

University of Memphis

## University of Memphis Digital Commons

---

Special Collections Finding Aids

Special Collections

---

8-27-2021

### MSS0397. James M. Beck papers finding aid

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.memphis.edu/speccoll-findingaids>

---

#### Recommended Citation

"MSS0397. James M. Beck papers finding aid" (2021). *Special Collections Finding Aids*. 95.  
<https://digitalcommons.memphis.edu/speccoll-findingaids/95>

This Finding Aid is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Collections at University of Memphis Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Special Collections Finding Aids by an authorized administrator of University of Memphis Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [khggerty@memphis.edu](mailto:khggerty@memphis.edu).

**University of Memphis Libraries  
Special Collections Department**

126 Ned R. McWherter Library

Memphis, TN 38152 - 3250

Phone: (901) 678 - 2210

E-mail: lib\_sc@memphis.edu

**James M. Beck papers**

**Title:** James M. Beck papers

**Collection No:** MSS.397

**Extent:** 1.5 cubic feet

**Inclusive Dates:** 1938-1997

**Abstract:** The collection is composed of documents concerning James M. Beck's World War II service and his civilian work in post-war Germany, as well as materials related to the cotton business in Memphis.

**Donor:** James M. Beck, Memphis, Tennessee, July & December 1997.

**Processed by:** James E. Montague, 1999; Gerald Chaudron, 2014.

**Access:** Open to all researchers.

**Language:** English

**Preferred Citation:** James M. Beck papers, Special Collections Department, University Libraries, University of Memphis.

**Publication date:** August 2014

---

## Biographical information

James Moreno Beck was born on July 29, 1913, in Pensacola, Florida, to Alexander Rabun (1882-1919) and Marie Isla Smith Beck (1886-1985). The Becks moved to Memphis in 1919, and Marie Beck later married Lorenzo Lewis Bland (b.1876) and moved to Birmingham, Alabama. James graduated from Central High School in Memphis in 1931, and then worked for D. Canale and Company and the brokerage business, Campbell Sales Company, before being drafted into the army in 1941. His first assignment was in British Guiana testing uniforms in 1942. In 1943 he was commissioned as a second lieutenant and served as a combat infantry officer in Italy, France and Germany. He left the army to work for the Joint Import-Export Agency in 1946, which was designed to help rebuild the German economy. While he was in Germany, Beck met and married his wife, Gertrude Kotte.

The Becks moved back to the United States in 1948 and he worked in a food brokerage business and then for several transportation companies. Beck also joined the Army Reserve with the rank of captain. In 1954 he started the Memphis Trucking Company which he operated until 1987. By 1964 the company was handling five million pounds of cotton weekly from Memphis to the Southeast textile mills. Trudy Beck assisted her husband in the operation of the company and later became a cotton broker. James Beck died on July 31, 2002.

---

## Scope and contents

The collection is composed of documents concerning James Beck's World War II service and his civilian work in post-war Germany, as well as materials related to the cotton business.

Beck's military papers include reassignment and leave orders, promotion and medal notices, as well as documents related to his work as a supply officer in Germany. The collection also contains documents related to Beck's service with the Joint Import-Export Agency after he left the army in 1946. Other materials concern the Army Reserve, health examinations and the Army Exchange Service.

Two notebooks feature in the cotton-related, one noting the shipments of cotton made from 1970 to 1977, and the other listing companies the Becks worked with. The collection also includes copies of Buenting's International Cotton Code and additions to the code.

---

## Subject terms

Beck, Gertrude K.

Beck, James M., 1913-2002.

Cotton trade--Tennessee--Memphis.

United States. Army--Supplies and stores.

---

## Inventory

Folder

### Box 1

- 1 Publication: The Cotton Digest, Vol. 37, No. 16, 1964 December 19. Article on Beck, p.22.
- 2 Army documents: Induction notice, 1941; statement of military service, circa 1945; qualification worksheet, circa 1949.
- 3 Army documents: Reassignment, leave orders, promotion, 1943.
- 4 Army documents: Reassignment and leave orders, 1944.
- 5 Army documents: Reassignment, leave orders, promotions, 1945.
- 6 Army documents: Reassignment and leave orders, 1946.
- 7 Inventory documents during period Beck was a supply officer for Headquarters Military Government, Kassel, Germany, 1945-1946.
- 8 Inventory documents signed by Beck while a supply officer for Headquarters Military Government, Kassel, Germany, 1945-1946.
- 9 Army documents: Decorations and medals, 1944-1949.
- 10 Results of pre-marital physical examinations, 1947; travel orders for Gertrude Beck and daughter, Frankfurt, Germany to Birmingham, Ala., 1948; Sigrid Leonhardy adoption certificate, 1947.
- 11 Letters of recommendation, 1947-1948.
- 12 Army documents: Financial, 1943-1948.
- 13 Army documents: Health, 1943-1947
- 14 Army documents: Army Reserve, 1948-1956.
- 15 Army documents: Related to Beck's employment with Army Exchange Service, 1946-1948.
- 16 Assorted items: Post cards: Kassel, Germany, undated; unidentified (Kassel, Germany?), undated; "Froede's Briefmarken-Katalog: Deutschland 1938"; New York passenger vehicle registration certificate, 1948; Italian economic representative's business card; invitation to Beck wedding reception, Leonbardsbrunn, Germany; Memphis-Shelby County civil defense brochure: "Be Safe From the H-Bomb", circa 1955.
- 17 Joint Export-Import Agency, Germany, documents, 1947.
- 18 Joint Export-Import Agency, Germany, documents, 1948.
- 19 Joint Export-Import Agency (US/UK) documents, 1947.
- 20 Joint Export-Import Agency documents: Category "B" General Imports list.
- 21 Buenting's International Cotton Code additions, 1956-1964.
- 22 Buenting's International Cotton Code: Micronaire and Pressley specification codes, 1959-1960.
- 23 Buenting's International Cotton Code: Lists of Belgian, Austrian, Italian spinners, 1959-1962 and undated.

- 24 "Purchases of American cotton made by the Grupo de Importacion del C.A.N. on October 27, 1955", Memphis and Orleans/Texas.
- 25 "Memphis Cotton Exchange: Directory of the Cotton Trade", 1986 November 1 (copy).

**Box 2**

- 1 Publication: Active Times, Vol. 17, No. 9, 1997 May. Article on Beck, pp.6-7, 10.

Unfolded

Notebook: Names and addresses of cotton merchants.

Notebook: Shipments of cotton, 1970-1977.

Buenting's International Cotton Code, Second edition, 1929 (3 copies).

- OS 1** "Memphis Cotton Exchange: Directory of the Cotton Trade", 1986 November 1.