

Editorial Notes

volunteers reflect a tradition that was seen in our Black segregated schools.

When schools were segregated by law or by tradition, teachers tended to give informal Black history lessons to spur students on to excellence.

For example, if a class objected to more arithmetic homework, the teacher might tell her students about the obstacles that the Black mathematician Benjamin Banneker faced in obtaining an education. The class would also learn that he was one of the designers of the nation's capital, Washington, D.C.

In segregated Black America, we were close to our role models, and Black history was an integral part of our overall education.

Race pride was preached in the home, in the school and in the church. In any contact with Whites, our young people were taught that they not only represented themselves, but they also represented their race. It was important not to let our race down because too many had suffered, sacrificed and died to bring us to this point in our history.

While forced segregation of anything is wrong, so is a forced integration that allows for our demeaning—albeit by lack of conscious design. Black youth and others desperately need the building of self-esteem as a pre-literacy requisite.

No group in America, ever, was so deliberately stripped of pride, heritage, language, and religion as were our once pride-filled ancestors from Africa. This process of isolating an individual or a group from its culture is called deracination.

The late Dr. Carter G. Woodson (1875-1950) understood the mind controlling implications of deracination. We owe our annual observance of Black History Month to his unstinting efforts. Most often, he is recalled as the "Father of Negro History" because many believe that he has done more than any other individual to prevent the obliteration of Black or Afro-American history.

Dr. Woodson's life's work was based on his conviction that if a race has no recorded history, its achievements will be forgotten and finally claimed by other groups. The race in this way "becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world and stands the danger of being exterminated."

Dr. Woodson had found that directly and indirectly, the "contributions of the Negro race were overlooked, ignored, and even suppressed by the writers of history books and the teachers who use them." Race prejudice, Dr. Woodson felt, grows naturally from the idea that the Negro race is inferior. "This is merely the logical result of tradition—the inevitable outcome of

thorough instruction to the effect that the Negro has never contributed anything to the progress of mankind." But in fact, "the achievements of the Negro properly set forth will crown him as a factor in early human progress and a maker of modern

civilization."

Woodson's research had shown that "in his native country.. the Negro produced in ancient times a civilization...[which] influenced the [Mediterranean] cultures...he

taught the modern world trial by jury, music by stringed instruments, the domestication of the sheep, goat, and cow, and the use of iron by which science and invention have made the universe." Dr.

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Dare to be More.



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