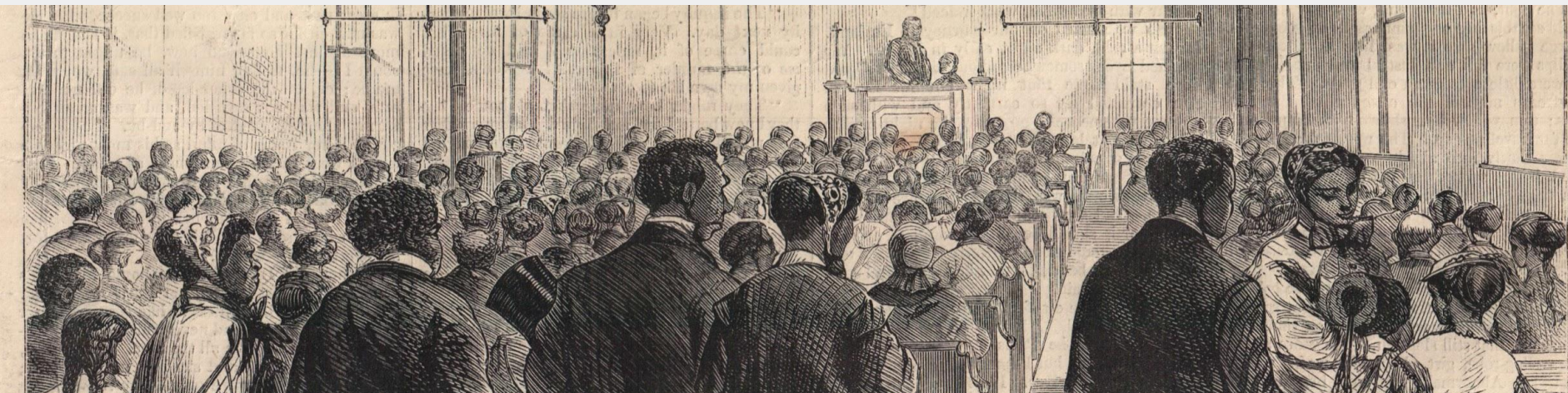


# To Organize, Organize, ORGANIZE: the Colored Conventions, Then and Now



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November 8, 2016  
Digital Dialogues  
MITH, UMD

# Colored Conventions Project



Working Groups

Exhibits

Digital Archives

Transcribe Minutes

Database

Grants

Social Media

Community/Church Outreach

Project Management

Site Migration

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# Colored Conventions Project

## WHAT DID THEY EAT? WHERE DID THEY STAY? BLACK BOARDINGHOUSES AND THE COLORED CONVENTIONS MOVEMENT

### Introduction

During the nineteenth century, thousands of African Americans traveled to attend state and national Colored Conventions. While a great deal of scholarship on the Colored Conventions focuses on political activity occurring on the Convention floor, Psyche Williams-Forson's essay "What Did They Eat? Where Did They Stay?: Interpreting the Material Culture of Black Women's Domestic Work and Labor in the Context of the Colored Conventions," prompts us to look beyond the convention hall. Overall, this exhibit offers viewers exposure to alternate spaces and forms of political activism during the conventions movement. In this way, she prompts us to consider a broader spectrum of political engagement encompassing the work of women within home.



"Where we ate, Where we slept" in [Album of 35 Snapshots of Washington, D.C. Monuments and Landmarks, July 5-15, 1896], 30-31. Courtesy of the Randolph Linsly Simpson African-American Collection. James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection in the Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Home

Where Did They Travel From?

Where Did They Stay? About Black Boardinghouses

Where Did They Stay? Inside the Boardinghouse

What Did They Eat? Mrs. Amie Long's Menu

"Humility of Things"

Biographies

Conclusions

## Hybrid scholarship as a process

Traditional essay collection:  
*The Colored Conventions in the Nineteenth Century and the Digital Age*

Student-faculty partners co-create online exhibits

Exhibits share materials from licensed databases by *Gale* and *Accessible Archives*



# Colored Conventions Project

## TRANSCRIBE MINUTES

New to transcribing?

Logged in as [Jccasey](#) ([logout](#)) | [About the Project](#) | [Advanced Instructions](#) | [Why do you transcribe?](#) | [Top Transcribers](#)

In the following pages, you will find PDF images and machine-generated transcriptions of historical documents. Correct the machine-generated transcriptions so they match the actual text from the PDF images.

 <p>1831, "Minutes and Proceedings of the First Annual Convention of the People of..."</p>	 <p>1834, "Address to the Fourth Annual Convention of the Free People of Color..."</p>	 <p>1840, "Minutes of the State Convention of Colored Citizens, Held at Albany, on..."</p>
 <p>1841, "Proceedings of the State Convention of the Colored Freemen of Pennsylvania, Held..."</p>	 <p>1843, "Minutes of the Union Temperance Convention of the Colored Citizens : of..."</p>	 <p>1844, "Minutes of the fifth annual convention of the colored citizens of the..."</p>
 <p>1851, "Proceedings for the North American Convention held in Toronto, Canada, 1851," Toronto,..."</p>	 <p>1851, "Address to the Constitutional Convention of Ohio from the State Convention of..."</p>	 <p>1853, "Proceedings of the Colored national convention, held in Rochester, July 6th, 7th,..."</p>
 <p>1853, "Official proceedings of the Ohio State Convention of Colored Freemen : held..."</p>	 <p>1853, "Minutes and proceedings of the General Convention for the Improvement of the..."</p>	 <p>1854, "Memorial of John Mercer Langston for Colored People of Ohio to General..."</p>
 <p>1854, "Proceedings of the National Emigration Convention of Colored People Held at..."</p>	 <p>1863, "Record of action of the convention held at Poughkeepsie, N.Y., July 15th..."</p>	 <p>1864, "Proceedings of the National Convention of Colored Men; held in the City..."</p>

Transcribe Minutes

Participatory preservation

Community partners

Class sprint projects

→ CCP Corpus

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# Colored Conventions, 1830-1900



## 300+ Colored Conventions

- 201 state conventions
- 51 national conventions
- Dozens of regional, emigration, Canadian and organizational conventions
- 230 postbellum conventions
- Totals unknown

"The Colored National Convention held at Nashville, April 5, 6, and 7." *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*. May 6, 1876, courtesy Schomburg Center.

# National Conventions in the Antebellum Era

**1829** - Ohio exclusionary law coerces thousands of Black people to leave state. Spurs Black leaders in free states towards collective action.

**1830** - African Methodist Episcopal Church founder, Rev. Richard Allen and peers launch inaugural 1830 National Colored Convention at Mother Bethel Church.

**1831-1835** - Annual national conventions reflect focus on “temperance, education and economy” as leading platforms for uplift. New York City and Philadelphia hubs for convention events and activism.

**1836** - After 1835 convention vote, delegate William Whipper establishes American Moral Reform Society.

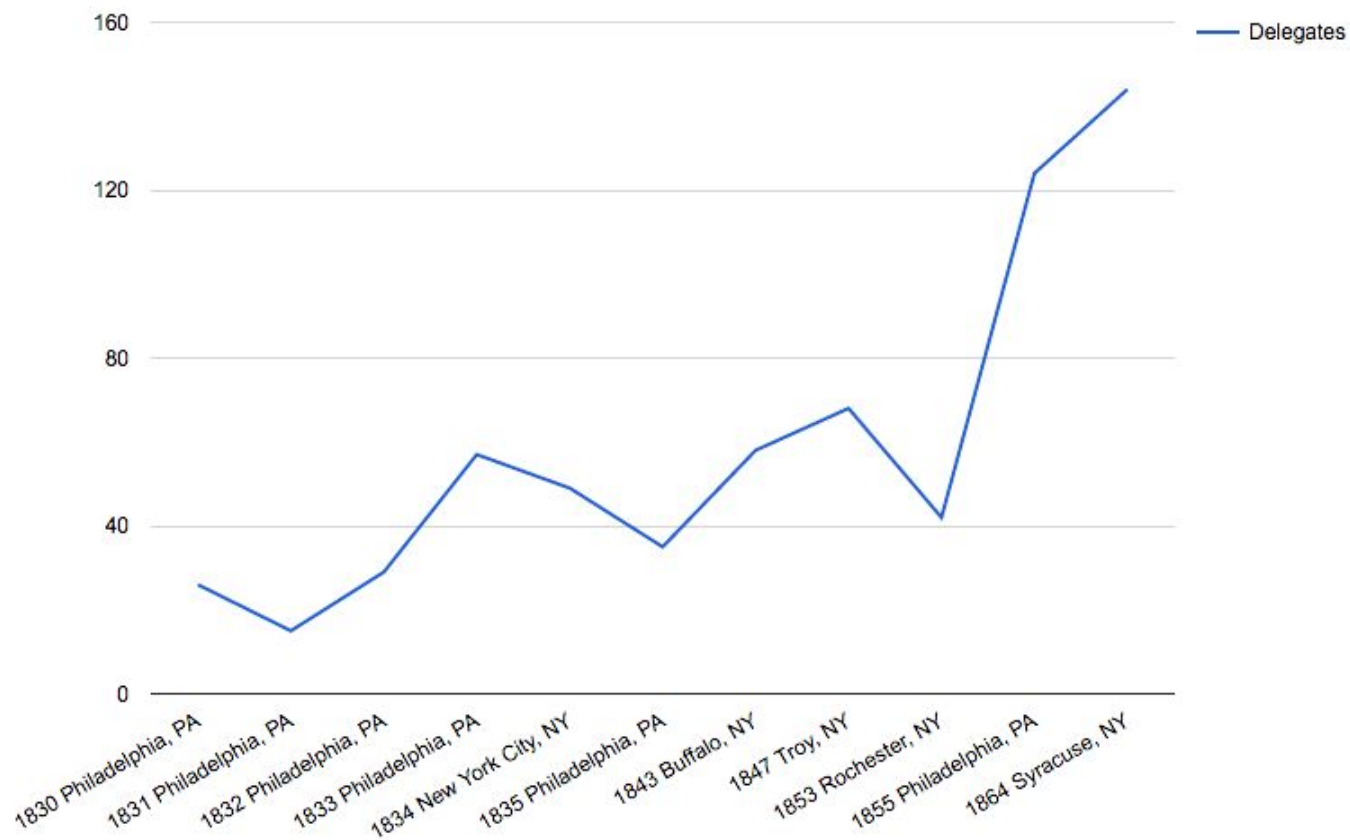
**1843** - National conventions convene after eight-year hiatus. Delegates such as Frederick Douglass, Henry Highland Garnett and William Wells Brown wield the power of the press and the pulpit to campaign for civil rights.

**1847-1855** - Five conventions held before Civil War, including two conventions in Ohio.





## Delegate Attendance Trends at National Colored Conventions, 1830 – 1864



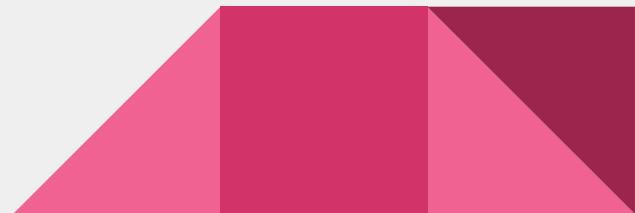


# Organize, Organize, ORGANIZE!

Concepts and challenges:

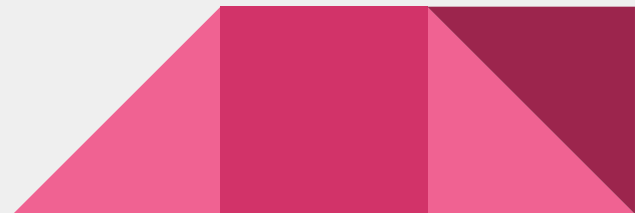
Organizing historic data connected to the 19th century

Organizing across communities, disciplines & systems

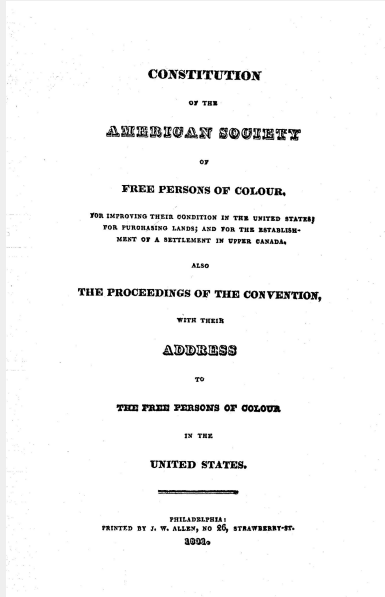


# Cataloging Convention Literature

- Convention literature is mediated by history and scholarly editions
  - Speeches
  - Reprinted newspaper content
  - Census-style reports
  - Petitions and memorials
  - Liberty songs
  - Footnotes



# Organizing data about the 19th century: Collections



National Convention (1830)  
Philadelphia, PA



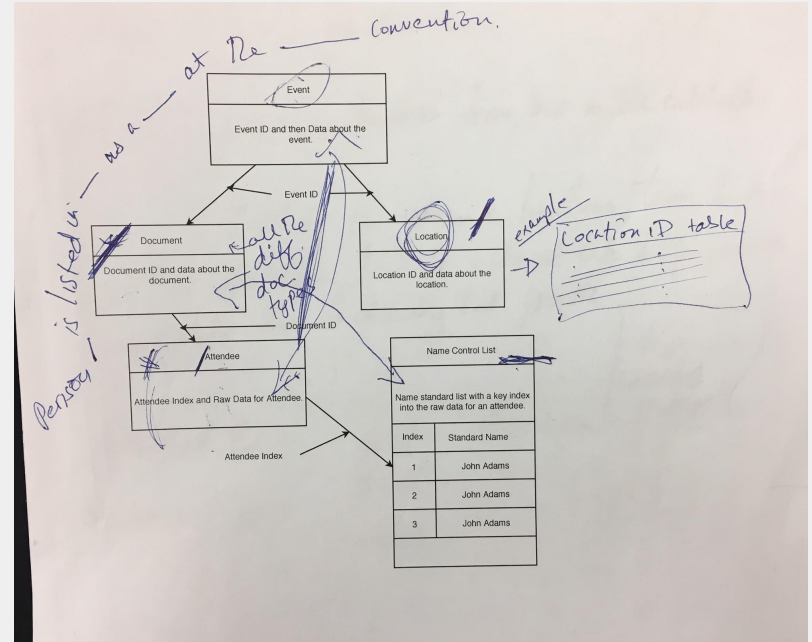
Regional Convention (1868)  
Baltimore, MD



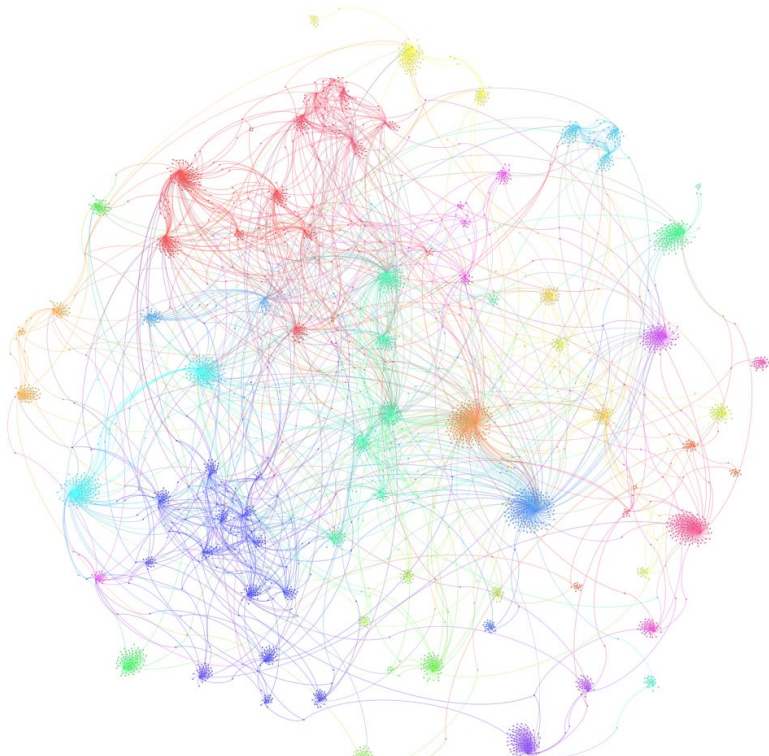
State Convention (1889)  
Galveston, TX

# Organizing data about the 19th century: Convention Database (CoDa)

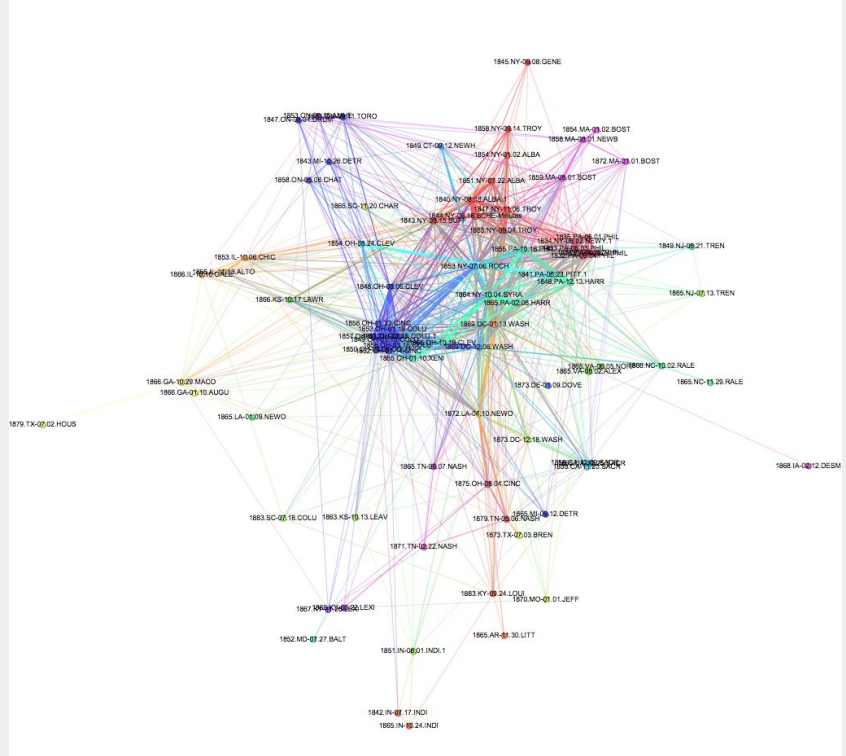
Places—Events—Docs



# Organizing data about the 19th century: CoDa on Social Networks of Black Activism



Conventions & Delegates, 1830-83



Conventions by shared delegates, 1830-83

# CoDa Challenges

Forgotten / Authorities William Johnson

Racist Violence

“Several of the delegates...were not present, having gone home in consequence of the disturbances on Monday afternoon.” –1852, *Maryland Free Colored People’s Convention*

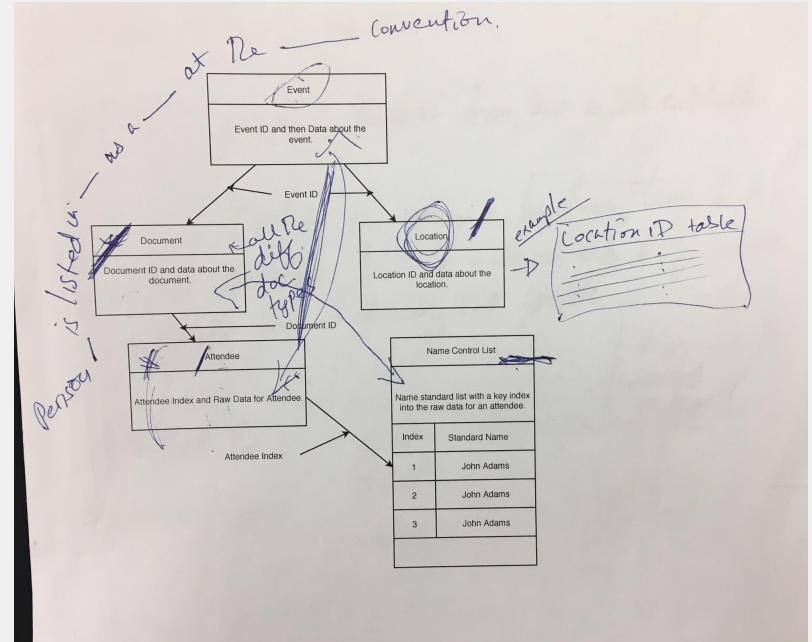
Collective Anonymous

“the Ladies of Sacramento”  
“One Hundred Ladies”  
“Ladies’ Hall”  
“Women of New Bedford”  
“the ladies”



# Organizing data about the 19th century: Convention Database (CoDa)

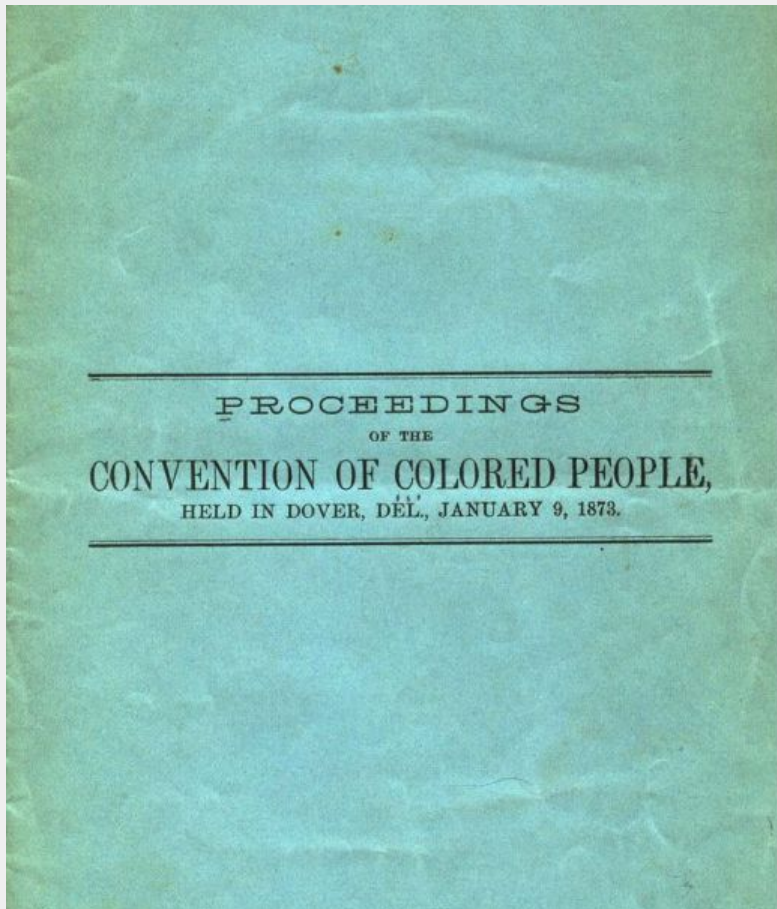
## Convention Name Index



Cultural  
Criticism +  
Gender  
in Digital  
Production

- Mediation
- Containment
- Attribution

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Courtesy of the Delaware Historical Society

Frances E. W. Harper

1873 convention speaker



# Collaborative Knowledge Production

“Dialogue further requires an intense faith in humankind, faith in their power to make and remake, to create and re-create, faith in their vocation to be more fully human (which is not the privilege of an elite, but the birthright of all). Faith in people is an a priori requirement for dialogue; the ‘dialogical [person]’ believes in others even before meet[ing] them face to face.”

-Paolo Friere, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*



# COLORE

## BRINGING NINETEENTH

A Brief Introduction to the Movement

What Did They Eat? Where Did They Stay?

Black Wealth and the 1843 Convention

African American Women's Economic Power

The First National Convention

The "Conventions" of the Conventions: Political Rituals and Traditions

Maps

Tables

# CONVENTIONS

## BRINGING NINETEENTH



[Home](#) > Exhibits

## EXHIBITS

Project's online exhibits draw upon its collections to complement and extend about the cultural histories and materials connected to Black organizing in the information, view supplemental lists of [Maps](#) and [Tables](#).

### The Colored Conventions Movement, 1830-1890s

Colored Conventions Movement? Read a document that complements the following the first Colored Convention? What were the prominent topics or debate? How are Black women connected to



# National Teaching Partners in Fall 2016



Benjamin Fagan, Auburn University

Selena Sanderfer, Western Kentucky Univ.

Anna Mae Duane, University of Connecticut

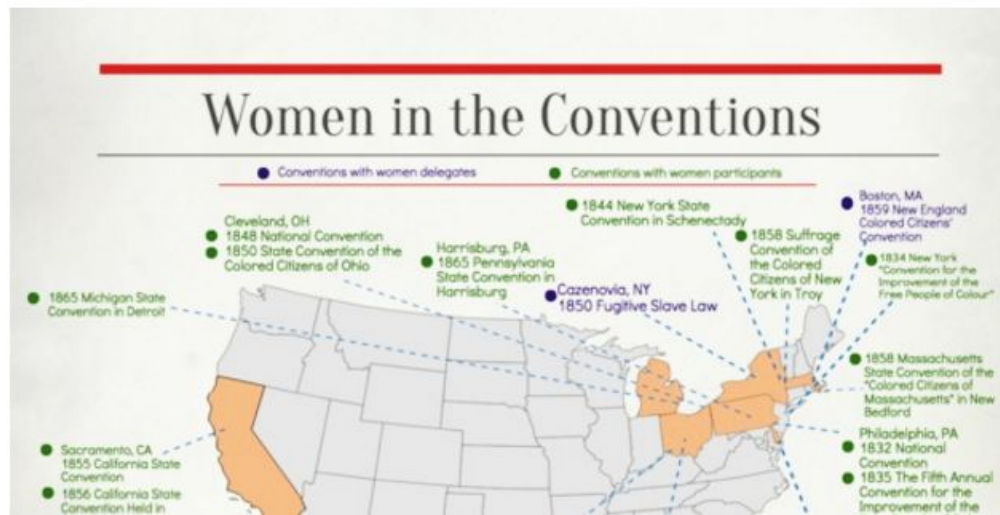
Monica Mercado, Colgate University

# AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN'S ECONOMIC POWER AND THE 1830S COLORED CONVENTIONS IN PHILADELPHIA

## Interactive Visualizations: Places and Women Participants

**Figure 1.** The illustration below shows women's attendance in Colored Conventions from 1832 to 1859. While this exhibit focuses on the 1830s conventions, it is important to note that the desire of the women in this exhibit to privilege their voice and experience were passed on to succeeding generations.

For further reading about women's participation in conventions, visit the exhibit, [The "Conventions" of Conventions: Political Rituals and Traditions.](#)



Home

Interactive Map of the  
Community

Boarding Houses: Sites of  
Black Intellectual Production

Dressmakers and Milliners:  
Black Women's Contribution  
to the Community's Mobility

Bakeries: Feeding  
Delegates and Fostering  
Charity in the Community

Traveling Delegates

Interactive Visualizations:  
Places and Women  
Participants

Daughters and

# Boarders and their Attendance in Philadelphia Conventions held in 1830s

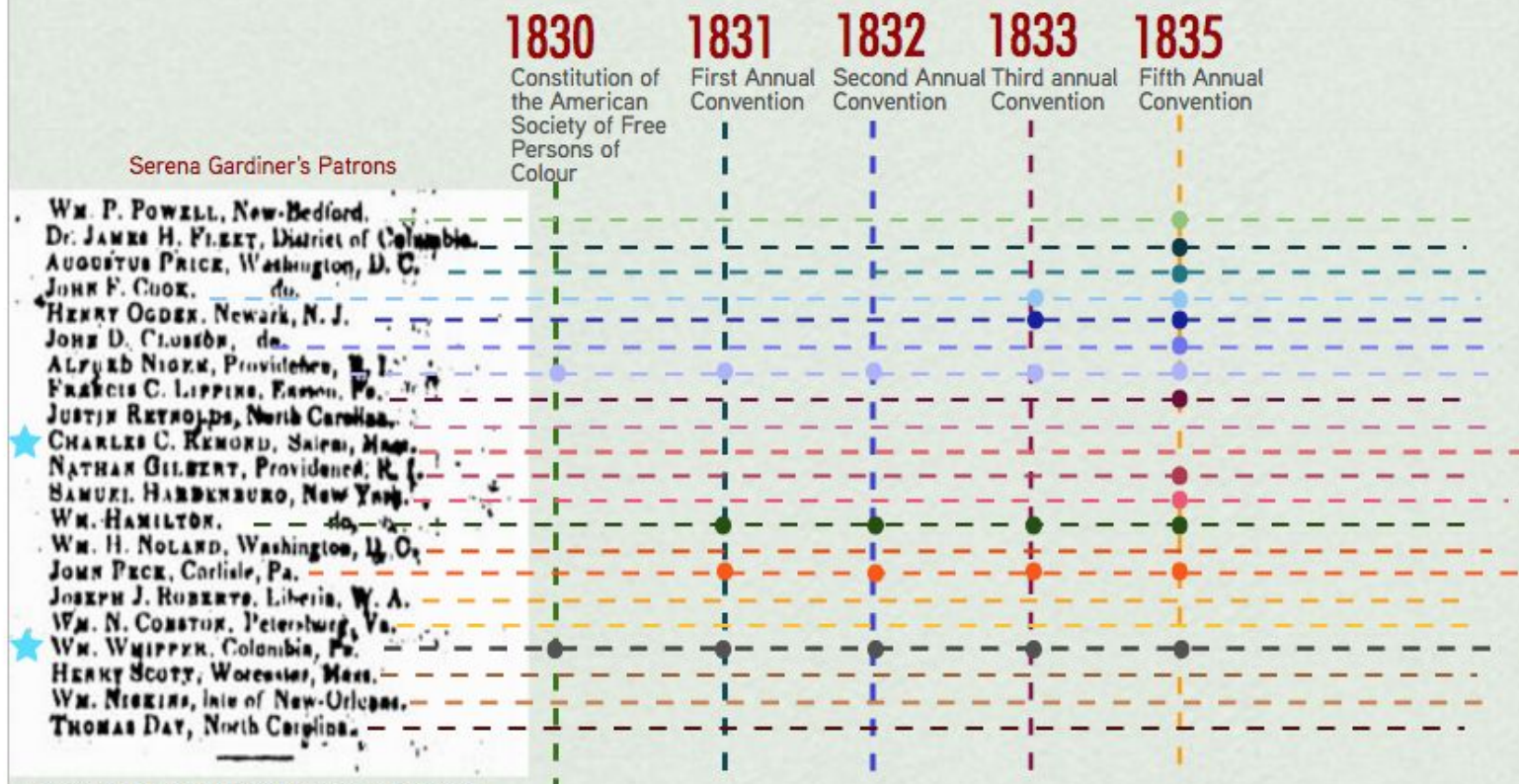


Table made using PiktoChart

"A Card." *The Liberator*. (Boston, MA), Jul. 11. 1835. Accessible Archives. Mar. 29, 2016.

Color-coded dots indicate each individual's attendance



# On Datasets - CCP Student MOU

I am aware that the CCP team reserves the right to revise any and all work on the site in the interest of quality and continuity. \*

Yes


No

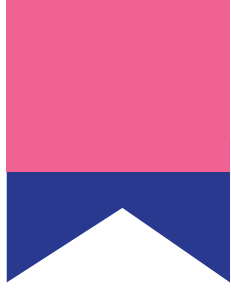
CCP encourages collaborative uses of data sets and visualizations between the project and its partners. I acknowledge that, by contributing data sets, statistics, static and interactive visuals, CCP reserves the right to edit and publish this content as owner. I will inform CCP if I do not desire for my name to be mentioned in attribution and credit lines. \*

I agree.

I do not wish for my name to appear in data attribution.

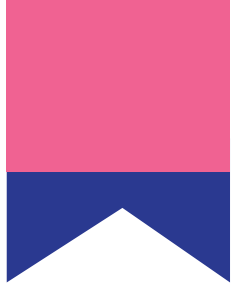
## Digital Tools | *ColoredConventions.org*

- Google Document Viewer
  - Google Slides
  - Google Fusion Tables
  - Timeline
  - NeatlineTime / OpenStreetMap
  - StorymapJS
  - *Canvas.com*
  - PiktoChart
  - Voyant
- 



# Next Steps | The Colored Conventions Movement

- Distinguishing between the Abolition and Colored Conventions movements
- Recovering Black women intellectual-activists' contributions
- Illuminating the longer history of Black activism and mass movements for social change in U.S. history



# Next Steps | The Colored Conventions Project

- How does it count?
- Balancing our critical aims & access points in larger discovery systems
- Who gets to participate in that work? Who is it for?
- Cross-project conversations?

**And so  
much more**

<b>#BlkTwitterstorians</b>	<b>Black Quotidian</b>	<b>Race and Slavery Petitions Project</b>
<b>2016 NEH-ODH IATH: Space and Place in Africana/Black Studies</b>	<b>Colored Conventions Project</b>	<b>Slave Revolt in Jamaica, 1760-1761</b>
<b>AADHUM Synergies</b>	<b>Crunk Feminist Collective</b>	<b>Slavery Database</b>
<b>AAIHS</b>	<b>Digital Blackness Conference</b>	<b>Soweto '76 Archive</b>
<b>African Diaspora, Ph.D</b>	<b>Digital Schomburg</b>	<b>Swag Diplomacy/ Black Travel Memoirs</b>
<b>Africana Memoirs: Database of Black Women's Autobiography American</b>	<b>DocSouth</b>	<b>The Haiti Lab</b>
<b>Panorama: The Forced Migration of Enslaved People</b>	<b>Early Caribbean Digital Archive</b>	<b>The Ward</b>
<b>Apartheid Heritages: The Spatial History of South Africa's Black Townships</b>	<b>ESSSS Project</b>	<b>Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database</b>
<b>Black Periodical Literature Project Black Press Research Collective</b>	<b>Mapping Black Methodism</b>	<b>TransformDH</b>
	<b>Mapping the Stacks</b>	<b>Umbra</b>
	<b>Negro Travelers' Green Book</b>	<b>Valley of the Shadow</b>
	<b>Race and Place: An Examination of African Americans in Washington, DC from 1800-1954</b>	<b>Virtual Harlem</b>
		<b>Visualizing Emancipation</b>

**Thank you!**

