



# Catalogue of the Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, a Unit of the Temple University Library

*Charles L. Blockson*

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'My main goal in life is to build a good library of Black history-knowledge is a form of Black power and this is my part in it', stated Charles L. Blockson, curator of these extensive holdings in African-Americana. Temple University's Blockson Collection is comprised of materials that date from 1581 to the present. It is among the largest collection of items relating to the African Diaspora experience and this is the first catalog by an African-American bibliophile to be published by a major university. The massive volume records approximately 11,000 entries and includes more than a dozen photographs. Determined to prove that people of African descent had heroes and a great historical past, Blockson began his lifelong passion for collecting while researching the underground railroad throughout the United States and Canada. Over forty-five years, he has acquired a variety of historical artifacts printed books, pamphlets, addresses and speeches, art catalogs, newspapers, periodicals, manuscripts, broadsides, handbills, lithographs, tape recordings, stamps, coins, maps, oil paintings, and sculpture that all relate to African, African-American, and Caribbean life and history. In his Preface to this volume, Blockson comments, 'It has long been my conviction that no race of people should be deprived of the knowledge of itself and that libraries are the soul of a nation'. Scholars from all over the world, indeed, anyone who is interested in the rich cultural heritage of African-Americans, will welcome this long-awaited and much-needed resource. Charles L. Blockson, Curator of the Blockson Afro-American Collection at Temple University, is the author of several books, including "The Underground Railroad: First Person Narratives". Dorothy Porter Wesley is Librarian Emeritus of the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University.

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