



The New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

John Edward Bruce papers: additions

1888-1918

Sc MG 253

Processed by Berlena Robinson, 1990, through the Schomburg NEH Automated Access to Special Collections Project.

Summary

Creator: Bruce, John Edward

Title: John Edward Bruce papers: additions

Date: 1888-1918

Size: 0.01 linear feet (1 folder)

Source: Gift of the Bruce Family, May 1982.

Revision History: Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

Abstract: This collection consists of one folder of papers relating to the personal and professional life of John Edward Bruce. Included is a drawing of an invention of a metal binder clasp by Bruce; an 1888 letter from Bruce to M. L. Robinson of the National Leader accepting the position of associate editor; a printed poem ("Song of the Night Child") with a picture of Bruce; an essay entitled "Great Thoughts by Great Negroes" (authorship is unclear); a copy of the "Congressional Record" (1918) in which Bruce's pamphlet, "A Tribute for the Negro Soldier", was included; and invitations such as a one for a testimonial dinner for Bruce (1905). Also included is correspondence between Bruce and friends such as Arthur A. Schomburg, J. E. Aggrey, W. M. Trotter, Rufus L. Perry, and Emmett J. Scott; and a letter of condolence to the relatives of author Frances E. W. Harper, including her obituary from the Theban Literary Circle (1911), of which Bruce was president and Arthur A. Schomburg was a member.

Preferred citation: [Item], John Edward Bruce papers: additions, Sc MG 253, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Processed by Berlena Robinson, 1990, through the Schomburg NEH Automated Access to Special Collections Project.

Related Materials:

John Edward Bruce papers, Sc Micro R-905, General Research and Reference Division, Schomburg

Creator History

John Edward Bruce was a journalist, historian, editor, and co-founder of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. Born a slave in Maryland in 1856, Bruce and his mother settled in Washington, D.C., after being freed from slavery. Bruce was self-educated and although his formal education was minimal, he was well read and wrote prolifically on various political and cultural subjects.

In 1874, Bruce became a general helper for *The New York Times* Washington office and also began writing for Black newspapers. For over fifty years, he wrote for more than twenty Black newspapers, and some of his columns appeared in white newspapers such as the *The New York Times* and the *Washington Evening Star*. His articles also appeared in Black publications in England, the West Indies, and West and South Africa.

One of the earliest Black nationalists and militant journalists, Bruce extolled the virtues, beauty, and heritage of the Black race; urged avoidance of integration; and demanded full equality with whites. He was known by the pseudonym, "Bruce Grit", which he adopted while writing for the *Cleveland Gazette* and the *New York Age*.

An editor before he was twenty-five, Bruce founded the *Argus*, a weekly newspaper in Washington D.C., 1879; the *Sunday Item*, 1880; and the *Washington Grit*, 1884. He was editor of the *Republican* of Norfolk, Virginia, 1882; assistant editor of the *Commonwealth* of Baltimore, 1884; and associate editor of *Howard's American Magazine* from 1896 to 1901. Around 1900, he settled in Albany, New York, and later in New York City and Yonkers (N.Y.). He co-founded the *New York City Chronicle* in 1877; the *Yonkers Weekly Standard* in 1908; and edited the *Masons Quarterly* in New York City.

In 1919, Bruce joined the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and became a regular columnist for the UNIA's newspaper, *Negro World*. Bruce was also a popular speaker and the author of two books, *Short Biographical Sketches of Eminent Negro Men and Women in Europe and the United States* (1901) and *The Awakening of Hezekiah Jones* (1916), and many pamphlets. In 1924, Bruce died and was eulogized by more than 5000 UNIA members, foreign dignitaries, and Freemasons.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of one folder of papers relating to the personal and professional life of John Edward Bruce. Included is a drawing of an invention of a metal binder clasp by Bruce; an 1888 letter from Bruce to M. L. Robinson of the *National Leader* accepting the position of associate editor; a printed poem ("Song of the Night Child") with a picture of Bruce; an essay entitled "Great Thoughts by Great Negroes" (authorship is unclear); a copy of the "Congressional Record" (1918) in which Bruce's pamphlet, "A Tribute for the Negro Soldier", was included; and invitations such as a one for a testimonial dinner for Bruce (1905). Also included is correspondence between Bruce and friends such as Arthur A. Schomburg, J. E. Aggrey, W. M. Trotter, Rufus L. Perry, and Emmett J. Scott; and a letter of condolence to the relatives of author Frances E. W. Harper, including her obituary from the Theban Literary Circle (1911), of which Bruce was president and Arthur A. Schomburg was a member.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American editors
African American historians
African American journalists
African American newspapers
Authors, Black

Names

Bruce, John Edward
Schomburg, Arthur Alfonso, 1874-1938
Trotter, William Monroe, 1872-1934