

# John Leonard Beevers:

## An Inventory of His Papers at the Harry Ransom Center

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### Descriptive Summary

- Creator:** Beevers, John Leonard, 1911-1975
- Title:** John Leonard Beevers Papers
- Dates:** 1926-1984
- Extent:** 6 record cartons, 1 oversize folder (7.56 linear feet)
- Abstract:** The John Leonard Beevers Papers contain correspondence, manuscripts, diaries, notebooks, legal and financial documents, and photographic and printed material that document the personal lives and literary careers of John Beevers and his two wives, Marjorie Pollard Beevers and Marjorie Broadbridge Beevers, from 1926 to 1984.
- Call Number:** Manuscript Collection MS-0309
- Language:** English
- Access:** Open for research. **Part or all of this collection is housed off-site and may require up to three business days' notice for access in the Ransom Center's Reading and Viewing Room. Please contact the Center before requesting this material: [reference@hrc.utexas.edu](mailto:reference@hrc.utexas.edu).**
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### Administrative Information

- Acquisition:** Gift, 1989 (G2181)
- Processed by:** Hans Rasmussen, Skye Thomsen, Colleen Whitney, 1999; Richard Workman, 2003; Kevin O'Sullivan, 2010
- Repository:** [Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin](#)
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## Biographical Sketch

John Leonard Beevers was born on 18 October 1911 in Gildersome, Yorkshire, to John Leonard Beevers, a police inspector, and Esther Schofield Beevers. Restless as a boy, he led a small gang that engaged in delinquent behavior and petty theft. His youthful hysteria and arrogance continued through his time at Queens College, Cambridge, where he took an M.A. in English with first class honors in 1933.

Beevers married Marjorie Pollard in 1934. He published his first book, *World Without Faith*, a defense of free thought over structured ideology, the following year. Beevers also began his journalism career at this time with stints on several newspapers. He worked exclusively for the British Broadcasting Corporation from 1941 to 1969.

John Beevers flirted with revolutionary Communism in his youth, but later rejected totalitarianism in all forms. He converted to Roman Catholicism sometime in the 1940s, and although nominally a Catholic, had an ambiguous relationship to the church. While he admired its theology and the lives of Catholic saints, Beevers's critical and lascivious nature prevented him from fully committing to the faith, particularly in its moral elements. Marjorie Beevers demonstrated a greater devotion to Roman Catholicism than her husband.

Beevers aspired to write fiction and poetry, but never had much success in these genres. He privately printed a volume of poetry, *The Dark Emperor*, under the pseudonym John Clayton in 1947, but failed to publish any more imaginative literature. Instead, Beevers turned to writing biographies of Roman Catholic saints, beginning with *Storm of Glory: St. Therese of Lisieux* (1949). John Beevers is best known for his 15 works on saints' lives, Marian apparitions, and translations of Catholic theological treatises. He has been credited with presenting balanced accounts of his subjects, avoiding both brusque skepticism and unquestioning piety.

John and Marjorie Beevers had one daughter, Susan Jane. Marjorie Beevers died in 1962. John Beevers married his mistress, Marjorie Broadbridge, the following year. He continued writing until his death on 13 September 1975.

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## Scope and Contents

The John Leonard Beevers Papers contain correspondence, manuscripts, diaries, notebooks, legal and financial documents, and photographic and printed material that document the personal lives and literary careers of John Beevers and his two wives, Marjorie Pollard Beevers and Marjorie Broadbridge Beevers, from 1926 to 1984. The material mostly deals with the personal affairs and opinions of John Beevers and less with his writing life. The papers are arranged in five series: I. Correspondence, 1931-1975 (9 boxes); II. Works, 1926-1976 (3.5 boxes); III. Personal, 1927-1975 (.5 box); IV. Marjorie Pollard Beevers, 1928-1962 (1 box); V. Marjorie Broadbridge Beevers, 1952-1984 (1 box); and VI. Susan Beevers, 1946-1957 (2 folders). Papers

within the three series devoted to his wives and daughter are arranged in the same order as Beevers's series: correspondence followed by works, if present, and then personal papers. Correspondence is filed alphabetically by correspondent, with outgoing correspondence interfiled with incoming letters.

The bulk of the collection consists of Beevers's correspondence with his two wives, both before and after marriage. He worked in Manchester and then in London, his wives lived at their country home in Baughurst Parish, Hampshire, and most of the letters are concerned with routine matters: family concerns, personal and business schedules, meetings with friends, shopping, and--one of Beevers's strongest passions--food; he seldom refers to his writing. Most of the rest of the correspondence is from Sylvester Mooney, abbot of Douai Abbey in Woolhampton near Reading, who was a friend and advisor to both Beevers and his first wife; the collection includes only Mooney's letters and none to Mooney from either John or Marjorie Beevers. Mooney's letters to John concern the subjects of John's books, while those to Marjorie respond to her confidences about marital and spiritual problems.

In addition to manuscripts for three of his published works, the collection contains several drafts of an unpublished novel about the emperor Tiberius, and several stories and sketches with strong sexual content and a focus on sadism and flagellation, interests that appear also in his letters to Marjorie Broadbridge. The diaries are devoted to daily routines, especially eating and drinking; they shed no light on his writing or on his career in journalism.

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**Series I. Correspondence, 1931-1975, n.d.**

A-M	<b>Container 1.1</b>
Beevers, Marjorie Broadbridge, 1949-1975, n.d.	
1949-1959	<b>Container 1.2</b>
1960-1961	<b>Container 1.3</b>
1962	<b>Container 1.4</b>
1963-1969	<b>Container 1.5</b>
1970-1975	<b>Container 1.6</b>
Undated	<b>Container 1.7</b>
Beevers, Marjorie Pollard, 1933-1962, n.d.	
Apr.-May 1933	<b>Container 1.8</b>
June 1933	<b>Container 1.9</b>
1-15 July 1933	<b>Container 1.10</b>
16-31 July 1933	<b>Container 1.11</b>
1-16 Aug. 1933	<b>Container 1.12</b>
17-31 Aug. 1933	<b>Container 1.13</b>
Sept. 1933	<b>Container 1.14</b>
Nov. 1933-Aug. 1941	<b>Container 1.15</b>
Sept. 1941	<b>Container 1.16</b>
Oct.-Nov. 1941	<b>Container 2.1</b>
Dec. 1941	<b>Container 2.2</b>
Jan.-Feb. 1942	<b>Container 2.3</b>
March-May 1942	<b>Container 2.4</b>
June-July 1942	<b>Container 2.5</b>

Aug.-Sept. 1942	<b>Container 2.6</b>
Oct.-Nov. 1942	<b>Container 2.7</b>
Dec. 1942-Feb. 1943	<b>Container 2.8</b>
March-Apr. 1943	<b>Container 2.9</b>
May-June 1943	<b>Container 2.10</b>
July-Aug. 1943	<b>Container 2.11</b>
Sept.-Oct. 1943	<b>Container 2.12</b>
Nov.-Dec. 1943	<b>Container 3.1</b>
Jan.-Feb. 1944	<b>Container 3.2</b>
March-Apr. 1944	<b>Container 3.3</b>
May-June 1944	<b>Container 3.4</b>
July-Aug. 1944	<b>Container 3.5</b>
Sept.-Oct. 1944	<b>Container 3.6</b>
Nov.-Dec. 1944	<b>Container 3.7</b>
Jan.-Feb. 1945	<b>Container 3.8</b>
March-May 1945	<b>Container 3.9</b>
June-Dec. 1945	<b>Container 3.10</b>
Jan.-June 1946	<b>Container 3.11</b>
July-Dec. 1946	<b>Container 3.12</b>
1947	<b>Container 3.13</b>
Jan.-June 1948	<b>Container 3.14</b>
July-Dec. 1948	<b>Container 4.1</b>
1949	<b>Container 4.2</b>
1950-1951	<b>Container 4.3</b>
1952-1954	<b>Container 4.4</b>

1955-1956

**Container 4.5**

1957-1962

**Container 4.6**

Undated

**Container 4.7**

Mooney, Sylvester, 1945-1975

1945-1946

**Container 4.8**

1947-1948

**Container 4.9**

1949-1953

**Container 4.10**

1954-1975

**Container 4.11**

N-Z, unidentified

**Container 4.12**

**Series II. Works, 1926-1976, n.d.***Abandonment to Divine Providence* (1975), translation

Handwritten draft with Introduction, n.d.

**Container 4.13**

Typed printer's copy with title page dummy, 1975

**Container 4.14***The Dark Emperor* (1947; written under pseudonym "John Clayton"), handwritten and typed manuscripts, printed copy, 1945, 1947**Container 4.15**

Diaries

1937, 1962

**Container 4.16**

1971-1972

**Container 4.17**

1974

**Container 4.18**

1975, with annotations by Marjorie Broadbridge Beevers, 1975-1976

**Container 5.1**

From Piræus, photocopy of printed copy, 1930

**Container 5.2**

Girls, n.d.

**Container 5.3**

The Making of a Saint (or) the Making of St. Therese, 1964

**Container 5.4***A Man for Now: The Life of Damien the Leper* (1974), n.d.**Container 5.5**

Notebooks, n.d.

**Container 5.6**

Notebooks (continued)

**Container 5.7**

Poems, handwritten and typescript, 1926-1934

**Container 5.8**

Stories (untitled), handwritten, n.d.

**Container 5.9**

Tiberius

Handwritten draft, 1959

**Container 5.10**

Handwritten draft, n.d.

**Container 5.11-12**

Original typescript (incomplete) and carbon copy, n.d.

**Container 5.13-15**

The Way in Which God Speaks to Us & How We Should Listen to Him,  
handwritten, 1973

**Container**  
5.16

Unidentified, n.d.

**Container** 5.17

**Series III. Personal, 1927-1975, n.d.**

Business documents, 1968, n.d.	<b>Container 5.18</b>
Commercial catalogs, n.d.	<b>Container 5.19</b>
Financial documents, 1964-1967	<b>Container 5.20</b>
Passport, 1966	<b>Container 5.21</b>
Photograph album, n.d.	<b>Container 6.1</b>
School Records, 1927-1933	<b>Container 6.2</b>
Miscellaneous and unidentified, 1966, 1975	<b>Container 6.3</b>

**Series IV. Marjorie Pollard Beevers, 1928-1962**

## Correspondence, 1933-1962

A-Z, unidentified, 1933-1951

**Container 6.4**

Mooney, Sylvester, 1945-1962

1945

**Container 6.5**

1946-1949

**Container 6.6**

1950-1959

**Container 6.7**

1960-1962

**Container 6.8**

## Works, 1931-1952, n.d.

Diaries, 1931-1932, 1941

**Container 6.9**

The Prison, short story, n.d.

**Container 6.10**

Proposals for television programs, 1952, n.d.

**Container 6.11**

Passports, 1928, 1946, 1956

**Container 6.12**

**Series V. Marjorie Broadbridge Beevers, 1952-1984, n.d.**

Correspondence, 1962-1984

A-Z, unidentified, 1962-1984

**Container 6.13**

Letters of condolence, 1975-1976

**Container 6.14**

Works, 1964-1976, n.d.

Diaries

1964-1965

**Container 6.15**

1973

**Container 6.16**

1975-1976

**Container 6.17**

Talk to the Rotary Club, n.d.

**Container 6.18**

Personal, 1952, 1962, n.d.

Financial papers, 1962, n.d.

**Container 6.19**

Legal papers, 1952

**Container 6.20**

**Series VI. Susan Beevers, 1946-1957, n.d.**

Correspondence, 1946-1957

**Container 6.21**

**BAR CODE LIST**

- Box 1: 059188000008915
- Box 2: 059188000008926
- Box 3: 059188000008937
- Box 4: 059188000008948
- Box 5: 059188000008959
- Box 6: 059188000008960