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BLACK HISTORY MONTH



PHOTO COURTESY CHARLES L. BLOCKSON AFRO-AMERICAN COLLECTION, TEMPLE UNIVERSITY
African Americans call for equal rights during World War II when racism and discrimination were rampant. As white workers went out on strike to protest the hiring of black trolley operators, black Philadelphians mounted their own campaign in support of the operators, including a march in August 1944.

Historian Proved Teacher Wrong

Even as a 4th grader, Charles Blockson knew better

(AP) -- As a child growing up in the 1940s, Charles Blockson was once told by a white teacher that black people had made no contributions to history. Even as a fourth-grader, Blockson, who is black, knew better. So he began collecting

a boy living in the Philadelphia suburb of Norristown. His quest began after he asked a substitute teacher about famous black people in history. She replied that there weren't any.

"I set out to prove her wrong," Blockson said.

Among his first purchases were the books "Up from Slavery" by Booker T. Washington, "God's Trombones" by

James Weldon Johnson and a biography of George Washington Carver.

As he grew older, Blockson's hunts for books at the Salvation Army and Goodwill led to searches at more rarefied shops. He recalled a bookstore where he would hide volumes he couldn't afford in

materials are just so wonderful and unique." The collection has grown so much since Temple acquired it 25 years ago that it moved into a larger space on campus this month.

Blockson, 74, is a historian, lecturer and author who began amassing his collection as

James Weldon Johnson and a biography of George Washington Carver.

Blockson worked as a teacher beginning in 1970. About 13 years later, he gave his collection to Temple and began serving as its curator.

Blockson also recently donated thousands of items to the Penn State library, which plans to open the Charles L. Blockson Room in April.



Charles Blockson

His continual collecting and research helped him become an expert on the Underground Railroad; he wrote several books, lectured around the world and met historical figures including Rosa Parks, Langston Hughes and Malcolm X.

Today, the Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection at Temple University contains more than 30,000 historical items, some dating to

Roundtable Discussion Looks Back at 1968

'You Say You Want a Revolution'

It was the year both Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy were assassinated; the

city of Chicago was in chaos as riots broke out at the Democratic National Convention; media coverage of the Tet Offensive brought out the realities of the Vietnam War; and the Civil Rights Movement gained momentum with sit-ins and riots.

The Mt. Hood Community College Historian's Roundtable "1968: You Say You Want a Revolution?" will be taking a personal approach to the events of 1968 through the eyes of those who experienced it firsthand.

During this compelling presentation you will hear from MHCC Dean Kim Freeman who was stranded in a Tallahassee, Fla. motel by rioting after Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination. Doug Sweet, director of KMHD radio station, will discuss his work as a civilian contractor in Da Nang (South Vietnam), where he witnessed the Tet Offensive; instructor Scarlett Saavedra will relate her experience while attending Dr. King's funeral in Atlanta, Ga. MHCC student Holly Mulcahey will explain what it was like when she was living in Los Angeles and Robert Kennedy was assassinated.

The Historian's Roundtable "1968: You Say You Want a Revolution?" is free and open to the public. It will be held on Thursday, March 6, from noon to 1 p.m. in Room AC1710.

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