

# **Building Data from Correspondence: A “Collections as Data” Approach**

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# Project Inspiration - Kennecott Miner Records at University of Utah

UTAH COPPER CO. Form 571 NO. 243

EMPLOYMENT CARD

Name Ali Ebrahim Date Employed 4/10/16  
 Address Company House Dependents Cousin N. Ali D.S.

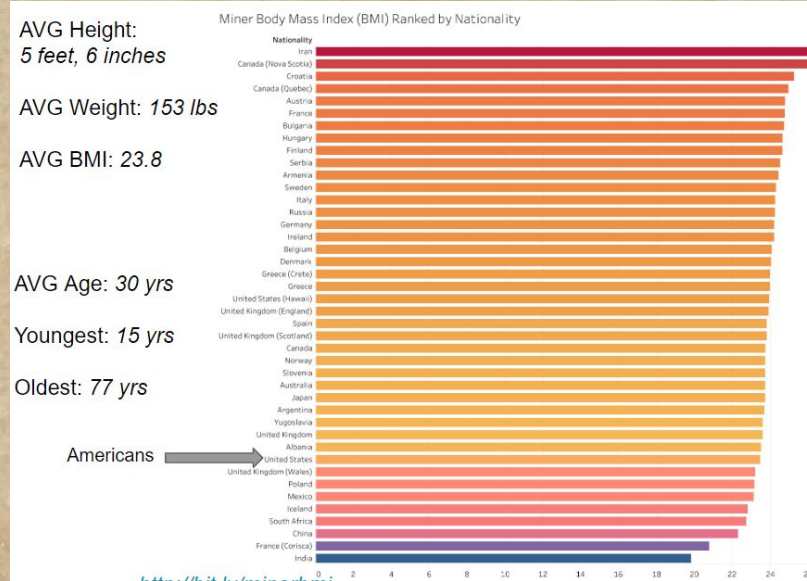
Age 35 Weight 155 Height 5-8 Eyes Brown Hair Black Sex M  
 Nationality Albanian Engaged by Earl

Last Employer Salt Lake Ry. Education 19-07-15-10M


Date	<u>4/10/16</u>		
Dept.	<u>Track Operations</u>		
Occ.	<u>Trackman</u>		
Rate	<u>2.20</u>		
Date			
Dept.			
Occ.			
Rate			

Left Employ - Date 4/27/16 Quit Reason


Approved



Neatrou, A. (2021). Kennecott Copper Mine Labor Records and Collections as Data at the University of Utah. code4lib Conference. <https://osf.io/kwjzc/>.



**What new types of  
research are possible  
with data derived from  
special collections?**



# Who was Alice Dunbar-Nelson?

1875-1935

African-American  
civil rights activist,  
author, educator,  
wife of notable poet  
Paul Laurence  
Dunbar



## Creating the “Basic” Data

Building network data from General Correspondence (Series II)

End goal to visualize Alice’s network which spanned other authors, activists, and prominent African-American figures

Added benefit of item-level metadata for all the letters in the series

# “Basic” Data

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Date_sent	Sender	Sender_loc	Recipient	Recipient_loc	MSS	URL	Index
104	2/28/1906	Robert E. James	New Orleans, LA	Alice Dunbar Nelson	Wilmington, DE	Box 5, F130	https://ud	1906 February
105	3/1/1906	Jessie K. Lane	Woodlawn, IL	Alice Dunbar Nelson	Dayton, OH	Box 5, F131	https://ud	1906 March 1-
106	3/2/1906	E. Miller	Naperville, IL	Alice Dunbar Nelson	Wilmington, DE	Box 5, F131	https://ud	1906 March 1-
107	3/3/1906	T.H. Gibson	Boston, Mass.	Alice Dunbar Nelson	Wilmington, DE	Box 5, F131	https://ud	1906 March 1-
108	3/4/1906	C.A. Fleetwood	Washington, DC	Alice Dunbar Nelson	Wilmington, DE	Box 5, F131	https://ud	1906 March 1-
109	3/10/1906	Sanders?		Alice Dunbar Nelson	Wilmington, DE	Box 5, F131	https://ud	1906 March 1-
110	3/10/1906	J.H. Finley	Dayton, OH	Alice Dunbar Nelson	Wilmington, DE	Box 5, F131	https://ud	1906 March 1-
111	3/10/1906	Samuel A. Roach	Jacksonville	Alice Dunbar Nelson	Wilmington, DE	Box 5, F131	https://ud	1906 March 1-
112	3/11/1906	Park?		Alice Dunbar Nelson	Wilmington, DE	Box 5, F131	https://ud	1906 March 1-
113	3/8/1906	M.V.W.		Alice Dunbar Nelson	Wilmington, DE	Box 5, F131	https://ud	1906 March 1-
114	3/11/1906	C.A. Fleetwood	Washington, DC	Alice Dunbar Nelson	Wilmington, DE	Box 5, F131	https://ud	1906 March 1-
115	3/12/1906	C.A. Fleetwood	Washington, DC	Alice Dunbar Nelson	Wilmington, DE	Box 5, F131	https://ud	1906 March 1-
116	3/13/1906	C.A. Fleetwood	Washington, DC	Alice Dunbar Nelson	Wilmington, DE	Box 5, F132	https://ud	1906 March 13
117	3/13/1906	Mary Sykes	Lyons, NY	Alice Dunbar Nelson	Wilmington, DE	Box 5, F132	https://ud	1906 March 13
118	3/14/1906	Ushers Brotherhood of Phila	Philadelphia, PA	Alice Dunbar Nelson	Wilmington, DE	Box 5, F132	https://ud	1906 March 13
119	3/15/1906	Robert E. Jones	New Orleans, LA	Alice Dunbar Nelson	Wilmington, DE	Box 5, F132	https://ud	1906 March 13
120	3/15/1906	Jas. L. Haley	St. Lous, MO	Alice Dunbar Nelson	Dayton, OH	Box 5, F132	https://ud	1906 March 13
121	3/15/1906	Jas. L. Haley	St. Lous, MO	Alice Dunbar Nelson	Dayton, OH	Box 5, F132	https://ud	1906 March 13
122	3/16/1906	Th...	St. Louis, MO	Alice Dunbar Nelson	Wilmington, DE	Box 5, F132	https://ud	1906 March 13

# Enriching the dataset with historical interpretation

- Research including both physical and digital correspondence
- Using letterheads, names, places, and drawing on other scholars to gain contextual information based on the correspondences
- Using the contextual information to formulate relationship assumptions & themes for the dataset

# More historical research by Brit

## Pros

Working with a Black woman's archive

Collaborating with a digital scholarship librarian to create data for a Black woman's archive

Centering Alice in the work we've created through her correspondences

## Cons

Trying to decipher what was written

Missing information

Digital sometimes can be difficult to work with when it comes to doing historical research

# Example letters

518

100-100-100

If you have no objection it will be a great pleasure to have  
of us to see you and we will. I am sure you will like the  
and the other things. 301 Spruce St., N.W., Washington, D.C.,  
I am glad you are well. I am glad you are well. Aug. 20, 1901,  
My dear Hattie,  
I received your letter and the little "memento" sev-  
more  
eral days ago, and I was so much pleased that you will realize be-  
cause I have delayed so long in answering your letter or in ack-  
nowledging the scarf. I have not been well, plenty of rheumatism  
and malaria, and it seemed to take all the energy out of me, so  
that beyond the regular duties of the day, I had no inclination to  
do another thing. I am not feeling a bit well now, but when your  
letter and program came this morning, I roused myself, feeling a deep  
shame that you should have had to remind me of my duties.

I enjoyed going over the program very much. How I should like  
to hear you sing! I have heard from two or three people beside  
Paul and Rosamond of your lovely voice, and I do hope I shall have  
the pleasure of hearing you sing sometimes. When Rosamond was  
here he sang "The Rosary" for me. I had never heard it before, and  
raved over it, and he said, "You should hear Hattie sing it." And some  
day I hope to.

Mr. Woodward was here last summer and I heard him then for  
the first time. I think he has a lovely voice, so sympathetic and  
expressive. You must make a great pair in your duos.

Paul is quite well and we are staying quietly at home try-  
ing to keep cool as well as we can. Do you think that you are go-



Miss Alice Ruth Moore  
Washington, D.C.

New Orleans Dec 30, 1901

My dear Aunt Alice

I got the box. My  
box is very pretty. Mamma's paper is with  
How is Uncle Paul? How is Uncle Paul for me.  
Miss Hattie's paper is well. Santa Claus has  
got to us. My dear Aunt Alice will you come  
down for Mardi Gras?  
I was seven years old on the 6th.  
I wish you and Uncle Paul a Happy New Year.

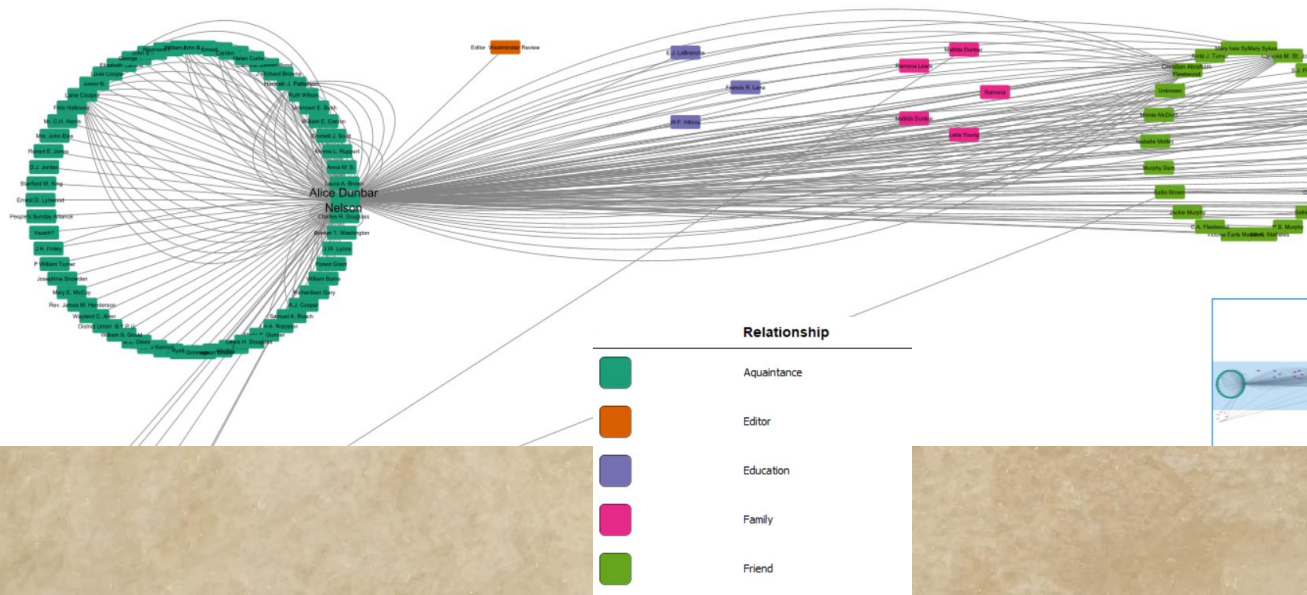
I am yours  
Ramona

19015

# Preliminary Visualizations

Paul Laurence-Dunbar a  
Common Topic  
in Alice's  
Letters

Count of Letters  
1  91



Topic	F
Personal	91
PLD	78
Education	41
Social Work (?)	33
Publication	25
N/A	20
PLD; Publication	12
Publication; Edu..	5
Education; Publi..	4
Personal; Public..	4
Writing	3
Personal; Social ..	2
Personal; Social ..	2
Education; Family	1
Journalism	1
Peronsal; Educat..	1
Personal; Educat..	1
Personal; PLD	1
Personal; Writing	1
Publication: Edu..	1

# Internal Buy-in

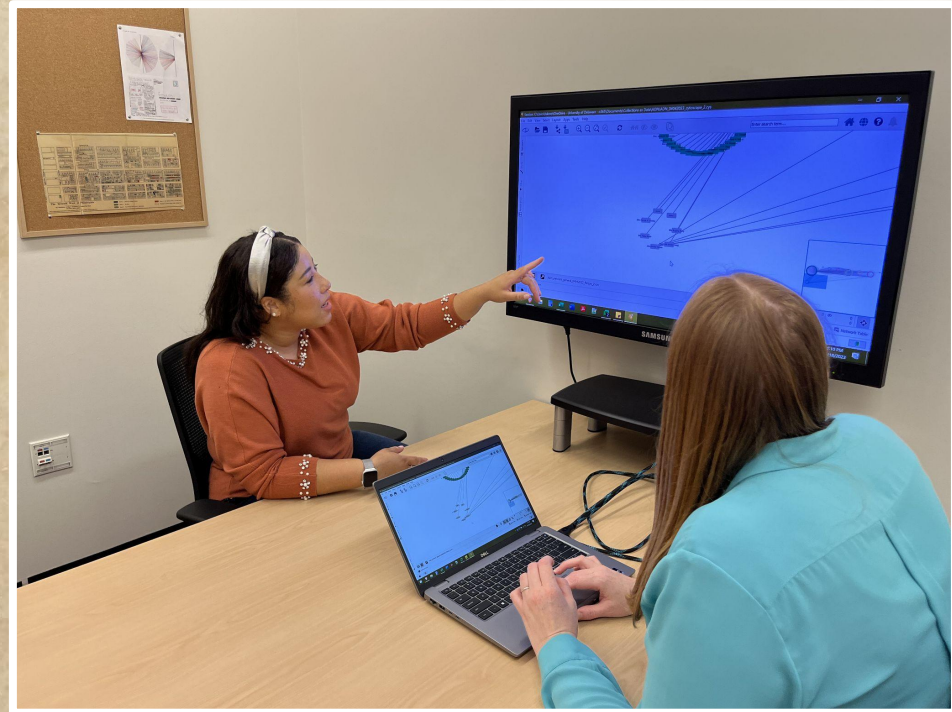
## Benefits:

- Enabling new types of research with our Special Collections
- Increase visibility of our digital collections, as we create new types of sources
- Intellectually interesting graduate assistantship for those interested in digital humanities and data curation

# Internal Buy-in

Challenges:

- Labor
- Storage of datasets



# **Future Development**

Expanding the network to include the networks of others in Alice's circle

Incorporating the dataset into teaching (courses, workshops, etc.)

More Collections as Data projects

# Thank you!

Reach us at [kabner@udel.edu](mailto:kabner@udel.edu) and [bnchenry@udel.edu](mailto:bnchenry@udel.edu)

Link to slides: <http://bit.ly/DLF23-letter-data>



Thanks to [Slidesgo](#) for this template.