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BRUCE, Blanche Kelso

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BLANCHE K. BRUCE PAPERS
Collection 9-1 to 9-5

Prepared & Revised by:
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June 1980

MANUSCRIPT DIVISION
Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University

Scope Note

The Blanche Kelso Bruce papers were purchased in 1954 from Martha A. Smoot of Washington, D.C. The Blanche K. Bruce papers total two linear feet and span the years 1870 to 1891. Blanche K. Bruce had the distinguished honor of being the first of his race to serve a full six year term in the United States Senate, 1875 to 1881, and the first of his race to preside over the National Republican Convention of 1880 held in Chicago.

The collection primarily consists of correspondence between members of his family, constituents of the state of Mississippi and other political allies. Letters in support of candidates for particular appointments, letters requesting aid in seeking appointments, pensions, and other general requests, form most of the general correspondence received by Bruce while serving as a U.S. Senator. Most of the official correspondence requesting aid have holographic notes by Bruce on what action, if any, was taken as a result of that particular letter.

Throughout the correspondence, are comments on the national political developments. This is especially noted in the correspondence with political ally, P.B.S. Pinchback. Other important correspondents include James Hill, John R. Lynch, J.J. Spelman and Booker T. Washington.

Extensive clippings are a part of the collection, some are biographical in nature, others are editorials on Bruce. Some of the clippings are related to political issues and controversies of the late 1800's. Other materials, in the collection, include documents, petitions, financial papers and biographical information on the Plummer family, dated 1787 to 1852.

Scope Note continued

Of special significance to the Bruce papers, is a collection of research notes, a bibliography, an abstract and documents used for a dissertation on Bruce by Sadie Daniel St. Clair. Items of interest include a photocopy of his wedding and death certificate, chapter ten of the dissertation, a script copy of his will, a page from the Congressional Record dated March 8, 1875 and correspondence by Mrs. St. Clair in pursuit of her research.

Biographical Sketch

- 1841 March 1 Born a slave in Farmville, Prince Edward County, Virginia.
- 1866-1868 Attended Oberlin College, Oberlin Ohio.
- 1869 Feb. Moved to Mississippi - worked as a planter.
- 1870 Jan. Elected Sergeant-at-Arms of the Mississippi Senate.
- 1871 Elected Sheriff and tax assessor of Bolivar County, Mississippi.
- 1872 Delegate to the National Republican Convention - Bruce was for all his life, a
- 1876 Staunch follower of the G.O.P. - the first of his race to preside over a national convention, which he did in Chicago in 1880.
- 1874 Elected to U.S. Senate representing the State of Mississippi.
- 1875-1881 Began his fall term as a U.S. Senator.
- 1878 June 24 Married Josephine of Cleveland, Union produced one son - Roscoe C. Bruce.
- 1881-1885 Appointed Register of the Treasury by President Garfield.
- 1889 Appointed Recorder of Deeds for the District of Columbia by Pres. Benjamin Harrison.
- 1893 Howard University conferred upon him the Honorary degree of LL.D.
- 1894-1898 Elected trustee of Howard University.
- 1897 Reappointed Register of the Treasury by President McKinley.
- 1898 March 17 Died in Washington, D.C.

Series Description

- Series A Correspondence**
Box 9-1 to Box 9-3 Primarily correspondence between members of family and constituents of Mississippi.
- Series B Manuscripts**
Box 9-4 A holographic poem by Bruce plus holographic covers and notes by Bruce, manuscripts by others are included.
- Series C Printed Material**
Box 9-4 Printed material include a mail receipt and a printed map of Mississippi.
- Series D Financial Papers**
Box 9-4 Include Bruce's bank account book, bank receipts and financial papers.
- Series E Documents**
Box 9-4 Include credentials for Bruce as a delegate to Republican Convention of 1889, U.S. bills, petitions, statistics.
- Series F Newspaper Clippings**
Box 9-4 Include biographical and editorial clippings on Bruce and other political issues of the late 1800's.
- Series G Artifact**
Box 9-4 Include a memorandum book of Bruce, which include holographic notes, dates 1885.
- Series H Plummer Family Records
Box 9-4 Clippings on the Plummer Family dated 1787 to 1832.
- Series I Sadie Daniel St. Clair Research Materials
Box 9-5 Includes a bibliography, an abstract correspondence, appendices, chapter ten of research for a dissertation on Bruce; also include a copy of his death and wedding certificate, his will and other extensive notes.

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3 H.C. Bruce - Family Corres-
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4 Josephine Bruce - Family
Correspondence - 1896
5 Josephine Bruce - Family
Correspondence - 1897
6 Josephine Bruce - Family
Correspondence - undated
7 Roscoe C. Bruce - Family
Correspondence - 1896
8 Roscoe C. Bruce - Family
Correspondence - 1897

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10 General Correspondence -
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11 General Correspondence -
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119 Petition to Charles
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- Box 9-4 Folder [119 cont.] Southern District of Mississippi. George S. McMillian as District Attorney.
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- 120 Petition to Congress in the interest of Wilberforce Univ. receiving a portion of the Unclaimed Volunteer Soldier's Bounty.
- 121 Petition to Pres. Chester A. Arthur from Daniel A. Adams offering his service for appointment as vice-consul at Tuxpan, Mexico. With testimonials and signatures attached.
Nov. 5, 1881. 115 cm.
- 122 Petition to President Rutherford B. Hayes and Congress from the Colored citizens of James City North
- 123 Petition to the Postmaster General of the U.S. from citizens of Grenada(?) Co. Miss. endorsing Capt. Matthew K. Mister, Jr. over Dr. James H. Campbell as postmaster.
- 124 Petition recommending Randolph Peyton for employment. Signed by John A. Moss, Frederick Douglass Jr., and D.P. Holloway
- 125 Senate Bill 117 amending the charter of the Freedmen's Savings and Trust Company.
Annotated. May 8, 1880.

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- Box 9-4 Folder 126 Statistics of 22 institutions for the instruction of the colored race for 1878 as called for by B.K. Bruce.
- 127 Subscriptions to the colored newspaper, The Virginia Post. May 1, 1880. With signatures and pledges.
- 128 Summary of Bounty Laws from T.W. Tallmadge. Columbus, Ohio. May 5, 1880.
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