Inventory of the Thomas Starr King Collection

Collection number: GTU 93-5-01

Graduate Theological Union Archives
Graduate Theological Union
Berkeley, California

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Thomas Starr King collection,
Dates: 1837-1964
Collection number: GTU 93-5-01
Creator: King, Thomas Starr, 1824-1864
Collector/Creator: Wendte, Charles William, 1844-1931
Collection Size: 2.5 linear feet (7 boxes and 4 folios). Digital materials : 1 scrapbook (3 parts), 1 book, and 6 photographs
Repository: The Graduate Theological Union. Library.
Berkeley, CA 94709

Abstract: Thomas Starr King (1824 - 1864) was a Unitarian and Universalist minister and popular lecturer. Son of a Universalist minister who served in New York and Massachusetts, he also served churches in the Boston area. He accepted a call to San Francisco in 1860 to serve the Unitarian Church. With the start of the Civil War, he lectured and campaigned successfully throughout the state to keep California in the Union and raised substantial funding for the Sanitary Commission. His was one of two statues from the State of California in the Capital Building, Washington, D.C., until replaced by Ronald Reagan in June 2009. The King statue was installed in the Civil War Grove in Capitol Park, Sacramento, December 8, 2009.

Physical location: 2/C/4-5
Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English


Access
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Preferred Citation
Thomas Starr King collection, GTU 93-5-01. Graduate Theological Union Archives, Berkeley, CA.
King Collection

Inventory of the Thomas Starr

Acquisition Information
Charles Wendte, Unitarian minister in Oakland, who had known Thomas Starr King when a young man in the 1860's (See introduction in Wendte's scrapbook, Folio 1) collected much of the material. This material was donated to the then Pacific Unitarian Seminary, which became the Starr King School for the Ministry. Over time, other materials were added from individuals and from the San Francisco First Unitarian Church. The collection is owned by Starr King School for the Ministry: GTU Archives is the designated repository. Transferred May, 1993.

Custodial History
Charles Wendte, Unitarian minister in Oakland, who had known Thomas Starr King when a young man in the 1860's, created the initial collection. Among his many activities, he worked on the committee to build the monument to TSK in Golden Gate Park, SF, 1892; authored a book, Thomas Starr King, Patriot and Preacher, 1921; and worked on designating TSK as one of the representatives in the U.S. Capitol's Statuary Hall, 1927. The collection contains materials he gathered for these projects. This material was donated to the then Pacific Unitarian Seminary, which became the Starr King School for the Ministry.

Other materials from individuals and from the San Francisco First Unitarian Church were added to what came to be known as the Starr King Collection. If indicated, the sources of items are identified in the container listings. Many items, particularly the printed materials, have the name of the school and the collection, and assigned call numbers written on them. Included in the Starr King Collection at SKSM were books, pamphlets, and other published material either original to TSK, or about him after his death. These were not transferred with the archival collection, but are maintained in the SKSM Rare Book Room. The majority of letters and sermons original to TSK in this collection are from his early years in Boston.

Biography / Administrative History
Thomas Starr King (1824-64) was born December 17, 1824, his parents, Thomas Farrington King, a Universalist minister, and Susan Starr, both of New York. T.F. King was called to the Universalist Church, Charlestown, MA in 1835, serving there until his death in September 1839. After the death of his father, Starr (as he was known in the family), had to leave school to help support his mother and five brothers and sisters. He worked in a dry goods store, then as a teacher, becoming principal of the West Medford Grammar School at age 18. He resigned this position to accept a clerking job in the Navy Yard where he had a larger salary and more time for independent study. Through self study, he mastered the requirements for entrance to the ministry.

He preached his first sermon at Woburn, MA, 1845, receiving a call to his father's old pulpit in Charlestown which he accepted in 1846. The following year he began his career as a public lecturer, a career in which he became extremely popular and sought after. In 1848, he accepted a call to the Hollis Street Unitarian Church. At the time, Universalist and Unitarian were separate denominations. "Mr. King openly adopted the Unitarian fellowship, although his relations with his Universalist associates continued to be of the warmest and most friendly character." Starr and Julia M. Wiggin were married, December 17, 1848 shortly after his installation. They had two children: Edith and Frederick.

In 1859 King received several invitations from churches calling him to be their pastor. "San Francisco prevailed." Sailing from New York in April 1860 via Panama, he found SF Unitarian "a moribund church, a depleted society, with an insufficient income and a heavy debt." Landing on April 28 and, with no preparation or advanced notice, King preached the next day to an overflowing crowd. "When his first year closed the debt was paid and the church was on a solid basis, the strongest Protestant parish in the city." With the attack on Fort Sumter in 1861 and the beginning of the war, the position of California was uncertain. Powerful interests in California leaned toward secession, others toward declaring California an independent republic. King decided "California must be won over at any price" and began his crusade for the Union. He lectured and preached from one end of the state to the other "in an earnest fight against secession." He faced hostile crowds, threats of harm, even threats against his life. In the fall election, the loyalty of the state was settled by an overwhelming majority. It was felt that "no one force had done so much to save the State as Mr. King."

With the loyalty of California safe, King turned to other service. He entered in to the movement for the sick and wounded soldiers fund-raising throughout the entire west coast for the Sanitary Commission. He raised a million and a half dollars in 1862. He also began work on raising the money for and then construction of a new church building for SF Unitarian. "At last, his overtaxed powers gave way." The new church, in which he preached seven Sundays, was completed and dedicated in January 1864. He contracted diphtheria, then after a second bout of pneumonia, died on March 4, 1864.

The city of San Francisco, and the entire state, went into mourning. "One wild, wild wave of excitement rolled over this city when the flag, at half-mast, and rumor from ear to ear announced the departure of a mighty spirit. From the gilded saloon to the Christian parlor --wherever he was hated most or loved best, men stopped to pause and ponder, and to simply say, with more than eloquence: 'Starr King is dead!'" (G.G.F., Alta California, March 4, 1864)

This biographical sketch is taken from "Thomas Starr King", by Horace Davis, in the Pacific Unitarian, March, 1904. See Box 4, ff 18.
**Scope and Content of Collection**
The collection includes original papers (letters and sermons), copies, printed material, photographs, scrapbook, newspaper articles, and King's leather traveling case. The majority of letters and sermons original to TSK in this collection are from his early years in Boston. Materials include Charles Wendte's work on the committee to build the monument to TSK in Golden Gate Park, SF, 1892, and to designate TSK as one of the representatives in the U.S. Capitol's Statuary Hall, 1927.

**Indexing Terms**
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

**Subjects**
- King, Thomas Starr, 1824-1864.
- Wendte, Charles William, 1844-1931.
- French, Daniel Chester, 1850-1931.
- Norris, Julia Wiggin King, d. 1904.
- Unitarians--History--Sources.
- Clergy--Correspondence.
- Unitarian Universalists--California--History--Sources.
- Unitarian Universalists--History--Sources.
- Clergy--Political activity.
- California--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.
- United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.
- San Francisco (Calif.)--History--19th century.

**Correspondence**

| Box 1, Folder 1 | TSK to Randolph Ryer (friend), 1/1841-1/1851, 2/24/1861 45 letters |
| Folder 2 | Handwritten copies done in 1867 of some of the letters in ff 1 (1/1841-10/1844) by Sarah Starr (TSK's aunt) |
| Folder 3 | 1 letter to Sarah Edgerton from Sarah with an additional letter from TSK, 12/14/1845 |
| Folder 4 | 1 letter TSK to Hosea, 11/10/1859 |
| Folder 5 | Typewritten copy of 1 letter from TSK to Sunday School, Hollis St. Society, Boston, 5/25/1860 |
| Folder 6 | TSK to Thomas Frazer (re: lectures in Portland and other Oregon cities), 5/1862-7/1862 (5 letters) |
| Folder 7 | 1 letter TSK to Mrs. Neal (re: dedication of SF church and hymn by Whittier), 1/6/63 |
| Folder 8 | 1 letter, William Henry Channing to TSK, 11/30/48 |
| Folder 9 | To Susan M. King (mother from Thomas F. King (father) and others, 1837-41 (10 letters, 1 receipt) |
| Folder 10 | Sermon on Hebrews 12:29 by Thomas F. King, n.d. |
| Folder 11 | Condolence letters to Susan M. King on the death of TSK, 1864 (2 letters) |
| Folder 12 | Empty envelopes to Mrs. S.K. Cushman (sister), 1864-65 |
| Folder 13 | 1 letter George Starr to Susan Starr (?), 6/14/1880 |
| Folder 14 | Charles F. Cushman (brother-in-law), business letters, 1 on King family genealogy, 1888-89 (4 letters); Florence Cushman (niece) to Charles Wendte, 1919 (5 letters removed from Wendte scrapbook (Folio 1) for better preservation) |
| Folder 15 | Julia King Norris (wife) to Charles Wendte, 1889 (6 letters removed from Wendte scrapbook (Folio 1) for better preservation) |
| Folder 16 | King family members to Charles Wendte, 1904-21 (5 letters removed from Wendte scrapbook (Folio 1) for better preservation: Frederick R. King, son; Edith King Davis, daughter; Horace Davis, son-in-law; Ruth Wiggin, sister of Julia King Norris) |
| Folder 17 | TSK, 3 letters: 12/14/1853 to Ellis Roberts; 4/8/1856 to "Dear Sir"; 9/17/1863 to Beaton (these letters are owned by the GTU Library, by purchase, 1977) |
Folder 18
1 letter, TSK to Henry Kimball, 4/25/62 (re: Kimball's resignation as Sunday School Superintendent)

Folder 19
"Journal Voyage", Passage from New York to San Francisco via Panama, April 1860 (handwritten in TSK hand, appears to be a copy)

Folder 20
Daniel C. French to Charles Wendte, 1888, 1890 (3 letters removed from Wendte scrapbook); Moncure D. Conway to Wendte, 1890 (1 letter removed from scrapbook) re: French statue of TSK

Sermons
Size: 2"

Additional Note
The sermons (with the exception of "Installation of Rev. Edwin H. Chapin") were a gift of Mrs. Harold Greene Arnold (Helen Hunt Freeman Arnold). The original gift lists 20 sermons, 3 are missing. For other printed sermons, see Box 4, ff 1-3, 6.

Box 2, Folder 1
Thanksgiving sermon, 11/25/1846

Folder 2
New Years sermon, 12/30/1846

Folder 3
Communion, 1/16/1847

Folder 4
Arguments for Universalism from Providence, 6/11/1847

Folder 5
Christianity and Creeds, 9/10/1847

Folder 6
God is Love, 11/20/1847

Folder 6a
The Character of Christ: A Christmas Sermon, 12/21/1847

Folder 7
What is Your Life, 12/26/1847

Folder 8
Christ and the Woman of Samaria, 1/19/1848

Folder 9
Installation of Rev. Edwin H. Chapin, 6/8/1848

Folder 10
The Bible, 8/7/1848

Folder 11
Duties of a Christian Society, 11/25/1849

Folder 12
Duty of Spreading the Religion of Jesus, 4/13/1850

Folder 13
The Ear Rings and Aaron, 11/2/1850

Folder 14
Living for and Living by Religion, 1/24/1852

Folder 15
Things and the Doctrine of Things, 1/29/1852

Folder 16
The Encouragements of Christianity, 3/20/1852

Folder 17
The Losses and Gains of a Church, 9/16/1852

Folder 18
Justice Before Charity, n.d.

Folder 19
fragment, n.d.

Folder 20
Sermon Case, n.d., tooled black leather and black silk, gold lettering, "T. Star (sic) King"

Newspaper Articles
Size: 2"

Note
See also, Box 7.

Box 3, Folder 1
Letters about travel in California to the Boston Transcript from "K.", 1860 (xerox copies)

Folder 2-4
original articles from which the copies were made

Folder 5
envelope in which the articles were found, signed Samuel A. Eliot

Folder 6
full page from the "Trumpet and Magazine", 8/1838 (T.F. King listed as preaching)

Folder 7
Contents of the box in the cornerstone of SF Unitarian Church, 1887

Folder 8
San Francisco Morning Call, unveiling the Starr King monument, Golden Gate Park, 10/27/1892

Folder 9
Death of Julia M. (King) Norris, 1904

Folder 10
Oakland Tribune, "Remember When", 4/5/1934

Subject Files

Box 3, Folder 11

Folder 12
Folder 13  Pamphlets (2), c. 1921, promoting the sale of "Thomas Starr King, Patriot and Preacher"
Folder 14  Letters and articles on TSK, gift of Stella Weston Howe, 1900, 1961. (2 letters from persons who knew TSK giving reminiscences)
Folder 15  SF Unitarian Church, 1 photo (c. 1865), 1 service card (first Sunday after TSK death, 1864)
Folder 16  Service bulletin, "Fifty Years of the First Unitarian Church of San Francisco, 1900"
Folder 17  "Ceremonies Dedicating the Sarcophagus of Thomas Starr King" (placing California Historical Landmark plaque #691), 4/24/1960

Printed Material
Size: 5"

Original to TSK

Box 4, Folder 1  Sermon, "Two Discourses Delivered in Hollis-Street Meeting-House, Sunday, Sept. 21, 1851." Gift of Henry L. Finch)
Folder 1a  Sermon, "The Death of Mr. Daniel Weld", 9/19/1852
Folder 2  Sermon, "Services at the Installation of Caleb D. Bradlee", 12/11/1854
Folder 3  Sermon, "Preached in Hollis St. Church at the Close of a Ministry of Eleven years", 3/25/1860 (2 copies: second copy, gift of Henry L. Finch)
Folder 4  "A Scripture Catechism for Sabbath Schools", by TSK, San Francisco, CA, 1861
Folder 6  Sermon, "Spiritual Christianity", n.d. (Printed post-1876)

Addresses about TSK

Box 4, Folder 7  Discourse, "The Unspotted Life: In Memory of Rev. Thomas Starr King", C.A. Bartol, Boston, 3/6/1864 (2 copies: second copy, gift of Henry L. Finch)
Folder 8  Address, "In Memory of their Late Pastor, Rev. Thomas Starr King", Robert B. Swain, San Francisco, 3/15/1864
Folder 9  Lecture, "Thomas Starr King in California", Charles Wendte, 1867
Folder 10  Address, "The Quickening Power of a Good and Ernest Life", Edward Galvin, 3/10/1878
Folder 11  Oration, "Thomas Starr King as a Patriot", at the unveiling of the TSK monument, Golden Gate Park, Irving Scott, 10/1892
Folder 12  Prayer, "At the Dedication and Unveiling of the TSK Monument", Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, Charles Wendte, 10/1892
Folder 13  Address, "The Patriotic Services of Thomas Starr King", Horace Davis, 1899
Folder 14  Address, "Thomas Starr King, A Memorial Address", Edward Everett Hale, 3/1/1903

Articles about TSK

Box 4, Folder 15  Unitarian Review, "The Character and Genius of TSK", 5/1878
Folder 16  Unitarian Review, "Reminiscences of TSK", Edward Everett Hale, 4/1888
Folder 17  Pamphlet, "Little Journeys to the Homes of Eminent Orators", Elbert Hubbard, 10/1903
Folder 18  Pacific Unitarian, Starr King Memorial Number, 3/1904
Folder 19  Pacific Unitarian, "A Letter of TSK", 10/1914
Folder 20  California Freemason, "California Decides", Hal Curtis, Spring 1961
Folder 21  "Starr King in California, a Dramatic Biography", students of SKSM, 5/1964
Folder 22  "Thomas Starr King in Oregon, 1862" by William G. Eliot, Jr., The Oregon Historical Quarterly, June 1931 (xerox copy)
Folder 23  TSK Biographic Summary, Bibliography, 1996; from RAdm. Randolph W. King
Folder 24  Newspaper articles, 1) to TSK in California, 8/29/1861, Anonymus (Boston Transcript); 2) "A Proper Bostonian Wowed the Miners", Millie Robbins (n.d., ca. 1965)
Photographs

Size: 2"

Box 5, Folder 1
SK, unmounted reprint, n.d., 8 1/2 x 10, standing shot (damaged)

Folder 2
TSK, oval framed reprint, n.d., 10 x 8, head shot

Folder 3
Julia King (wife), Ambrotype (?) in case, c. 1860, head shot

Folder 4
TSK monument in Golden Gate Park, 8 x 10, full shot, c. 1892

Folder 5
Small portfolio of reprints of pictures used in "Thomas Starr King, Patriot and Preacher" by Charles Wendte, c. 1921:
  - Mt. Starr King, Yosemite, CA
  - Starr King Mountain, White Hills, NH
  - First Unitarian Church, San Francisco, c. 1865
  - Starr King Monument, Golden Gate Park

Folder 6
Starr King Domes, Yosemite, CA, c. 1963

Folder 7
TSK, reprint, c. 1992, 4 x 5, head shot

Folder 8
TSK, reprint, c. 1960, taken from an engraving in a book, head shot

Traveling Case

Leather traveling case used by TSK on his trip to California from New York via the Isthmus of Panama, April 1860. Made by Holmes Saddler Harness Maker and Manufacturer, 25 Tremont Road, Boston. Leather, wood, brass studs, leather handle, key for the lock, paper lined, initials "TSK". 14 x 9 x 6 in. (355 x 228 x 152 mm).

Scrapbooks

Size: 2"

Box 7
TSK newspaper articles from the Boston Transcript, 1853-1864. Compiled by Daniel Noyes Haskell (Editor, Transcript); later in the possession of Edward Everett Hale, 1909. Gift of Carolyn Freeman Westwood and Arnold Farrow Westwood.

Folio Folio 1
"Memorabilia, Thomas Starr King, 1860-1864", C.W. Wendte

Creator/Collector: From the typed introduction: "The undersigned (Charles W. Wendte), who was a resident of San Francisco during the Civil War and had the great privilege of a personal acquaintance with Thomas Starr King and later became his biographer, has thought it his duty to collect and put into consecutive and acceptable form the personal and historical material which he has collected for the purpose."

Scope and Content Note

Contents include: original photographs, newspaper articles, copies of correspondence, and correspondence concerning the career and death of TSK, 1854-1900; erection of the monument in Golden Gate Park, 1892 (including the monument committee work

Photograph

Folio Folio 2
TSK, 16 x 13 oval framed engraving of a drawing, n.d., damaged (foxing), half figure in academic or preaching robe.

Broadside

Folio Folio 3
Printed lecture, "Peace: What Would it Cost Us", delivered at Platt's Music Hall, San Francisco, August 29, 1861 (original: owned by the GTU Library)

Folio Folio 4
Copy of printed lecture in Folio 3