

The Cornerstone

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JULIAN HUXLEY AT RICE

By Mary Seaton Dix

In the course of his travels around the world on behalf of the Rice Institute to-be, Edgar Odell Lovett met Julian Huxley, then twenty-four and a lecturer at Oxford University. Dr. Lovett of course knew of Thomas H. Huxley, Julian's grandfather, a renowned biologist and champion of Charles Darwin. Much impressed by the young scientist, Lovett invited him to come to Rice to build a biology department. The offer was very tempting – the salary would be a great improvement over his Oxford stipend, and the move to Texas would distance him from what was apparently a conflicted romance. Huxley accepted, although he asked to be permitted to postpone his arrival until 1913.

Huxley did, however, come to America in 1912 to attend the opening ceremonies at the Rice Institute. He was amazed at what he found. In a letter to his fiancée he described the Administration Building (today's Lovett Hall) as "gorgeous and pretty galumptious" and such a contrast to the unfinishedness of all the rest."

In the fall of 1913 Huxley arrived and set to work establishing a biology department. He lived at North Hall (now Baker College), where he enjoyed his lodgings but in common with the students disliked the food. The following year he, Griffith Evans, and Norbert Wiener shared an apartment near the campus and across the street from the Tsanoffs. Like other faculty, Huxley fled from Houston's



Julian Huxley when he was at Rice

summers. In 1914 he returned to England, the following year he went camping in Colorado with the

Tsanoffs, and in 1916 he spent the summer at Woods Hole on Cape

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The Rice Historical Society

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the history of Rice University*

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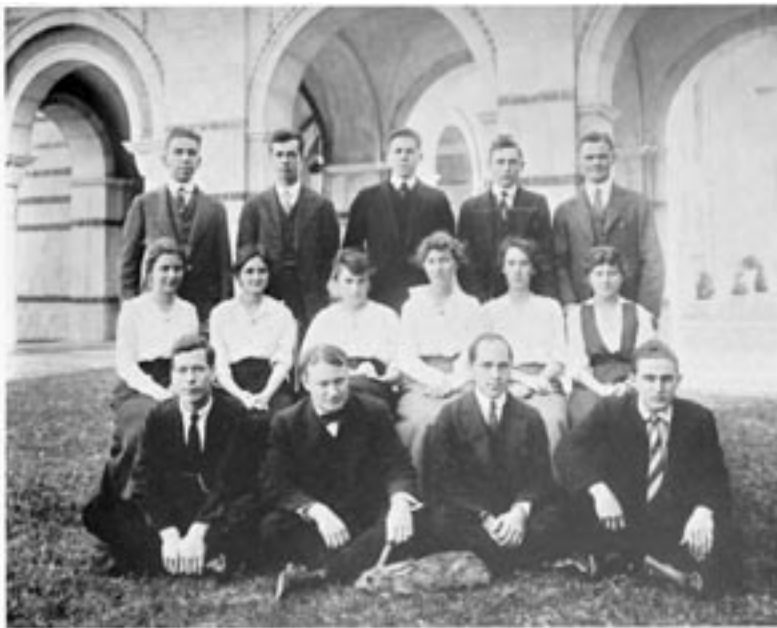
Ray Watkin Strange '36

*The Rice Historical Society welcomes letters
to The Cornerstone, its official newsletter.
Rice alumni and friends are encouraged to
contribute photographs and remembrances
of historical interest which may be used in
future issues of The Cornerstone. Items
cannot be returned and will be donated to
our archival collection.*

NEWSLETTER DESIGNED
BY TOMORROW'S KEY

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TOP: WHEELER, HUXLEY, SIMMONS, BOGERS, ODILL
MIDDLE: WEINBERG, JAGGERSTY, WAGGAMAN, ROBINSON, WEL, ELLIS
BOTTOM: DAVIES, MARSHALL, MULLER, SMITH

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Cod. By this time Huxley felt that he should go back to England and join the army. After World War I he joined the faculty at Oxford and later at King's College, London.

But he did not entirely leave Rice. He subscribed to the *Thresher* for the rest of his life, he dedicated one of his books to friends and colleagues at Rice, and he lectured on the campus in 1924 and 1954. Huxley wrote

President Lovett that he was extremely grateful to "Rice and Texas and America."

Huxley was remembered as an excellent lecturer and rather eccentric. Camille Waggaman Brown, '18, noted in her memoirs that Huxley wore red socks and patent leather pumps to dances. Neal Heaps, '42, son of Claude W. Heaps, a physicist who joined the faculty in 1914, recalls his father telling about Huxley arriving

at a dinner party at Professor Harold A. Wilson's home with his laundry for Mrs. Wilson's attention.

Michelle Gillespie, Rice undergraduate and history major, took early advantage of the Huxley Papers to write an excellent article on Julian Huxley's years at the Rice Institute that appeared in the September 1982 issue of *Sallyport*. It is an ideal source for anyone wishing more details on this remarkable period.

THE HUXLEY PAPERS AT RICE

By Nancy Boothe

Julian Sorell Huxley, as many of our readers know, was appointed by President Edgar Odell Lovett as Rice Institute's first chair of the biology department, with the responsibility of planning the curriculum and laboratories and hiring the first faculty.

People have asked me how (or why) Rice University's Fondren Library came to know about and to purchase a large lot of the papers of Sir Julian Huxley in 1978. Well, it was a truly roundabout way.

Stephen Spender, the great English poet and a personal friend of both Julian and Juliette Huxley, was spending a semester in residence at the University of Houston. Lady Huxley had asked him to feel Rice out about buying her late husband's papers, feeling no doubt that this "wealthy Texas school" (as she remembered it) would likely be able to afford such a purchase better than any institution in Great Britain.

Spender was so oblique in conveying this feeler that it was only after he visited the Harry Ransom Center in Austin and spoke with Director Warren Roberts – and Dr. Roberts called me -- that we understood that Spender was offering the papers to Rice first. We were indeed interested.

First we needed to know exactly what this lot of papers consisted of. Next, we had to find out what price

Lady Huxley had put on the papers, if any. So Rice engaged Anthony Rota in London (whose father Bertram Rota had sold books to the early Rice Institute library) to meet with Lady Huxley and to start the process of defining the scope of the collection and setting a price.

After many visits with Lady Huxley, Rota was finally able to give us a good idea of the scope of the papers she was ready to part with, and a suggested price.

Next came the harder part: finding the money for the collection. Without university funds available, the supporters of the acquisition of the papers began a private campaign; most notable of these was Hank Hudspeth, alumnus and a longtime friend of Rice. Lady Huxley, via Rota, had set a time limit for us to raise the money;



Julian Huxley and his wife Juliette in the nineteen-fifties

two other American universities were waiting in the wings to buy the collection if we failed. Miraculously, we went through three deadlines and were saved from losing the papers each time. Finally the funds were raised.

Rota sent the papers, carefully packed in dozens of shipping

cases, and finally we had them under our own roof. It was definitely a time for celebration, so the Woodson Research Center held a champagne party for the major donors, including Hank and Demaris Hudspeth, John and Elly Heard, the Friends of Fondren, as well as for faculty members who had played major roles in advocating the purchase of the papers: Bob Patten and Albert Van Helden. We let these fine and generous friends

Continued on page 5

be the first to look into the boxes and actually handle some of the interesting manuscripts, letters, drawings, photographs, and memorabilia. This was a joyous event for the donors, faculty supporters, and the Woodson staff.

We were fortunate enough to obtain a grant for processing the papers from the Office of Education, Higher Education Act, Title II-C, and to find three excellent staff members who organized the papers and wrote the resulting Guide to the Papers of Julian Sorell Huxley (available in hard copy at the Woodson Research Center and online at <http://www.rice.edu/fondren/woodson/mss/ms50/#scope>).

The Guide's abstract summarizes the collection: "The papers of the British biologist, philosopher and popularizer of science, now housed in neat, archivally correct boxes, occupy 91 linear feet of shelf space. The Abstract to the Guide tells us: "Grandson of Thomas Henry Huxley, son of Julia Arnold and older brother of Aldous Huxley, Sir Julian [born in 1887] began his career in 1910 as a teacher and practicing biologist, became director of the London Zoo, acted as first director-general of Unesco, and until his death in 1975 was a prolific author and widely-travelled speaker. The collection documents Huxley's role as a synthesizer and educator who influenced thinking in many areas. Linking scientists, science and other fields, and science and the public, Huxley corresponded with such scientists, artists, writers, and social figures as Kenneth Clark, J.B.S. Haldane, H.J. Muller, Bertrand Russell, Stephen Spender and H. G. Wells. Other materials found in the papers include original writings; publications of others; organizational, conference and travel materials; personal diaries; photographs; and memorabilia."

The largest part of the collection, and perhaps most important to researchers, are the 25,000 pieces of correspondence. There are letters to and from Huxley family members,

scientists, authors, historians, artists, composers, philosophers, theologians, statesmen, publishers and editors. Here we can find interchanges with such figures as T.S. Eliot, George Bernard Shaw, Albert Schweitzer, H.J. Muller, Stephen Spender, the Sitwells, Arnold Toynbee, H.G. Wells, Henry Moore, Benjamin Britten, John Maynard Keynes, Claude Levi-Strauss, Bertrand Russell, Teilhard de Chardin, Dag Hammarskjold, and Margaret Sanger. A separate and interesting section contains Rice Institute-related correspondence.

Rewards for researchers and archivists alike in this generally serious and scholarly collection are the rare nuggets Huxley labeled "Curiosities." One of my favorites is an undated postcard sent to him after one of his appearances on BBC:

"Dear Sir Julian, You said on TV once that you don't believe in God – well I don't believe in you! Yours truly, Faith Hope, St. Saviours Convent, Harrow."

Another is from a Canadian reader of *Look* magazine, whose spelling is considerably worse than Sister Hope's:

"Dear Julian:

Upon looking over, Look, I see your on, All about love. In your discription of love, I must say I become, intriested in what you say there – for this letter.

You state men are thrilled to fondle the femeline breast, What I would like to know if they, that is the, ope-sate seek do they like the? Fondling.

Thank you for this fav-iour".

The Julian Huxley papers

continue to be used by a wide community of researchers, some of whom travel from countries around the world to tap into these resources. Scholarly papers, theses, and a number of significant books have resulted from their research. This strikes me as a strong indication that Woodson is fulfilling its mission by acquiring and making accessible significant manuscript collections.

In the summer of 1996, some two years after the death of Sir Julian's widow, Lady Juliette Huxley, another important group of Huxley papers (presumably Juliette's) was put up for sale by Maggs Brothers of London, representing the Huxley Estate. Needless to say, we were interested, particularly after reading a detailed description of this group of papers done by a London manuscript specialist. Not only were Juliette's correspondence and literary manuscripts represented in this lot, but also many Huxley family letters and much more of Julian's papers.

I was sent to London just after Christmas of that year to survey the collection myself, where I spent a very chilly week in a tiny unheated office on the fourth floor of Maggs Brothers, an eighteenth-century townhouse on

Biology Club (Huxley is second from the left on the back row.)



Berkeley Square, doing what I like to do best: working with manuscript collections. These papers more than lived up to my expectations, and when I returned to Houston I recommended that the library purchase them, which we did after lengthy negotiation.

With nine thousand items (over eleven cubic feet), correspondence makes up the largest and most important group of the papers. In addition, there are manuscripts of both Juliette's and Julian's writings, printed material, notebooks, travel material, and memorabilia. After unpacking and reboxing, the papers amounted to twenty-four cubic feet, compared to the ninety cubic feet of the 1980 purchase.

Julian's correspondence is mainly to his wife (over twelve hundred letters written between 1918 and 1965). But there is also a significant quantity of Julian's correspondence with scientific colleagues, as well as with writers, artists, philosophers, composers, statesmen, and intellectuals of all stripes. A particularly interesting letter is from the eccentric English artist Dorothy Brett, who lived in both Taos and New York, in which she insists that Julian "must see Georgia O'Keefe's pictures and meet Stieglitz" when he comes to New York.

We see something of Juliette's intelligence and stature in her own right from a letter she wrote Julian from Switzerland, where she was staying with Marian Huxley [Aldous Huxley's first wife] and D. H. Lawrence. Lawrence was writing *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Maria was typing it, and Juliette was reading the manuscript text and giving Lawrence advice he didn't always like. She wrote to Julian, "Now he has lent me the new MS to read . . . So far, a little thin. . . We had a great talk about it – as I objected to several things & he got very fierce."

The Huxley family correspondence is highlighted by two hundred and fifty-three letters from Aldous Huxley, Julian's celebrated literary brother; the London manuscript

specialist described these letters as "a highly important collection." Aldous' correspondence to Julian began in 1902, when Aldous was eight, and ended in 1963, the year of his death. Now Rice's Woodson Research Center owns the largest collection of Aldous letters in the U. S., ahead of the University of California at Los Angeles and the Ransom Center at the University of Texas. Of particular interest are letters exchanged between Julian and his early colleagues at Rice.

Julian came to the Rice Institute in 1913 at President Edgar Odell Lovett's urging, to be the first chair of the Biology Department, to plan its classrooms and laboratories, and to hire its first faculty (one of whom, H. J. Muller, went on to win a Nobel Prize).

Noteworthy are four long letters from Joseph I. Davies, a young lab assistant Huxley brought to Houston with him, who went on to become one of Rice's legendary and well-loved professors. From the Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratory, where he was working during the summer of 1916, Davies wrote a poignant six-page letter acknowledging Huxley's mentoring. Davies says Huxley has "made twice the man of me and has put thoughts in my head that I had never dreamed of before; would it surprise you if I thought of trying for a degree at Rice!!!"



Caricature of Huxley in later life

Another treasure is the series of letters Julian Huxley wrote to his then-fiancée Kathleen Fordham, beginning with his voyage to the United States and his train trip to Houston for the Institute's opening in 1912. His letters written from Houston and Galveston describe in great detail all the programs and special events surrounding the formal opening ceremonies.

This second collection is truly important for Woodson, both because it augments and enhances the 1980 collection and because it opens new windows for researchers in several fields. Rice University will become a mandatory stopping place for Aldous Huxley scholars, and it has become known as the major repository in the world of Huxley family documentation.

DAVID DOUGLASS RED – RICE '36

By Karen Rogers

Periodically over the years, a number of autobiographies of Rice alumni have found their way into the university archives. Some, like those of Mildred Ogg Fisher, Madge Barrick Madden, and Jesse Madden, tell of the very early days of the twentieth century and the institute. These stories will be published in a future *Cornerstone*. David Douglass Red's story began a decade later. He was born in Houston in 1913 in a Victorian house on the corner of Caroline and Walker. Walker was paved with bricks with tar poured between them. "On hot summer days," he wrote, "the tar would bubble up and made good chewing gum. Mother didn't think much of the idea." His father, a doctor, had his office in the house although there was a separate entrance on Walker. They kept chickens in their backyard.

"The community into which I was born bustled with activity. Cotton and other products moved through Houston from rail to ship. Merchants and professionals were a vital part of this system." His father, a forward-thinking man, was the chief surgeon for the Santa Fe Railroad. He brought X-ray to the city, instituted an ambulance service, and was the first doctor to perform an appendectomy.

David attended Woodberry Forest School in Virginia the last two years of high school. Then he came back to Houston to attend the Rice Institute. "College dormitory life was a new experience for me. There was always something going on that interfered with studies...like the time a group was sitting around chewing the fat and someone said, 'Bet I can go downtown and back without my clothes on.' He was immediately taken up on the bet with the provision that he could have two items of clothing. He chose a bed sheet and

a pair of shoes. He was to have no money except the price of admission to a movie to prove that he had been downtown." He stood on the street corner in the sheet with his head sticking out of a hole and got a ride with a farmer in a truck, then got the movie ticket and found another ride back to Rice. He won the bet.

David also remembers losing his room key during a hazing incident. Looking for it the next day, "I was down on my knees in the clover by the sidewalk when an inquiry was made: 'Young man, are you looking for four leaf clovers?' I looked at the striped pant legs and followed them up to the face of the university president. What to do? I told a lie and looked for four leaf clovers like mad. I met the president only two other times, at the freshman reception and graduation."

The thirties were a time of financial challenges for many families and the Red family faced their share. "Fortunately, the Rice Institute was in Houston, where we lived, and I could live at home during my final years of college. This required transportation. Wally (his half-brother) was buying a car and getting rid of his old car. He agreed to sell the old car to me for 'one dollar and other valuable considerations'. The car was a Model T Ford, no first gear and questionable brakes. I spent part of one summer vacation fixing up the car for the fall term." It had a new gray and blue awning top and RICE painted on the body. It was a novelty. "There was one thing that I could not repair: the leak in the radiator. I solved this problem, however,



David Douglass Red
B.A. Degree, Class President '32,
Dramatic Club

with an aluminum pitcher which I place under the radiator when I parked. The pitcher caught the water which dripped from the radiator. Before I cranked the car to get it started, I would pour the water from the pitcher back into the radiator - no problem. The *Campanile*, the yearbook, referred to the circumstance as the 'poet's pitcher', and showed a picture of my car."



In the fall there were football games on Saturday and a dance at the University Club that night. They had separate dates for the game and the dance. "Going steady with one person was frowned upon. This was not done until two people were engaged." During the winter and spring there were the Junior Prom, the Freshman Ball, the Sophomore Dance and the Senior Ball. There were dramatic club presentations and the Archi-Arts Ball. "The



architects always had a bang up party. They would select a hall and change the interior to a theme like 'A Night in Algiers', 'Art Nouveau', and 'Paris in the Spring'. I grew a beard for the 'Night in Algiers'. I was somewhat of a freak during a period when everyone was clean-shaven except foreigners and Bohemians. I didn't care. I was on the ticket committee and selling tickets." When anyone asked about the beard, he would sell him or her a ticket.

"The first of May each year was an occasion for the girls to hold their May Fete. There was always an election to determine who would be the

May Queen. Each class also elected a duchess. I was Duke during my freshman year." The election process was very political. "The girls' clubs [literary societies] began campaigning in January to elect a member of their club. The boys were pursued from all sides. As a consequence, one year the boys got together and elected a co-ed who was married (only one in school). This turn of events really made the girls mad. Despite this bit of politics, the May Fete was usually a colorful event. The girls wore colorful dresses and paraded to the platform to the accompaniment of the school band. There was entertainment for the Queen's Court...dance groups, cho-

rus, and solos. It was good entertainment for a Saturday afternoon in May."

"College days were the period in my life when I experimented. Although Prohibition had been repealed, alcoholic beverages other than beer and wine were forbidden. It was possible, however, to get bootleg whiskey. My first experience with bootleg was at a University of Texas football game in Austin. The team had won the game and everyone was celebrat-

ing. Oscar Neuhaus and I had a room in a hotel and were preparing to pick up our dates for the dance in the gym. Sitting around the room waiting to leave, it occurred to me that we might be able to get some whiskey from the bellhop. The bellhop arrived to take an order. After some hesitation, I blurted out, 'Know where we can get a pint?' The bellhop, without batting an eye, said, 'Sure, but it will cost you three-fifty.' Get the whiskey right here in the hotel? We pooled our resources and got the pint. The bellhop was also thoughtful; for a dollar tip he also supplied us with ice and a pitcher of water. Oscar and I got glasses from the bathroom and poured the whiskey over the ice and added a little water. My, its taste was strange. Mother had used a little medicinal whiskey on the plum pudding at Christmas, but this was different. I started to take the whiskey with us to the dance, but we did not know where to hide it in the car. What was left in the bottle was finished off after the dance. We couldn't carry it home, and we had invested three-fifty."



Above: Archi-Arts Ball, Left: May Fete

RICE HOLIDAY PARTY AT THE HOME OF MARY ELLEN AND DICK WILSON

Photos Compliments of Greg Davis



Above: Lynda Crist



Left: Clare Kotch



Top left: Mary Ellen and Dick Wilson

Above center: Nancy Eubank and Helen Toombs with Barbara Chapman in the background

Bottom right: Nancy and Bill Akers

