



"Founders of Black History Month"

ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LIFE AND HISTORY, INC.

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2011 National Black History Month Theme Announced

Washington, DC – (December 1, 2010) The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) is excited to announce the 2011 National Black History Month Theme as “African Americans and the Civil War.” This year’s commemoration continues the tradition of excellence started by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, the Father of Black History, in 1915, in his vision of accurate historic documentation of the tremendous impact of African Americans amidst American history.

Black History Month 2011 takes on even greater significance amidst the discoveries of erroneous text book accounts of history in Virginia and Texas. In the spirit of Dr. Woodson, ASALH will spend the month educating the nation on how Black soldiers took up arms to help free themselves and liberate a nation.

In 1861, as the United States stood at the brink of Civil War, people of African descent, both enslaved and free persons, waited with a watchful eye. They understood that a war between the North and the South might bring about jubilee--the destruction of slavery and universal freedom. When the Confederacy fired upon Fort Sumter and war ensued, President Abraham Lincoln maintained that the paramount cause was to preserve the Union, not end slavery. Frederick Douglass, the most prominent black leader, opined that regardless of intentions, the war would bring an end to slavery, America’s “peculiar institution.”

Over the course of the war, the four million people of African descent in the United States proved Douglass right. Free and enslaved blacks rallied around the Union flag in the cause of freedom. From the cotton and tobacco fields of the South to the small towns and big cities of the North, nearly 200,000 joined the Grand Army of the Republic and took up arms to destroy the Confederacy. They served as recruiters, soldiers, nurses, and spies, and endured unequal treatment, massacres, and riots as they pursued their quest for freedom and equality. Their record of service speaks for itself, and Americans have never fully realized how their heroic efforts saved the Union.

This theme is also the focus of the 85th Annual Black History Luncheon scheduled on Saturday, February 26, 2011 that will be held at the Renaissance Washington, DC Hotel on 999 9th Street NW; click on http://www.asalh.org/Annual_Luncheon.html.

ASALH encourages all Americans to study and reflect on the value of their contributions to the nation.