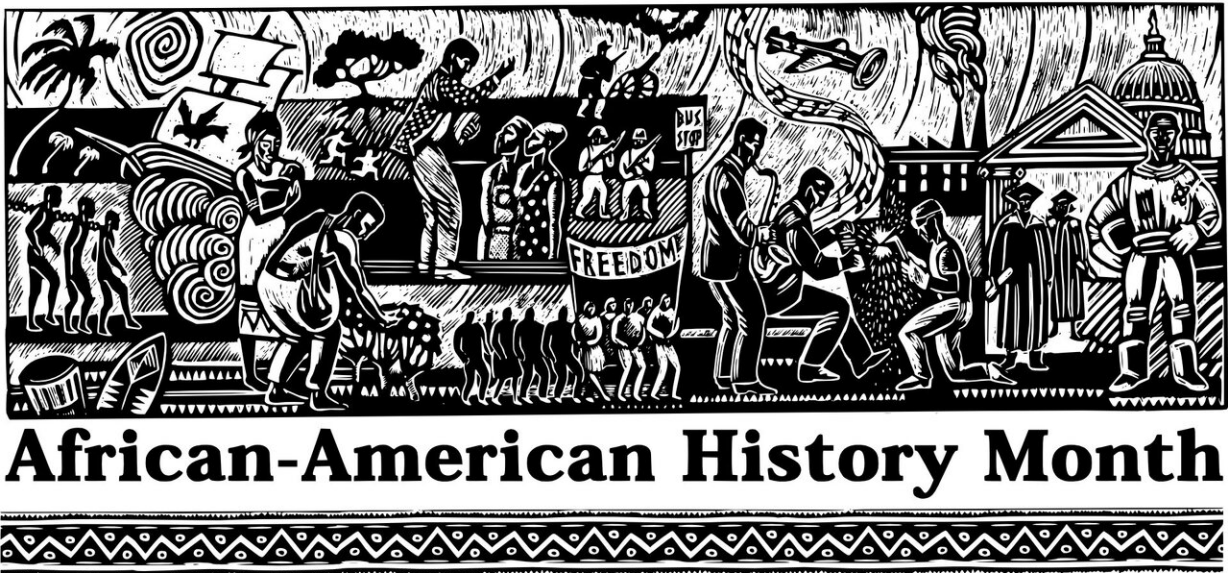


# Black history month is not just a time to celebrate marches and martyrs

January 31 2020



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February 1st marks the start of Black History Month. While many people are familiar with iconic figures such as Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks and Harriet Tubman, there are many other lesser known African-Americans, whose achievements should also be recognized.

Black Quotidian—an archive of digitized African-American newspaper content, introduces audiences to the lives of everyday African-

Americans and events that are often missing from textbooks or Black History celebrations.

This free, open-access multimedia archive features 1,000 media objects, including scanned articles from over a dozen African-American newspapers, audio clips and videos from moments in history spanning from the 1900s to 1980s. The content was published as a digital project by the Stanford University Press in fall 2019.

Matthew F. Delmont, the Sherman Fairchild Distinguished Professor of History at Dartmouth, first developed the idea for Black Quotidian when Black Lives Matter went global in 2016. "It was exciting to watch the Black Lives Matter movement gain international traction but at the same time, it was disheartening to see how the police shootings of black people was dominating the narrative of black lives," explained Delmont.

"I wanted people to understand that black lives are about more than marches and martyrs. Black lives are not just heroic and tragic figures that we read about in the news or in history," he added. "There's a joyous complexity and diversity of everyday black lives and communities that many people may not have heard of before, and Black Quotidian strives to introduce people to those stories."

To bring attention to other moments in black history, which extended beyond "videos of the violent killings that were circulating on social media" at the time, from January 2016 to January 2017, Delmont tweeted each day about at least one black newspaper article from that date in history. While he wrote most of the posts, he also featured guest posts by scholars and some of his students. After the year had passed, Delmont had amassed a collection of stories about ordinary black people and lives, which paved the way for the creation of Black Quotidian.

Black Quotidian shares the legacies of many African-Americans, who are notable in their own way, including the following trailblazers:

- Bowler Juanita Blocker, who averaged 185 per game, was the "first black member of the Professional Women's Bowling Association." She wrote a column, "Bowling Around L.A.," which ran regularly in the Los Angeles Sentinel; a scanned copy of her column from Feb. 20, 1969 is featured on the site.
- Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm was not only the first black woman elected to U.S. Congress but was also the "first black woman to run for president as a major party candidate." This announcement was publicized in the New York Amsterdam News on Jan. 29, 1972.
- Basketball and tennis star, Ora Washington, from Philadelphia, Penn., was one of the stars of the "national champion Philadelphia Tribune Girls basketball team" (1932-43), as reported by the Norfolk Journal and Guide on March 31, 1934. She also won the American Tennis Association's national singles title eight times in the 1930s.

"While history and heritage months are terrific in promoting the breadth of diversity in the U.S., black [history](#) shouldn't be something that we only focus on in February but should be a 365-day thing," added Delmont.

**More information:** Black Quotidian: [blackquotidian.org/](http://blackquotidian.org/)

Provided by Dartmouth College

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