



INSIDE THE VAULT

Black Enfranchisement and Education
with Dr. Jesse Erickson

THURSDAY, JANUARY 5, 2023

☆☆☆

THE
GILDER LEHRMAN
INSTITUTE
of
AMERICAN HISTORY

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How to Participate



- If you would like to ask a question, you can use the Q&A feature.
- We will be answering audience questions throughout the session.

For Security and Privacy

- Your microphone is automatically muted.
- Your camera is automatically turned off.

Jesse Erickson

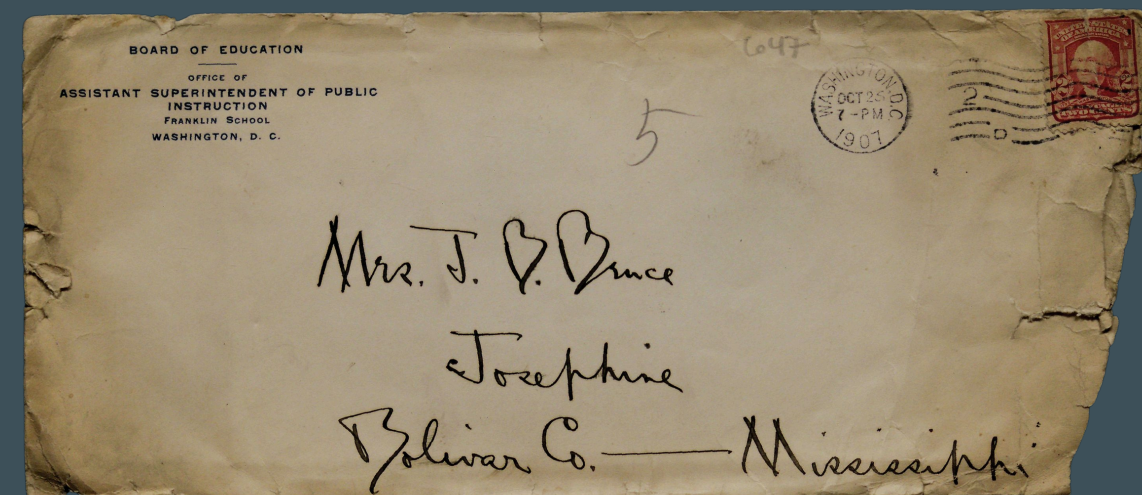
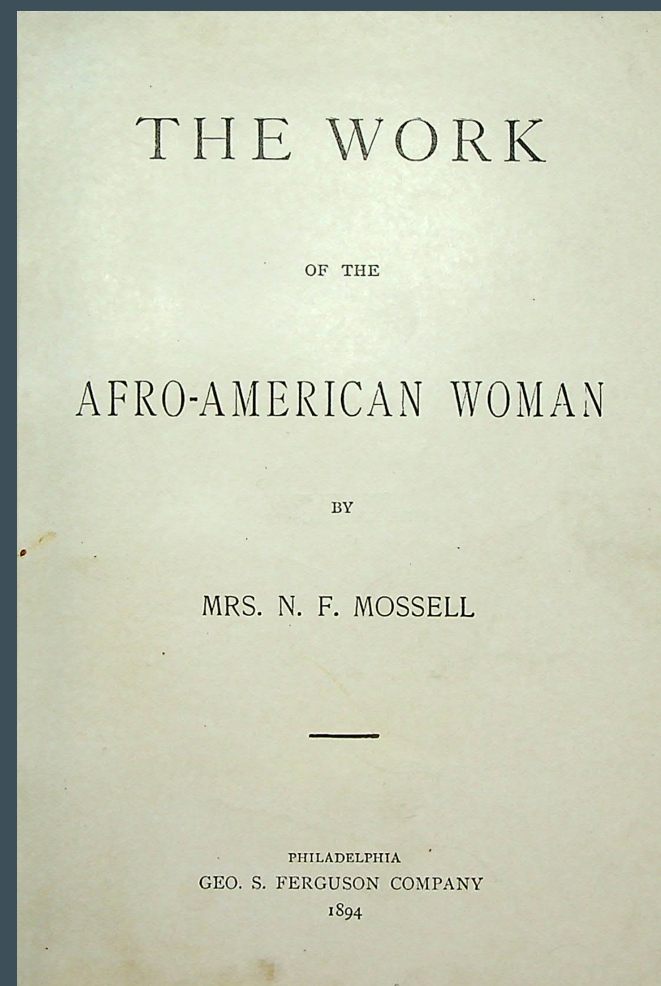


Jesse R. Erickson is the Astor Curator of Printed Books and Bindings at the Morgan Library & Museum. Along with Sarah Werner, he is co-editor of the *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*. He worked previously in a joint appointment as Coordinator of Special Collections and Digital Humanities and Assistant Professor in the Department of English in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Delaware. He served as the Vice President for Programs for the American Printing History Association from 2017 to 2019 and has served on the editorial boards of the University of Delaware Press and Birmingham City University Centre for Printing History and Culture's journal, *Publishing History*. His research specializations are in ethnobibliography, alternative printing, non-canonical textuality, Black print culture, and the transnational publishing history of the works of Ouida.



Today's Documents

- Engraving of Five African American Members of Congress, 1870
- *The Work of the Afro-American Woman* by Gertrude Bustill Mossell, 1894
- Envelope from the Board of Education Addressed to Josephine B. Bruce, 1907



African American Congressmen

1870

- Engraved illustration by William Wellstood from Speaker James Blaine's *Twenty Years of Congress from Lincoln to Garfield* (1884).
- Blanche Kelso Bruce was born into slavery near Farmville, Virginia on March 1, 1841.
- Moved to Mississippi in 1869, where he entered politics.
- Elected nearly unanimously on February 4, 1874, Bruce became the second Black man to serve in the U.S. Senate (after Hiram Revels) and the first to be elected to a full term.
- Closely allied with Republican Roscoe Conkling of New York.
- Advocated for Black war veterans, promoting integration of the armed forces and desegregation in the U.S. Army.




Unknown, *Engraved portrait of African American members of Congress during Reconstruction, 1870.*
(The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC09746)

Albert Thompson to Blanche Bruce

1875

- A letter from Thompson asking Senator Bruce for help securing a position as a school teacher for himself and his wife in another county since he wanted to leave his current placement in De Soto County due to threats of violence and a pay cut.
- Thompson was also the colonel of the militia in his county, and as a result was a target for threats and abuse from the Democrats, who had recently taken power in his county.

Albert D. Thompson, *To Blanche Kelso Bruce*, 1875.
(The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC09400.019)



Hernando Nov. 27th /75 -

Hon. B. K. Bruce

Dear Sir

I have been informed that you are now acting as Superintendent of Pub. Ed. of Bolivar County, until the question of Superintendent is settled, if so I would be more than pleased if you will employ myself or wife or both if possible in the schools of your county. My reasons are several viz. I desire to leave De Soto County for a while until things get more settled. As my life is continually threatened and I have been obliged to sleep in the woods and cotton pews more than I wish in order to save my life and since I have been appointed Col. of the Militia of this county and the Democrats become successful I have become a target for all their threats and abuse, and I cannot stay here for some time. The board of supervisors for the last two years.

Gertrude Bustill Mossell

1855-1948

- Born in Philadelphia on July 3, 1855.
- Married Dr. Nathan Francis Mossell, whose initials she used in her writing.
- Began her career as a teacher, before transitioning to journalism.
- Advocated for racial equality and women's suffrage in her articles and columns.
- Published *The Work of the Afro-American Woman* to highlight Black women's accomplishments.



L.A. Scruggs, *Mrs. N. F. Mossell*, 1893.

(The New York Public Library, 4255360)



The Work of the Afro-American Woman 1894

- *The Work of Afro-American Women*, her most prominent publication, is a collection of essays and poems highlighting the work of Black women.
- Focused on the work of Black women journalists, educators, and other professionals including Black women working in the medical field.
- Documented the work of such figures as Frances E. W. Harper, Alice Ruth Moore [Dunbar-Nelson], Victoria Earle Matthews, Katherine D. Tillman, and Ida B. Wells.
- Wrote about the American "racial caste" system in education.
- Included various samples of Black women's poetry as a representation of this history in verse.



Gertrude Bustill Mossell, *The Work of the Afro-American Woman*, 1894.
(The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC09874)

THE WORK OF THE AFRO-AMERICAN WOMAN

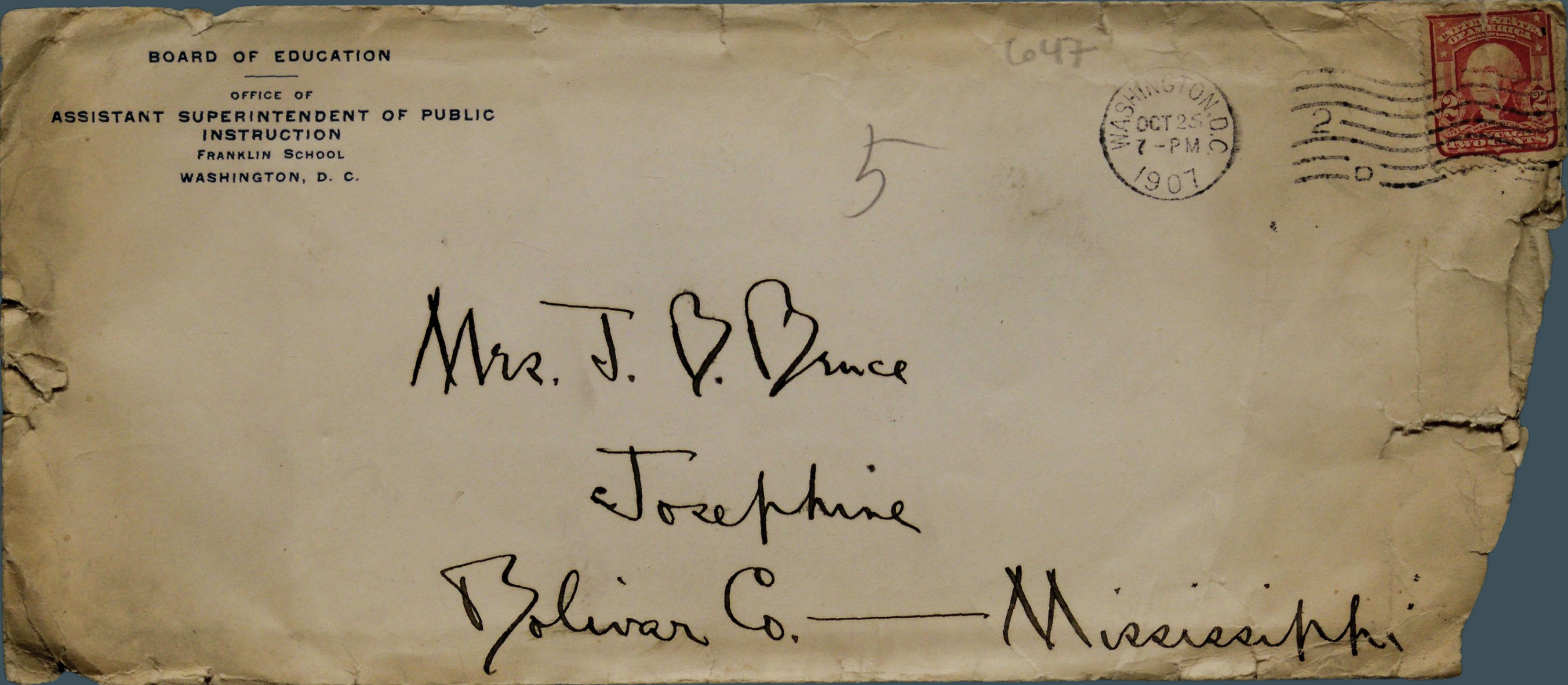
BY

MRS. N. F. MOSSELL

PHILADELPHIA
GEO. S. FERGUSON COMPANY
1894

Board of Education to Josephine B. Bruce

1907



Board of Education, *To Josephine B. Bruce*, 1907.
(The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC09400.647)

Upcoming Programs

INSIDE THE VAULT: February 2 at 7 p.m. ET (4 p.m. PT)

- We will be joined by Liz Covart (Founding Director, Colonial Williamsburg Innovation Studios) to discuss Benjamin Franklin's copy of the U.S. Constitution.

BOOK BREAKS: January 8 at 2 p.m. ET (11 a.m. PT)

- Kostya Kennedy will discuss his book *True: The Four Seasons of Jackie Robinson*.

