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Black History Month, researched by Johnnie Rodriguez

The month of February has been officially designated by every U.S. president since Gerald Ford, in 1976, as Black History Month or African-American History Month, though the term Black is considered more inclusive of the Afro-Caribbeans, Afro-Latin Americans and Black Canadians, all of whom are celebrated in this month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also set aside a month for Black history.

This month grew out of "Negro History Week,' an idea that was promoted by Harvard-trained historian Carter G. Woodson (who got his own Google Doodle in February 2018) to raise awareness of the role that African-Americans had played in the history of the United States as well as their achievements around the world. His plan finally came to fruition in February 1926, during the week containing the birthdays of both Abraham Lincoln (the 12th) and Frederick Douglass (the 14th) because many Black citizens already celebrated those days. Almost immediately, Black history clubs were organized and teachers (primarily Black teachers) wanted materials about Black history for their students.

When Woodson died in 1950, Negro History Week had become ingrained in African-American life, and even the mayors of some U.S. cities proclaimed Negro History Week. Thus it was that during the 1960s and the Civil Rights Movement that there was a national awakening to the contributions to American culture and history of those U.S. citizens descended from or part of the African diaspora. Though it took 50 years —from 1926 to 1976—for Black History Month to become an official part of the calendar, and though we all realize that we should celebrate African-Americans more than just in February, it's still important that this month has been set aside specifically to stop and remember and sing praises to them.

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