Collection Summary
Title: Alexander King Papers
Span Dates: 1953-1987
Bulk Dates: (bulk 1953-1987)
ID No.: MSS62427
Creator: King, Alexander, 1900-1965
Extent: 1,920 items
Extent: 25 containers
Extent: 9.5 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English, German, and Hebrew
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm88062427
Summary: Author, illustrator, and storyteller. Correspondence, writings, business papers, scrapbooks, and photographs relating to King's literary works, television appearances, relations with colleagues in the fields of art, literature, and entertainment, social life in New York, N.Y., and fund-raising efforts for kidney dialysis facilities. Some correspondence concerns housing discrimination against Jews in Connecticut.

Selected Search Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People
Caldwell, Taylor, 1900-1985--Correspondence.
Cummings, E. E. (Edward Estlin), 1894-1962--Correspondence.
Dinesen, Isak, 1885-1962--Correspondence.
Fuller, R. Buckminster (Richard Buckminster), 1895-1983--Correspondence.
Harnly, Perkins, 1901- --Correspondence.
Hart, Moss, 1904-1961--Correspondence.
Horne, Lena--Correspondence.
King, Alexander, 1900-1965.
King, Margie Lou Swett--Correspondence.
Matthau, Walter--Correspondence.
Miller, Henry, 1891-1980--Correspondence.
Moore, Marianne, 1887-1972--Correspondence.
Paar, Jack--Correspondence.
Perelman, S. J. (Sidney Joseph), 1904-1979--Correspondence.
Rose, Billy, 1899-1966--Correspondence.
Vanderbilt, Gloria, 1924-2019--Correspondence.

Subjects
American literature.
Artists.
Authors.
Discrimination in housing--Connecticut.
Entertainers--United States.
Hemodialysis facilities--United States.
Jews--Connecticut--Segregation.
Television personalities--United States.

Places
New York (N.Y.)--Social life and customs.

Occupations
Provenance

The papers of Alexander King, illustrator, author, and raconteur, were donated by King's widow, Margie King Barab, to the Library of Congress in 1987.

Processing History

The papers of Alexander King were arranged and described in 1991. The finding aid was revised in 2004.

Transfers

Items have been transferred from the Manuscript Division to other custodial divisions of the Library. Books have been transferred to the Rare Book and Special Collections Division. Illustrations and photographs have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division. Phonograph records and video recordings have been transferred to the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division. All transfers are identified in these divisions as part of the Alexander King papers.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Alexander King in these papers and in other collections in the custody of the Library of Congress is reserved. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division for further information.

Access and Restrictions

Restrictions apply governing the use, photoduplication, or publication of items in this collection. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division for information concerning these restrictions.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Alexander King Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Born Alexander Koenig (or Konig), Vienna, Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>circa 1913</td>
<td>Immigrated with parents to New York, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Illustrator, New York <em>Sunday World</em> magazine section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married Nettie [?] (divorced 19[?])</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1928
Illustrated:
- C. J. Bulliet's *Venus Castina: Impersonators, Celestial and Human*. New York: Covici, Friede
- Joseph Moncure March's *The Set Up*. New York: Covici, Friede

Published:

1929
Illustrated:
- François Rabelais's *All the Extant Works of François Rabelais*. New York: Covici, Friede

1930
Illustrated:
- Gustave Flaubert's *Salammbô; a Story of Ancient Carthage*. New York: Modern Library
- Anatole France's *At the Sign of the Queen Pédanque*. New York: Illustrated Editions Co.
- Hickman Powell's *The Last Paradise*. New York: Cape and Smith

1931
Illustrated:

Art consultant, Linweave Paper Association's limited edition broadside collection (King did most of the illustrations under various pseudonyms).

1932
Illustrated:

1932-1933
Editor-in-chief, *Americana* magazine

1933
Illustrated *Fyodor Dostoyevsky's The Brothers Karamazov*. 3 vols. New York: Limited Editions Club

circa 1933-1936
Married Annis Grover (divorced 19[?])
Assistant to Frank Crowninshield, *Vanity Fair* magazine

1934
Published *Peace is Hell*, 10 lithographs. n.p.

1937-1940
Associate editor, *Life* magazine

1938
Investigated for *Life* magazine the massacre of Haitians by Dominican army

1939
Collaborated with Clare Boothe Luce on her play *Margin For Error: A Satirical Melodrama*. New York: Random House

1940-1941
Managing editor, *Stage* magazine

1941
Collaborated with Chester Erskin on the play *Portrait of a Lady*

circa 1942
Married Marjorie Belle, later known as Marge Champion (divorced 19[?])

1945
Became addicted to morphine while being treated for a kidney ailment

1951
Arrested on drug charges and sentenced to the federal narcotics hospital in Lexington, Ky.

1953
Married Margie Lou Swett, singer and actress

1954
Arrested and returned to Lexington, Ky., for violation of probation and drug abuse treatment
1957  Exhibited thirteen paintings at the Chase Gallery, New York, N.Y.
1958  Published *Mine Enemy Grows Older*. New York: Simon and Schuster
Published *Alex in Wonderland; Six Paintings with Commentary*. New York: Shorewood Press
Recorded phonograph album "Alexander King Reads from His Bestseller and Other Stories"
1959, Jan. 2  First guest appearance on Jack Paar's television show
1959  Featured with his wife, Margie, in his own television show "Alex in Wonderland" (New York City's Channel 13)
1960  Translated and illustrated *Alexander King Presents Peter Altenberg's Evocations of Love*. New York: Simon and Schuster
Published *May This House Be Safe from Tigers*. New York: Simon and Schuster
Recorded two phonograph albums: "Love and Hisses" and "Comedy Concert" (excerpts from "Love and Hisses")
1961  Published *I Should Have Kissed Her More*. New York: Simon and Schuster
1962  Published *The Great Ker-plunk*. New York: Simon and Schuster (a children's story illustrated by his son, Robin; first published as a short story in 1961 by *McCall's* magazine)
1963  Published *Is There a Life After Birth?* New York: Simon and Schuster
1964  Published *Rosa Krawatten: Das Seltsame und Abenteuerliche Leben des Alexander*. Wien: P. Zsolnay (German translation of excerpts from *Mine Enemy Grows Older*)
1965  Published *Rich Man, Poor Man, Freud and Fruit--Advice to Amorous Ladies*. New York: Simon and Schuster
1965, Nov. 16  Died, New York, N.Y.

**Scope and Content Note**

The papers of Alexander King (1900-1965), Austrian-born author, commercial artist, painter, and television personality, span the years 1953-1987, with the bulk of the items concentrated in the period from 1958 to 1965. The papers are organized into the following series: General Correspondence, Business Papers, Writings File, Miscellany, Photographs, and Scrapbooks.

King claimed to have "4,000 intimate friends." The General Correspondence series reflects his familiarity with individuals in the fields of art, literature, and entertainment. He counted among his friends such notables as Tanaquil LeClerq Balanchine, wife of George Balanchine, E. E. Cummings, Isak Dinesen, R. Buckminster Fuller, Moss Hart, Lena Horne, Walter Matthau, Marianne Moore, Jack Paar, J. Perelman, Billy Rose, and Gloria Vanderbilt. Most of the letters concern social and professional activities, reactions to King's books, and sympathetic messages to his widow, Margie King, after his death in 1965.

Some of the letters are from individuals who figured prominently in the first volume of King's memoirs. Anecdotes involving Julian L. and Adeline Greifer (whose letters discuss housing discrimination against Jews in 1960s Connecticut), J. L. Moreno, Mary Jane Russell, DeHirsch Margules, Julius Landowne (a.k.a. the biology professor, Mr. Landis) and De Witt Montgomery appear in *Mine Enemy Grows Older*.

Several correspondents merit particular note. Taylor Caldwell, whose fictional work *Dear and Glorious Physician* appeared simultaneously with King's *Mine Enemy Grows Older* on the *New York Times* bestseller list, maintained a lively correspondence with King between 1959 and 1965. Caldwell elaborates on her unhappy childhood, her religious philosophy, the conflicts of being a writer and a homemaker, her writing techniques (she was working on *Pillar of Iron* and *The Listener* at the time) and the marketing of her books. Her highly negative reaction to a 1959 *Life* magazine article, "The Queens of Fiction" by Robert Warnick, is evident in several letters.

The General Correspondence series also includes a large number of letters from Perkins Harnly, an artist whom King promoted in his 1930s *Americana* magazine. King rediscovered him in the 1960s and encouraged him to resume painting. Harnly's letters describe the technical aspects of his work, including choice of paper, paints, and colors most suitable for photographic reproduction, as well as the inspiration behind and symbolism of his images. Many of the paintings...
mentioned in the letters are depicted in the Photographs series. King died before Harnly's major 1966 exhibition, but Margie King took over her husband's role in the show and continued to correspond with Harnly the rest of the decade.

Other notable correspondents include Henry Miller discussing his watercolors, literary tastes, and the filming of his Tropic of Cancer, and Isak Dinesen writing about fund-raising for her bird sanctuary in Denmark. A small group of outgoing letters by Margie King describe her husband's illnesses, his 1957 exhibition at the Chase Gallery, his growing success as an author and television personality, and their fast-paced social life among the luminaries of New York. In addition, at the end of the series, there is a sampling of King's fan mail with copies of his standard replies.

The Business Papers series contains correspondence from publishers, literary agents, lawyers, and producers. Topics relate chiefly to book production and promotion, interviews and personal appearances, solicitations for magazine articles, royalties, and foreign publication and other rights. A folder of memoranda holds notes on King's television appearances and discussion topics for his show "Alex in Wonderland."

The engagement contracts in the Business Papers are primarily for King's appearances on television programs such as the "Today Show," "Jack Paar Show," and "Les Crane Show." Also includes contracts of Margie King. Pay vouchers, royalty statements, and an itemized 1963 income tax return provide information regarding King's financial status.

Because of his own health problems, King was interested in raising money for kidney dialysis treatment centers. The file on the Kidney Emergency Fund in the Business Papers documents his efforts for that cause.

The Writings File consists of notes, manuscripts, typescripts, proofs, and promotional material for King's major literary productions. He wrote in longhand first and claimed to have rewritten some of his books twenty times before achieving a satisfactory result. Two handwriting styles appear in the manuscripts, his own and that of Margie King, who assisted him in making clean copies.

The sequence of chapters in these works often varies between the manuscript/typescript versions and the published version. Where this occurs, the primary folder label refers to the manuscript chapter with the corresponding published chapter number set off by parentheses. The term "typescript draft" refers to a rough copy that has many handwritten modifications; "corrected typescript" refers to a copy that has been edited with proofreader's marks. Promotional material includes primarily magazine and newspaper advertisements and reviews.

The Miscellany series contains King's address books, appointment calendars, and a bibliography listing his books, illustrations, and recordings. A folder of printed ephemera holds such diverse items as the program from his 1957 Chase Gallery exhibition, an award in 1960 from the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, and his New York Times obituary.

The Photographs series contains photographs of Perkins Harnly paintings created for exhibitions promoted by Alexander and Margie King and Henry Warshaw. Many of Harnly's later paintings were new inspirations, but several were reworkings of earlier themes. For example, an earlier version of "The Gay 90's" (a house within a corset) can be seen in the book Lightest Blues edited by Jane Van Nimmen. The names of Harnly's paintings, as listed in this guide, correspond to actual titles or to references in his letters. Dates have been assigned based on information in the letters. In addition, there are a few snapshots of Harnly with Alexander King and other friends.

The Scrapbook series consists of nine volumes containing photographs, letters, book jackets, and newspaper clippings of publicity and reviews. Some articles are in German and Hebrew.

Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in six series:
- General Correspondence, 1953-1987
- Business Papers, 1955-1975
- Writings File, 1958-1965
- Miscellany, 1953-1987
- Photographs, 1965-1969
- Scrapbooks, 1959-1965
## Description of Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Series</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1-4</td>
<td><strong>General Correspondence, 1953-1987</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Letters to Alexander and Margie King from family and friends. A few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>outgoing letters from the Kings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent, then chronologically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sampling of fan mail arranged chronologically at end of series.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 4-5</td>
<td><strong>Business Papers, 1955-1975</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correspondence, engagement contracts, royalty statements, pay vouchers,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tax records, and an account book. Includes correspondence, notes, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>financial reports relating to the Alexander King Foundation (Kidney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emergency Fund).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically within</td>
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<td></td>
<td>each subseries.</td>
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<td>BOX 5-14</td>
<td><strong>Writings File, 1958-1965</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manuscript and typescript drafts, galley proofs, page proofs, reviews,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>promotional material, and television interview transcripts.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Arranged alphabetically by title of book and therein by format.</td>
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<td>BOX 15</td>
<td><strong>Miscellany, 1953-1987</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Address books, appointment calendars, bibliography of King's works,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>wedding, citizenship, and cremation papers, and printed ephemera.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Arranged by type of item and therein chronologically.</td>
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<td>BOX 16</td>
<td><strong>Photographs, 1965-1969</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Color photographs of Perkins Harnly paintings, with printed ink sketches</td>
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<td></td>
<td>of some of the paintings.</td>
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<td>Arranged chronologically to correspond to their descriptions in Harnly's</td>
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<td>letters.</td>
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<td>BOX 17-25</td>
<td><strong>Scrapbooks, 1959-1965</strong></td>
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<td>Oversize scrapbooks containing photographs, reviews, and publicity</td>
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<td>materials.</td>
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## Container List

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<td>BOX 1-4</td>
<td><strong>General Correspondence, 1953-1987</strong>&lt;br&gt;Letters to Alexander and Margie King from family and friends. A few outgoing letters from the Kings.&lt;br&gt;Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent, then chronologically. Sampling of fan mail arranged chronologically at end of series.</td>
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"G" miscellany, 1961-1984, undated
Hackett, Albert, 1963-1984, undated
Harnly, Perkins
1961
(2 folders)
BOX 2
1962-1972, undated
(8 folders)
Hart, Moss, 1958-1961
Havoc, June, undated
Hawkins, Dale, 1959-1966
Hirschfeld, Al, Dolly (Haas), and Nina, 1954-1965, undated
Horne, Lena (Hayton), 1967, undated
"H" miscellany, 1959-1967
Ince, Alexander and Peggy, 1966, undated
Jessel, George, undated
"J" miscellany, 1960-1965, undated
Kay, Ulysses, 1961-1964
Kennedy, Jacqueline, 1962-1963
King, Margie and Alexander, 1953-1965, undated
(2 folders)
King, Mervin and Betts, 1965-1966, undated
Kingsley, Sidney, 1961, undated
"K" miscellany, 1957-1984
Landowne, Julius, 1959
Lee, Gypsy Rose, 1966
Leigh, Vivien, 1966
Lober, David, 1960-1965, undated
Lumet, Sidney and Gail Jones, 1984, undated
"L." miscellany, 1959-1966, undated
Margules, DeHirsch, 1960-1963
Marx, Groucho, 1960-1965
Marx, Harpo, 1961
Matthau, Walter and Carol, 1965-1968, undated
Miller, Henry, 1962-1964, undated
Montgomery, De Witt and Holly, 1956-1963, undated
Moore, Marianne, 1960-1968
Moreno, J. L. and Zerka, 1961-1962
"M" miscellany, 1960-1966
"N" miscellany, 1962
"O" miscellany, 1965
Paar, Jack and Miriam, 1965-1966, undated
Perelman, J., Laura, and Nina, 1954-1966
Pollock, Hugo, 1960
Raphaelson, Dorshka and Samson, 1959-1969, undated
Rose, Billy, 1956
Rothenberger, Anneliese, 1964
Russell, Mary Jane, 1962, 1965
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<td>Schuster, Ray, 1959-1965</td>
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<td>Straight, Beatrice See Container 1, Cookson, Peter and Beatrice Straight</td>
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<td>Toldi, Theodoro, 1961-1966, undated</td>
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<td>&quot;T&quot; miscellany, 1953-1965</td>
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<td>Vanderbilt, Gloria, 1962, undated</td>
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<td>Van Duym, Alfred Van Ameyden, 1960</td>
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<td>Van Vechten, Carl, 1962</td>
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<td>Wouk, Herman, 1960</td>
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<td>&quot;W-Z&quot; miscellany, 1958-1969</td>
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<td>Unidentified, 1954-1985</td>
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<td>Fan mail</td>
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<td>Incoming</td>
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<td>BOX 4</td>
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<td>King's responses, 1960-1961, undated</td>
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<td>BOX 4-5</td>
<td><strong>Business Papers, 1955-1975</strong></td>
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<td>Correspondence, engagement contracts, royalty statements, pay vouchers, tax records, and an account book. Includes correspondence, notes, and financial reports relating to the Alexander King Foundation (Kidney Emergency Fund).</td>
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<td>Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically within each subseries.</td>
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<td>BOX 4</td>
<td>Contracts, 1959-1966, undated</td>
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<td>Correspondence, 1955-1974, undated</td>
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<td>Estate account book and notes, 1968-1972, undated</td>
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<td>BOX 5</td>
<td>Kidney Emergency Fund</td>
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<td>Correspondence, 1963-1966, undated</td>
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<td>Miscellany, 1964-1965, undated</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Memoranda and miscellany re television appearances, 1960-1962</td>
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<td>Pay vouchers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>American Federation of Television and Radio Artists Pension Fund, 1959-1968</td>
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<td>WQED, &quot;Mister Rogers' Neighborhood,&quot; 1968</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Miscellany, 1959-1970</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Royalty statements, 1959-1975, undated</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(5 folders)</td>
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</table>
Tax records, 1960-1970

**BOX 5-14**  
**Writings File, 1958-1965**  
Manuscript and typescript drafts, galley proofs, page proofs, reviews, promotional material, and television interview transcripts.  
Arranged alphabetically by title of book and therein by format.

**BOX 5**  
Evocations of Love (1960), corrected typescript  
(3 folders)

**BOX 6**  
The Great Ker-plunk (1962)  
Typescript, "The Origins of the Great Ker-plunk"  
Synopsis  
Manuscript draft  
Typescript  
Corrected typescript  
(2 folders)  
Galley proofs  
Promotional material  

I Should Have Kissed Her More (1961)  
Manuscript drafts  
Chapters 1-14  
(13 folders)  

**BOX 7**  
Chapters 14-20  
(4 folders)  
Notes  
Typescript draft, Chapter 10  
Corrected typescript  
(7 folders)  
Promotional material  

Is There a Life After Birth? (1963)  
Typescript  
Chapters 1-3, 5-13  
(3 folders)  

**BOX 8**  
Chapters 14-27  
(5 folders)  
Typescript draft  
(8 folders)  

**BOX 9**  
Corrected typescript  
(8 folders)  
Galley proofs  
(2 folders)  

**BOX 10**  
Blueprints  
(3 folders)  
Unbound gatherings  
(3 folders)  

May This House Be Safe From Tigers (originally titled Moot Points Revisited) (1960)  
Manuscript drafts
## Writings File, 1958-1965

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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</table>
| BOX 11 | Chapters 17-22  
(10 folders)  
Typescript  
(15 folders) |
| BOX 12 | Memoirs of a Certain Mouse (originally titled Pinky Whiskereeno Tells a Story) (1965)  
Manuscript draft and notes  
Typescript  
(2 folders)  
Galley proofs  
(3 folders)  
Page proofs  
Blueprints  
(2 folders)  
McCall's magazine  
Galley proofs  
Page proofs  
(2 folders)  
Book jacket |
| BOX 13 | Promotional material  
(4 folders)  
Mine Enemy Grows Older (1958)  
Manuscript drafts  
(22 folders)  
Typescript fragments  
Promotional material |
| BOX 14 | Rich Man, Poor Man, Freud and Fruit: Advice to Amorous Ladies (originally titled All Men Are Lovers) (1965)  
Manuscript draft  
Typescript (All Men Are Lovers)  
(3 folders)  
Typescript draft  
(6 folders)  
Typescript  
(4 folders)  
Promotional material  
(2 folders)  
Essays  
Unidentified fragments  
Television transcripts  
"Open Mind" program--"The Emancipated Woman," 1964  
"Les Crane Show," 1965 |
| BOX 15 | Miscellany, 1953-1987  
Address books, appointment calendars, bibliography of King's works, wedding, citizenship, and cremation papers, and printed ephemera. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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</table>
| BOX 15    | Address books, 1957, undated  
            (4 folders)  
            Appointment calendars, 1960-1965  
            (7 folders)  
            Bibliography of King's works, 1966  
            Wedding, citizenship, and cremation papers, 1953-1965  
            Printed ephemera, 1956-1987 |
| BOX 16    | **Photographs, 1965-1969**  
            Color photographs of Perkins Harnly paintings, with printed ink sketches of some of the  
            paintings.  
            Arranged chronologically to correspond to their descriptions in Harnly's letters. |
| BOX 16    | Perkins Harnly paintings and sketches, 1965-1969  
            (26 folders) |
| BOX 17-25 | **Scrapbooks, 1959-1965**  
            Oversize scrapbooks containing photographs, reviews, and publicity materials.  
            Arranged chronologically. |
| BOX 17    | Vol. 1, 1959-1960 |
| BOX 18    | Vol. 2, 1959-1965 |
| BOX 19    | Vol. 3, 1959-1961 |
| BOX 20    | Vol. 4, 1960 |
| BOX 21    | Vol. 5, 1960-1962 |
| BOX 22    | Vol. 6, 1961 |
| BOX 23    | Vol. 7, 1960-1962 |
| BOX 24    | Vol. 8, 1963 |
| BOX 25    | Vol. 9, 1959-1965 |