



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

José Famadas papers

1926-1991

*T-Mss 2000-046

Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2014

Summary

Creator: Famadas, José

Title: José Famadas papers

Date: 1926-1991

Size: 2.3 linear feet (6 boxes)

Source: Donated by Nelson Famadas, 1992.

Abstract: José Famadas (1908 – circa 1991), also known as Professor Colmar, was a professional magician and a historian of magic and magicians. The José Famadas papers, dating from 1926 to 1991, document Famadas's work as a magician and historian through correspondence, photographs, subject files, and newsletters.

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Processing note: Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2014

Creator History

José Famadas (1908 – circa 1991), also known as Professor Colmar, was a professional magician and a historian of magic and magicians. Born in Rio de Janeiro, he became fascinated with magic as a child and began collecting books, magazines, photographs, and other memorabilia regarding magicians and the art of magic. In 1927, Famadas joined the International Brotherhood of Magicians, and in 1930 he founded the Sociedade Brasileira de Magia, the first magical society in South America. Famadas was one of the founding members of the Magic Collectors Association, and was also an honorary member or honoree of magic societies in other nations, including the United States, Argentina, Chile, and India.

In 1941, he moved to the United States, where he studied at the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and Columbia University. In addition to his magic activities, Famadas was a teacher,

journalist, editor, and translator.

Scope and Content Note

The José Famadas papers, dating from 1926 to 1991, document Famadas's work as a magician and historian of magic through correspondence, photographs, subject files, and newsletters.

The correspondence, dating from 1932 to 1990, is with magicians, magic organizations of several nations, publishers of books on magic, and fans of magic. Many of the letters are in Portuguese or Spanish. The correspondence files also hold programs, clippings, and Famadas's notes on individuals listing their address and interests, and logging their past correspondence. For many correspondents, only Famadas's notes are present. Correspondents include Professor Aronack (Aaron Ackerman), O Tacape Mágico, Arrom (Renato Moura), J.A. Camacho Barriga, Herbert Bressane, Círculo Mágico Argentina, Teral Garrett, James Hagy, F. William Kuethe, Jr., Dick Marvel, Élcio Moura, Jorge Musso, Ray Oliveira, Professor Rubnil (Rubem Siqueira Campos), Antonio Navas Sánchez, and Antigo Villaneuva. The folder for the Associação dos Mágicos de Minas Gerais contains a copy of Mystics magazine with a biography of Famadas (box 1, folder 7).

The photographs date from 1926 to 1980. Composed of formal and informal portraits or performance images, they picture magicians worldwide, many of them friends of Famadas who sent him the photographs, usually signed. Subjects include magicians from Argentina, Brazil, China, Norway, and the United States, such as Mr. Argos (Barbona da Nascimento), Milbourne Christopher, Sir Edwards and Connie, Fu-Manchu (David Bamberg), Li Tang, Élcio Moura, Yosha Mouice, Professor Rubnil (Siqueira Campos), and Howard Thurston.

The subject files hold information on various kinds of magic and deceptions. They include clippings, articles, bibliographies, book excerpts, newsletters, and pamphlets. Famadas divided them into four categories: Technical (tricks), Magic (general), Frauds and Delusions, and Related Arts. Catalog cards outlining further subdivisions can be found in box 5, folder 5.

The newsletters are from magic publishers and supply houses, and double as catalogs. Some also have programs or flyers for performances. Dating from the 1980s to the early 1990s, they include runs from the publishers Ken Baker's MagicLand, Magico Magazine, Mickey Hades International, Rabbit in the Hat Ranch, and Sun Magic.

Arrangement: The papers are arranged by format.

Key Terms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Clippings
Correspondence
Photographs

Subjects

Magicians

Occupations

Magicians (illusionists)

Container List

Correspondence 1932-1990

- b. 1 f. 1-26 A - F
- b. 2 f. 1-24 G - Sa
- b. 3 f. 1-10 Sc - W

Newsletters 1981-1991

- b. 3 f. 11 1985-1991
- b. 3 f. 12-16 J - Mag 1981-1990
- b. 4 f. 1-6 Mar - S 1984-1991

Photographs 1926-1980

- b. 4 f. 7-11 A - M
- b. 5 f. 1-4 N - Z

Subject Files 1966-1983

- b. 5 f. 5-8 Technical (Tricks)
- b. 5 f. 9-17 Magic (General)
- b. 5 f. 18-23 Frauds and Delusions
- b. 6 f. 1-5 Related Arts