

# University of British Columbia Library Rare Books and Special Collections

## Finding Aid - Joseph Thomas Sheridan Le Fanu research collection (RBSC-ARC-1837)

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# Joseph Thomas Sheridan Le Fanu research collection

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## Summary information

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<b>Repository:</b>	University of British Columbia Library Rare Books and Special Collections
<b>Title:</b>	Joseph Thomas Sheridan Le Fanu research collection
<b>Reference code:</b>	RBSC-ARC-1837
<b>Date:</b>	1576-1995 (date of creation)
<b>Physical description:</b>	32 cm of textual records and 11 photographs.
<b>Dates of creation, revision and deletion:</b>	Fonds arranged and described by Allison Gale in Spring 2022.

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## Administrative history / Biographical sketch

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### Note

Joseph Thomas Sheridan Le Fanu was born August 28, 1814 in Dublin, Ireland. Growing up, his father, Thomas Philip Le Fanu, was a clergyman for the Church of Ireland and struggled financially causing them to move around Ireland several times throughout Le Fanu's childhood. Le Fanu's mother, Emma Lucretia Dobbin, supported his writing and he started writing poetry when he was 15 years old.

Le Fanu studied law at Trinity College in Dublin, and was called to the bar in 1839, but he soon left law for journalism and never practiced in a court of law. He first began writing stories for the Dublin University Magazine in 1838 where he published his first ghost story entitled "The Ghost and the Bone-Setter". In 1840, he became the owner or had interest in several newspapers, including the Dublin Evening Mail and The Warder, where he also published his stories.

On December 18, 1844 he married Susanna Bennett and the couple would have four children: Eleanor (1845), Emma (1846), Thomas (1847), and George (1854). Bennett suffered from anxiety and other neurological symptoms, and in 1858 died of unclear circumstances, or a "hysterical attack" as it was known then. This impacted Le Fanu deeply and caused him to cease writing for three years.

When Le Fanu resumed writing again in 1861, he became the editor and proprietor of the Dublin University Magazine. He published both "The House by the Churchyard" and "Wylder's Hand". He then signed a contract with Richard Bentley, his London publisher, and in 1864 had success with an English audience and market with his publication of "Uncle Silas".

Le Fanu is remembered for his horror fiction writing, often including Irish folklore into his stories, along with gothic, Victorian elements. Though known for writing ghost stories, he avoided overtly supernatural effects, and rather specialized in tone and effect in his mysteries. He is best known for his 1864 novel "Uncle Silas", and a collection of five short stories published in 1872 entitled "In a Glass Darkly". His legacy would influence 20th century ghost writers, notably M.R. James. Le Fanu's work was so horrific that it is said he "died by fright" caused by a heart attack on February 7, 1873.

## Custodial history

The records were collected by Roy Stokes throughout his professional and academic career. His main academic interest was in bibliographies, and he worked with various institutions in Europe and North America to acquire the records to create a comprehensive bibliography of Le Fanu that comprises this research collection. He donated the archival records along with a collection of books that are available in the UBC Library catalogue in the year 2000.

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## Scope and content

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The fonds consists of the research on Le Fanu conducted by Roy Stokes. Records relate to the personal life and professional writing career of Le Fanu that were collected and composed by Roy Stokes. Records include: four original letters by or for Le Fanu, typed transcripts of letters, and correspondence between Stokes and various people and institutions throughout his research process; bibliographies by Roy Stokes and other authors; photographs and photo negatives of Beaumaris; newspapers and articles; photocopies of book chapters; and a poster and program for the Gate Theatre performance of “Carmilla”.

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## Notes

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### Title notes

### Arrangement

No original order, records arranged by archivist.

### Related material

Library materials: <https://webcat.library.ubc.ca/vwebv/search?searchArg=Le%20Fanu%20Collection.&searchCode=NAME&searchType=4>

Special Collections: English Literature (library resource guide):  
[https://guides.library.ubc.ca/spcoll\\_English\\_Literature/lefanu](https://guides.library.ubc.ca/spcoll_English_Literature/lefanu)

### Other notes

- **Publication status:** published
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## Access points

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- Stokes, Roy
  - Stokes, Roy (subject)
  - Textual record (documentary form)
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- Photographic material (documentary form)
- Arts and culture (subject)

## Series descriptions

### Correspondence

Creator: Sheridan Le Fanu, Joseph Thomas

Date: 1814-1984 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Series consists of letters of correspondence, where the bulk of the records are typed transcription copies of letters by, for, or about Le Fanu during his lifetime. These copies were received by Roy Stokes from possibly the Archive Centre at Kings College in Cambridge, UK, but that is unconfirmed. There are uncorrected copies as well as copies that have notes and annotations by Roy Stokes. The series also includes four original letters to, from, or about Le Fanu as well as correspondence between Roy Stokes and various institutions and people, notably William Le Fanu, a direct descendant of Le Fanu.

Physical description: 18 cm of textual records

1 photograph: sepia

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)
- Photographic material (documentary form)

Publication status:

published

#### File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1837-01-01	File - [Original Letters]	1840-1869		
RBSC-ARC-1837-01-01-PH-01	Item - [Le Fanu Photograph]	[1840-1869]		
RBSC-ARC-1837-01-02	File - Le Fanu Letters Carbon Copies Uncorrected	[1830?]-1895		
RBSC-ARC-1837-01-03	File - [Transcribed Letters with Notes] Undated	[1814-1873?]		
RBSC-ARC-1837-01-04	File - [Transcribed Letters with Notes]	1830-1839		
RBSC-ARC-1837-01-05	File - [Transcribed Letters with Notes]	1840-1849		

RBSC-ARC-1837-01-06	File - [Transcribed Letters with Notes] 1850-1859	1850-1859
RBSC-ARC-1837-01-07	File - [Transcribed Letters with Notes] 1860-1864	1860-1864
RBSC-ARC-1837-01-08	File - [Transcribed Letters with Notes] 1865-1866	1865-1866
RBSC-ARC-1837-02-01	File - [Transcribed Letters with Notes] 1867-1873	1867-1873
RBSC-ARC-1837-02-02	File - "Russel Gray" [Bibliography and Transcribed Letter]	1867-1869
RBSC-ARC-1837-02-03	File - Emma Lucretia Le Fanu [Letter Copies]	1850-1852
RBSC-ARC-1837-02-04	File - Lady Gifford [Family History and Transcribed Letters]	[1807-1867]
RBSC-ARC-1837-02-05	File - Rhoda Broughton [Research]	[1952-1962]
RBSC-ARC-1837-02-06	File - Caroline Norton [Transcribed Letters]	[1807-1877]
RBSC-ARC-1837-02-07	File - Untraced Letters	[1871-1971]
RBSC-ARC-1837-02-08	File - [University of Kansas Letter with "Nineteenth-Century Fiction" Excerpt]	1952-1953
RBSC-ARC-1837-02-09	File - [Letters Between Roy Stokes and William Le Fanu]	1947-1984
RBSC-ARC-1837-02-10	File - General Correspondence [Roy Stokes Research]	1947-1972

## Bibliographies

Creator: Sheridan Le Fanu, Joseph Thomas

Date: 1814-1995 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Series consists primarily of the handwritten or typed bibliography of Le Fanu's works as composed by Roy Stokes. The bibliography covers Le Fanu's works published during his lifetime and after his death. The series also includes photocopies of various book chapters and articles written by other authors that Roy Stokes used during his research process.

Physical description: 10 cm of textual records

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)

Publication status:

published

### File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1837-02-11	File - [Dublin University Magazine Bibliography]	[1838-1873]		

RBSC-ARC-1837-02-12	File - Le Fanu Bibliography 1814-1873	[1814-1949?]
RBSC-ARC-1837-03-01	File - [Le Fanu Bibliography] Post-1873	1878-1985
RBSC-ARC-1837-03-02	File - [Le Fanu Bibliography] Undated Editions	[before 1995]
RBSC-ARC-1837-03-03	File - [Le Fanu Bibliography] American Editions	1865-1964
RBSC-ARC-1837-03-04	File - [Le Fanu Bibliography] Translations	1877-1912
RBSC-ARC-1837-03-05	File - [Le Fanu Bibliography] Bentley's Catalogues	1888-1920
RBSC-ARC-1837-03-06	File - [Le Fanu Bibliography] McCormack	1980

## Research

Creator: Sheridan Le Fanu, Joseph Thomas

Date: 1576-1995 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Series consists of the research that Roy Stokes did about the history of Le Fanu. Series includes familial history dating Le Fanu's lineage back to 1576 as well as his descendants; newspapers, articles, and book chapters; bibliographic notes and general queries; theatrical adaptations of Le Fanu's work "Carmilla"; and photographs and photo negatives of Beaumaris, Isle of Anglesey where Le Fanu spent time as a child and later in life.

Physical description: 4 cm of textual records

6 photographs: b&w

4 photographs: negatives

Publication status:

published

### File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1837-03-07	File - Family	[1576-1969?]		
RBSC-ARC-1837-03-08	File - Le Fanu Articles and References	1971-1977		
RBSC-ARC-1837-03-09	File - Le Fanu Cuttings	1946-1968		
RBSC-ARC-1837-03-10	File - General Cuttings	1946-1965		
RBSC-ARC-1837-03-11	File - [Roy Stokes Research Notebook]	[1936-1945?]		
RBSC-ARC-1837-03-12	File - [British Library Research]	[1804-1978?]		
RBSC-ARC-1837-03-13	File - General Queries	[1830-1972?]		

RBSC- ARC-1837-03-14	File - [Writings about Le Fanu]	[before 1995]
RBSC- ARC-1837-03-15	File - [Gate Theatre Production of Carmilla]	1955
RBSC- ARC-1837-03-16	File - [Beaumaris]	[1953?]
RBSC- ARC-1837-03-16- PH-02 - PH-05	Item - Beaumaris [Photographs]	[1953?]
RBSC- ARC-1837-03-16- PH-06 - PH-11	Item - Photographs Victoria Terrace Beaumaris	[1953?]