

Nicholas King Family Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2008

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm95076244>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms008111>

Prepared by Margaret McAleer

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2008
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Collection Summary

Title: Nicholas King Family Papers

Span Dates: 1792-1987

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1792-1861)

ID No.: MSS76244

Creator: King, N. (Nicholas), 1771-1812

Extent: 30 items

Extent: 1 container plus 1 oversize

Extent: .4 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm95076244>

Summary: Family of Nicholas King, English-born engineer and surveyor of the city of Washington, D.C. Journals, correspondence, notes, genealogies, visas, photographs, and drawings concerning King and members of his family.

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

Cooper, Mark A. (Mark Anthony), 1800-1885--Correspondence.

King family.

King, N. (Nicholas), 1771-1812.

King, Robert, 1740-1817--Correspondence.

Wade family.

Wade, Elizabeth Stone, 1840-1913--Correspondence.

Wade, Nicholas King, 1823-1899. Nicholas King Wade papers. 1856.

Wade, William, 1789-1875. William Wade papers. 1840-1861.

Organizations

United States. Army--Ordnance and ordnance stores.

United States. War Department.

Subjects

Architecture--Washington (D.C.)

Arsenals--Europe.

Iron industry--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.

Iron.

Ordnance--Europe.

Ordnance--Russia.

Public buildings--Washington (D.C.)

Surveying--Washington (D.C.)

Voyages and travels.

Places

Berlin (Germany)--Description and travel.

England--Description and travel.

Pennsylvania--Description and travel.

Philadelphia (Pa.)--Description and travel.

Saint Petersburg (Russia)--Description and travel.

Titles

N. King papers

Occupations

Engineers.
Surveyors.

Provenance

The papers of the Nicholas King family were given to the Library of Congress by Margaret Deland in 1920 and 1935 and by Robert W. and Helen B. Poindexter from 1983 to 1991.

Processing History

The papers of the Nicholas King family were arranged and described in 1997. The finding aid was revised in 2008.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of the Nicholas King family is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of the Nicholas King family are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

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

Scope and Content Note

The papers of the Nicholas King family span the years 1792-1987, with the bulk of material dating from 1792 to 1861. The journals, correspondence, notes, genealogies, visas, photographs, and drawings comprising the collection consist primarily of the papers of three members of the King family: Nicholas King (1771-1812), English-born engineer and surveyor of the city of Washington, D.C.; his son-in-law William Wade (1789-1875), United States Army ordnance officer and part owner of a series of steam engine and cannon foundries in Pittsburgh; and his grandson Nicholas King Wade (1823-1899), engineer and foundry owner. The papers are arranged alphabetically by name of family member. A small group of miscellany contains genealogies, photographs, and drawings. Oversize material is housed separately.

The papers of Nicholas King consist largely of a series of journals containing diary entries (some in shorthand), drawings, and treatises on a variety of subjects. The earliest volume, written in 1793 while traveling through Suffolk, East Anglia, and Yorkshire prior to his immigration to the United States, records his observations on agriculture, architecture, oak timber, tithing, and the poor. The second journal, begun in August 1794 when King was a resident of Philadelphia, contains an account of a trip from Philadelphia to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania; advice for immigrant settlers and American land speculators; and passing comments on American agriculture, racial attitudes, and Pennsylvania penal reform. A third journal records his work as a surveyor in Washington, D.C. from 1796 to 1799. A board of commissioners responsible for overseeing the construction of federal buildings and the sale of city lots hired King as a surveyor in 1796. Also included are transcribed excerpts from several journals which have since been lost. One of these recounts King's transatlantic crossing in 1793 and his earliest impressions of America. The transcripts include copies of letters from King and his father, Robert

King, who was also an engineer and surveyor. The collection contains a small portrait of King, a sketch of St. John's Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C, and several photographs of family portraits.

The papers of William Wade relate primarily to his participation in an inspection tour of European cannon factories sponsored by the War Department in 1840. Included is a letter from Wade to his son Nicholas before his departure, two visas, and a transcribed memorandum by Wade concerning the trip. In a letter dated 1861, Mark A. Cooper of Georgia expressed interest in acquiring a machine used to test the strength of iron. The letter, written eight days after the attack on Fort Sumter, is annotated with Wade's refusal to assist him.

The papers of Nicholas King Wade consist of a series of letters to his sister, Elizabeth Stone Wade, describing his journey from Berlin, Germany, to St. Petersburg, where he had a contract with the Russian government to manufacture military ordnance.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged alphabetically by name of person or type of material and thereunder chronologically.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	King, Nicholas
BOX 1	Journals, 1793-1799 (3 folders)
BOX 1	Notes, undated
BOX 1	Transcriptions of letters from Nicholas King and his father, Robert King, and excerpts from Nicholas King's journals, 1792-1811, 1978, undated (2 folders)
BOX 1	Miscellany
BOX 1	Genealogies, 1983-1987, undated <i>See also Oversize</i>
BOX 1	Photographs and drawings, 1862, undated
BOX 1	Wade, Nicholas King, letters to Elizabeth Stone Wade (sister) during a journey from Berlin, Germany, to St. Petersburg, Russia, 1856
BOX 1	Wade, William
BOX 1	Cooper, Mark A., 1861
BOX 1	Inspection tour of European cannon factories, 1840 <i>See also Oversize</i>
BOX OV 1	Oversize
BOX OV 1	Miscellany
BOX OV 1	Genealogies, undated (Container 1)
BOX OV 1	Wade, William
BOX OV 1	Inspection tour of European cannon factories, 1840 (Container 1)