

Francis Henry King:

An Inventory of His Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator	King, Francis Henry, 1923-2011
Title	Francis Henry King Collection 1939-1992
Dates:	1939-1992
Extent	8 boxes (3.3 linear feet)
Abstract:	The collection contains correspondence and literary works by the British author.
Language	English
Access	Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition	Purchases, 1970-1992
Processed by	Deborah Shelby, 1992, 1993
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin

Biographical Sketch

Francis Henry King, the only son of Eustace Arthur Cecil and Faith Mina Read King, was born on March 4, 1923, in Adelboden, Switzerland. King spent the early part of his childhood in India with his parents and three sisters. His father was a police officer, then deputy director of the Intelligence Bureau, and died at an early age from tuberculosis.

King was sent to Shrewsbury boarding school in England. He declared himself a pacifist at the age of fourteen and became a conscientious objector to World War II. This forced him to leave Balliol College, Oxford University during the war to participate in the agricultural service for England until the war's end when he returned to Oxford. As an undergraduate King published three novels: *To the Dark Tower*, 1946; *Never Again*, 1948; and *Air that Kills*, 1949. He graduated from Oxford in 1949 and received his MA in 1951.

King joined the British Council in order to travel and work abroad. From 1949-50 King was a lecturer in Florence, Italy, the setting of his 1951 novel *The Dividing Stream*, which received the Somerset Maugham award in 1952. Salonkia, Greece, was his next post and he was then assigned to Athens from 1953-1957. *The Dark Glasses*, published in 1954, was set in Greece as was *The Firewalkers: A Memoir*, which was published in 1956 under the pseudonym, Frank Caudwell. *The Man on the Rock*, published in 1957, also involved Greek characters, while his next novel, *The Custom House* (1961), was set in Japan. In 1957 King was transferred to Helsinki, Finland, as an assistant representative for one year. He then served as regional director of the British Council in Kyoto, Japan, from 1958-63. One of King's short stories, "The Japanese Umbrella," won the Katherine Mansfield Prize in 1965. Another of his novels set in Japan was *The Waves behind the Boat* (1967). King left the British Council and moved back to England in 1964 to dedicate more time to his writing, and to reviewing literary works. In 1978, he added dramatic criticism to his repertoire.

The Last Pleasure Gardens (1965), the least biographical of his works according to King, is set in England. *The Brighton Belle and other Stories* (1968), is a collection of short stories, many of which had been previously published in magazines such as the *London Magazine* and *Modern Short Stories*.

King did not use his sexual preference as the main theme to his novels, with the exception of *The Domestic Animal*, though there are homosexual characters in several of his novels. Some publishers tried to limit these characters during his early writing period, particularly during the 1950s when *The Dark Glasses* was published. *The Domestic Animal* was published in 1970, and according to King, it is his most autobiographical novel. Publication was delayed due to a libel suit from an acquaintance who saw himself as a minor female character in the novel. King later used this experience in his novel *The Action*, which was published in 1978.

Flights (1973), is set in Hungary, and conveys his experiences traveling in the Communist Bloc Countries. *A Game of Patience* (1974), is set in rural southern England and King's experiences during World War II as a conscientious objector. *The Needle*, published in 1975 revolves around two main characters, one of which is a pedophilic, the other is his sister who keeps him alive with insulin shots.

Robert de Montesquiou (1967), and *Japan* (1970), are two of Kings works which are not novels. King worked with John Haylock to produce this English translation of *Un Prince 1900 - Robert de Montesquiou*, a biography originally written by Philippe Jullian. *Japan* is filled with photographs and is an essay that describes a brief history of Japan and its people from a visitors perspective.

King served as a member of the Executive Committee of P.E.N., London, from 1969 to 1973. From 1975 to 1977 he was chairman of the Society of Authors. In 1977 he was elected vice-president of P.E.N. in England and the following year became president of the organization. He also served as president of P.E.N. International from 1986 to 1989.

King, who had suffered a stroke in 2005, died July 3, 2011. He had been appointed Officer of the order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1979 and Comander (CBE) in 1985.

For further biographical information on Francis Henry King see

Yesterday Came Suddenly: An Autobiography by Francis King, 1993.

Friends and Friendship, by Kay Dick, 1974.

Scope and Contents

The Francis Henry King collection contains two series, I. Correspondence, 1941-1992, and II. Works, 1939-1978. The correspondence series is primarily incoming letters, and contains information about King's works, who he spent time with, PEN, opinions of his reviews, personal information, aspects of publishing, his health, works of others, and other people's impressions of friends and writers that King knew.

The bulk of the collection consists of manuscripts King wrote from 1939 to 1978, but primarily dating from the 1960s and 1970s. While most of his writings from this time period are represented in one or more versions in the collection, a few works such as *The Firewalkers: A Memoir*, *The Widow*, *The Man on the Rocks*, and *E. M. Forster and His World*, are not. The manuscripts are hand written or typed and many have been heavily edited.

Series Descriptions

Series I. Correspondence, 1941-1992, 2.5 boxes

Of the 140 correspondents represented in this collection, the majority wrote only a few letters. The content varies from discussions of King's works, reviews, personal information, publishing, PEN, the British Council, politics, and visits with friends, to detailed analyses of other peoples' lives and their work. There is some criticism of opinions King expressed in reviews. The majority of letters appear to have been kept in a two-ring binder with some loss of text where the holes were punched. In most cases it is possible to infer the missing information. The bulk of correspondence is from Edith Borne, Ronald Bottrall, Ivy Compton-Burnett, Clifford Kitchin, Robert Liddell, Harold Nicolson, Desmond Stewart, and Godfrey Winn. Edith Borne's letters date from 1972 to 1984, and discuss her own works as well as King's, PEN, health problems, and politics. Ronald Bottrall asks King to serve as his literary executor in letters dating from 1967 to 1986, in addition to discussing the publication process and King's health. The majority of letters from Ivy Compton-Burnett (1948-1967) are invitations to come for a visit, though some letters discuss King's work, including *Domestic Animal* and *Never Again*. Clifford Kitchin began corresponding with King to compliment him on his novel *The Man on the Rocks*. This turned into a life-long correspondence covering such matters as publications, critiques of works by both writers, plans for visiting, and details about Kitchin's life between 1958 and 1966. While Robert Liddell corresponded with King from 1948 to 1992, letters for the first ten years are rather sporadic. Liddell's letters comment on literature, happenings in Athens, gossip and news of literary friends, and reminisces of earlier times and acquaintances such as Ivy Compton-Burnett, Barbara Pym, Lawrence Durrell, Bernard Spencer, and others. The letters provide an autobiographical account of Liddell's last thirty years, from 1957 to just a few days before his death in June 1992. Harold Nicolson's correspondence to King pertains to publishing, critiques, works by both writers, and also more personal information regarding King's life from 1950 to 1964. Desmond Stewart also wrote several letters concerning King's personal life, including issues about his homosexuality (1948-1981). The correspondence from Godfrey Winn is not dated though it spans from around 1967 to the early 1970s. He focuses on both of their works, especially on King's *Domestic Animal*, and Winn's autobiography. Other correspondents include Leslie P. Hartley, James Kirkup, Olivia Manning, Robin Maugham, Raymond Mortimer, Alfred L. Rowse, Philip Toynbee, and others. Within the correspondence series is a group of letters written by King to Alexander (Sandy) Walton from 1956 to 1963. The majority of the letters were written while King was in Greece and Japan. King elaborates on his experiences and impressions of both countries and their people in these letters to Walton. There is also one folder of correspondence relating to the publication of King's *Robert de Montesquiou*. An alphabetical list of correspondents is provided at the end of this inventory.

Series II. Works, 1939-1978, 6 boxes

King's works are arranged in alphabetical order by title. The bulk are manuscripts of his novels, though there are also plays, radio scripts, short stories, and two of his scholarly works, *Japan* and *Robert de Montesquiou*. *Measure for Counterfeit*, a play written with Bruce Williamson when King was only 16 years old, is represented by a holograph draft and an original typescript. Drafts and some printed copies of individual stories from the collection, *The Brighton Belle and other Stories*, are arranged in separate folders under the title of the collection, and these are followed by an incomplete edited typescript of the book. Most of the stories were previously published in magazines. There are several versions of *Robert de Montesquiou* and notes on the translations in this series. *Waves behind the Boat* (1967) is present in several versions, and *The Prisoner* (1949) is available in three versions, one of which is a play for broadcasting.

Related Material

Other Ransom Center manuscript collections containing King materials are:

- Auden, Wystan Hugh
- Brooke, Jocelyn
- Forster, Edward Morgan
- Heath-Stubbs, John Francis Alexander
- Hutchinson, Mary
- Johnson, Pamela Hansford
- Lehmann, John
- London Magazine
- Manning, Olivia
- Maugham, William Somerset
- Patmore, Derek
- Snow, Charles Percy

Index Terms

Correspondents

Ackerley, J. R. (Joe Randolph), 1896-1967.

Attenborough, David, 1926- .

Bagnold, Enic.

Born, Edith de, 1901- .

Bottrall, Ronald, 1906- .

Bowen, Elizabeth, 1899-1973.

Brooke-Rose, Christine, 1923- .

Compton-Burnett, I. (Ivy), 1884-1969.

Connolly, Cyril, 1903-1974.

Davies, Rhys, 1903- .

Gielgud, John, Sir, 1904- .

King, Francis Henry, 1923-2011

Grant, Duncan, 1885-1978.

Grigson, Geoffrey, 1905- .

Hartley, L. P. (Leslie Poles), 1895-1972.

Jameson, Storm, 1891- .

Jeans, Angela.

Jullian, Philippe.

King, Eustace Arthur Cecil.

King, Faith Mina Reed, 1889-1992.

Kitchin, C. H. B. (Clifford Henry Benn), 1895-1967.

Knight, George Wilson, 1897- .

Lehmann, John, 1907- .

Liddell, Robert, 1908- .

Lofts, Norah, 1904- .

Manning, Olivia.

Maugham, Robin, 1916- .

Mishima, Yukio, 1925-1970.

Mortimer, Raymond, 1895- .

Nicolson, Harold George, Sir, 1886-1968.

Pritchett, V. S. (Victor Sawdon), 1900- .

Spender, Stephen, 1909- .

Stanford, Derek.

Stewart, Desmond, 1924- .

Stoppard, Tom.

Taylor, Elizabeth, 1912-1975.

Toynbee, Philip.

Walton, Alexander.

Waugh, Alec, 1898- .

West, Rebecca, Dame, 1892- .

Winn, Godfrey, 1906- .

Subjects

Authors, English--20th century.

English fiction--20th century.

Series I. Correspondence, 1941-1992, 2.5 boxes

Incoming

A-F, 1945-1988, nd	box 1 folder 1
Born, Edith de, 1972-1984, nd	folder 2
Bottrall, Ronald, 1967-1986, nd	folder 3
Compton-Burnett, Ivy, 1948-1967, nd	folder 4
G-J, 1956-1991, nd	folder 5
K-N, 1959-1988, nd	folder 6
Kitchen, Clifford H.B., 1958-1966, nd	folder 7
Liddell, Robert, 1948-1992, nd	box 2 folder 1-4
Enclosures, nd	folder 5
Nicolson, Harold, 1950-1964	folder 6
O-Z, 1949-1990, nd	folder 7
Regarding the manuscript <i>Robert de Montesquiou</i> , 1956-1968, nd	folder 8
Stewart, Desmond, 1948-1981	folder 9
Winn, Godfrey, nd [ca 19647-1972?]	box 3 folder 1
Unidentified, 1941	folder 2

Outgoing

King, Faith Mina Read and Eustace Arthur Cecil, 1931-1992, nd	box 3 folder 3-5
Walton, Alexander (Sandy), 1956-1963, nd	folder 6

Series II. Works, 1939-1978, 6 boxes

Act of Darkness, a novel, edited typescript	box 3 folder 7-8
<i>The Action</i> (1978), a novel, edited typescript	box 4 folder 1-2
"Breaking Glass," a short story, holograph, nd	folder 3
<i>The Brighton Belle and other Stories</i> (1967)	
"Brighton Belle," edited typescript, nd, and printed copy from unidentified periodical, 1966	box 4 folder 4
"I Lived for You," edited typescript, nd and printed copy of <i>London Magazine</i> , Sept. 1966	folder 5
"Mess," edited typescript, nd	folder 6
"Their Night," edited typescript, nd, and printed copy from unidentified periodical, nd	folder 7
"At the End of the Day," edited typescript, nd	folder 8
"Cat People," edited typescript, nd	folder 9
"An Evening by the Fire," edited typescript, nd	folder 10
"The Performance of a Lifetime," edited typescript, nd	folder 11
"The Doll," edited typescript, nd	folder 12
"Good Neighbors," edited typescript, nd	folder 13
"A Beautiful Old Man," edited typescript, nd	folder 14
Incomplete copy, edited typescript, 1967	folder 15

"Brothers," a short story, edited typescript, nd	folder 16
"To Camp and Back," a short story, published 1972 in <i>Modern Short Stories</i> , #12	folder 17
"The Collectors" (1972), a short story	folder 18
"A Corner of a Foreign Field," a play for radio, edited typescript, produced by the British Broadcasting Corporation in 1967	folder 19
<i>The Custom House</i> (1961), a novel, original, holograph p. 1-274	folder 20
<i>The Custom House</i> , p. 275-367 plus inserts	box 5 folder 1
<i>Danny Hill: Or Lord Chatterley's Lover</i> (1977) a novel, typescript	folder 2
The Dark Glasses (1956), a novel, holograph	folder 3
<i>The Domestic Animal</i> (1970), a novel, edited typescript	folder 4
<i>Epiphany of Fire</i> , a play in 2 acts, original typescript, nd	folder 5
"The Fence," a short story, edited typescript, published by <i>London Magazine</i> , 1974	folder 6
<i>Flights</i> (1973), a novel, edited typescript	folder 7
<i>A Game of Patience</i> (1974), a novel, edited typescript p. 1-140	folder 8
<i>A Game of Patience</i> , p. 141-261	box 6 folder 1
"Hard Feelings," short story, edited typescript, nd	folder 2

"Home," short story, edited typescript, published 1972	folder 3
<i>Japan</i> an essay, edited typescript, published 1970	folder 4
<i>The Last of the Pleasure Gardens</i> , a novel, edited typescript, published 1965	folder 5-6
"The Love Game," a short story, edited typescript, published 1973	folder 7
<i>Measure for Comfort</i> , a play, holograph and typescript draft, 1939	folder 8
<i>The Needle</i> (1975), a novel, edited typescript	folder 9
"A Nice Way to Go," a short story, edited typescript, nd	folder 10
<i>The Prisoner</i> , incomplete holograph, 1949	box folder 11
Edited typescript, parts I and II, nd	box 7 folder 1-2
A play for broadcasting, edited typescript, nd	folder 3
"A Ring at the Bell," short story, edited typescript, nd	folder 4
Robert de Montesquiou (1967), edited typescript	folder 5-6
Press typescript p. 1-129	folder 7
Press typescript p. 129-406	box 8 folder 1-2
Notes on the translation, nd	folder 3
"A Scent of Mimosa," a short story, edited typescript, nd	folder 4
"Snake Temple," a short story, edited typescript, nd	folder 5

"Samson," published in *So Hurt & Humiliation*, 1953

folder 6

The Waves behind the Boat (1967), a novel, unrevised version

folder 7-8

Original typescript, 1967

folder 9

Prepared for press

box 9 folder 1-2

Revised and final version

folder 3

Francis Henry King Collection--Index of Correspondence

- Ackerley, J.R., 1966, nd--1.1
- Ackland, Rodney, 1972--1.1
- Ackland, Valentine, 1964-1966, nd--1.1
- Allen, Walter, 1987--1.1
- Attenborough, David, 1963--1.1
- Bagnold, Enid, 1966-1976, nd--1.1
- Barber, Janet, 1986--1.1
- Borne, Edith, 1972-1984, nd--1.2
- Bottrall, Ronald, 19647-1986--1.3
- Bowen, Elizabeth, 1969, 1971--1.1
- Bowra, Maurice, nd--1.1
- Brahms, Caryl, 1981-1982--1.1
- Braine, John, 1970, 1981--1.1
- Brand, Christianna, 1970--1.1
- Brooke-Rose, Christine, 1964-1966--1.1
- Brophy, Brigid, 1965, nd--1.1
- Cadmus, Paul, 1978--1.1
- Carr, James L., nd--1.1
- Cecil, David, ca. 1970--1.1
- Clancier, J.E., 1988--1.1
- Clewes, Dorothy, 1986--1.1
- Coghill, Nevill, 1961-1969--1.1
- Collins, Norman, 1979-1980--1.1
- Compton-Burnett, Ivy, 1948-1969--1.4
- Connolly, Cyril, 1973-1974--1.1
- Carling, Malcolm, 1952--1.1
- Davies, Rhys, 1971-1978--1.1
- Dench, Judy, 1980--1.1
- Devas, Nicolette, 1977-1987--1.1
- Driberg, Tom, 1969--1.1
- DuMaurier, Daphne, 1977--1.1
- Endo, Shusaku, 1986-1988--1.1
- Enright, Dennis, 1961-1964--1.1
- Ewart, Gavin, 1965-1984--1.1
- Farrell, Jim G., 1975, nd--1.1
- Fitzgerald, Kevin, 1986--1.1
- Forster, Peter, 1971--1.1
- Fry, Christopher, 1980--1.1
- Gielgud, John, 1980-1983--1.5
- Ginsbury, Norman, 1980-1982--1.5
- Gittings, Robert, 1979--1.5
- Glanville, Brian, 1964, 1966--1.5
- Graham, Winston, 1973--1.5
- Grant, Duncan, 1967-1970--1.5
- Greacen, Robert, 1981--1.5
- Grigson, Geoffrey, 1980--1.5
- Guinness, Bryan, 1978--1.5
- Hall, Peter, 1986--1.5
- Hamilton, Hamish Ltd., 1980--1.5

- Hardy, Alister, 1974--1.5
- Hartley, Leslie P., 1961-1970--1.5
- Hartley, Norah, 1978--1.5
- Heath, Catherine, nd--1.5
- Helpmann, Robert, 1964--1.5
- Hink, Roger, 1956-1962--1.5
- Hopkinson, Dorothy, 1964--1.5
- Huggett, Richard, 1984--1.5
- Humana, Charles, 1990-1991--1.5
- Jameson, Margaret Storm, 1973-1975--1.5
- Jeans, Angela, 1971-1984, nd--1.5
- Jenkins, Elizabeth, 1983--1.5
- Johnson, B.S., 1973--1.5
- Jullian, Philippe, ca 1967, nd--1.5
- Kavan, Anna, 1965, nd--1.6
- Keeley, Edmund, 1959--1.6
- Kirkup, James, 1962--1.6
- Kidd, David, ca 1960s, nd--1.6
- Kinross, P., 1964--1.6
- Kitchin, Clifford H.B., 1958-1966, nd--1.7
- Knight, George Wilson, 1982--1.6
- Koestler, Authur, 1974--1.6
- Lavin, Mary, 1981--1.6
- Lehmann, John, 1964-1982--1.6
- Lehmann, Rosamond, 1980-1987--1.6
- Leigh-Fermor, Patrick, 1984--1.6
- Liddell, Robert, 1948-1991, nd--2.1-2.5
- Lofts, Nora, 1981--1.6
- Lowenstein, Hubertus Prinz zu, 1962-1965--1.6
- MacBeth, George, nd--1.6
- McCarthy, Mary, 1979--1.6
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- Maugham Robin, 1965-1966--1.6
- Maxwell, J.C., 1965--1.6
- Middleton, Stanley, 1980--1.6
- Mishima, Yukio, 1965--1.6
- Monsarrat, Nicholas, 1971--1.6
- Moorcock, Michael, 1988--1.6
- Moore, Brian, 1981--1.6
- Morris, Ira J., 1965--1.6
- Morris, Ivan, I., 1963-1969--1.6
- Morris, Jan, 1976--1.6
- Morris, John, 1967, 1977--1.6
- Mortimer, Raymond, 1959-1969--1.6
- Moyne, Lord Bryan--see Guinness, Brian
- Nicholson, C.L., 1978--1.6
- Nicolson, Harold, 1950-1964--2.6
- Nunn, Trevor, 1983--1.6
- Olson, Stanley, 1982--2.7
- Orwell, Sonia, 1967-1969--2.7 check dates
- Osborne, John, 1978--2.7

- Pritchett, Victor S., 1979-1990, nd--2.7
- Reeves, James, 1977, nd--2.7
- Roberts, Cecil, 1975-1974, nd--2.7
- Robson, Flora, nd--2.7
- Rowse, Alfred Leslie, 1959--2.7
- Rumbold, Richard, 1949-1951--2.7
- Sabato, Ernesto R., 1988--2.7
- Searle, Alan, 1962--2.7
- Shepard, Rupert, 1987--2.7
- Sieveking, Lance, 1967--2.7
- Simon, Jack, 1982--2.7
- Snaith, Stanley, 1949--2.7
- Spender, Stephen, 1983--2.7
- Sprigge, Elizabeth, 1972--2.7
- Stallybrass, Oliver, 1977--2.7
- Stanford, Derek, 1977-1978--2.7
- St. John-Stevas, Norman, 1985--2.7
- Stewart, Desmond, 1948-1981--2.9
- Stoppard, Tom, 1986--2.7
- Symons, Julian, 1973--2.7
- Taylor, Elizabeth, 1971-1975, nd--2.7
- Theotokas, George, 1951--2.7
- Tindall, Gillian, ca 1970--2.7
- Toynbee, Philip, nd--2.7
- Trevor, William, nd--2.7
- Uhlmann, Fred, nd--2.7
- Upward, Edward, 1976--2.7
- Urquhart, Fred, 1957--2.7
- Vander Post, Laurens, 1981, nd--2.7
- Walton, Alexander (Sandy), 1956-1963--3.3
- Warburg, Frederic, 1971--2.7
- Watkins, Vernon, 1945--2.7
- Waugh, Alec, 1979--2.7
- Wedgwood, C.V., 1974-1981, nd--2.7
- Weeks, Donald, 1970--2.7
- West, Rebecca, 1965-1975--2.7
- White, Patrick, 1965--2.7
- Williams, Emlyn, 1973--2.7
- Wilson, Angus, 1965-1986, nd--2.7
- Wieniewska, Celina, 1979--2.7
- Wingfield, Sheila, 1953--2.7
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- Worsley, T.C., nd--2.7