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# J.D. SALINGER - HARTOG LETTERS

## A GUIDE

## Introduction

J.D. Salinger (1919-2010) and Donald Hartog (1919-2007) met in 1937 in Vienna. They were both 18 years old and had been sent to Vienna by their fathers to learn German. Salinger was at the time also learning the meat trade.

In March 1938 Salinger returned to the US to pursue his studies. The war years followed and both friends were involved in active service. They corresponded for some years but these earlier letters, up until the 1950s, have not survived.

In 1986 Don decided to get in touch with Salinger and revive their acquaintance. The letters in this collection cover this period (1986-2002).

The collection contains 50 letters and 4 postcards sent by Salinger to Don. An additional letter is dated 1943, from Salinger's father (Sol Salinger) to Don. There are a few enclosures.

The two friends enjoyed a reunion in England in 1989 to mark their joint 70<sup>th</sup> birthdays (their first meeting since 1938) and a further meeting took place in the US in 1994.

## Provenance

The University of East Anglia was approached by Frances Hartog, daughter of Donald Hartog. The Hartog family was looking for a permanent home for the letters and gifted the letters to the UEA Archives. The letters were deposited on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2011.

## Reference

JDS

## Dates

1943, 1986-2002

## Extent

1 box

## Medium

Letters (typescript), postcards, photographs, press-cuttings.

## Photographs

A 1989 photograph (formerly owned by Don) shows Don and Salinger sitting on a bench in England, this was their first reunion since 1938. Four photographs show Salinger's desk and his Russian Blue cats (1993), and there is a photograph of a gift from Salinger to Don – a wooden eagle (2000), it is unclear who took this photograph.

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The Salinger Estate has confirmed that permission for publication will not be granted.

## Related Collections

Collections of papers on and about Salinger can be found at various locations:

[Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre](#), University of Texas, Austin

[Morgan Library and Museum](#), New York (Carter Burden Collection of American Literature)

[Princeton University](#) holds working papers for a proposed biography on Salinger by Ian Hamilton

## Description and arrangement

The letters are arranged chronologically. Envelopes, where included, have been kept with the corresponding letter. Brief descriptions of the letters follow.

### **JDS/1/1 [Letter, Sol Salinger to Lieut. D.T. Hartog, 29/7/1943]**

Sol writes from New York to Don in the King's Royal Rifle Corps. Sol reassures Don about his friendship with Salinger. He sends regards to Don's family and says he had a visit from Leo Safir. If Don goes to Tel Aviv he is asked to visit Leo's family.

### **JDS/1/2 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 22/10/1986]**

Salinger describes his revisit to Vienna and mentions members of the Safir family. He updates Don on his family and is pleased about the re-acquaintance.

### **JDS/1/3 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 9/11/1986]**

Mentions the Safir family and updates Don on the Salinger family. Salinger remarks on Don's second marriage after the death of his first wife.

### **JDS/1/4 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 20/12/1986]**

Salinger refers to a print of an old photograph taken in Vienna which Don had sent him.

### **JDS/1/5 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 26/5/1987]**

Salinger refers to the progress of a lawsuit, Don's wife's participation in a philharmonic chorus and the presidential elections in the US.

### **JDS/1/6 [Postcard, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 28/7/1987]**

Salinger hadn't managed to get away from the US on a trip [to Europe].

### **JDS/1/7 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 7/12/1987]**

Salinger would like to meet up with Don. He mentions progress on a lawsuit.

### **JDS/1/8 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 10/4/1988]**

Mentions plans to meet Don in London the following year [for their 70<sup>th</sup> birthdays]. Salinger describes his home and the surrounding countryside, the nearest town etc.

### **JDS/1/9 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 8/12/1988]**

Refers to their impending meeting, US elections and London theatre.

### **JDS/1/10 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 9/2/1989]**

Refers to their impending meeting, the recent celebration of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, and his recent marriage to Colleen.

### **JDS/1/11 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 9/3/1989]**

Salinger remarks on a photograph sent of Don and Dilys (Don's wife), and that he had met Don in 1937. Travel plans to England are discussed, London theatre and what the Salingers may like to do in London.

**JDS/1/12 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 26/3/1989]**

Hotel arrangements in London are mentioned; clothes for the trip; London theatre and activities in London.

**JDS/1/13 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 8/4/1989]**

Salinger describes his regular Saturday evening dinners out, and other nearby restaurants. He thanks Don for booking London theatre seats and describes travel plans. Salinger also recollects Don's father taking them out one night in Vienna in 1937.

**JDS/1/14 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 26/4/1989]**

Salinger writes of their recent meeting and the meaning of their friendship. He remarks on Don's children and home.

**JDS/1/16 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Dilys and Donald Hartog, 29/6/1989]**

Salinger describes progress in the vegetable garden, Dilys' singing, Don and Dilys' trip to Suffolk, and Wimbledon tennis. He thinks back to Vienna and the days when he met Don at the Eislaufverein [skating rink]. He mentions the outdoor work he does in the grounds of his property.

**JDS/1/17 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 29/7/1989]**

Refers to Dilys and an opera house in Twickenham, Wimbledon tennis, Colleen's gardening and homeopathy.

**JDS/1/18 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 11/10/1989]**

Salinger writes of firewood and a tomato crop, his views on travel, his son's acting career, an Indian restaurant in London, hearing aids, Wimbledon tennis, a Russian dance ensemble, and BBC television series.

**JDS/1/19 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 10/2/1990]**

Salinger writes of Colleen's trip to Florida to see family, winter weather, politics in the Balkans, Russia and the US. Enclosed is an article "Grand Old Ladies" by Gabriele Tergit.

**JDS/1/20 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 19/3/1990]**

Salinger discusses Dilys' ill health, and makes brief mention of Don's daughter and his own son.

**JDS/1/21 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 2/5/1990]**

Salinger writes of his relationship with his publishers, Dilys' health, his son's experiences while filming, the vegetable garden and harvesting of wild greens, his and his wife's varying interests at home, and Don's brother's health.

Includes a press-cutting "English Uber Alles"

**JDS/1/22 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 11/6/1990]**

Salinger writes about Dilys' health, the vegetable garden, Wimbledon tennis, World Cup football, Dilys' concerts and his own taste in music, the release of a film in which his son featured, and an expectant grandchild.

**JDS/1/23 [Postcard, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 24/10/1990]**

The postcard shows Lipizzaner horses which Salinger had been to see in Worcester, Mass. He had originally seen them in 1937 [in Vienna]. Salinger writes of the arrival of his new grandson. His wife Colleen is making quilts and he is bringing in firewood.

**JDS/1/24 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 5/12/1990]**

Salinger describes a bus tour he had just made to the Canadian side of Niagara Falls, his feelings about leaving his home, and tree-felling in order to open up a view.

Includes an article on shortwave radios by Philip Shenon.

**JDS/1/25 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 13/12/1990]**

Salinger sends sympathy on the death of Don's brother. He remembers meeting Howard when they were all young.

**JDS/1/26 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 9/3/1991]**

Salinger writes of Colleen's like for Italian operatic tenors. He encloses a photograph of his son and grandson [not included]. He refers to the possible demise of Don's fire alarm company in the recession and asks for a taped interview with Howard to be sent. He reminisces about the time he spent in Vienna [1937/38] and what he has liked in life. He comments on Don's relatives living in Israel and their war time experience. Salinger hopes Dilys is feeling better, and writes briefly about their home activities and pets.

**JDS/1/27 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 11/4/1991]**

Salinger thanks Don for the tape on his brother Howard. He would like his daughter Peggy (a music scholar) to listen to what Howard had to say about his life in music.

Colleen's aunt is visiting and he writes of their quilt work, and his television watching. They would be visiting New York later that month.

He discusses his son's acting career and describes his writing over the past 25 years.

Enclosed is an article on restricted diets and longevity.

**JDS/1/28 [Postcard, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 4/5/1991]**

A postcard from New York where Colleen had been to a quilt festival.

Salinger had met up with his son for a meal. He was about to have breakfast and then drive home.

**JDS/1/29 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 3/7/1991]**

Salinger gives his views on national holidays on the eve of Independence Day. He writes of Wimbledon tennis and wishes Don finds himself a new home as good as the previous.

He writes of Don's daughter's trip to Budapest, his like for the place, and that he had not managed to visit there.

Colleen had been away with her sister and Salinger writes of his being at home alone. The living-room would be re-painted and Salinger was thinking about the presence of painters. He describes his preferred season.

**JDS/1/30 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 4/10/1991]**

Salinger writes of old age and how his lifestyle has prepared him for this. He mentions things he's been attending to, the coming fall, potato planting, his young grandchild and his friendship with Don.

**JDS/1/31 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 8/2/1992]**

Salinger comments on the sort of friend he is and his daily writing of fiction. He describes the route to his letter-box, the family Christmas, the Australian tennis, and Verdi Requiem.

**JDS/1/32 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 16/5/1992]**

Salinger writes about Don's visit to France for a wedding, progress in the vegetable garden, the Cornish fair, stacking of firewood, a documentary on Klaus Barbie, a second-hand book sale in Hanover, the writings of R.L. Stevenson, his son's trip to the Rockies, and that he is expecting another grandchild.

**JDS/1/33 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 1/9/1992]**

Salinger writes about the builders and alterations being done to his house, a trip to Malibu to see his son and his family, a trip with them to a baseball game, Malibu life, and shopping in Los Angeles.

**JDS/1/34 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 29/10/1992]**

Salinger writes about the fire which destroyed their home and dogs. His writings and papers of the previous 25 years had been left undamaged. The Salingers moved temporarily into a house nearby.

**JDS/1/35 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 4/10/1993]**

Salinger comments on Don's suggestion that he [and Dilys] come to the US for a visit in 1994. He comments on Don's house move.

Salinger and Colleen had settled well into their newly rebuilt house after the fire a year previous, insurance cover had paid out on his damaged books.

He writes about his cats, tennis, their lunches out a few times a week, visitors to their home and his fiction writing. He would soon be flying to Washington for a visit and is very pleased that Don and Dilys may be visiting.

Enclosed are photographs of two Russian Blue cats at JD Salinger's writing desk.

**JDS/1/36 [Postcard, J. D. Salinger to Donald and Dilys Hartog, 22/5/1994]**

The postcard is sent from Germany where Salinger and Colleen have spent three weeks in central Europe.

**JDS/1/37 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 28/6/1994]**

Salinger writes of his excitement at the prospect of Don and Dilys' visit to New Hampshire in September. He describes what it will be like to visit them, what they could do, etc.

He gives news of the death of Bibi Safir.

**JDS/1/38 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald and Dilys Hartog, [1994?]]**

Salinger is pleased that it's nearly time for Don's visit. He makes suggestions for the best entertainment and activities in Dartmouth, Boston and Cambridge. He is convalescing.

**JDS/1/39 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 23/10/1994]**

Salinger remarks on Don and Dilys' visit and he jokes about their good wives. He writes of the logging in the woods and comments on the photographs of Don's house.

He and Colleen would be visiting Washington for a few days.

He writes favourably about his friendship with Don.

**JDS/1/40 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 19/2/1995]**

Salinger encloses a little book by [Alvise "Luigi"] Cornaro [16<sup>th</sup> century discourse on living well and long]. He encourages Don to try the regime.

Colleen's sister and nieces are coming to visit. He remarks on the inconvenience of builders, the winter snowfall and the heating of his home. Colleen had been to visit family in Florida. Salinger would continue with the church suppers.

**JDS/1/41 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 22/3/1995]**

Salinger muses on what to do with his remains, literary and other. He writes about the benefits of aloe vera. He'd been to see the Vienna Boys Choir in Claremont, and had seen them 60 years prior in Vienna. They'd had a visit from Colleen's sister and three nieces. One paragraph redacted (Data Protection Act).

**JDS/1/42 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 18/5/1995]**

Salinger thanks Don for photographs of his birthday. He comments on work in the vegetable garden. He would be going on a bus trip to Cape Cod in June, and describes his impressions on the Grand Canyon. Colleen has a new bread making machine.

**JDS/1/43 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 17/7/1995]**

Salinger mentions Betty Stronach and recalls a Vienna Ball which Don and he attended. He describes his preference for natural remedies and mentions Don's lunch with Tony Posnansky.

He describes his coach trip to Cape Cod, Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard, and comments on Frances' career in tapestry restoration, and making decisions in general.

Colleen's family would soon be visiting from Florida. He mentions briefly the television programme *Band of Gold*, tennis, tomatoes, and a novel by Penelope Fitzgerald.

**JDS/1/44 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 16/8/1995]**

A brief note enclosing an article for Don's son, Simon, from the New York Times [not included]. Salinger mentions briefly the tennis, a French film with [Gerard] Depardieu *Tous les Matins du Monde*, and the tomato crop.

**JDS/1/45 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 28/3/1996]**

Salinger gives his thoughts on biographies and biographers and quotes from Emerson. He writes about the pianist Alfred Brendel. He wishes Don a happy 77<sup>th</sup> birthday and asks why they never skate at the Eislaufverein anymore. He'd like to see Don and Dilys in either the US or London.

**JDS/1/46 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 27/6/1996]**

Salinger thinks fondly of Regent's Park and remembers the gun emplacements there 50 years earlier. He remarks on Wimbledon tennis. Colleen was taking a trip to New Jersey with her family, and he writes about his own sense of family.

Salinger comments on the vegetable and flower gardens, his fondness for his home, and the trial of O.J. Simpson.

Enclosed is a press-cutting "Simpson: Celebrity, Not Hero" by Michael Wilbon, *Washington Post*.

**JDS/1/47 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 27/9/1996]**

Don had sent Salinger an obituary of Grete Salinger, whom Salinger did not think was a relative. He writes of his parents' 'mixed' marriage and that he knew little of his parents' ancestry. He describes the character of his father and mother and his relationship with each of them. Brief mention is made of his attendance at a boarding military school. He is looking forward to the Fall and Winter; and not looking forward to the presidential elections [Bill Clinton (Democrat), Bob Dole (Republican)].

A paragraph is redacted (Data Protection Act).

**JDS/1/48 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 30/1/1997]**

Salinger writes about a possible publication of a long short-story of his which first appeared in the *New Yorker* in 1965. He also gives his opinion on publishers and publishing.

He remarks on his and Don's ageing and that he is putting a rowing machine to use. He comments on the tennis and the players' parents.

**JDS/1/49 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 5/11/1997]**

Salinger comments on Don and Dilys' trips to Rotterdam and Ravenna. He thinks about his 1938 train ride from Vienna to Berne and on to Paris, his own attitudes to travel - especially train travel, and recommends a fast-food outlet.

He remarks on the confines of his room where he spends his time, a visit from his son and daughter and their respective families, his feelings towards his grandchildren and how he sees himself as a grandfather.

**JDS/1/50 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 29/1/1998]**

Salinger describes the squirrels and birds around his home. He thinks he will be visiting Florida with Colleen. They had escaped a storm and he was not bothered by more snow. He remarks on Frances' appointment to the Victoria and Albert Museum.

**JDS/1/51 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 7/12/1998]**

Salinger is pre-occupied with his work and apologises for being a poor correspondent. Colleen is playing the violin. He remarks on his grandsons and his involvement as a grandfather. He comments on the tennis and his feelings about the forthcoming holiday season and their 80<sup>th</sup> birthdays, and tells Don about a book *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years 1933-41*.

**JDS/1/52 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 15/9/1999]**

Salinger asks after Don's health. He writes about the previous Wimbledon and US tennis. JDS thinks it fortunate that he and Don had been able to be in Vienna [in 1937/38]. In May he and Colleen had been to the Grand Canyon and Zion National Park. His son had moved nearer, to Connecticut.

**JDS/1/53 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 11/4/2000]**

A letter to wish Don a happy birthday. This note is enclosed with a gift sent by Salinger and Colleen to Don – a wooden carving of an owl for his garden. Included is a photograph of the owl [this may have been taken by Don or Salinger, it is unclear which].

**JDS/1/54 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 30/11/2000]**

Salinger has been harvesting a weed, *chenopodium album*, which is prevalent due to the wet weather. He describes Thanksgiving at home with Colleen's relatives. Matthew his son had produced a play *The Syringa Tree* and Salinger had been to watch it.

Includes a press-cutting on Britain enduring its soggiest autumn.

**JDS/1/55 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 30/4/2001]**

Salinger remarks on the miserable winter in both the UK and US. He describes how cutting one's own hair helps avoid having to make small talk with barbers and that P.G. Wodehouse reportedly avoided living anywhere above the 1<sup>st</sup> floor as he didn't know what to say to the lift boy.

Salinger remembers fondly the Safirs and another family who took him in whilst he was in military school. Colleen is having a graduation party and going into a quilting partnership.

**JDS/1/56 [Letter, J. D. Salinger to Donald Hartog, 30/1/2002]**

Mentions Don's sending of a National Theatre notice about the play Matthew is producing. Salinger is pleased about news on Frances' health. Salinger's son and grandsons had been to visit and he comments on the interaction between them. Salinger had also been to New York to see the one-character play by Matthew, it was hoped this would go on tour overseas.

Colleen adds a note that she has started a new business and they had acquired two kittens, thus bringing to five the number of felines in the house.