paper than a magazine, but eventually it grew to a larger number of pages and reached a wider audience. It was in the Bulletin that Woodson printed many of the biographical sketches he was preparing for his encyclopedia. In fact he wrote nearly everything in the Bulletin. The format contained a lead article devoted to a particular person or event in Negro history. If there was some

function to be sponsored by the Association, including Negro History Week or the Annual Meetings, a reference was always made to it in a strategic spot. In the first several years persons of importance who were born in each month that the *Bulletin* was published were written up as "Persons To Be Remembered" in that particular month. The heading was sometimes changed to read "Persons and Achievements" if there were events to be recalled.\(^{80}\)

For instance, in January, 1938, eight people of importance were honored and three places singled out for mention. All three ended up in the files of the encyclopedia in addition to the people.\(^{81}\) Of the eight persons chosen for January, seven were white. The only black selected was Lott Carey, a minister. Since the selections were mainly based on those who celebrated birthdays within the particular month, it was sometimes difficult to find blacks for inclusion because so few in the days of slavery knew when they were born. In Lott Carey's case no

\(^{80}\) *Negro History Bulletin, I-XII* (1937-1949), *passim*.

birthdate was given, but he had sailed for Africa on January 23, 1821. 82

The biographical sketches were written in simple language with short sentences so that they could be easily read by children. As an example Woodson wrote a brief description of Benjamin Lundy, one of the whites born in January:

Benjamin Lundy was born in Sussex County, New Jersey . . . the only child of Joseph and Eliza (Shotwell) Lundy. They were Quakers, or friends. Benjamin Lundy had to labor hard as a youth and received only a limited training in school. He educated himself. . . . 83

The Bulletin also contained a section on books which was aimed primarily at children. This made Woodson's workload increasingly heavy, since he was still reading and reviewing the majority of the books for the Journal. However, the Bulletin served as an excellent source of publicity for the children's books published by the Associated Publishers and reviewed in the Bulletin by the President of the Company.

The Negro History Bulletin was gratefully received

83Ibid., p. 4.
by teachers, school administrators, and students, especially in the segregated schools of the South. Little had previously been directed to children on the topic of Negro history or on the Negro at all. Subscriptions came in at a rapid pace. By the third year of its existence the Bulletin had reached the level of five thousand subscribers. 84 During February, when Negro History Week was observed, Woodson printed large numbers of extra issues and frequently planned a special issue which was larger than those for other months. 85

The first year in which the Bulletin was issued the emphasis was placed on the Negro in the United States with some brief mention of other countries. The second year the Bulletin dealt with special achievements on the part of Negroes, concentrating each month on one phase such as oratory, poetry, fiction, music, or art. In the third year an economic emphasis was developed by stressing Negroes as businessmen, farmers, professional men, and scientific


achievers. 86

By 1940 the appearance of the Bulletin had changed so that it more closely resembled a magazine. A different cover each month illustrated a contemporary or historical character or event. The Director also established an Editorial Board and began publishing contributions by others, thus lessening his burden to some extent. He continued writing articles monthly and compiling special materials for children, including sets of questions to be answered at the conclusion of their reading. 87 He also started publishing past issues in bound form for sale to schools and libraries as he had done for the Journal since the sixth year of its publication. Every issue of the Bulletin was well illustrated, carrying pictures of Negroes that children and even adults would never have seen otherwise.

In 1947 Woodson introduced a particularly interesting idea by carrying the stories of significant Negro families including illustrations depicting different


generations. He experimented and innovated with the Bulletin while at the same time maintaining the Journal in its original scholarly format.

Through his efforts to reach the masses of the black people in the United States, Woodson had worked out a remarkable program within the Association where every program matched something else within the organization. The pictures Woodson obtained for use in the Bulletin were blown up to larger size and sold individually. The articles in the Bulletin were transferred to the encyclopedia file. Negro History Week was advertised in the Bulletin, and during Negro History Week extra issues of the Bulletin were printed for promotional circulation, thus adding new subscribers each year. In the later years young and unpublished scholars were published in the Bulletin before moving up to the now-prestigious Journal. This gave the Bulletin a steady stream of articles and provided the younger historians and writers an opportunity to publish. All of this demonstrates what a remarkable man Woodson was and suggests that a genius at organization is not mistaken in insisting on a one-man method of operation.

---

CHAPTER VIII

EDITOR, HISTORIAN, POLEMICIST

In thirty-four years of editing the Journal of Negro History Woodson never missed an issue, even in the Association's most precarious financial moments. The first issue, brought out in January, 1915, was forwarded to a number of scholars and people interested in the history of the Negro. He received an overwhelmingly satisfactory response from the recipients, including his former professors at Harvard and the University of Chicago.

Edward Channing wrote Woodson informing the new editor:

How much I liked the looks of the magazine, the page, the print, and how good the matter of this first number seemed to me to be. . . . Enclosed is my check for five dollars which you can add to your research fund.  

Ferdinand Schevill of the University of Chicago commended

Woodson on the first issue by stating, "It bears every evidence of a scientific disposition on the part of the editor and his board."² J. Max Barber, former editor of The Negro Voice, wrote in praise of the undertaking telling Woodson that the magazine had more "class than I have seen in any of our race journals ... notwithstanding the fact that I edited a race magazine once myself. . . ."³

Newspapers reviewed the first quarterly issue and were enthusiastic about its appearance. The Trenton Evening Times carried a long review of the Journal in which the entire first number was discussed in detail. The reviewer concluded that the Journal could best serve the public through the publication of "facts, believing that facts properly set forth will speak for themselves. . . ."⁴

The New York Evening Post discussed the founding of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History and the inception of the Journal. The editor believed the "outstanding feature of the new magazine is just its appearance. . . . This is a new and stirring note in the advance

²Ferdinand Schevill to Woodson, printed Ibid.
³J. Max Barber to Woodson, printed Ibid.
⁴Trenton Evening Times (Trenton, New Jersey), January 21, 1916.
of the black man. . . ."5

In the Southern Workman, the publication of Hampton Institute, a long review called attention to the Association, the Journal, and their purposes. "Its [the Journal] purpose, it is claimed, is not to drift into discussion of the Negro problem, but to publish facts which will show to posterity, what the Negro has thought, felt and done."6

While the Southern Workman compared the Journal with the American Historical Review in types of articles and format, the AHR welcomed the new publication into the ranks of historical circles. A major publication, the AHR, reviewed the first Journal by consistently using a small "n" for Negro despite the fact that DuBois and others had campaigned actively to influence publications from so doing. The AHR considered it "an excellent beginning."7

DuBois, at that time the most noted Negro editor in the country, wrote Woodson, "Your magazine is excellent. I

5New York Evening Post (New York City), January 20, 1916.


am noting it in the current Crisis."³⁸ Thirty-four years later DuBois had not changed his opinion and wrote at the time of Woodson's death that, "the Journal was an excellent piece of work."³⁹

Rayford W. Logan, in analyzing Woodson and his editorship of the Journal, wrote that, "it is true the reviews written by Dr. Woodson and his disciples have been at times weighted in favor of the Negro, but on the whole they have revealed no more bias and less personalism than have reviews in most scholarly Journals."¹⁰ Evarts B. Greene, professor of history at Columbia University, surveyed the Journal in its seventeenth year (1932) and found that "there is nothing more thoroughly worthwhile in your special field of historical activity than the publication of the sort of documents which have appeared in your Journal. . . ."¹¹

Logan, before being separated from Woodson's employ

---


and good will, wrote an evaluation of the Journal after twenty years of publication. He found that one of the noteworthy facts about the Journal was that it was founded and sustained so soon after the Negro people's release from slavery; when, in comparison, it had taken whites one hundred-twenty years to begin a scholarly historical publication after securing their freedom from Great Britain.\(^1\) Logan divided the articles printed in the Journal in volumes I-XX into categories, finding that they dealt with Negroes on every continent; covered every historical field from political history to cultural; and included documents in four languages.\(^2\)

On the occasion of the Journal's twenty-fifth anniversary, Woodson asked Luther P. Jackson of Virginia State University to write a critical review of its progress and of its contents. Jackson was as objective in his analysis as the thorough Logan had been. He admitted that when the Journal first appeared, he "predicted then, as hundreds of others predicted, that this magazine would last for a year


\(^{2}\)*Ibid.*, pp. 399-400.
or two only."¹⁴

The caliber of the early articles, in some cases, left much to be desired, opined Jackson, especially in the areas of documentation. However, in later issues the Journal's articles came from primary sources, as opposed to secondary, and researchers had travelled over the world in search of their materials. Jackson, too, praised the documents, finding that Volume X "with its 505 pages of documents called 'Letters of Negroes to Anti-slavery Workers and Agencies' . . . is the best volume for documents in the entire twenty-five volumes."¹⁵ This volume is of value, along with others carrying articles on Negro participation or interest in antislavery. Too often white scholars failed to realize the significance of the Negro to antislavery efforts. The fact that few were given an opportunity to provide leadership in the movement did not preclude their involvement. The documents in this volume were Woodson's answer to the missing pages in the antislavery literature as chronicled by those who did not take


¹⁵Ibid., pp. 433-34.
into account the activity of the Negro as it affected the movement.

Jackson concluded his analysis of the *Journal* by writing a brief note on its editor-founder. He pointed out that the *Journal* was "unique among historical magazines in that it has had only one editor--Carter G. Woodson. He wrote the first article in the first issue; he financed the first issues; he is with us today."\(^{16}\)

Following Woodson's death, still another account of the *Journal* was written by historian Frenise Logan. Similar in content to the earlier works of Rayford Logan and Jackson, this article was mainly concerned with the progress of the *Journal* after Woodson. Frenise Logan commended Woodson for having founded and maintained a quarterly of high historical standards while at the same time continuing to operate in his many other time consuming capacities.\(^ {17}\) Another outstanding scholar in the field of Negro history, John Hope Franklin, wrote that, "The *Journal of Negro History* . . . contains more material for rewriting the

---


nation's history with ample consideration of the Negro than any other scholarly periodical.  

Franklin contended that Woodson, in launching the Association, had begun an era of "The New Negro History.  

... the Journal of Negro History projected the new approach to every part of the world where history was seriously studied."  

A white historian, Frank Klingberg, wrote that as soon as the Journal was founded, it "took rank with the two or three leading periodicals in the country. And Woodson himself led in finding facts. ..."  

Between 1916 and 1950, Woodson wrote fifteen articles for the Journal; two hundred and eighty-two book reviews; located, compiled, and edited many of the documents; created its format which changed somewhat over the years and wrote the "Notes" section in each of the quarterly issues. Some of the articles he wrote were highly


significant. The diversity in topics that he covered was illustrative of his flexibility in the area of historical scholarship. In 1918, Woodson wrote a well-documented article in which he treated the controversial problem of miscegenation. He traced the physical interrelationship between whites and blacks from Egyptian and African relations through those of the English, French, and Spanish to America, and then he discussed various state laws which were drafted in an attempt to outlaw miscegenation.21

Another article traced the changing attitudes toward Negroes in English legends, drama, poetry, and prose from early English history to 1933.22

Earlier, he had summarized fifty years of Supreme Court rulings as they affected the status of the Negro. In this piece he accused the federal government of evading the duty of safeguarding the rights of the Negro. He cited Dred Scott vs. Sanford, the Slaughter-House cases, and the Plessy case as his examples.23 He was a man who could


23Woodson, "Fifty Years of Negro Citizenship as Qualified by the United States Supreme Court," Ibid., VI (January, 1921), pp. 1-53.
write on so august a body as the United States Supreme Court and turn with equal ability to the subject to the lowly Negro washerwoman.  

Many of the volumes produced by Woodson were of an economic nature. This emphasis in approach was not followed in his Journal articles. Of the fifteen he wrote, only one, "Insurance Business Among Negroes," dealt with economics. He wrote two articles which had as their theme education, and one of these was specifically centered on Negro history.

While serving as editor of the Journal, Woodson seldom, if ever, invited any editorial advice. He jealously guarded his prerogatives in choosing all that entered the pages of the periodical. As editor he had the opportunity to decide if a book submitted by a publisher was worthy of review. Furthermore he had the option of whether

---

24 Woodson, "The Negro Washer-Woman, A Vanishing Figure," Ibid., XV (April, 1930), pp. 269-77.


or not he would serve as reviewer. In the first years he wrote more reviews than he did in the period after 1940. Even after he sought and found outside reviewers, he continued to function in this capacity. He even reviewed some of his own books.

In 1926 when the *Mind of the Negro* was released, it was reviewed by Woodson in the October (1926) issue of the *Journal*. He stated that since all the documents contained therein had previously appeared in the *Journal* there was no need for a review, but he then devoted three complete pages quoting excerpts from the volume.27 The year before when his *Negro Orators and Their Orations* was published, he had reviewed that book. In the review he explained that the book was originally undertaken by someone else but that person had to abandon the task. Then it was "taken up by the author, in whose hands the plan was decidedly changed."28 The review is a summary of the volume, but no opinion as to its worth is offered.29 After The *Negro Wage*


Earner, written in collaboration with Lorenzo J. Greene, was off the press, Woodson reviewed it in the July, 1931 issue of the Journal. He told the reader that this volume would be more appreciated "when persons will cease to give most of their attention to the polemic aspects of history and economics and will approach these matters from the definitive point of view." The book is of value, Woodson said, because it summarizes what Negroes have done toward earning a living. In this review, the author-reviewer made more positive statements and exercised less objectivity than in the other reviews of his own works but still failed to recommend it beyond the above quotes.

In addition to the reviews of DuBois' Darkwater and Souls of Black Folk, Woodson wrote on Black Folks Then and Now in which he stated it was more "now than then." He chastized the writer for "not using important secondary works now available." Perhaps he was calling attention

31 Ibid., pp. 341-42.
33 Ibid., p. 461.
to DuBois' failure to use his own African Heroes and Heroines as well as his African Background Outlined. Woodson faults the senior historian for not including in his discussion of the world's proletariat the dark workers of Asia and Africa, for these people, too, Woodson wrote, support "a superstructure of wealth, luxury and extravaganza." He concluded with DuBois' own statement, apparently agreeing with it, that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line."

In 1945 Woodson received the opportunity to review the preliminary (and only) volume of DuBois' The Encyclopedia of the Negro. By the time the book reached publication, much of the bitterness Woodson once felt had abated. He no longer unleashed stinging words of hostility toward DuBois but wrote instead that, "Dr. DuBois is now an old man and will hardly do more than pen a prologue and an epilogue for what others may write." For DuBois' co-editor, Guy Johnson, Woodson had comments of condemnation.

---

34 Ibid., pp. 462-63.


36 DuBois and Johnson, Encyclopedia of the Negro, reviewed Ibid., XXX (October, 1945), pp. 339-42.
Johnson's racism, he said, should have precluded his selection. Of the white man he wrote, "Why the crew [Board] took this biased mariner on board is not clear unless the captain of the ship [DuBois] believed that he can cooperate with Anson Phelps-Stokes in finding an angel to pay the freight."37 No mention was made of Logan, although he was listed as one of the editors. Woodson played at the projected contents listed in the preliminary work, saying that if they were going to publish an encyclopedia they should get to it and not publish what they intend doing. At another point he made reference to the "interracial workers" [whites] and their money. He argued that if the Negro was expected to help finance the work, "he should write it himself rather than await dictation from without..."38

The editors of the Encyclopedia listed their source material for the future volumes. Among those listed are works published by the Association and the Associated publishers. Woodson says of this: "In one respect the staff should be congratulated on its frankness.... The editors

37 Ibid., p. 341.
38 Ibid.
intend to lean heavily, in fact unduly heavily, on the
texts published by [the Association and the Associated
Publishers]... "39

At times Woodson solicited articles for the
Journal. In the beginning issues this was necessary to
insure material for publication. In the later years he
sometimes planned special issues and asked contributors to
send him material to complement the theme he planned. This
was true in 1924, when he decided to devote one issue of
the Journal to social service organizations. He wrote
Mary White Ovington of the NAACP, L. Hollingsworth Wood of
the National Urban League, and his old friend, James E.
Moorland of the YMCA, asking each for an article describing
their work. All of those contacted responded with affirma-
tive replies. Each submitted his article in time for the
April issue.

Miss Ovington, however, became the subject of one
of Woodson's blunt criticisms, when he wrote her that, "I
do not like your article, because it is too short... "40

39 Ibid., pp. 341-42.

40 Carter G. Woodson to Mary White Ovington, February 6, 1924, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress.
He asked her to rewrite it, making it more inclusive. If she could not find the time to accomplish this, he volunteered to lengthen it for her.\textsuperscript{41} A reading of the article indicates that she either accommodated the editor, or he printed what she originally sent, because it is much too personal in content to have been elaborated upon by Woodson. A sidelight on this issue is the inclusion of a brief study on "The Feeding of Blacks," a topic completely out of character with the tenor of the other material. Possibly another article had been solicited on some topic which better fitted the general theme and was not received, thus forcing the editor to fill the space with whatever he had on hand.\textsuperscript{42}

Whites were never excluded from publishing in the \textit{Journal}. Woodson's relationships with white writers were as good as those of any editor who dealt with the receipt and rejection of articles—both based on their worth. Some of the better known white historians who published from time to time in the \textit{Journal} were Kenneth Stampp, Richard

\textsuperscript{41}Mary White Ovington, "The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People," pp. 107-16.

\textsuperscript{42}R. H. Taylor, "Feeding Slaves," \textit{Journal of Negro History}, \textbf{IX} (April, 1924), pp. 139-44.
Hofstader, and Arthur Link. Kenneth Porter of Vassar College wrote a number of articles on Florida Negroes, all of which were published, and kept up a stream of correspondence with the editor. He even used Woodson as a reference for a job at one time, writing the editor after the fact to obtain his permission for so doing.⁴³

Kenneth Stampp as a young, unknown historian, once submitted a paper for publication in the Journal, which for some reason Woodson did not publish. Nor did he return the manuscript to the white historian.⁴⁴ Little did he realize that this man would project a whole new interpretation of slavery and its effect upon the slave; one that would have brought forth praise from the Negro historian had he lived to read it.

Woodson published a number of Herbert Aptheker's articles. Aptheker also became a friend of Woodson, no easy accomplishment for black or white. While it is sometimes considered part of the Communist Party's ideological program for white members to befriend Negroes in order to

⁴³Kenneth W. Porter to Carter G. Woodson, March 5, 1943, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.

⁴⁴Kenneth Stampp, unpublished manuscript, title page missing, Ibid.
win them over to the Party, no one could have persuaded
Woodson to become involved in anything outside his own
cause. Wilson Record, writing in *The Negro in the Com-
munist Party*, stated that "The Party historians sought to
give to the Negro in America a radical past as a preface to
a radical present."45 Record proceeded to quote from the
preface of one of Aptheker's books as an example: " 'The
desire for freedom is the central theme, the motivating
force in the history of the Negro people.' "46 If a desire
for freedom is radical, which according to Record (a Negro)
it is, then Woodson and almost every other black, past and
present, would have to be so labelled. This, in turn,
would have to be characteristic of all people the world
over who have chanted the slogan of freedom.

Woodson was the propounder of a literary nation-
alism. He, no more than any other Negro, could separate
himself from his past, the past of his people, or the pres-
ent in which he lived in the capacity of a second-class

45Wilson Record, *The Negro and the Communist Party*

46Ibid.
citizen, Harvard degree or no. Aptheker wrote about slave revolt; he stressed the dissatisfaction of men in bondage with their lot in life. He did voluminous amounts of thorough research. For Woodson, who had spent a working lifetime trying to spur race pride through the written word, it was only natural not only to publish Aptheker's works, but also to be interested in a white historian who tried to bring to print facts which exhibited manhood and refuted the traditional view of the "shuffling" Negro. It is imperative that Woodson be seen as he was, in his own circumstances, and not branded with a label of any kind, because none fits the man in his totality.

One of Woodson’s heroes was Nat Turner. The historian saw him as a leader who exercised a profound effect on his people at a time when blacks were everywhere in chains and there was not much hope of the situation being any different. To Woodson, Nat Turner represented the same kind of gallantry and courage that some whites admired in a Samuel Adams or a John Brown. There was no radicalism involved in Turner when he was seen from the black man's point of view. In the same vein the relationship with

47 Daly interview.
Aptheker was formulated on a scholarly interest with emotional overtones. The friendship was based on human factors. Not very many whites visited Woodson in his homey, unadorned office in the ghetto. Fewer still ate with him in the segregated Negro restaurants that did not offer either the comfort or the cuisine of the plush "white only" restaurants. Aptheker did both.⁴⁸

The year after Woodson's death, when the country was undergoing the period of "McCarthyism," a book was published which asserted that there was a communist influence in the Journal of Negro History. The author alluded to the lack of funds that made the Journal "a hazardous financial venture" especially during the 1930s.⁴⁹ The major premise on which the author stated his case was the number of articles by Aptheker carried in the Journal. Regarding the lack of money, the author wrote, "The communist leaders knew just what to do in such a predicament.... The leading communist historian for Negro affairs sic Herbert Aptheker now became a frequent contributor. ..."⁵⁰

---

⁴⁸Aptheker to author, January 28, 1970.

⁴⁹William A. Nolan, Communism vs. the Negro (Chicago, 1951), p. 113.

⁵⁰Ibid.
It was implied that in exchange for publishing Aptheker's works, Woodson received funds for the Journal. Any familiarity with the independent Woodson would have ruled that out immediately.

Woodson did not restrict his writing solely to the Journal of Negro History. He occasionally published scholarly articles in other periodicals. For instance he wrote a brief note on Negro History Week for Opportunity (the official publication of the National Urban League). He published a short treatise in the Southern Workman on "Health Venture with Negro Management" and another on "Emma Frances Grayson," a Negro woman who rose to prominence in the District of Columbia school system. This vignette also appeared in Opportunity. In the Howard University Record he wrote a note concerning "Journalism in the Schools," which was published the year he served the school as its

---


In the 1930s, as a result of his travels to Europe in the summers, he was invited to contribute an article on "Negro Slavery" to the European Civilization Series edited by Edward Eyre. The volume to which he contributed was entitled The Relations of Europe with Non-European Peoples. (The books were published in Great Britain and the United States simultaneously.) This publication was among the few written by Woodson that had benefit of editing. The result is a remarkable difference in flow of words with a much less stilted style. The essence of the article is a brief historical survey of slavery through a mostly political approach. There was no effort on the writer's part to depict the institution through the eyes of a Negro.

As a historian Woodson has been characterized as

---


55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.
the "Father of Negro History," but this is a misnomer. He did not write the first works on the subject, nor did he even contribute the first textbooks in the field. The historian who is generally credited with the first publication of merit in the area of black history is George Washington Williams whose *History of the Negro Race in America from 1619 to 1880* was published in 1886. A prominent historian himself, Benjamin Quarles has more correctly called Woodson the "Father of Scientific Negro History." Woodson would agree with this evaluation, emphasizing as he did the value and need for scientific study of the Negro. If he had a theme in his approach to historical writing, this was it. That he did not always follow his articulated belief never occurred to him. Lorenzo Greene interpreted Woodson as a historian in the

---


following manner:

Yet great as he was as a historian, Dr. Woodson could not be as objective in his writings as he desired to be. He perforce had to be historian, indoctrinator, and propagandist. Not only had he to secure the facts; he had to inculcate and disseminate them.60

Greene characterized the historian thus:

What Paul was to Christianity, Woodson was to Negro History . . . history to him was . . . an instrument to help black people achieve equality of citizenship in American society, to enable them to be respected and to respect themselves.61

Woodson would have accepted this interpretation, too, but he would have added "through the use of scientific methods." His own attitude toward this approach was expressed at the annual meeting of the Association in 1921. Speaking before the group assembled in his session, he discussed the various reasons why Negroes previous to him had gone into the field of black history. It was his belief that most of them were propagandists and for that reason "a non-partisan and unbiased history of the Negro has not yet been written."62 All of the previously written studies on

60 Greene, "As I Remember," p. 9.

61 Ibid.

such topics as colonization and antislavery, as well as proslavery opinions should be rewritten, wrote the historian, and "they will have to be scientifically examined. . . ."63

This emphasis on scientific method had its roots in the university training of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Fact reigned supreme over interpretation and ideally more balanced history books should have been the result. However, human frailty continued to exist and many historians chose the facts that best illustrated their own preconceived attitudes and eliminated or failed to use those which did not. Some of Woodson's contemporaries were writing Reconstruction history with little reliance on the whole truth, especially on the objective role of blacks in that period. Woodson, writing as he did, was trying to eradicate the images presented by whites, and in so doing lost his own objectivity. This was true, too, of Woodson's contemporary, Ulrich B. Phillips, who selected the research materials that illustrated his preconceived point of view.64 Phillips was not naturally inclined to

63Ibid.

64Ulrich B. Phillips, American Negro Slavery (New York, 1918), passim.
unobjectivity; he too was influenced by his environment and therefore was just as limited in his approach as was Woodson in his.

John Hope Franklin places Woodson in the front ranks of American historiography. Woodson's books, nearly all of them original and based on extensive research, helped reconstruct our history. His compilation of documents in the *Journal* and in the other published works enabled other scholars to base their own research on his findings. This was one of Woodson's major contributions. Had he not taken so many pains to stress the need for preserving the records of the Negro past many more hundreds of sources would have been lost to historians.

In describing the role of Woodson as historian, the effect that he had upon black people cannot be overlooked. Blacks learned more about themselves and their past through his work than that of all the other Negro historians combined. Children in elementary school, especially those in the South where Negro history was taught as a result of Woodson, came to bear their burden of blackness with a

---

lighter yoke. When Marcus Garvey proposed that Negroes move back to Africa, Woodson taught them to "think black," with pride. He gave the people a reason to be proud of their African heritage. Something now being loudly advocated as new and original was not original even with Woodson. But he expounded on the African background and through the widespread sale of his materials brought the African past to life. First he incorporated bits and pieces of information about Africa in *The Negro in Our History*, published in 1922.66

Later in the decade he re-wrote the textbook on a lower reading level so that it could be utilized in schools for disseminating knowledge among elementary students. He called this volume *Negro Makers of History*. Still later, in 1935, he wrote and published *The Story of the Negro Retold* for junior and senior high school students. Each of these volumes carried chapters on the African past. Woodson's books which completely emphasized Africa were begun in 1928 when he published *African Myths, Together with Proverbs*. This little volume was composed of some material

published previously in the *Journal* and was intended to
serve as a supplementary reader for children in grade
school.67

**The African Background Outlined** is a small history
of Africa, based primarily on secondary sources.68 **African**
Heroes and Heroines, brought out in 1939, gives a brief
history of Africa and then treats earlier African leaders
biographically.69 Considering the almost total lack of
primary materials then available, and taking into consid-
eration Woodson's goal to instill pride more than to pre-
sent a comprehensive history of Africa, these works are
significant. Both, however, present his views on coloni-
alism and the role of the African in relation to whites in
a most unscientific manner.

Although many of Woodson's works dealt with eco-
nomic themes, there was no Marxist point of view, as such,

---

67Woodson, *Negro Makers of History* (Washington,
D. C., 1928), *The Story of the Negro Retold* (Washington,
D. C., 1935), and *African Myths, Together with Proverbs*
(Washington, D. C., 1928).

68Woodson, *African Background Outlined* (Washington,
D. C., 1939).

69Woodson, *African Heroes and Heroines* (Washington,
D. C., 1939).
contained therein. DuBois, an authority in that area, dryly commented that Woodson had "never real Karl Marx." Woodson has to be considered as a Negro historian reconstructing the black experience. The prevailing thought about Negroes was that their former bondage had ill equipped them for living in a state of freedom. Woodson endeavored to show that while some were slaves, others were free, productive members of society earning money and engaged in occupations from the earliest period in our history.

It was necessary for a Negro historian, writing to correct the record as he considered himself to be doing, to stress economic factors. When he published the volumes dealing with Negro business, he was trying, once again, to instill race pride and at the same time to motivate others to become involved in business enterprise. Social and economic history were being recognized as regular disciplines within the field; Woodson's work was as much concerned with social as economic history.

The only work that does more than hint of Marxism, and then only in a few pages, is The Miseducation of the

---

Negro, published in 1933. This volume reveals a bitterness on Woodson's part toward people with money and position. He resented strongly those blacks who had influence and wealth, and who in the acquisition of both cut themselves off from the masses. He believed that black people should help each other; that the educated Negro should reach into the ghetto and aid those who did not have the benefit of learning, so that they, too, might climb out of poverty and degradation.  

Woodson lived as he believed. He had persevered where others might have failed; he spent fourteen years trying to obtain three college degrees, working fulltime all but two of those years. Yet, he had not turned his back on his people; he had instead devoted his life to bringing them the story of their past and saving their records for future generations.

As a new Doctor of Philosophy he had for a time manifested an elitist point of view, and the traces of this return in the 1930s when he wrote The Miseducation of the Negro. His philosophy resembled DuBois's in that he too

---

71 Woodson, Miseducation of the Negro, passim.
72 Ibid.
favored educated blacks' assuming positions of leadership before the great majority reached a point where they could be informed and pursue higher goals. On the other hand, he followed Booker T. Washington in advocating that industrial training be undertaken rather than no training at all. When Woodson told a black newspaper audience that it was better to buy a flower cart than be a clerk in someone else's flower shop, he meant that they should develop their own enterprise and thus become part of the American mainstream through sharing a piece of American capitalism.\textsuperscript{73}

When Woodson published \textit{The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861} in 1915 he was beginning what would be his real life's work. The book was well received and according to Franklin, "is regarded by many as his most important contribution in the area of original research."\textsuperscript{74} His former professor, Edward Channing, wrote him that he "liked it very much. You seem to have loosened up on your style a bit and you have done an excellent piece of research."\textsuperscript{75}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{73}Norfolk Journal and Guide (Norfolk, Virginia), January 23, 1936.
\textsuperscript{74}John Hope Franklin, "The Place of Carter G. Woodson," p. 195.
\textsuperscript{75}Edward Channing quoted in advertisement from Crisis, (n.d., no p.), Woodson Papers, ASNLH.
\end{flushright}
The book deals with the early efforts to educate Negroes and the subsequent changes in attitude on the part of the master class after the period of industrial development. According to Woodson the patriarchal period, prior to about 1835, was one in which Negroes were frequently educated, at least in the fundamentals. After 1835 when slavery became more entrenched as an economic institution, it was generally conceded that education would cause Negroes to become too self-assertive. Woodson found, however, that as high as ten percent of the slave population was literate on the eve of the Civil War.  

The book was reviewed in the *American Journal of Sociology*, with the reviewer writing, "Aside from the light which this book throws upon the rather obscure subject, there is something at once touching and romantic in the story..."  

According to the *New York Times* "it is a thorough and intelligent study, with just enough sympathetic spirit to humanize its array of well ordered facts."  

---


In Woodson's second book, *A Century of Negro Migration*, he discussed the major movements of sizable segments of the Negro population. He noted that Negroes began to move from the South to the North as economic opportunities developed in the North or as racial pressure developed in the South.\textsuperscript{79} This volume can be considered Woodson's first to deal with economic history, but does not depict the migration purely in that vein. The racial factor is as present, in the balance, as the economic. The *Nation* called it a worthy study in an area which was of concern to the times.\textsuperscript{80}

Woodson's next book, *The History of the Negro Church*, published in 1921, revealed the extent to which this institution had an influence over the lives of black people. It was the only significant institution over which they had any control. Woodson wrote of the work of the early missionaries, the rise of the Negro preacher, and the church's emergence from internal and external pressures to become a major factor in the lives of most Negroes.\textsuperscript{81}

\textsuperscript{79}Woodson, *A Century of Negro Migration*, passim.

\textsuperscript{80}*The Nation*, January 11, 1919, p. 59.

\textsuperscript{81}Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church* (Washington, D. C., 1921).
Reviewed primarily in Negro newspapers, the book was widely acclaimed. It was favorably reviewed in the New York Age; the Norfolk Journal and Guide said the "startling feature of the book is the mass of valuable information generally unknown to the public." 82

The next book to come from the prolific historian was his first text-book, The Negro in Our History. This volume was intended as both a text for school use and as a comprehensive record of the Negro past for the general public. Beginning with Africa and, in the first edition, going through World War I, the volume names people, places, and events in Negro history. It was not based completely on original research, although the materials that Woodson had by that time begun to amass gave it a more original and thorough treatment than previous histories of its type. 83

Here the historian's own racial bias creeps into the pages, thus causing it to compare unfavorably with the text produced twenty-three years later by John Hope

82 New York Age (New York City), January 7, 1922; Norfolk Journal and Guide, December 31, 1921.

Franklin. During Woodson's life the book went through nine editions in twenty-five years. Through revision and additions it grew in length from 393 pages in 1922, to 691 in the ninth edition released in 1947. The best that can be said for this book was that through it many courses in Negro history were established in the schools. They now had a volume that was readily available and crammed full of factual information. The New York Tribune reviewed it thus: "It is unfortunate that Dr. Woodson's style is cramped and slovenly, but the interest of his subject matter in the volume now before us is so compelling that it enables us to overlook this primal defect."  

Howard University professor Alain Locke, reviewing the third edition of The Negro in Our History in 1927, wrote that it was "a compendium of facts" but lacked interpretation. Locke stated that the volume would serve as a wedge between fact and interpretative content which, by implication, he believed would come through another volume. The mark of the textbook would come when historians

84 John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom (New York, 1947), passim.
realized that it belonged "to that select class of books that have brought a revolution of mind." 86

Since Woodson had no money to hire editorial assistance in his publishing company, many of his books and those of other authors, suffer from the lack of the type of assistance that is common in most firms today. Therefore it would be unfair to criticize his works too harshly for their style. Woodson admitted that his textbook contained a few errors, but maintained that seldom do books come from the press that are not likewise limited. To his credit, he changed errors when he became aware of them. 87

Negro Orators and The Mind of the Negro were compilations of documents. The Boston Transcript stated that Negro Orators should inspire whites as well as blacks through reading the words of Negro spokesmen of the past. 88

The New York Herald Tribune thought The Mind of the Negro a


88 Boston Transcript (Boston, Massachusetts), December 3, 1925.
fascinating study, while the Catholic World reviewer wrote that it was too long.\footnote{89}{New York Herald Tribune (New York City), December 26, 1924; Catholic World (New York City), December 4, 1926.} Both volumes are excellent as source materials. \textit{The Mind of the Negro} particularly has a vast store of information giving insight into the intellectual history of the Negro before and during the Civil War. Although the title of the volume implies a cut-off date of 1860, some of the letters contained therein were written during the war.

The two pamphlets published by Woodson from information gathered by himself and his staff are most significant. \textit{Free Negro Heads of Families in the United States in 1830} provided statistical information not previously available and revealed the numbers of blacks not in bondage thirty-five years before freedom was a reality to the slaves. There is no study of this nature to supersede it today, although others, including Franklin, built upon it in specific areas.\footnote{90}{Carter G. Woodson, \textit{Free Negro Heads of Families in the United States in 1830} (Washington, D. C., 1925); John Hope Franklin, \textit{The Free Negro in North Carolina} (Chapel Hill, 1943).}
The companion volume to this is more interesting to many, in that it provides statistics on Negro ownership of slaves. The pamphlet is entitled *Free Negro Owners of Slaves in the United States in 1830*. 91 It shows that most of those who owned slaves did so because the bondsman were parts of their owner's family and were "purchased" so as to relieve them from actual slavery. However, some blacks who owned slaves worked them in a manner similar to the whites. 92

In 1930 Woodson published *The Rural Negro* and, with Lorenzo J. Greene, *The Negro Wage Earner*. 93 Both of these works are studies in economic history. In each volume the emphasis is on how the Negro, urban or rural, lived. In each case a discussion was presented on the manner in which blacks earned their living, in the country and in the city. Statistical data are furnished in both concerning the amount of education these Negroes had acquired, and the


types of churches they attended and supported. Both volumes served to provide sociological data that would otherwise have been lost. No one has ever conclusively repeated these studies to measure changes that have occurred since their publication.

In 1934 Woodson turned his attention to the social and economic problems of The Negro Professional Man and the Community. This study is essentially limited to Negro lawyers and doctors with less space devoted to ministers, teachers, nurses, welfare workers, and artists. This is not one of Woodson's more objective studies, although it abounds with statistical data. He developed this work when he was feeling particularly antagonistic toward upper class blacks. The professionally trained Negro was his source of irritation because these types were those whom Woodson felt most often exploited or ignored those left behind in poverty.94

Another volume with a social and economic orientation was co-authored with two Negro businessmen, Arnett Lindsay who was in the real estate business, and James H.

Harmon who was an insurance man. The book, The Negro As A Businessman, was divided into three short sections. Harmon wrote the section dealing with the Negro in business; Lindsay covered the Negro in banking; and Woodson took the section relating to the Negro in the insurance business. The net effect of the volume is to show Negroes engaged productively and successfully in business. Each of these sections was published as a single piece in the Journal prior to being brought together in book form.

The last major publication produced by Woodson was The Works of Francis J. Grimke in four volumes. Grimke was for many years the pastor of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church in Washington, D. C. (He was also the husband of Charlotte Forten, the product of a noted Negro family and herself a woman of considerable accomplishment.) Volume I includes the addresses of Grimke, many of which deal with the race problem. Volume II contains selected sermons given by Grimke in his years of ministry 1888-1930; and Volume III has over six hundred pages of various personal material compiled from the pastor's writings. Volume

---

IV has letters written by and to the Negro minister between 1884 and 1937.\textsuperscript{96} This last volume is worth more, in terms of research value to scholars, than the others. Of course, for the scholar who has a particular interest in the Negro church, all four become valuable.

The Miseducation of the Negro is about as close as Woodson ever came to writing anything of an autobiographical nature, and the book really is not that. A letter from a teacher at Teachers College, Columbia University told him that she was so impressed by the book that she was "tempted to write . . . him a letter."\textsuperscript{97} She then wrote a long note of praise in which she stated, "I consider your book . . . the most important contribution in its field since the early philosophy and practice worked out by Booker T. Washington."\textsuperscript{98}

Interestingly, Woodson's message in this book is the one which most closely resembles the rhetoric of the militant blacks of today. Even more to the point, so much

\textsuperscript{96}Carter G. Woodson, ed., The Works of Francis J. Grimke, 4 volumes (Washington, D. C., 1942).

\textsuperscript{97}Mabel Carney to Carter G. Woodson, March 26, 1934, Woodson Papers, ASNLH.

\textsuperscript{98}Ibid.
that he wrote in that book, published in 1933, is prophetic of today. For instance he writes about Negroes receiving industrial training in the 1930s and states that, "such industrial education as these Negroes received then, was merely to master a technique already discarded in progressive centres."\textsuperscript{99} Certainly if this was true then, it is more so today and Woodson was farsighted in realizing that the latter part of the 20th century would be a period in which more highly skilled workers would be needed.

On militancy and protest Woodson warned that "Negroes who think as the author does [protest not for attention but for previously constructed programs of blacks aiding other blacks] and dare express themselves are branded as opponents of interracial cooperation."\textsuperscript{100} Woodson was not trying to spurn cooperation between the races, he only wished that it be on equal terms. Or as he phrased it, "The Negroes do the 'coing' and the whites the 'operating.'"\textsuperscript{101}

Woodson wrote of the effect of white history books

\textsuperscript{99}Woodson, \textit{Miseducation of the Negro}, p. 13.

\textsuperscript{100}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 29.

\textsuperscript{101}\textit{Ibid.}
on the Negro and the way he thought whites used history to their advantage. In his opinion, "... if by the teaching of history the white man could be further assured of his superiority and the Negro could be made to feel that he had always been a failure ... the freedman, then, would still be a slave."\textsuperscript{102} Woodson was not a foe of integration. In another section of the volume he blamed the "educated" Negroes for accepting segregation "and becoming its fearless champions."\textsuperscript{103}

Another bit of wisdom came from \textit{Miseducation} when Woodson wrote that Negroes would always be exploited if they did nothing to help themselves overcome exploitation. He warned that "the exploiters of the race are not so much at fault as the race itself."\textsuperscript{104}

The core of his philosophy pertaining to educated Negroes was expressed in belief that they "should redefine higher education as preparation to think and work out a program to serve the lowly rather than to live as an

\textsuperscript{102}Ibid., p. 84.

\textsuperscript{103}Ibid., p. 100.

\textsuperscript{104}Ibid., p. 117.
aristocrat." Woodson believed that too many professional Negroes escaped to the growing ranks of the middle class and separated themselves from those who remained in the ghetto. He would have had doctors, lawyers, teachers, and other educated blacks return to the communities from which they had originally come. There, instead of advancing themselves, they would work to uplift the whole group. In writing about his own Association, Woodson said, "the method employed by the ASNLH however is not spectacular propaganda or fire-eating agitation...."

"The Association," wrote Woodson, "is teaching the Negro to exercise foresight rather than hindsight." He advocated learning of the past through the work of his organization and using the experiences of those Negroes in history as a guide for future actions and relationships with whites.

Woodson concluded his volume and his thoughts on race relations with insight into how the Negro could make gains without reducing himself to racial hatred. He

---

105 Ibid., p. 149.
106 Ibid., p. 194.
107 Ibid., p. 195.
believed that:

No advantage can be gained by merely inflaming the Negro's mind against his traducers. In a manner they deserve to be congratulated for taking care of their own interests so well. . . . The Negro must learn how to take care of himself. . . .

On one other topic of pertinence, today as yesterday, Woodson spoke with gusto. When asked by a participant at a historical meeting as to what was the proper name for the race, he responded:

It does not matter so much what the thing is called as what the thing is. The Negro would not cease to be what he is by calling him something else. . . . There is nothing to be gained by running away from the name.

Woodson's successors did not hold themselves to their founder's philosophy, for in October of 1970 it was voted to change the name of his Association to the Afro-American Historical Society.

In spite of the indications that Woodson was often erratic, and undiplomatic in some cases, he left a legacy that few will be able to match in future generations. Those with whom he shared brief glimpses into his life are of one accord as to his devotion to his work, to Negro

106 Ibid., p. 197.

109 Ibid., p. 200.
people, and to bringing harmony between the races through the study of Negro history. Franklin remembered him as "one of the most charming men I ever met. I never saw in him any of the peculiarities or unfavorable side of his personality that others claimed he possessed."\textsuperscript{110}

He quoted Woodson as saying he looked forward to the day "when Negro History Week would no longer be necessary."\textsuperscript{111} "He was so desperately anxious that the history of the Negro would be integrated into the history of the United States," Franklin concluded in brief summation of Woodson. \textsuperscript{112}

Historian Benjamin Quarles recalls that Woodson was "Quick to smile or laugh, he had a ready sense of humor ... while in his remarks he was direct and straightforward, making him seem a bit blunt."\textsuperscript{113} Quarles continued:

\begin{quote}
I never heard him make a cutting remark, or say anything clever at anyone else's expense. . . . He
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{110}John Hope Franklin to the author, January 28, 1970.
\item \textsuperscript{111}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{112}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{113}Benjamin Quarles to the author, February 2, 1970.
\end{itemize}
loved to converse (as a man without a wife might be expected to do) and if he did most of the talking it was because he had so much to say worth hearing.  

Quarles best summed up Woodson's contribution when he stated:

as a leader in pointing up the black American's role in history, Woodson needs no higher honor. . . . In the current upsurge of black studies . . . there is no figure to whom there is and will continue to be a greater indebtedness than to Woodson, his sun is now brighter than ever before.  

Woodson died during the night of April 5, 1950. At the time of his death he was alone and in the sanctuary of his office-home at the Association. All the material reward that he received from Negroes in his lifetime was the Spingarn Medal in 1926, and three honorary degrees, one each from Virginia Union, Howard, and Morehouse College. The scholarly world largely passed him by in his lifetime; they hover over his works today, prodding through the massive amounts of material he collected, wrote, and compiled. His organization exists much as it did when he was alive, only in this year it will move to a new, large and

---

114 _ibid._

115 _ibid._
modern office space in The Carter G. Woodson Building. The Bulletin continues to serve the unknown children that he cared so much to address in his lifetime. The Journal of Negro History, in compliance with his request, carries its founder's name on the title page, and another man now speaks to the pages he used to turn to in his loneliness.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Manuscript Collections

Archives of the United States. War Department. Bureau of Insular Affairs.

Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Inc. Archives, Charles H. Wesley Papers.

Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Inc. Archives, Carter G. Woodson Papers.


Fisk University. Library Archives, Julius Rosenwald Papers.

Hampton Institute. Archives, George F. Peabody Collection.

Howard University. Founders Library. Moorland Room Archives, C. G. Woodson File.


Virginia State University. Library Archives, Luther P. Jackson Papers.

Yale University. Sterling Library. Historical Archives Section, Anson Phelps-Stokes Collection.

Private Interviews With the Author


Daly, Victor R. Washington, D. C. April 6, 1971.


Newspapers

Amsterdam (N. Y.) News. February 2, 1932; February 3, 1941; February 1, 1945; February 2, 1947.


Boston (Mass.) Transcript. December 3, 1925.

Catholic World. December 4, 1926.

Louisville (Ky.) Defender. February 11, 1950.


Works by Carter G. Woodson


______. Early Negro Education in West Virginia. Institute, West Virginia: West Virginia Institute Press, 1922.


Selected Articles and Reviews  
by Carter G. Woodson

Woodson, Carter G. "An Accounting for Twenty-Five Years."  
Journal of Negro History, XXV (October, 1944), 422-31.

________. "Anthony Benezet." Journal of Negro History, II  
(January, 1918), 37-50.

________. "Attitudes of the Iberian Peninsula." Journal  
of Negro History, XX (April, 1936), 190-243.

________. "The Beginnings of the Miscegenation of the  
Whites and Blacks." Journal of Negro History, III  
(July, 1918), 335-53.

________. "Early Negro Education in West Virginia."  

________. "Emma Frances Grayson Merrett." Opportunity,  
VIII (August, 1930), 244-45.

________. "Emma Frances Grayson Merrett." Southern  
Workman, IXL (September, 1930), 420-22.

________. "Fifty Years of Negro Citizenship as Qualified  
by the United States Supreme Court." Journal of  
Negro History, VI (January, 1921), 1-53.

________. "Freedom and Slavery in Appalachian America."  

________. "Health Venture With Negro Management."  
Southern Workman, LX (December, 1931), 518-24.

________. "Insurance Business Among Negroes." Journal of  
Negro History, XIV (April, 1929), 202-26.

________. "Introduction." In Frederick Douglass Calendar  
Writers Project, 1946.

——. "Negro Life and History in Our Schools." Journal of Negro History, IV (April, 1919), 273-80.


——. "The Negro Washerwoman, A Vanishing Figure." Journal of Negro History, XV (April, 1930), 269-77.


——. "Ten Years of Collecting and Publishing the Records of the Negro." Journal of Negro History, X (October, 1926), 598-606.


Articles About Carter G. Woodson


Secondary Works


**Articles in Journals and Magazines**


Taylor, R. H. "Feeding Slaves." Journal of Negro History, IX (April, 1924), 139-44.