

King Manor

STATE: New York
COUNTY: Borough of Queens
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON:
King Manor (Rufus King House)

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
150th Street and Jamaica Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
New York

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:

STATE
New York

CODE
11432

COUNTY:
Borough of Queens

CODE

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
New York City Department of Parks

STREET AND NUMBER:
830 5th Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
New York

STATE:
New York

CODE
10021

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Queens County Clerks Office

STREET AND NUMBER:
88-11 Sutphin Boulevard

CITY OR TOWN:
Jamaica, Queens

STATE
New York

CODE
11435

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, LP0145

DATE OF SURVEY:
 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Landmarks Preservation Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
305 Broadway

CITY OR TOWN:
New York

STATE:
New York

CODE
10007

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE

COUNTY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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Theme:
Signers of the Constitution

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

King Manor stands in King Park, in the Borough of Queens, bounded by Jamaica Avenue, 150th Street, 89th Avenue, and 153rd Street. This comprises practically the last sizable open portion of what originally was a 90-acre farmstead Rufus King purchased for \$12,000 in 1805. King's tract initially extended eastward to Grace Episcopal Church and north to what is now the Grand Central Parkway. Among the structures standing when he bought the land were the one-story and two-story gabled portions that now comprise the ell of King Manor, which date from the first half of the 18th century, and the left-hand portion of the main two-and-one-half-story house a short distance away. Previous residents here included an innkeeper and two pastors from Grace Church. It was apparently the second of these clergymen, Reverend Thomas Colgan, who began the gambrel-roofed house as a parsonage, sometime around 1750.

After King purchased the property from the estate of Colgan's son-in-law, he added the right-hand portion of the main house, then moved the original cottage around to the rear and attached it for servants' quarters. The newer portion of the main house has more generous horizontal proportions, resulting in an asymmetrical facade. Nevertheless, the front elevation presents a quite handsome aspect, especially the portico with its fluted doric columns, the main entrance with its Dutch door, transom, and side lights, and the fine Palladian window above. H. D. Eberlein describes the overall appearance as a "pleasant blending of comely Georgian features with the local Colonial manner in which ... both English and Dutch fashions were combined."

The section built by King contains a spacious oval-ended dining room in front. Behind, and separated from it by a side hallway, is a large serving pantry connecting with the kitchen in the ell. Across the wide foyer in the west half are the parlor and the family room. Of the house's 17 rooms, the latter one probably retains greatest fidelity to its appearance during Rufus King's residency. The only other rooms open to the public are the bedrooms, children's room, and sitting room on the second floor of the main wing. The furnishings are a somewhat indiscriminate mixture of Colonial, Empire, and Victorian. Much of the furniture, as well as various items of memorabilia on display, have been donated over the years.

The last of the King family to occupy the house was Cornelia, granddaughter of Rufus and daughter of John Alsop King (a political notable in his own right, a U.S. Senator and Governor of New York). After her death in 1896, what remained of the King property was acquired by the Village of Jamaica, and when the latter was annexed to the city of New York, it came under the jurisdiction of the Department of Parks. The King Manor Association, a voluntary organization incorporated in 1900, is responsible for maintaining the interior of the main house.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Of the 39 men who signed the Constitution, the names of perhaps eight or 10 remain known to every schoolboy, while most have been forgotten except by scholars and antiquarians. The name of Rufus King is neither writ so large as those of Washington, Franklin, Dickenson, Madison, and Wilson, nor has it been totally relegated to limbo. Anyone having a passing acquaintance with American history should recognize it, but probably be unable to recall much about the man. Even so, King's place in history is far from insignificant. A member of the Continental Congress, framer of the Constitution, United States Senator for a total of nearly 18 years, twice appointed Ambassador to Great Britain, twice selected as Federalist candidate for Vice President and once for President, King was a confidant of the powerful and a noteworthy policy-maker in his own right. William Pierce of Georgia ranked him among "the Luminaries of the present Age."

The last nationally prominent Federalist, he remained flexible enough to urge vigorous prosecution of the second war with England. A life-long foe of slavery, he was, nevertheless, held in high esteem even by John Randolph of Roanoke. The following assessment from his obituary in a New York newspaper, although patently hyperbolic, has a demonstrable validity: "In his meridian [King] was numbered among the brightest stars in the galaxy of his country's glory."

King Manor in Jamaica is the only extant house associated with Rufus King. While he did not occupy it until some 20 years after the Philadelphia Convention, he lived there for 22 of his 72 years, longer than at any other location. A dignified Colonial mansion with a scattering of Federal details, its integrity remains largely intact. It is open to the public one afternoon per week.

Biography

"Take him tout en semble," wrote William Pierce of Georgia, one of Rufus King's fellow delegates to the Constitutional Convention, "he may with propriety be ranked among the Luminaries of the present Age." King was then only 32, but in the decade since his graduation from Harvard he had clearly earned Major Pierce's encomium. After reading

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Brush, E. H., Rufus King and His Times (New York, 1926).

Eberlein, Harold D., Manor Houses and Historic Homes of Long Island and Staten Island (Philadelphia, 1928).

Farrand, Max, Documentary History of the Constitution (Washington, 1894).

Federal Writers' Project, New York Panorama (New York, 1938).

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES													
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE			LATITUDE			LONGITUDE							
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds						
NW	0	'	"	0	'	"	40	0	42	'	11	"	73	0	51	'	43	"
NE	0	'	"	0	'	"												
SE	0	'	"	0	'	"												
SW	0	'	"	0	'	"												

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **1 acre**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Robert C. Post, Survey Historian

ORGANIZATION **Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service** DATE **6/28/73**

STREET AND NUMBER:
1100 L Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE **D.C.** CODE

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION **NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

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7. Description (page 1) King Manor (Rufus King House)

The ell is occupied by offices of the Department of Parks, and evidences the workaday uses to which it is put. But the main house, except for a clumsy repair job on the side porch, and the addition of shingle siding, new sashes, and several skylights, remains relatively original, and in surprisingly good condition considering its location in an extremely crowded inner-city park.

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8. Significance (page 1) King Manor (Rufus King House)

law under the eminent Newburyport jurist Theophilus Parsons, King had established his own practice in 1780. He quickly liquidated his debts incurred as a student, and three years later became a delegate to the Massachusetts General Court, soon assuming a leading role in that body. In 1784 the legislature asked him to attend the Continental Congress, where--to quote Pierce again--he served "with great and deserved applause" until 1786. Among the resolutions he introduced was one providing that "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude" be permitted in the North-west Territory, a memorable phrase later written into the Ordinance of 1787.

As a delegate to the Philadelphia Convention, King initially advocated a moderate revision of the Articles of Confederation. Subsequently, however, he aligned himself with those who favored scrapping the Articles altogether and the centralization of Government authority under a strong executive. This change in King's outlook seems to have been largely the handiwork of Alexander Hamilton, who said, "I revolutionized his mind." King subsequently served along with Hamilton, Madison, and Gouverneur Morris on William Johnson's Committee on Style and Arrangement, which edited the final draft of the Constitution. Then, on September 17, 1787, he became one of its 39 signatories. In early 1788, he played a key role in securing ratification in Massachusetts, theretofore something of an Antifederalist stronghold.

After marrying the daughter of John Alsop, a wealthy import merchant and president of the New York Chamber of Commerce, King transferred his political base. Following a brief stint in the State Assembly, he was appointed to the United States Senate. A close personal friend and business associate of Hamilton's by then, King became a forceful proponent of Hamiltonian economics, and in 1791 he was elected to a directorship of the Bank of the United States. Three years later, he joined with Hamilton and John Jay under the collective pseudonym, "Camillus," in publishing a persuasive defense of the Jay Treaty; King dealt mostly with maritime and commercial affairs, on which he was an acknowledged authority.

In 1796, acting principally on Hamilton's recommendation, President Washington named King to the extremely sensitive post of Minister Plenipotentiary to Great Britain. In the opinion of Edward Channing, he made his mark as "one of the most effective representatives the United States ever had at London." Resigning after seven years, he returned to Manhattan, where he had resided prior to his tenure at the Court of St. James. While he did not immediately return to the New York political wars, King consented to run as the Federalist candidate for Vice President

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in 1804. Both he and C. C. Pinckney were badly defeated that year, as they were again, though by a much closer margin, four years later.

Meantime, in November 1805, King had settled at his Jamaica estate. For a time he devoted himself mainly to the role of country gentleman, but in 1813 the Legislature once again elected him to the United States Senate. At first a staunch opponent of the war with England, he reversed himself following the Sack of Washington in August 1814. In his heart, though, King could never break decisively with his party, and in 1816 he became the last Federalist to make a serious run for the Presidency. He lost in a landslide to James Monroe, something of a nemesis ever since they had clashed at the time of the abortive Jay-Gardoqui negotiations three decades before.

During his last years in the Senate, King sponsored legislation relating to maritime commerce and to the public lands, led the futile attempt to derail the second Bank of the United States, and adamantly opposed the Missouri Compromise, thus reaffirming the hostility to slavery extension he had first manifested in the 1780s. (King was a proponent of compensated emancipation and colonization.) In 1825 President John Quincy Adams appointed King to a second term as Minister to Great Britain. His health began to fail shortly after his arrival in London, however, and he was forced to return home in little more than a year. He died in April 1827 and was buried at Grace Church, not far from King Manor.

Rufus King's career has received something less than close scrutiny from professional historians--a serious oversight, if contemporary assessments of his character, ability, and accomplishments are trustworthy. Hamilton thought him "a remarkably well informed man [and] a very judicious one." Jeremiah Mason regarded him as "the most able man and the greatest orator" in the Senate, while even the acerbic John Randolph could call him "the best man north of the Potomac." And, in a day when political effectiveness was frequently gauged in terms of oratorical capability, Daniel Webster wrote, "You never heard such a speaker. In strength, and dignity, and fire; in ease, in natural effect, and gesture as well as in matter, he is unequalled."

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9. Bibliographical References

King Manor (Rufus King House)

Fuess, Claude M., "Rufus King," Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. X,
pp. 398-400.

Kern, Mrs. Ludwig (ed.), A Brief History of King Manor (n.p., n.d.).

King, Charles R., Life and Correspondence of Rufus King (6 Vols.,
New York, 1894-1900).

New York Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs Administration,
Historic Houses in New York City's Parks (n.p., n.d.).

Warren, Charles, The Making of the Constitution (Boston, 1928).