What can writers and activists teach us about our relationship to data? This talk begins with an overview of the data and digital archives created to represent nineteenth-century African American print cultures and activist communities. Among others, data about the Colored Conventions, the Black press, Vigilance Committees, and the Underground Railroad can show the sprawling social networks that surrounded Frederick Douglass and tens of thousands of his contemporaries. Yet these archives also raise many questions about how to contend with missing or incomplete data, or when we hear a mention only in passing of the “Ladies of Harrisburg.” What stories for advancing social justice might we tell with data that is absent, erased, invisible, or illegible? How can our work render these pasts accessible, useful, and open to wider participation?

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LUNCH will be provided with RSVP to sus3@lehigh.edu by January 28