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

Colored Conventions Project
Sarah Patterson
Jim Casey

@CCP_org
@Sarah_Patterson
@jimccasey1

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
Colored Conventions Project

Values of the CCP
Collaboration
Interdependence
Informal learning spaces
Social justice
Sustainability
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*

http://coloredconventions.org/exhibits/show/williams-forson-exhibit
Colored Conventions Project

Transcribe Minutes

Participatory preservation

Community partners

Class sprint projects

-> CCP Corpus
Colored Conventions Project

Working Groups
Exhibits
Digital Archives
Transcribe Minutes
Database
Grants
Social Media
Community/Church Outreach
Project Management
Site Migration
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.


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.
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
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
The Colored Conventions Movement, 1830-1890s

Colored Conventions Movement? Read a report that complements the following:

what were the prominent topics of 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
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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>First Annual Convention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>Second Annual Convention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1833</td>
<td>Third Annual Convention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>Fifth Annual Convention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Serena Gardiner’s Patrons


Color-coded dots indicate each individual’s attendance.
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
Thank you!