

The H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture & Sports

The University of Texas at Austin

Finding Aid

Jesse Mercer Gehman Collection: 12 Archival Photograph Boxes, 97 Folders, 1918-1975, undated (1393 items)

Abstract

The Jesse Mercer Gehman Collection has three distinct parts and contains material from Jesse Mercer Gehman, Doris Doscher Baum and Bernarr Macfadden. Jesse Mercer Gehman was a naturopathic doctor, amateur wrestler, magazine editor, author, and active professional in the field of physical culture, natural health, and fitness. The collection documents Gehman's interest and participation in wrestling during the 1920s-1930s. Included in the collection are photographs of wrestling poses published in the magazines *Muscle Builder* and *Physical Culture* as well as portraits of wrestlers from the era. The collection also contains materials related to Gehman's involvement in *American Better Health Publications, American Vegetarian-Hygienist, Health and Strength* magazine and the *Natural Living Foundation Internationale* from the 1920s-1960s. Gehman's material also includes personal family photographs, and a small number of newspaper clippings, postcards, colored slides, negatives, and correspondence.

Doris Doscher Baum was a leading female journalist, model and actress whose work centered on physical culture and naturopathy. Doris's materials include articles and photographs on stretching exercises, photographs from her career as a model and film actress in the 1920s, and family photographs. Additionally, the collection includes materials related to Bernarr Macfadden, the owner of Macfadden Publications, a prolific author on topics such as health, fitness and bodybuilding, and Gehman's employer at *Physical Culture*. The Macfadden materials, which have a small but significant presence in the collection, include his family scrapbook from the 1920s in addition to photographs of Macfadden in his late years.



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Access

Access to the Jesse Mercer Gehman Collection is restricted to visitors of the H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture & Sports. The Stark Center welcomes access inquires and encourages research appointments. For more information, phone (512) 471-4890, email info@starkcenter.org, or visit www.starkcenter.org.

Restrictions on Use

The Stark Center retains the right to limit the use of the Jesse Mercer Gehman Collection under certain conditions. No copies of any materials in the collection may be made without permission.

Processing Information

Claire Cella and Kathleen O'Connell processed the collection in 2013 under the supervision of Brent Sipes.

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Preferred Citation

The Jesse Mercer Gehman Collection, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture & Sports, The University of Texas at Austin.

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Biographical Note

Jesse Mercer Gehman was born circa 1901 and died in 1976. Gehman was active in the emerging fields of alternative medicine, health reform and naturopathy. In 1925 he graduated from the American College of Naturopathy and Chiropractic with degrees in nutrition (DCN), naturopathy (ND) and chiropractic (CD). He completed a doctorate in natural philosophy in 1931. His professional career began with research on the effects of smoking on health, which included the publication of Smoke Over America (1943), Living Today for Tomorrow (1947), and Is Smoking Harmful? (1950). Gehman's interest in natural health led him to pursue diet- and fitness-related reforms, and he began writing about the benefits of a vegetarian diet in the late 1950s, and was published in: American Better Health Publications and their journal, American Vegetarian-Hygienist (both of which he served as editor); Health and Strength magazine; and the Natural Living Foundation Internationale, of which Gehman was a founder with Vincent Collura. Gehman also served as president of various associations, including the American Naturopathic Association (1947) and the American Vegetarian Union (1949). He served as secretary and president of the Citizens Medical Reference Bureau from the 1930s-1950s, was a chairman of the first American Vegetarian Convention in 1949, and was the vice president for the International Vegetarian Union from 1960 to 1976.

Throughout his life, Gehman also fostered an interest in wrestling. He and his brother, Marvin Mercer, were amateur wrestlers (Gehman wrestled under the name Jim Mercer), and Gehman competed professionally from 1925 to 1926. It was through this interest that Gehman would meet, personally train, and work for Bernarr Macfadden, the owner of *Physical Culture*, whose materials also appear in the collection. Macfadden, born in 1868 as Bernard McFadden, was actively involved in physical culture, bodybuilding, nutrition, and natural health. He founded the company, Macfadden Publications, which published magazines, such as: True Detective, True Story, Ghost Stories, the New York Graphic, Muscle Builder and SPORT. He was most known for the magazine, *Physical Culture*, which he founded in 1899 and served as editor until 1912. Macfadden also wrote on health, fitness, and bodybuilding topics, and published over 100 books during his lifetime. In his later years, Macfadden established various health



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institutions, educational and training programs, and boarding schools throughout America's northeast and midwest. In 1903, he married his first wife and had his first daughter, Bryne, a year later. In 1913, he married his second wife, Mary Williamson, with whom he had three girls, three boys, and adopted a daughter, Helen. Macfadden and Mary separated in 1932 and were divorced in 1946. Macfadden died in 1955 in New Jersey.

Gehman would also develop professional relationships with other leaders and practitioners in natural health and alternative medicine. One of these professional relationships was with the Baums, H. William and Doris (who was known by her maiden name, Doscher), who also appear in the collection. Doscher, born in 1882 in New York, is credited with being one of the first health and beauty columnists in the newspaper industry. Her daily column, "Beauty, Health, Physical Culture and Psychology" was published in *The New York World* in the 1920s. Doscher was also a silent film actress under the name Doris Doree, as well as a model. She was chosen to pose for the American Standing Liberty Quarter, in mint from 1916 to 1930, and was nicknamed "Miss Liberty." She was also on the cover of Macfadden's Physical Culture in 1920. Later in her career, Doscher served as president of the Women's Auxiliary of the American Naturopathic Association and wrote about health for the *American Vegetarian* Hygienist and American Better Health Publications. Doscher was married to Baum, who was a physiotherapist, chiropractor, and a professional acquaintance of Gehman's. Doscher and Baum had one daughter, Miriam Baum Kiriluk. Doscher died in New York in 1970.

Scope and Content

Jesse Mercer Gehman Collection: 12 Archival Photograph Boxes, 97 Folders, 1918-1975, undated (1393 items)

This collection is comprised of photographs, scrapbooks, correspondence, and ephemera dating from roughly 1918 to the mid-1970s, with the bulk of the materials dating from the 1920s to the 1940s. Most of the items are photographs, but the collection also includes a small number of newspaper clippings, typewritten articles, broadsides,



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postcards, colored slides, negatives, and correspondence. The collection is divided into three parts: materials related to Jesse Mercer Gehman and family, those relating to Doris Doscher Baum and family, and those of Bernarr Macfadden and family. The Gehman materials comprise approximately two thirds of the collection, and the primary subject documented is wrestling, appearing as photographic series for the magazines Muscle Builder and Physical Culture. There are also a number of signed photographs given to Gehman by amateur and professional wrestlers such as Frank Brono, John Pagano and Harold Ross. Another significant portion of the collection consists of Doris Doscher Baum's articles and photographs on stretching exercises. There are also photographs that document her modeling and acting career, including materials from when she modeled for the American Standing Liberty Quarter. Bernarr Macfadden's materials include publicity photographs of Macfadden in his later years. The collection also includes family photographs and scrapbook materials from Jesse Mercer Gehman, the Baum family and the Macfadden family, which depict Gehman's wife, Agnes, and their son, Jason; Doris's husband, H. William Baum, and their daughter, Miriam Baum; and Bernarr Macfadden, his second wife Mary, and his children.

Collection Arrangement

The collection is divided into four groupings: three for each family represented in the collection, and one for unidentified items. The Jesse Mercer Gehman group is arranged into five series by type: Publications, Photographs, Organizations and Affiliations, Scrapbook, and Ephemera. The series are then arranged by subject: publication title, organization, or activity. Items that can be linked to publishing in general, but not to a specific publication, are located within the Unspecified Publications file in the Publications series. Photographs that have been identified as belonging to Gehman, but which cannot be further identified as being of a particular publication, sport, activity, or organization are within an Unidentified file in the Photographs series.

The Doris Doscher Baum, H. William Baum and Family grouping is divided into series by individual. Items belonging or closely associated with Doris Doscher Baum are divided by type: Modeling, Photographs, Publications, and Scrapbook. H. William



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Baum's items are treated similarly to create the second series. The third series consists of items that belonged to both Baums: Ephemera, Photographs or part of a Scrapbook.

The Bernarr Macfadden and Family grouping is divided into two series by type: Photographs and Scrapbook. The final document grouping, Unidentified, contains materials that cannot be linked to any specific person or family in the collection.

Sub-series and files are arranged alphabetically throughout the collection, due to the lack of consistent dating of items. Items within files are arranged chronologically when possible, with the exception of the file of signed wrestlers' photographs in Gehman's Photograph series, which are arranged by the name of the wrestler. Undated items are arranged by name, either as it was marked on the item, or as assigned by the processors. All photographs are placed two to an envelope, unless otherwise noted.

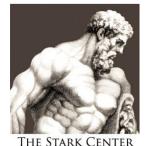
An indexing system was created for photographs where no identification was possible. Each photograph is assigned a three-part identifier, consisting of six letters and a number written on its envelope. The first three letters signify the person's collection to which the photograph belongs: GEH (Gehman, Jesse Mercer), BAD (Baum, Doris), BAH (Baum, H. William), BAF (Baum Family) and MAC (Macfadden, Bernarr) or UNI for the final series of unassociated photographs. The second three letters signify the general subject of the photograph or if it is part of a scrapbook: DNC for Dance, WRE for Wrestling, and SCR for Scrapbook, for example. (These subject codes are listed below.) Photographs are then assigned a number following the six letters. Each person or subject within each individual's sub-group begins with "1" and follows numerically. For example, the fifth unidentified Wrestling photograph in the Jesse Mercer Gehman sub-group is identified as GEH-WRE-5.

Collection Codes:

BAD -- Baum, Doris GEH -- Gehman, Jesse Mercer

BAF -- Baum Family MAC -- Macfadden, Bernarr

BAH -- Baum, H. William UNI -- Unidentified



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Subject Codes:

activity)

ACT -- Acting POS -- Posing

BDM -- Badminton SCR -- Scrapbook

BOX -- Boxing STR -- Stretching

DNC -- Dance SWM -- Swimming

GEN -- General (Photographs that WRE -- Wrestling cannot be associated with a sport or

Collection Arrangement

12 Archival Photograph Boxes, 97 Folders, 1918-1975 (1393 items)

Box 1: 17 Folders: Gehman: Publications: *American Better Health Publications* (1957-1964); (127 items)

Jesse Mercer Gehman (1919-1964, undated)

Publications (contains photographs) (1923-1964)

American Better Health Publications (1957-1964)

Correspondence (1958-1964)

Box 1, Folder 1: Received by Jesse Mercer Gehman (Nov. 3, 1961) [4 items]

Box 1, Folder 2-3: Received by Jesse Mercer Gehman (Nov. 6, 1961) [15 items]

Box 1, Folder 4: Received by Jesse Mercer Gehman (Nov. 7, 1961) [8 items]

Box 1, Folder 5-6: Received by Jesse Mercer Gehman (Nov. 8, 1961) [9 items]

Box 1, Folder 7: Received by Jesse Mercer Gehman (Nov. 9, 1961) [7 items]



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Box 1, Folder 8-10: Received by Jesse Mercer Gehman (Nov. 10, 1961)

[29 items]

Box 1, Folder 11-12: Received by Jesse Mercer Gehman (Nov. 11, 1961)

[18 items]

Box 1, Folder 13: Received by Jesse Mercer Gehman (Nov. 12, 1961) [7 items]

Box 1, Folder 14: Received by Jesse Mercer Gehman (Feb. 18, 1962) [7 items]

Box 1, Folder 15: Received by Jesse Mercer Gehman (April 20, 1962) [12 items]

Box 1, Folder 16: Received by Jesse Mercer Gehman (April 23, 1962) [4 items]

Box 1, Folder 17: Received by Jesse Mercer Gehman (May 28, 1964) [7 items]

Box 2: 11 Folders: Gehman: Publications: American Better Health Publications cont., American Vegetarian Hygienist (1954-1958), Health and Strength (undated), Muscle Builder (1924-1925, undated); (91 items)

> Box 2, Folder 18: Received by Francis Hilton (March 19, 1958) [3 items]

Box 2, Folder 19: Received by Francis Hilton (Oct. 2, 1958) [4 items]

Box 2, Folder 20: Received by Francis Hilton (Oct. 16, 1958) [10 items]

Photographs (1957)

Box 2, Folder 21: Theater Productions (1957) [3 items]

American Vegetarian Hygienist (1954, 1955, 1958)

Correspondence (1954, 1955, 1958)

Box 2, Folder 22: Received by Francis Hilton (Feb. 14, 1954) [2 items]

Box 2, Folder 23: Received by Francis Hilton (1955) [3 items]



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Box 2, Folder 24: Received by Francis Hilton (March 30, 1958)

[12 items]

Health and Strength (undated)

Wrestling (undated)

Box 2, Folder 25: Wrestling Photographs (undated)

[1 item, 1 envelope]

Muscle Builder (1924-1925, undated)

Posing (1924)

Box 2, Folder 26: Posing (1924, undated)

[5 items, 3 envelopes]

Wrestling (1924-1925, undated)

Box 2, Folder 27: Wrestling Course #1-24, Jesse Mercer Gehman and Nat Pendleton (Feb.-July 1924)

[24 items, 12 envelopes]

Box 2, Folder 28: Wrestling Course #25-48, Jesse Mercer Gehman and Nat Pendleton (Aug.-Nov. 1924)

[24 items, 12 envelopes]

Box 3: 6 Folders: Gehman: Publications: Muscle Builder (1924-1925, undated) cont., Physical Culture (1923-1928, undated); (91 items)

Wrestling cont.

Box 3, Folder 29: Wrestling Course #49-72, Jesse Mercer Gehman and Nat Pendleton (Dec. 1924-March 1925)

[24 items, 12 envelopes]

Box 3, Folder 30: Wrestling Course, Unpublished (Feb. 1924, undated)

[18 items, 9 envelopes]

Box 3, Folder 31: Wrestling Course, Unpublished (undated)

[16 items, 8 envelopes]

Box 3, Folder 32: Wrestlers (Oct. 1924, undated)

[8 items, 4 envelopes]

Physical Culture (1923, 1924, 1928, undated)

Dance (undated)

Box 3, Folder 33: Dance Exercises (undated)

[14 items, 7 envelopes]



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Posing (1923, 1924, undated)

Box 3, Folder 34: Posing (1923, 1924, undated)

[11 items, 6 envelopes]

Box 4: 10 Folders: Gehman: Publications: Physical Culture (1923-1928, undated) cont., Unspecified Publication (1937-1960, undated). Photographs: Badminton (undated), Boxing (undated), Dance (undated); (76 items)

Physical Culture cont.

Swimming (1928)

Box 4, Folder 35: Swimmers (1928)

[1 item, 1 envelope]

Wrestling (undated)

Box 4, Folder 36: Wrestling (undated)

[1 item, 1 envelope]

<u>Unspecified Publication (1937-1960, undated)</u>

Correspondence (1955-1956)

Box 4, Folder 37: Received by Francis Hilton (Dec. 17, 1955)

[5 items]

Box 4, Folder 38: Received by Francis Hilton (May 29, 1956)

[2 items]

Box 4, Folder 39: Received by Unknown (1955)

[6 items]

Photographs (1937, 1958, 1959, 1960, undated)

Box 4, Folder 40: Unidentified Photographs (1937, 1958, 1959, 1960,

undated)

[23 items, 12 envelopes]

Photographs (1923-1954, undated)

Badminton (undated)

Box 4, Folder 1: Badminton (undated)

[5 items, 3 envelopes]

Boxing (undated)

Box 4, Folder 2: Boxing (undated)

[14 items, 7 envelopes]

Dance (undated)

Box 4, Folder 3: Stretching for Dance (undated)



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[16 items, 8 envelopes] Box 4, Folder 4: Dance (undated) [3 items, 2 envelopes]

Box 5: 9 Folders: Gehman: Photographs: Headshots (undated), Posing (1923-1924, undated), Stretching Exercises (1924, undated), Swimming (1928); (72 items)

Photographs cont.

<u>Headshots (undated)</u>

Box 5, Folder 5: Headshots (undated)

[2 items, 1 envelope]

Posing (1923-1924, undated)

Box 5, Folder 6: Portraits for McFadden Publications (undated)

[6 items, 3 envelopes]

Box 5, Folder 7: Portraits of Jesse Mercer Gehman (Dec. 1923 - Jan.

1924, undated)

[11 items, 6 envelopes]

Box 5, Folder 8: Portraits of Unidentified Males (Dec. 1923-Jan.

1924, undated)

[11 items, 6 envelopes]

Stretching Exercises (1924, undated)

Box 5, Folder 9: Female Stretching Series (undated)

[4 items, 2 envelopes]

Box 5, Folder 10: Jesse Mercer Gehman Series (April 7, 1924)

[12 items, 6 envelopes]

Box 5, Folder 11: Jesse Mercer Gehman Series #1-9 (June 1924)

[14 items, 7 envelopes]

Box 5, Folder 12: Jesse Mercer Gehman Series (undated)

[10 items, 5 envelopes]

Swimming (1928)

Box 5, Folder 13: Swimmers (1928)

[2 items, 2 envelopes]

Box 6: 6 Folders: Gehman: Photographs: Unidentified (1924, 1954, undated), Wrestling (1923-1924, 1929, 1937, 1949, undated), Yoga (undated); (126 items)



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Photographs cont.

Unidentified (1924, 1954, undated)

Box 6, Folder 14: Personal, Unidentified (1924, 1954, undated)

[44 items, 22 envelopes]

Wrestling (1923-1924, 1929, 1937, 1949, undated)

Box 6, Folder 15: Mr. Physical Culture Postcards (1949)

[2 items]

Box 6, Folder 16: Wrestlers, Named: Bothner-Pagano (1923-1924,

1937, undated)

[25 items, 13 envelopes]

Box 6, Folder 17: Wrestlers, Named: Patterson-Wilson (1923-1924,

1929, 1937, undated)

[22 items, 12 envelopes]

Box 6, Folder 18: Wrestlers, Unidentified (1920, 1923, 1924,

undated)

[23 items, 12 envelopes]

Yoga (undated)

Box 6, Folder 19: Yoga Poses (undated)

[10 items, 6 envelopes]

Box 7: 5 Folders: Gehman: Organizations and Affiliations (1950); Scrapbook (1919-1924, undated); (171 items)

Organizations and Affiliations (1950)

International Vegetarian Union (1950)

Box 7, Folder 1: International Vegetarian Union Congress (1950)

[3 items, 2 envelopes]

Box 7, Folder 2: Congress Photographs Received by Jesse Mercer

Gehman (July 1950)

[6 items, 3 envelopes]

Scrapbook (1919-1924, undated)

Photographs (1919-1924, undated)

Box 7, Folder 1: Personal Photographs (1919 - 1923)

[63 items, 33 envelopes]

Box 7, Folder 2: Personal Photographs (1923 - 1924)

[56 items, 31 envelopes]



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Box 7, Folder 3: Personal Photographs (1924, undated) [43 items, 23 envelopes]

Box 8: 7 Folders: Gehman: Ephemera: Advertising (1961-1962, undated), Newspaper Clippings (1945), Postcards (1932, 1956, undated); (33 items)

Ephemera (1932-1962, undated)

Advertising (1961-1962, undated)

Box 8, Folder 1: Assorted (undated)

[2 items]

Box 8, Folder 2: Calendar (March 1961-June 1962)

[15 items]

Box 8, Folder 3: "Fall Denim Days" (1961)

[8 items]

Newspaper Clippings (1945)

Box 8, Folder 4: The Evening Standard (1945)

[2 items]

Box 8, Folder 5: The Pittsburg Press (April 1945)

[1 item]

Postcards (1932, 1956, undated)

Box 8, Folder 6: Organizational Postcards (undated)

[3 items, 2 envelopes]

Box 8, Folder 7: Personal Postcards (1932, 1956)

[2 items]

Box 9: 6 Folders: Baum, Doris, Doscher: Modeling; Photographs: Acting (undated), Personal (1938, undated), Stretching Exercises (undated); (114 items)

Doris Doscher Baum, H. William Baum and Family (1918-1975, undated)

Doris Doscher Baum (1918-1938, undated)

Modeling (contains photographs) (1928, undated)

Box 9, Folder 1: Liberty Quarter (undated)

[8 items, 6 envelopes]

Box 9, Folder 2: Headshots and Poses (1928, undated)

[35 items, 18 envelopes]



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Photographs (1938, undated)

Acting (undated)

Box 9, Folder 1: Acting (undated)

[21 items, 12 envelopes]

Personal (1938, undated)

Box 9, Folder 2: General Photographs of Doris Baum (1938,

undated)

[14 items, 8 envelopes]

Stretching Exercises (undated)

Box 9, Folder 3: Stretching With Ball (undated)

[9 items, 5 envelopes]

Box 9, Folder 4: Stretching (undated)

[27 items, 15 envelopes]

Box 10: 9 Folders: Baum, Doris Doscher: Photographs: Stretching Exercises cont. (undated) Swimming (undated), Wrestling (undated); Publications: The New York World (1921-1922); Scrapbook (1918, undated); (153 items)

Stretching Exercises cont.

Box 10, Folder 5: Stretching in Forest (undated)

[13 items, 7 envelopes]

Box 10, Folder 6: Facial Stretching (undated)

[9 items, 5 envelopes]

Swimming (undated)

Box 10, Folder 7: Swimming exercise series on beach, #3-38

(undated)

[20 items, 10 envelopes]

Box 10, Folder 8: General Swimming Exercises (undated)

[3 items, 2 envelopes]

Wrestling (undated)

Box 10, Folder 9: Wrestlers and Managers (undated)

[13 items, 7 envelopes]

Publications (contains photographs) (1921-1922)

The New York World (1921-1922)

Box 10, Folder 1: Exercise Articles and Photographs (July-Aug.

1921)



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[28 items, 13 envelopes]

Box 10, Folder 2: Exercise Articles and Photographs (Sept.-Oct. 1921)

[33 items, 14 envelopes]

Box 10, Folder 3: Published Articles (1922)

[2 items]

Scrapbook (1918, undated)

Box 10, Folder 1: Acting Photographs (1918, undated) [32 items, 16 envelopes]

Box 11: 8 Folders: Baum, H. William: Correspondence (1974-1975), Photographs (undated); Family Papers and Photographs: Ephemera (1935, 1941, undated), Photographs (1932-1954, undated), Scrapbook (1932, undated); (181 items)

H. William Baum (1974-1975, undated)

<u>Correspondence</u>

Box 11, Folder 1: Sent by D. V. Gokhale (1974 - 1975) [5 items]

<u>Photographs</u>

Box 11, Folder 1: Personal and General Photographs of H. William Baum (undated)

[12 items, 7 envelopes]

Family Papers and Photographs (1932-1954, undated)

Ephemera (1935, 1941, undated)

Box 11, Folder 1: General Family (1935, 1941, undated)

[6 items]

Photographs (1935-1954, undated)

Box 11, Folder 1: H. William and Doris Baum (1954, undated)

[10 items, 6 envelopes]

Box 11, Folder 2: Miriam Baum (1935, 1948, undated)

[35 items, 18 envelopes]

Box 11, Folder 3: General Family Photographs (1938, undated)

[32 items, 17 envelopes]

Box 11, Folder 4: Oversized General Family Photographs (undated)

[5 items, 5 envelopes]

Scrapbook (1932, undated)



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Box 11, Folder 1: Family Scrapbook (1932, undated) [76 items, 38 envelopes]

Box 12: 3 Folders: Bernarr Macfadden and Family: Photographs (1943, 1952, undated), Scrapbook (1923, undated); Unidentified: Photographs (1953, undated); (158 items)

Bernarr Macfadden and Family (1923-1952, undated)

Bernarr Macfadden, 1923-1952, undated

Photographs (1943, 1952, undated)

Box 12, Folder 1: Bernarr Macfadden (1943, 1952, undated) [31 items, 16 envelopes]

Scrapbook (1923, undated)

Box 12, Folder 1: Scrapbook Photographs (1923, undated) [77 items, 41 envelopes]

Unidentified (1953, undated)

Photographs (1953, undated)

Box 12, Folder 1: General Photographs (1953, undated) [50 items, 27 envelopes]