



The Wittliff Collections

Guide to the Larry L. King Papers 1929-1993

Collection SWWC-006

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	King, Larry L.
Title:	Guide to the Larry L. King Papers
Dates:	1929-1993
Abstract:	The Larry L. King papers document his writing career and span the years from 1929 to 1993 with most of the material dating from the late 1950s.
Identification:	SWWC-006
Extent:	39 boxes, 19 Linear Feet
Language:	English
Repository:	The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University

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Biographical Notes

Lawrence Leo King, the youngest child of Clyde Clayton and Cora Lee Clark King, was born January 1, 1929 in Putnam, Texas. He fixed on a career as a writer early in his childhood, inspired by the Mark Twain his mother read to him. As early as grade school, King pursued publication of his works. He wrote regularly for the student newspaper at high school where he found a mentor in Aubra Nooncaster, football coach, English teacher and poet. From high school, King joined the army where he was a reporter for his base paper. He wrote professionally as a sports and crime reporter for the *Hobbs (N. M.) Daily Flare*, the *Midland Reporter-Telegram* and the *Odessa American* after a brief stint at Texas Technological College (now Texas Tech University) as a journalism major. In 1954, King moved to Washington, D.C. as the Administrative Assistant to Representative J. T. Rutherford. After Rutherford was defeated in 1962, King joined the staff of another Texas congressman, future House Speaker Jim Wright. In 1964, King quit Capitol Hill to become a free-lance writer.

The novel, *The One-Eyed Man*, was published in 1966, but King's chief livelihood as a writer during this time came from his magazine articles. From 1964, King wrote for *The Texas Observer*, an iconoclastic liberal magazine "then the only voice of dissent (constant) or reason (occasionally) to be found in my native state" (King, *Blockhead* 20). At the same time, Mississippian Willie Morris, a University of Texas graduate and former editor of the *Observer*, encouraged King's writing ambitions. Morris gave King his first national exposure in *Harper's*, where Morris was an editor. In 1967, Morris was named editor-in-chief of *Harper's* and under his leadership, the magazine became famed for its' exciting and innovative writing. Morris published the brightest literary lights of the day as represented by an impressive list King catalogues in *The Old Man and Lesser Mortals*: "James Dickey, Jules Feiffer, Robert Penn Warren, Justin Kaplan, Sara Davidson, Jack Richardson, Elizabeth Hardwick, Norman Podhoretz, Arthur Miller, Tony Lucas, George Plimpton, Bud Shrake, Michael Arlen, Joe McGinnis, Alfred Kazin, John Updike, Ralph Ellison, Jeremy Lerner, Ward Just, Truman Capote, Herbert Gold, Tom Wicker, Gay Talese, Larry McMurtry, Joan Didion, Philip Roth, John Fowles, Irving Howe . . ." (286). Not to be left out are William Styron, Norman Mailer, Bill Moyers and David Halberstam. King's best magazine work, as witnessed by the dominance of Harper's pieces in King's published collections, was done under Morris's editing. Examples of their collaboration are "Requiem for a West Texas Town", "My Hero LBJ", "The Old Man",

and “The Whole World’s Turned On.”

King went on to write for numerous, well-known publications including *Life*, *Holiday*, *Cosmopolitan*, *The Progressive*, *Playboy* and *Sports Illustrated*. His topics were, in the main, Texas (“Requiem for a West Texas Town,” “The Old Man,” “The Lost Frontier,” “Playing Cowboy”) and politics (“My Hero LBJ,” “God, Man and William F. Buckley,” “The Trial of John Connally”), but he also treated other subjects such as sports, travel, and music.

In 1978, King penned the book for the hit Broadway musical *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, based on an article he wrote for *Playboy*. The success of *Whorehouse* allowed King to get off what he had come to feel was the magazine treadmill and develop his talent in a different form. He has subsequently seen his plays *The Night Hank Williams Died*, *The Kingfish* and *Golden Shadows Old West Museum* produced.

During his career, King’s work has received much praise. He earned a National Book Award Nomination in 1972 for *Confessions of a White Racist*. He received a Stanley Walker Journalism Award from the Texas Institute of Letters in 1973 for the article “The Lost Frontier.” A television documentary, *CBS Reports: The Best Little Statehouse in Texas*, earned him an Emmy. He received the Mary Goldwater Award from the Theatre Lobby Trust in 1988 for *The Night Hank Williams Died*. This same work brought him the Helen Hayes award for best new play in 1989.

Though a college dropout, King’s journalistic talent brought him to Harvard University in the 1969-1970 academic year as a Nieman Fellow. (He chronicled this experience in the October 1970 issue of *Harper’s*, “Blowing My Mind at Harvard”.) From Fall 1973 through Fall 1974, King taught as a Ferris Professor of Journalism and Political Science at Princeton University. He was a Duke Fellow of Communications from 1975 to 1976.

King has lived the majority of his life away from his home state but he continually returns there in his writing. In his own words, “That time and place of my youth -- which, I had been thoroughly convinced contained no story material, has merely provided me with the stuff of a career.” (King, National Geographic Speech 1988) By chronicling the Texas that formed him, a Texas that is passing if not past, King, who believes “understanding of the past is vital to the lessons of the present” (King, *The Old Man* 46) has come to see himself as a leaver of “literary

signposts. Those signposts say, simply . . . this is how it was, in my time and my place, when I passed this way Pass it on!” (C.A.S.T. Speech 1993, SWWC).

King married Wilma Jeanne Casey (d. 1991) in 1950. They had three children, Alexandria, Kerri Lee King Grandey, and Bradley Clayton. King, divorced in 1964, married on February 20, 1965 Rosemarie Coumaris Kline, who died of cancer June 8, 1972. Since May 6, 1978, King then married Barbara S. Blaine, who was also his lawyer and agent. They had two children, Lindsay Allison and Blaine Carlton.

King died of emphysema on December 20, 2012.

Scope and Contents

The Larry L. King papers span the years from 1929 to 1993 with most of the material dating from the late 1950s. They are arranged according to the following eleven series: 1. Books; 2. Plays; 3. Articles; 4. Short stories 5. Television; 6. Songs; 7. Speeches; 8. Material about King; 9. Other Writers; 10. Personal Papers; 11. Correspondence.

Within the archive are manuscripts, galley proofs, magazines, tear sheets, playbooks, flyers, posters, tapes, videos, clippings, correspondence, calendars, cancelled checks, tax receipts, vital records, photographs, T-shirts, a jacket and a typewriter. These materials document King's life and career and provide a thorough overview of his writing process. They include correspondence with or about other Texas writers, such as Larry McMurtry, Bud Shrake, Billy Lee Brammer, Dan Jenkins, Peter Gent, Jay Milner and Gary Cartwright along with letters to friends and family such as cousin Lanvil Gilbert and colorful Texas lawyer, Warren Burnett. The materials are most frequently arranged in chronological order.

Contact the The Wittliff Collections for information about additional materials from this writer that have not yet been fully processed.

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Use

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Materials from the Wittliff Collections are made available for use in research, teaching, and private study. The user assumes responsibility for determining copyright status, obtaining permission to publish, and abiding by U.S. copyright laws.

<https://www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu/research/visit/policies/publication.html>

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gifts of Larry L. King, Russell Harding and Lanvil Gilbert since 1987.

Physical Location

Materials may be stored off-site. Advance notice is required for use:

<https://www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu/research/makearesearchappointment.html>.

Preferred Citation

Larry L. King Papers, The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University.

Controlled Access Headings

- American journalists
- Authors, American -- Texas -- 20th century
- Correspondence
- Dramatists -- Texas

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Books, 1959-1976

Box	Folder	
1	1-2	"The Back of a Bear," (unpublished manuscript)
1	3-5	One-Eyed Man, drafts and book jacket
1	6	...And Other Dirty Stories, book jacket
1	7-11	LBJ research
2	1-4	LBJ research
2	5	Of Outlaws, Con Men, Whores, Politicians and Other Artists, book jacket
2	6-8	None But a Blockhead, galley proofs
3	1-2	None But a Blockhead, galley proofs and book jacket
3	3-4	The Whorehouse Papers, galley proofs
3	5-7	Collection file and articles for TCU Press
3	8	Because of Lozo Brown, galley proof and book jacket

Series II: Plays, 1977-1993

The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas, 1977-1991

3	9	Scripts, 1977-1982
4	1	Sheet music: Words and music by Carol Hall
4	2	Playbook, Samuel French, Inc. Inscribed by King
4	3	Screenplay, first draft
4	4	Screenplay, second draft
4	5	Screenplay, final draft
4	6-7	Playbills
4	8-9	Memorabilia
4	10	Newspaper clippings

The Kingfish, 1977-1991

5	1	Original final transcript, 1979
5	2	Script, as performed at John Houseman Theatre, 1991
5	3	Newspaper clippings, 1977-1991
5	4	Playbills
5	5	Book jacket

The Life and Times of Miss Lydia Thompson” (unpublished), 1982-1992

- 5 6-7 Research on Zeffie and Lydia Thompson
- 5 8-9 Songs of the period (photocopies)
- 5 10 Script with cover letter and explanation by King, 1992

The Night Hank Williams Died, 1985-1990

- 5 11 Script, with letter from King, 1985, 1990
- 6 1 Script, “Big Cast” version, with letter from King, 1985
- 6 2 Original manuscript, with letter from King, May 1985
- 6 3 Revised draft, signed by King, November 1985
- 6 4 Revised draft, signed by King, December 1985
- 6 5 Final “New York” version, signed by King, 1989
- 6 6 Revised draft, “Final script for Rehearsals,” signed by King, May 1986
- 6 7 Revised draft, signed by King, May 1986
- 6 8 King’s script used during production at New Playwright’s Theatre, Washington, D.C., February 2 -March 6, 1988
- 7 1 Correspondence, 1984-1985
- 7 2 Correspondence, 1986-1988
- 7 3 Posters, flyers, awards
- 7 4-5 Letters of congratulations, 1987-1988
- 7 6 New York auditions
- 7 7 Flyers, posters, reviews
- 7 8 Playbills
- 7 9 Clippings
- 7 10 SMU Press
- 7 11 Final page proofs, SMU Press
- 7 12 Script, “Acting edition,” First printing, inscribed to Bill Wittliff
- 7 13 Screenplay, First draft
- 7 14 Screenplay, “1st Act,” second draft, 1990
- 8 1 Screenplay, second draft, 1990
- 8 2 Screenplay, August 1990
- 8 3 Christmas 1933 (playbook) and The Terrible Night Santa Got Caught in the Woods (playbill)

The Golden Shadows Old West Museum, 1985-1989

- 8 4 Script, 1987
- 8 5 Correspondence, 1985-1987
- 8 6 Audition notes, 1989
- 8 7 Ticket, playbill, reviews, 1989
- 8 8 “Road Story” prospectus & treatment, 1990
- 8 9 The Best Little Whorehouse Goes Public outline, 1991

Series III: Articles, 1953-1991

8	10	Odessa-American: J. Summy file, articles, and notes, 1953
		<u>The Texas Observer, 1960-1971</u>
8	11	The Texas Observer, 1960-1961
8	12	The Texas Observer, December 1962 - July 1973
8	13	The Texas Observer, August - December 1963
9	1	The Texas Observer, January - June 1964
9	2	The Texas Observer, July - December 1964
9	3	The Texas Observer, January - June 1965
9	4	The Texas Observer, July - December 1965
9	5	The Texas Observer, January - June 1966
9	6	The Texas Observer, July - December 1966
9	7	The Texas Observer, January - June 1967
9	8	The Texas Observer, July - December 1967
9	9	The Texas Observer, January - June 1968
10	1	The Texas Observer, July - December 1968
10	2	The Texas Observer, January - June 1969
10	3	The Texas Observer, July - December 1969
10	4	The Texas Observer, January - June 1970
10	5	The Texas Observer, July - December 1970
10	6	The Texas Observer, January - June 1971
10	7	The Texas Observer, July - December 1971
10	8	Capitol Hill (five issues), 1965
10	9	"Requiem for a West Texas Town," Harper's, January 1966
10	10	"Bob Jones University," Harper's, June 1966
11	1	"My Hero LBJ," Harper's, October 1966
11	2	"Joe Pool of HUAC," Harper's, November 1966
11	3	"God, Man and William F. Buckley," Harper's, March 1967
11	4	"Dear Congressman,..," New York Times Magazine, April 1967
11	5	"Roughing It In the Football Bushes," Harper's, August 1967
11	6	"The Cool World of Nelson Rockefeller," Harper's, February 1968
11	7	"An Epitaph for LBJ," Harper's, April 1968
11	8	"Hughes of Iowa," Harper's, March 1968
11	9	"Kids, Stray Dogs..." Harvard Crimson, February 11, 1970
11	10	"The Old Man," Harper's, April 1971
11	11	"Semi-Tough by Dan Jenkins" review Publisher's Weekly, 1972
11	12	"Spring Revels of the ABA," BookWorld, W. Post , June 4, 1972
11	13	"Most Likely to Succeed," New Times, November 16, 1973
11	14	"Wheeling and Dealing," Playboy, June 1978

11	15	"Don't let Amarillo Slim Psych You Out," Sport, November 1978
11	16	"He walked Across..." Congressional Record, October 29, 1979
11	17	"Hurtin' Good" Washington Post Magazine, February 13, 1983
11	18	"When Love Is Its Own Reward," Parade, May 8, 1983
11	19	"How the Army Brought Blacks" Parade, February 19, 1984
11	20	"A Tale of Two Teams," Parade, September 9, 1984
11	21	"This Is My Home," Parade, June 30, 1985
11	22	"Political Conventions," TV Guide, July 16, 1988
11	23	"Roots Christmas," TV Guide
11	24	Love/Cheating proof, Texas Monthly, 1988
11	25	"What, Me Sixty?!!!," Parade, November 5, 1989
11	26	"Writers Si, Editors No!" Roundup Quarterly, Fall 1990
11	27	"Vanishing Texas," final proofs, Texas Monthly, 1990
11	28	Magazine Cover Pages
11	29	Tear Sheets, 1964-1966
12	1-4	Tear Sheets, 1967-1978
12	5	"Fulminations," New Times tear sheets, 1974-1976
12	6	Washington Star, clippings, 1976-1977
12	7	Tear Sheets, 1980-1991
12	8	Book Reviews, 1965-1968

Series IV: Short Stories, 1990

12	9	Something Went With Daddy
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Series V: Television, 1981-1989

13	1-2	CBS Reports: The Best Little Statehouse in Texas, 1981
13	3	Capitol Hill Proposal, 1989

Series VI: Song Lyrics, 1989-1990

13	4	Songs
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Series VII: Speeches, 1981-1993

14	1	Speeches , 1988-1991
		Speech to the editors of National Geographic Magazine, Washington D.C., March 12, 1988
		Salute to Sarah McLendon, National Press Club, Washington D.C., November 26,

1990

Lyndon Baines Johnson Distinguished Lectures, Southwest Texas State University, October 3, 1991

Speech to Alcohol and Drug Counselors, Fairfax, VA, November 2, 1991

- | | | |
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| 14 | 2 | Pen Faulkner Honors, 1990 |
| 14 | 3 | Speech to Houston Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council (transcript and audio cassette), May 7, 1992 |
| 14 | 4 | Speech at Dobie-Webb-Bedichek fund raiser, Austin, TX, March 30, 1993 |

Series VIII: Material About Larry L. King, 1957-1991

Newspaper Clippings, 1957-1991

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| 14 | 5 | Newspaper Clippings, 1957, 1968-1969, 1977 |
| 14 | 6 | Newspaper Clippings, 1980-1984 |
| 14 | 7 | Newspaper Clippings, 1986-1989 |
| 14 | 8 | Newspaper Clippings, 1990-1991 |
| 14 | 9 | Interview on Larry King Show (audio cassettes) , May 24, 1982, March 6, 1986 |
| 14 | 10 | Radio interviews, one in Austin and two in Washington D.C. (audio cassettes) , 1986, 1988 |
| | | |
| 15 | 1 | Probe video |
| 15 | 2 | Cartoons |
| 15 | 3 | Research Papers about Larry L. King, 1973-1986, undated |
| | | |
| "The Best Little Writer in Texas," Leslie White Clay, Southern Methodist University, 1986 | | |
| | | |
| "Perspectives on the South: The Writing of Willie Morris and Larry L. King," James B. Smith, Jr., University of Texas, May 21, 1973. | | |
| | | |
| "Ruminating and Relating in the Texas Essay," Clifford, Craig Edward, Tarleton State University, undated | | |

Series IX: Other Writers, 1989-1993

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|----|-----|---|
| 15 | 4 | Billie Lee Brammer |
| 15 | 5 | James Lee Burke |
| 15 | 6 | Aaron Latham, Edwin (Bud) Shrake |
| 15 | 7-8 | The Republic of Snakes by Jack Runnel, manuscript |

Series X: Personal Papers, 1929-1993

16 1 Vital Records (birth certificate, report card, army discharge papers, etc.)

Photographs , 1897-1999

16 2 Photographs , 1897, 1929-1950

16 3 Photographs , 1950-1959

16 4 Photographs , 1960-1969

16 5 Photographs , 1970-1979

16 6 Photographs , 1980-1989

16 7 Photographs , 1990-1999

17 Tax records, 1972-1978

18 1-3 Tax receipts

Series XI: Correspondence, 1957-1993

18 4 Correspondence, 1957-1964

18 5 Correspondence, 1965-1971 [No Month]

18 6 Correspondence, 1965 [No Month]

18 7 Correspondence, January - August 1965

18 8 Correspondence, September - December 1965

19 1 Correspondence, January - February 1966

19 2 Correspondence, March - April 1966

19 3 Correspondence, May 1966

19 4 Correspondence, June 1966

19 5 Correspondence, July 1966

19 6 Correspondence, August 1966

19 7 Correspondence, September - October 1966

19 8 Correspondence, November - December 1966

19 9 Correspondence, January - February 1967

19 10 Correspondence, March - April 1967

19 11 Correspondence, May - June 1967

20 1 Correspondence, July 1967

20 2 Correspondence, August 1967

20 3 Correspondence, September - November 1967

20 4 Correspondence, December 1967

20 5 Correspondence, January - February 1968

20 6 Correspondence, March - April 1968

20 7 Correspondence, May 1968

20 8 Correspondence, June 1968

20 9 Correspondence, July 1968

20 10 Correspondence, August 1968

20	11	Correspondence, September 1968
20	12	Correspondence, October 1968
21	1	Correspondence, November 1968
21	2	Correspondence, December 1968
21	3	Correspondence, January 1969
21	4	Correspondence, February 1969
21	5	Correspondence, March 1969
21	6	Correspondence, April 1969
21	7	Correspondence, May 1969
21	8	Correspondence, June 1969
21	9	Correspondence, July 1969
21	10	Correspondence, August 1969
21	11	Correspondence, September 1969
21	12	Correspondence, October 1969
21	13	Correspondence, November 1969
22	1	Correspondence, December 1969
22	2	Correspondence, 1970 [No Month]
22	3	Correspondence, January 1970
22	4	Correspondence, February - March 1970
22	5	Correspondence, April – June 1970
22	6	Correspondence, July 1970
22	7	Correspondence, August 1970
22	8	Correspondence, September 1970
22	9	Correspondence, October 1970
22	10	Correspondence, November 1970
22	11	Correspondence, December 1970
22	12	Correspondence, 1971 [No Month}
22	13	Correspondence, January-February 1971
22	14	Correspondence, March 1971
23	1	Correspondence, April 1971
23	2	Correspondence, May 1971
23	3	Correspondence, June 1971
23	4	Correspondence, July - August 1971
23	5	Correspondence, September - October 1971
23	6	Correspondence, November 1971
23	7	Correspondence, December 1971
23	8	Correspondence, 1972 [No Month]
23	9	Correspondence, January 1972
24	1	Correspondence, February 1972
24	2	Correspondence, March 1972

24	3	Correspondence, April - May 1972
24	4	Correspondence, June 1972
24	5	Correspondence, July - August 1972
24	6	Correspondence, September - October 1972
24	7	Correspondence, November - December 1972
24	8	Correspondence, 1973 [No Month]
24	9	Correspondence, January - February 1973
24	10	Correspondence, March - April 1973
25	1	Correspondence, May - June 1973
25	2	Correspondence, July - September 1973
25	3	Correspondence, October - November 1973
25	4	Correspondence, December 1973
25	5	Correspondence, 1974 [No Month]
25	6	Correspondence, January 1974
25	7	Correspondence, February 1974
25	8	Correspondence, March 1974
25	9	Correspondence, April - June 1974
25	10	Correspondence, July - September 1974
25	11	Correspondence, October - November 1974
26	1	Correspondence, December 1974
26	2	Correspondence, 1975
27		Correspondence, January 1977 - March 1980
28		Correspondence, April 1980 - July 1981
29		Correspondence, August 1981 - December 1982
30		Correspondence, January 1983 - March 1984
31		Correspondence, April 1984 - July 1985
32		Correspondence, August 1985 - August 1986
33		Correspondence, September 1986 - October 1987
34		Correspondence, November 1987 - July 1988
35		Correspondence, August 1988 - April 1989
36		Correspondence, May 1989 - December 1989
37		Correspondence, January 1990 – September 1990
38		Correspondence, October 1990 – November 1991

