The Philadelphia Inquirer

NEWS

Charles Blockson dedicated his life to collecting Black history. Here are 23 notable items from the archive.

Charles Blockson, curator emeritus of the Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection at Temple University Libraries, died this month at 89.



News cameras jostle for position as Martin Luther King Jr. speaks to a crowd at 40th and Lancaster Avenue in August 1965, as part of his Freedom Now tour. ... **Read more**

John W. Mosley Photographic Collection, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries

by Rachel Molenda
Published Jun. 22, 2023, 4:59 p.m. ET

Charles Blockson, curator emeritus of the Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection at Temple University Libraries and the Charles L. Blockson Collection of African-Americana and the African Diaspora at Penn State University Libraries, died earlier this month at 89.

The renowned historian made it his life's mission to collect and showcase Black history after a teacher told him Black people had no history and only had the purpose of serving white people.

Temple University, and has become a resource for the Temple and North Philadelphia communities.

» READ MORE: Charles L. Blockson, celebrated historian of African American culture, scholar, and prolific author, has died at 89

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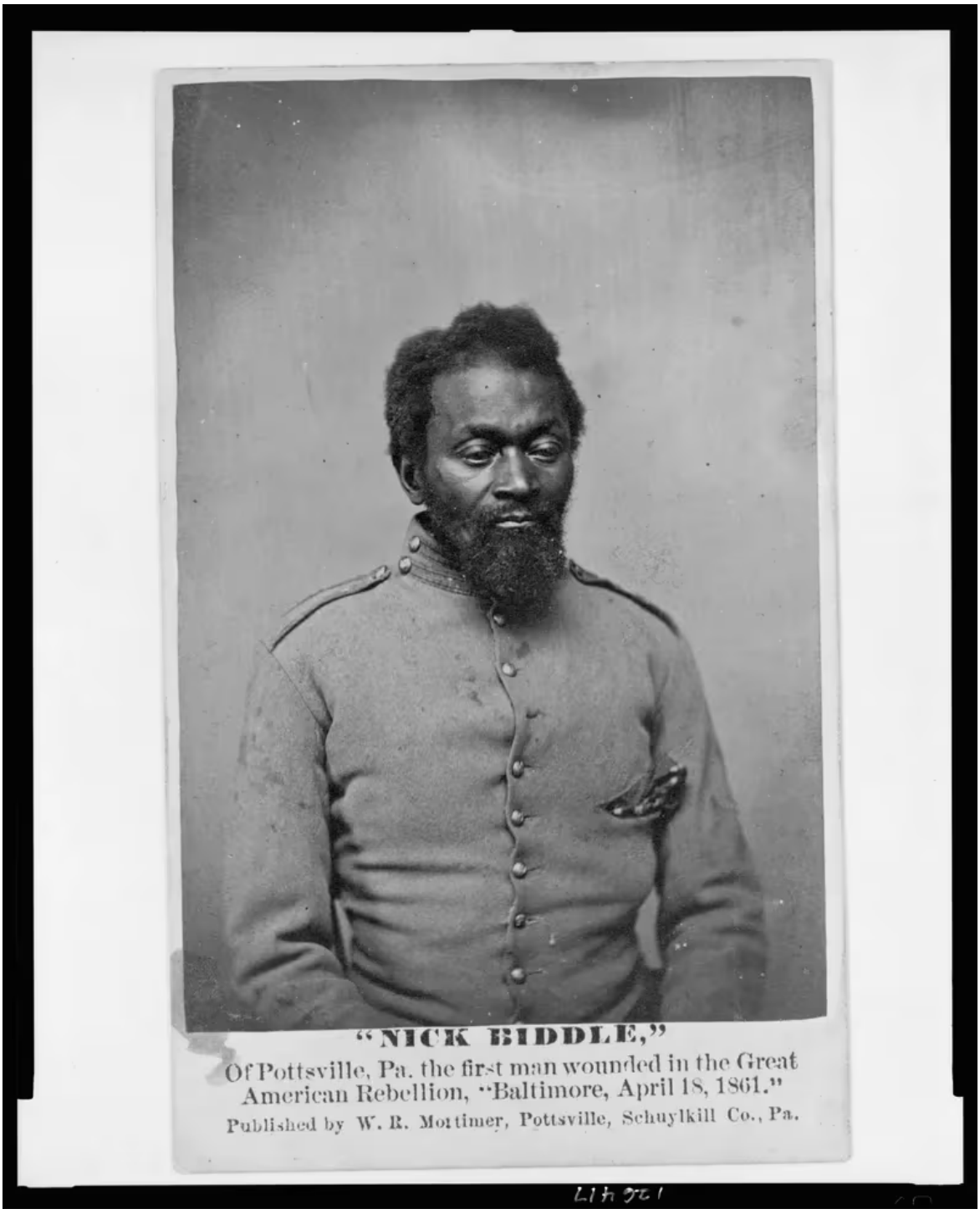
Here are some of the most notable images and items housed in the collection, which is open to the public every weekday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.





Stephen Smith used his company rail cars to transport enslaved people seeking freedom as part of the Underground Railroad. ... **Read more**

Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries



Nicholas Biddle, of Pottsville, "the first man wounded in the Great American Rebellion." Pictured in Baltimore on April 18, 1861. ... **Read more**

Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries



A handkerchief owned by Harriet Tubman. Photographed by Joseph Aaron Campbell. Blockson donated a collection of Tubman's items to the Smithsonian National Museum of African American Histor ... **Read more**

Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Charles L. Blockson





A young Ruth Wright Hayre (left) pauses during a tea. Hayre, who died in 1998 at age 87, was a towering figure in the history of the Philadelphia School District. She was its first African American higl ... **Read more**

John W. Mosley Photographic Collection, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries



The National Alliance of Postal Employees assemble in front of the Pyramid Club on Girard Avenue in 1940. Founded in 1937, the Pyramid Club was the leading social club for African American professic ... **Read more**

John W. Mosley Photographic Collection, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries





PHILADELPHIA STARS 1944

The 1944 team photo of the Philadelphia Stars of the Negro National League with manager and co-owner Ed Bolden (center). The club, which captured its only Negro League championship in 1934, w ... **Read more**

John W. Mosley Photographic Collection, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries



Jackie Robinson, of the Brooklyn Dodgers, during a 1947 game at North Philadelphia's Shibe Park.

John W. Mosley Photographic Collection, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries





Singer Billie Holiday jokes backstage with Cornfield of the nationally known “Cornfield and Biscuit” comedy team. ... **Read more**

John W. Mosley Photographic Collection, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries





Big Band leader, jazz pianist, and composer Count Basie performs for servicemen at the South Broad Street USO in 1943. ... **Read more**

John W. Mosley Photographic Collection, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries



Sam Evans, the patriarch of Philadelphia's African American political establishment, plays possum with children during a picnic in Fairmount Park during the mid-1940s. ... **Read more**

John W. Mosley Photographic Collection, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries



Students learn tailoring during a class at Mr. Long's Trade School on Aug. 21, 1950.

John W. Mosley Photographic Collection, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries





Portrait of Dox Thrash by an unidentified photographer, c. 1950.
Courtesy Blockson Afro-American Collection



In the 1950s, the Philadelphia Cotillion Society invited Black Philadelphians from all walks of life to the Cotillion Quadrille, an extravagant public event that showcased the private lives of the city's A· ... **Read more**
John W. Mosley Photographic Collection, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries



In a photo from the 1950s, singer Ella Fitzgerald prepares in her backstage dressing room for a performance. ... **Read more**

John W. Mosley Photographic Collection, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries





Bishop Charles M. “Sweet Daddy” Grace, who in 1926 founded the United House of Prayer for All People Evangelical Church in a Charlotte, N.C., storefront, paraded through the Philadelphia streets ... **Read more**

John W. Mosley Photographic Collection, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University





The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. went to Chicken Bone Beach when he was in Atlantic City ... **Read more**

John Mosley Collection, Courtesy Charles L. Blockson Afro American Collection, Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia, Pa.



Sunbathers stroll along Kentucky Avenue in Atlantic City in the 1950s.

John W. Mosley Photographic Collection, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries





Sammy Davis Jr. picnicking with friends and admirers at Chicken Bone Beach.
Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries





Opera contralto Marian Anderson (left) and film actress Grace Kelly (right), two Philadelphia-born international stars, chat during an event in 1957. ... **Read more**

John W. Mosley Photographic Collection, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries





Cecil B. Moore and Daisy Bates at the 1964 Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City.

Photo Credit: John Mosley Collection, Courtesy Charles L. Blockson Afro American Collection, Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia, Pa.



Issues of Jet magazine in the Blockson Collection.

Jessica Griffin / Staff Photographer





John Lewis at the 1964 Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City.

John W. Mosley Photographic Collection, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries



John W. Mosley Photographic Collection, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, Temple University Libraries

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Rachel Molenda
I oversee the use of images online and in special projects.

TRENDING IN PHILLY

How Ocean City's taxpayers paid $20 million for vacant lots that were supposed to cost $9 million

A snow advisory for 2 to 5 inches is posted for early Saturday across the Philly region

A big potential issue for the Phillies, two names to solve it, and other thoughts

Shaquille O'Neal believes the Sixers are 'done' following Joel Embiid's knee injury

Don't miss these back-to-back Philly beer festivals

SOCCER/UNION



MLS's new anti-discrimination policy focuses on more than just suspensions

last fall symbolizes what it wants to do.

Jonathan Tannenwald Feb 15, 2024

SPORTS BETTING COVERAGE PROVIDED BY ACTION NETWORK



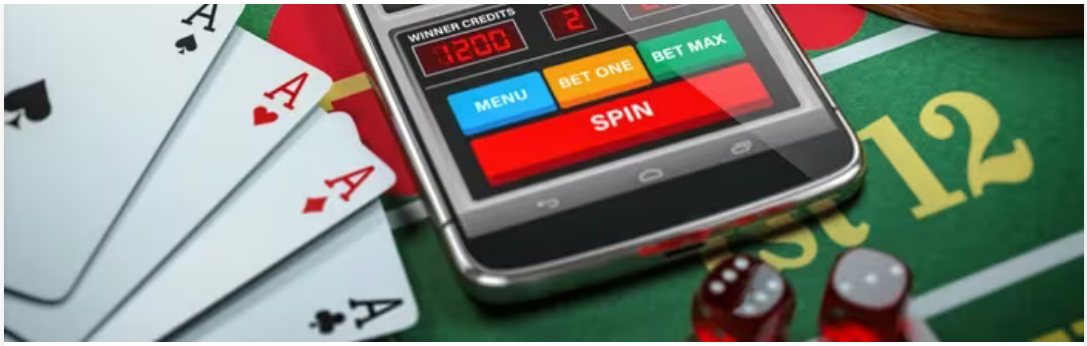
High 5 Casino Promo Code | February 2024

High 5 Casino is a social casino offering a huge assortment of games and a strong promotion for new users! Read on to learn how you can score 250 Gold Coins, 5 Sweeps Coins, and 600 Diamonds today!

Nick Goodling, The Action Network Feb 15, 2024

ONLINE CASINOS





PA Online Casinos: Best Pennsylvania Gambling Apps & Sites - February 2024

The top welcome offers, apps, promotions, and more from the best PA online casinos are in this guide for players in the Keystone State.

Sam Wilkins, The Action Network Feb 12, 2024

SPORTS BETTING COVERAGE PROVIDED BY ACTION NETWORK



Bet on Flyers as home favorites against Coyotes in Monday night's matchup

Check out our betting preview for Monday's NHL game between the

MUSIC



Pierre Robert's heaven: A nice queenly brunch followed by coffee at Rittenhouse Square

The WMMR rock jock, who's been a staple on the Philly airwaves for four decades, needs your Chinese food recs.

Dan DeLuca Feb 13, 2024

ST. JOE'S





St. Joe's women reach a new high in a blowout win over Dayton

The Hawks improved to 23-2, the best start across 25 games in program history. They reached two other milestones as well.

Mia Messina Feb 15, 2024

NEWS

Delco community release balloons in memory of Le family killed in East Lansdowne

People gather for a balloon release organized by Nakalya's Le's

NEWS

Delaware County DA Jack Stollsteimer updates public on standoff, fire in East Lansdowne

Two officers were taken to Penn Presbyterian Medical Center in stable condition after responding to a call on Lewis Avenue in East Lansdowne.

Ellie Rushing Feb 7, 2024

INQUIRER MORNING NEWSLETTER





Readying Philly's historic sites for America's big birthday | Morning Newsletter

Our lead story today focuses on Philadelphia's plans to spruce up its historic sites in anticipation of America's 250th birthday bash in 2026. And we'll also cover the ever-clearer job status of Eagle

Tommy Rowan Jan 23, 2024

INQUIRER MORNING NEWSLETTER



What could be next for I-95 | Morning Newsletter

Ashley Hoffman Jan 22, 2024

INQUIRER MORNING NEWSLETTER



Cherelle Parker talks week 1 | Morning Newsletter

Today we go inside the mayor's office where Cherelle Parker's settling into Philly's highest seat.

Ashley Hoffman Jan 8, 2024

CLOUT





Cherelle Parker's inauguration included an awkward shout-out and high-profile scuffle; Joe Biden comes to town

"I'm not sure if it's true, but someone told me that we have Mayor Eric Adams from New York here," Parker said. "Wherever you are, hello Mr. Mayor."

Chris Brennan Jan 5, 2024

INQUIRER MORNING NEWSLETTER



Philly has a new mayor and top cop | Morning Newsletter

first appointment yesterday our new top cop, Kevin S. Bethe

Ashley Hoffman Jan 3, 2024

INQUIRER MORNING NEWSLETTER



🍪The annual holiday edition | Morning Newsletter

Holiday bar, agave and staff recommendations for fun things to do in Philly.

Ashley Hoffman Dec 20, 2023

PHILLY TIPS





From Pitbull to SNACKTIME, say goodbye to 2023 with one of these Philly New Year's Eve parties

Here's your guide to NYE events in Philly.

Hira Qureshi Dec 18, 2023

PHILLY TIPS



Where to do the polar bear plunge in the Philly area

Icy dips in Harrisburg, Philadelphia, the Jersey Shore, and more.

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