BRICKTOP, 1894-1984.
Letters to Jodi Desmond, 1958-1972

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Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Bricktop, 1894-1984.
Title:	Letters to Jodi Desmond, 1958-1972
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection No. 1167
Extent:	.25 linear ft. (1 box)
Abstract:	Letters from International caberet performer and nightclub owner Bricktop to Jodi Desmond, written while both were living in Rome, Italy.
Language:	Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access
Unrestricted access.

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Related Materials in Other Repositories
Ada "Bricktop" Smith papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York, New York

Source
Purchase, 2010.

Citation
[after identification of item(s)], Letters to Jodi Desmond, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Processing
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Collection Description

Biographical Note

Bricktop (1894-1984), international cabaret performer and nightclub owner in Paris, Mexico City, and Rome, was born Ada Beatrice Queen Victoria Louise Virginia Smith, in Alderson, West Virginia, on August 14, 1894. Bricktop left the U.S. in 1924 for a limited European engagement; however, her stay in Paris lasted almost two decades and catapulted her to international fame with the first in a series of “Bricktop’s” clubs. In 1950, Bricktop returned to Europe after moving to the States during World War II, and reopened her nightclub in Paris. Soon after she moved to Rome, where the last “Bricktop’s” reigned until 1964. While in Rome, Bricktop--who had converted to Catholicism in 1949--developed relationships with Italian clergy and offered financial support to a variety of religious charities. Returning to the U.S. from 1965-1968, and then permanently in 1970, Bricktop continued to perform and remained a sought-after international personality until her death on February 1, 1984.

Bricktop met Jodi Desmond (1925-2008), a California native also known as Josephina Desimone, in Rome during the 1950s.

Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of letters from Bricktop to Jodi Desmond from 1958-1972. In her letters to Desmond, Bricktop discusses the ups and downs of her nightclub business, in addition to her Catholic faith. The collection also includes a small amount of correspondence regarding Bricktop from others to Desmond, in addition to Desmond's handwritten reminiscences about Bricktop.

Arrangement Note

Arranged by record type.

Container List

Box	Folder	Content
1	1	Correspondence from Bricktop to Desmond, 1958-1972
1	2	Correspondence from others to Desmond, 1972
1	3	Writings, "Bricktop," by Jodi Desmond
1	4	Writings, manuscript notes about Bricktop, by Jodi Desmond
1	5	Writings, "Notes and suggestions for 'Bricktop' manuscript by David Hanna, by Jodi Desmond
1	6	Clippings, 1964