

Richard R Grayson, MD

From: "Richard R Grayson, MD" <richard@doctorgrayson.com>
To: "William Pack" <chgomagic@sbcglobal.net>
Cc: "Dan Grayson" <Drg@uiuc.edu>
Sent: Saturday, July 14, 2007 12:41 AM
Subject: Re: Hambujer

Bill: I inserted your recent contribution into the Hambujer Magic file but left the previous writings for completeness. I think I made a discovery with your history of Ephraim. You mentioned Dublin in 1849. I now remember that I have a letter or memo on file at my son's house from Ephraim's grandson Eugene Henry who wrote that while living in England Ephraim played before Governor and Mrs. Seaton of Ireland. (See the Hambujer Bio file.) Eugene told me he had a playbill. This was 50 years ago that he told me. The date 1849 fits perfectly. Born in Prussia about 1826, emigrates to England ca 1849, to America ca 1860-2, plays New York, Boston, Chicago, ends up in Detroit till 1893 as an inventor, developer, and realtor, returns to Chicago to be with family about 1890, dies 1916. I will have Dan translate the German in the testimonial book, looking for descriptions of tricks, but I know there weren't any descriptions in the English section. Probably there are archives somewhere in England and in Ireland describing all this. Maybe in Germany. I should try to track down some more of his descendants. I will try to put the whole testimonial book online, but we would have to find a Google type scanner (those scan non-destructively at 1,000 ppm!.) I have no records of any family members (going back to about 1881) who ever saw him perform any magic. I will keep our email dialogs online for historical purposes if OK with you. Anyway, you now have all I know about Hambujer at present. Here's a linguistic mystery: why was the term "cabalistic art" used by some of his admirers? That's Jewish mysticism.

----- Original Message -----

From: Richard R Grayson, MD
To: William Pack
Sent: Wednesday, July 11, 2007 12:59 AM
Subject: Re: Hambujer

Hello Bill: How great to find someone who appreciates one of my ancestors! I just now finished scanning and uploading 10 more pages on Ephraim Hambujer. I assume you looked at my genealogy site under Hambujer and found all my material. My second post mentions his 1850-60 testimonial book which my son has in Urbana. It contains handwritten testimonials from headmasters and others who saw his shows in Germany and in England. Possibly born in Hanover. My mother knew him. My maternal aunts wrote me letters about him which I still have. They all referred to him as a genius. I have been to his grave. I have copies of his 33 patents. My sister has original oil portraits of him and his wife Anna (Hannah Darmstadt). My grandmother Stella Hambujer Mandelbaum was his 11th child. His gravestone says Ephraim Hamburg. Some of the records spell the name Hamburger. He was possibly a 33rd degree Mason, initiated in Edinburgh. There is a family tradition that he had 13 siblings who formed an orchestra. His father was Moishe (Moses). He allegedly was a drillmeister in the Prussian army before being posted to England. I have no records that show him in our civil war or in the Franco-Prussian war as the Tribune Obituary claims. He was apparently 88 when he died in 1916. There is no family memory of his having been in India. Probably P-R Schtick. He lived in Detroit, was a member and founder of a synagogue. He had 4 or 5 wives. He lost all his money in the 1893 financial panic and depression. I have a death certificate. I have a cousin my age who is/was an amateur/professional magician in Chicago, now in California: Frank Yaffe. Know him? I live in Batavia, 330 Maple Lane, practice at Delnor. We should read and translate every page in his testimonial book to gain clues to his magic career. We should check Detroit news archives from 1860-1890. We should get together.....Richard Grayson

<http://www.graysonfamily.org/Documents/>

----- Original Message -----

From: William Pack
To: richard@doctorgrayson.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 11, 2007 12:19 AM
Subject: Re: Hambujer

Doctor Grayson,

7/14/2007

I cannot begin to describe how delighted I was to get your comment on my blog about your great-grandfather.

You see I have taken up the task of preserving the history of magic and magicians in Chicago. I spent the better part of a year going through the microfilm copies of the Tribune at the Naperville library. They start at 1864. I stopped at 1900. Page by page, I went through over 250,000 pages saving anything to do with magic. Later, I supplemented this while on-line access to several digital archives of the Tribune and other national papers. This is where I first met your great-grandfather.

Two years ago, I wrote a limited edition book, "Discovering the Magic City, Early Chicago Amusements from 1834 to 1871. Hambujer did not make it in because I did not discover him on-line until after the book was written. I just started the second volume covering the next ten years, 1872-1882, but in the appendices I was planning to add the magicians I missed the first time around.

There seems to be little information about Hambujer in magic books. He received notice in a single sentence in Thomas Frost's, "Lives of the Conjurors." The entry in Bart Whaley's "Who's Who in Magic" is completely wrong, which is not unusual for this book.

I want to set the record straight. This is an obsession for me. I think there may be enough new material to do a magazine article in one of the magic trade magazines.

The main question is: Do you have more information about his magic career?

I would certainly give you copies of all that I have. Although, much of the microfilm is bad, there are some good advertisement copies.

I see your office is in Geneva. I live in Naperville, my mother is in Batavia, I am in the area all the time. Perhaps, after I get a chance to read what you have online and get my materials together, we could meet for lunch.

Thank you for your time,
Bill Pack