

**John A. King
Letters, 1825-1883****21674**

QUANTITY: 1 folder (24 items)
ACCESS: Open to research
ACQUISITION: Collation of single items that were originally accessioned separately; see provenance note for further information
PROCESSED BY: Jasmine Bumpers, Student Assistant (SUNYA), Manuscripts and Special Collections, August 2011

Biographical Note:

John Alsop King was born on January 3, 1788, in New York City to Rufus and Mary Alsop King. He had four brothers: James (U.S. Congressional Representative from New Jersey), Charles (ninth president of Columbia University), Edward, and Frederic. King attended school in Europe, spending time in Paris and at the Harrow School in London, where his family resided after his father was appointed the U.S. ambassador to Great Britain.

After graduating from Harrow, King returned to New York City. He entered into law school and was later admitted to the bar and set up practice in New York City. King married Mary Ray on January 3, 1810, in New York City. They had seven children who survived childhood: Mary, Charles, Elizabeth, John, Caroline, Richard, and Cornelia. Another daughter, Ellen, died in 1827 at the age of two.

During the War of 1812 King served as a lieutenant of cavalry. After the war, he resumed his law practice, and also decided to venture into politics. Elected as a member of the New York State Assembly in 1819, he was re-elected each year until 1823, when he was elected to the State Senate. In 1825 he left state government to serve as secretary of the U.S. legation in London. King again was elected to the New York State Assembly in 1832, 1838, and 1840. In 1848, King was elected as the U.S. Representative from New York State to the Thirty-First Congress (1849-1851), and there opposed all compromise measures relative to slavery.

King had been a member of the Whig Party for much of his political career, but after its demise, he joined the newly formed Republican Party in 1854. He quickly became an active member of the party and in 1856 was selected as a delegate to the Republican National Convention. Later the same year King became the Republican candidate for governor of New York and won the election, serving from 1857 to 1859 as twentieth Governor of New York State. During his term he was noted for making improvements to the state education system and enlargement of the Erie Canal.

King decided not to run for reelection in 1858, choosing instead to work on his farm in Jamaica, (Queens County, N.Y.), and devote time to agricultural advancement. He was actively involved in organizations like the United States Society of Pomology and the United States Agricultural Society. Despite his dedication to agricultural efforts, King did not entirely shy away from

politics during this time; in 1861 he participated in a peace convention, the aim which was to prevent the outbreak of the Civil War. He died on July 7, 1867, and was buried in the Grace Church Cemetery in Jamaica, New York.

Scope and Content Note:

This collection consists chiefly of letters written by John Alsop King relative to his long and varied career in state and federal politics and government. A number of these letters concern bills and other actions of the state legislature, matters of taxation and finance, and military affairs.

The letters are mainly addressed to colleagues and other officials in government and politics, some of whom were prominent during the mid-nineteenth century, including Edwin D. Morgan (Governor of New York State and U.S. Senator), Thomas Aspinwall (Consul of the United States to England), Erastus Corning (Mayor of Albany, New York), Assemblyman Luther Bradish (future speaker of the Assembly and lieutenant governor of New York), Horatio Seymour (Governor of New York State, and Democrat Party nominee for U.S. Presidency, 1868), and Sanford E. Church (lieutenant governor under Seymour and a chief judge of the New York State Court of Appeals).

In his note to W.W. Gorham, King inquires about purchasing a farm he saw being advertised in *Country Gentlemen*, a popular agricultural magazine founded in 1831 by Luther Tucker and published in Albany, NY. This is one of the few instances in which King's interest in agriculture is made apparent.

This collection also includes four letters most likely written by John Alsop King, Jr. (1817-1900). Three of those letters are addressed to Samuel B. Ruggles (a state assemblyman and Erie Canal commissioner) while the other is addressed to an L.W. Nash.

Related Collections:

There also a number of letters of John A. King in the papers of [Edwin D. Morgan](#) (SC11818), which are held by this repository.

Provenance Note:

This collection was created by bringing together items that originally were single accessions; each item's original accession number is included in parentheses at the end of its description. Details about the acquisition of a specific item can be found in the accession logbooks and files which will be furnished upon request.

Folder and Item List:

Folder	Item	Description
1	1	Letter: John A. King, Baker Street, [London], to Thomas Aspinwall, Consul of the United States, Bishop's Gate Church Yard, [London], November 26, 1825. King seeks a favor and informs Aspinwall that he was forwarding a letter to him

		from the Consul at Rio de Janeiro. (accession no. 6417)
1	2	Letter: John A. King, 20 Baker Street, [London], to Thomas Aspinwall, Consul, U.S.A., February 4, 1826. King seeks a favor and informs Aspinwall that he was forwarding a letter to him from the Consul at Rio de Janeiro. (accession no. 6416)
1	3	Letter: John A. King, Jamaica, [Queens County, N.Y.] to Luther Bradish, May 6, 1834. King discusses a bill passed by the State Senate regarding changes being made to the Brooklyn and Jamaica turnpike. (accession no. 1765)
1	4	Letter: John A. King, Jamaica, to Philip Phelps, Deputy Comptroller, [Albany] August 7, 1834. (accession no. 2258)
1	5	Letter: John A. King, Jamaica, to the Adjunct General of the State of New York, July 2, 1849. (accession no. 1538)
1	6	Letter: John A. King, Washington, [D.C.], to "Gentlemen," June 24, 1850. King declines an invitation to participate in a Fourth of July ceremony being held in Philadelphia due to a prior commitment. (accession no. 3528)
1	7	Letter: John A. King, Jamaica, to W.W. Gorham, Canandaigua, [N.Y.], July 1, 1856. In regards to an advertisement of Gorham's farm in the <i>Country Gentlemen</i> . (accession no. 1047)
1	8	Letter: John A. King, Albany, [N.Y.], to Erastus Corning, D.W. Wemple, and others. January 21, 1857. King accepts "with pleasure" an invitation to attend an event being held by the Albany Burgesses Corps, a light artillery uniformed company formed in October of 1833. (accession no. 18750)
1	9	Letter: John A. King, Albany, [N.Y.], to a university president in regards to attending a commencement ceremony, June 26, 1857. (accession no. 6510)
1	10	Letter: John A. King, Albany, [N.Y.], to Sanford E. Church, Comptroller, September 25, 1858. (accession no. 7667)
1	11	Letter: John A. King, Albany, [N.Y.], to Edwin D. Morgan, December 7, 1858. (accession no. 14031)
1	12	Letter: John A. King, New York, to Horatio Seymour, January 29, 1859. (accession no. 7574)
1	13	Letter: John A. King, Jamaica, [Queens County, N.Y.] to M.R. Patrick, November 12, 1859. (accession no. 13503)
1	14	Letter: John A. King, New York, to M.R. Patrick, January 21, 1860. (accession no. 6430)
1	15	Letter: John A. King, Trenton Falls, [N.Y.], to M.R. Patrick, August 14, 1860. (accession no. 6398)
1	16	Letter: John A. King, Jamaica, [Queens County, N.Y.], to W.C. Bryant, March 14, 1861. (accession no. 6423)
1	17	Letter: John A. King, Jamaica, [Queens County, N.Y.], to Edwin D. Morgan, September 3, 1862. (accession no. 2259)
1	18	Letter: John A. King, Jamaica, [Queens County, N.Y.], to Edwin D. Morgan, October 10, 1862. (accession no. 2260)
1	19	Letter: John A. King, Jamaica, [Queens County, N.Y.], to Edwin D. Morgan, December 23, 1862. (accession no. 14598)
1	20	Letter: John A. King [Jr.], Great Neck, [N.Y.] to Samuel B. Ruggles, November 11, 1873. (accession no. 2261)

1	21	Letter: John A. King [Jr.], Albany, [N.Y.], to Samuel B. Ruggles, March 20, 1874. (accession no. 2262)
1	22	Letter: John A. King [Jr.], Albany, [N.Y.], to Samuel B. Ruggles, March 24, 1874. (accession no. 6583)
1	23	Letter: John A. King [Jr.], Great Neck, [N.Y.], to L.W. Nash, March 14, 1883. (accession no. 1539)
1	24	John Alsop King's obituary (newspaper clipping)

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