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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Baron (“Mister”) Siroon Missakian was born in 1892 in Istanbul, Turkey, of Armenian parents. As a youth he apprenticed to the official photographer for the Ottoman Empire. A patron from Boston, impressed when he heard the boy’s voice in an Armenian church, brought him to this country in 1913. Missakian enlisted in the Army during World War I and spent most of his service time singing for Liberty Bond Campaigns. After the war, he managed a Chicago portrait studio, later moving to Kansas City in 1925. Known as a “creative photographer,” Missakian captured the images of Kansas City’s resident and visiting performers during the Jazz Age, a time when Kansas City was one of the most dynamic arts centers in America. His camera not only documented the worlds of classical music and dance, but also the new popular entertainments, vaudeville and the movies. By 1926 he was well established and garnered awards for his studio portraits. Among those photographed were Missakian’s friend and neighbor Walt Disney, Milton Berle and Sir Carl Busch, founder of the Kansas City Symphony Orchestra. Baron Missakian died July 7, 1964 after a long illness.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Missakian Collection was donated by Nadine Missakian, widow of Baron Siroon Missakian. Inclusive dates are circa 1915-1972, with the bulk dates being the 1920s and 1930s. There is some manuscript material and miscellaneous ephemera but the richness of the collection lies within hundreds of magnificent photographs created by Missakian. Some of the photographs are black and white and some are in color, hand tinted by the photographer himself. Included are many famous personalities such as movie stars and other notables from around the world. One of the interesting components of the collection is the historical documentation of Laugh-O-Gram Films, a production company established by Walt Disney, a friend of Missakian’s whose office was located across the hall in the same building. Disney’s personal secretary was Nadine, who later married Baron Missakian.

SERIES NOTES

Series I: Biographical Information

Series I is located in box 1, folder 1, and contains information relating to Baron Missakian. Included are an obituary from the *Kansas City Times*; a Xerox copy of a news article about Nadine Missakian’s donation of the photographer’s mahogany table to Maple Woods Community College; an anecdote about Missakian from the *Professional Photographer*; and an article about Nadine Missakian from the *Kansas City Star*. Also included is a biographical poster (from a Missakian retrospective), which is located in box 8.

Series II: Correspondence

Series II is located in box 1, folders 2 and 3. Folder 2 contains correspondence related to Baron Missakian, which consists of two letters from Franklin Moore and a greeting card. Folder 3 contains correspondence related to Nadine Missakian, which includes several letters from Walt Disney Productions and two Christmas greeting cards designed by Nadine Missakian.

Series III: Laugh-O-Gram Films/Disney Productions

Series III is located in box 1, folders 4 and 5, and contains information pertaining to Walt Disney's Laugh-O-Gram Film Company. Of special interest are the photographs of the film company, which can be found in the photograph series.

Series IV: Sheet Music

Series IV is located in box 1, folders 6 and 7, and contains four songs composed by Nadine Missakian. There is also a song entitled *A Patriotic Lullaby* by K. Proff-Kalfaian; included is a 45-rpm, acetate-disc recording of this song.

Series V: Miscellaneous

Series V is located in boxes 1, 4 and 8 (due to the contents being of varying sizes and formats). Included are ephemera from the Missakian studio; two calligraphy writing samples of Sir Carl Busch's name with descriptive caption; event programs; a medallion; a photography handbook; proofs/negatives, some hand tinted on glass; and index cards referencing client activity and fees.

Series VI: Journals

Series VI is located in box 1, folders 9-11, and contains issues of *Professional Photographer* and one issue of its former title *Abel's Photographic Weekly*.

Series VII: Photographs

Series VII is located in boxes 2-8 and contains several hundred images taken during Baron Missakian's career. Many of the photographs are unidentified, but a select number have been identified, including local Conservatory performers, movie stars and International notables.

Series VIII: Photographic Trade Tools

Series VIII is located in box 9. Included are the instruments Missakian used, which may help the researcher in uncovering some of the techniques employed to achieve the unique results of Missakian's photographs. There are examples of different colors and pencil leads, as well as drafting instruments. One item, an artist's palette, has been loaded with various colors and remains in tact. Another interesting piece is a formula for a Borax Developer that may or may not have been devised by Missakian.

CONTAINER LIST

SERIES I: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Box	Folder	Description
1	1	Anecdote about Missakian from <i>Professional Photographer</i> , August 5, 1937; Baron Missakian obituary, <i>Kansas City Times</i> , July 8, 1964 (died July 7); Xerox copy of a news article regarding Nadine Missakian's donation of Baron Missakian's mahogany table to Maple Woods Community College [n.d.]; <i>Kansas City Star</i> article about Nadine Missakian, December 20, 1966; biographical poster (from Missakian retrospective) [item located in box 8]

SERIES II: CORRESPONDENCE

Box	Folder	Description
1	2	Baron Missakian: one letter from Franklin Moore, Managing Director of the Hotel President, Kansas City, Missouri, August 3, 1928; one letter from Franklin Moore, Manager of the Penn Harris Hotel, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, October 31, 1940; greeting card [n.d.]
1	3	Nadine Missakian: one letter from Madeleine Wheeler, Secretary to Mr. Roy O. Disney, Walt Disney Productions, October 9, 1968; one letter from David R. Smith, Archivist, Walt Disney Archives, December 15, 1970; one letter from E.S. Purrington, Director of the Winona School of Professional Photography, Winona Lake, Indiana, April 24, 1972; one letter to Fred Schmidt, Professional Photographers of America, Des Plaines, Illinois, from Virginia Stern, President of the Winona School Alumni Association, Inc. (Kansas City Chapter), cc: Nadine Missakian, June 3, 1968; five greeting cards

SERIES III: LAUGH-O-GRAM FILMS/DISNEY PRODUCTIONS

Box	Folder	Description
1	4	<i>Laugh-O-Gram Films, Inc.: Fiftieth Anniversary, 1922-1972</i> , a history written by David R. Smith, 1972 [This article was attached to the Disney-related photographs; provenance: Carol Svendsen; photographs are located in box 2, pictures # 1-23]
1	5	"Walt Disney Day" Proclamation (Aug. 22, 1968); two images of Disney paintings from an exhibit

SERIES IV: SHEET MUSIC

Box	Folder	Description
1	6	Songs written by Nadine Missakian: <i>Baron</i> ; <i>Let's You and I Make Music</i> ; <i>My Plea</i> ; <i>Some Fine Day</i>
1	7	<i>A Patriotic Lullaby</i> (Armenian anthem by K. Proff-Kalfaian); includes 45-rpm, acetate-disc recording (Joe Enna, vocal, Corinne Enna, piano; Damon Recording Studios)

SERIES V: MISCELLANEOUS

Box	Folder	Description
1	8	Winona School medallion; Baron Missakian newspaper ad [n.d.]; Missakian logo; program, NBC Children's Hour Luncheon, Southern Lounge-Rainbow Room, New York City, January 12, 1931; program, Sylvia Tell, Kansas City Horner Conservatory, performance at the Ivanhoe Temple, Saturday June 6 [no year] (2 copies); card stock with Baron Missakian handwritten name/signature; two calligraphy writing samples of Sir Carl Busch's name with descriptive caption; <i>Ansco Professional Pointer: A Handbook on the Use of Photographic Paper</i> , 1926
4	N/A	One negative; six hand-tinted glass plates; six black-and-white proofs
4	N/A	3 x 5 index cards referencing client activity and fees
8	N/A	Photographer's Association of America/50 th Annual Convention, 1937 (Brochure mounted on board)

SERIES VI: JOURNALS

Box	Folder	Description
1	9	<i>Abel's Photographic Weekly</i> , June 15 1929
1	10	<i>The Professional Photographer</i> : 5 issues spanning June 20, 1934 to August 20 1937 [formerly <i>Abel's Photographic Weekly</i>]
1	11	<i>The Professional Photographer</i> : 5 issues spanning September 20, 1937 to July 1942 [formerly <i>Abel's Photographic Weekly</i>]

SERIES VII: PHOTOGRAPHS

Box	Description
2	Photographs 1-55
3	Photographs 56-110
5	Photographs 111-210
6	Photographs 211-265
7	Photographs 266-313
8	Photographs 314-316
4	Photographs 317-355

SERIES VIII: PHOTOGRAPHIC TRADE TOOLS

Box	Description
9	Drafting kit; crayons; charcoal; misc. art tools; oil paints; art pencils; lead; formula for borax developer; etc