Kahn’s ‘Cloak-And-Dagger’ Bidding Adds Nadler Collection To Library

By MIMI MUNSON

Rice’s recent venture into the field of competitive bidding resulted in the acquisition for the Fondren Library of approximately 14,000 volumes. These volumes constituted the private collection of Professor Joseph Nadler, internationally known historian of German literature.

Funds for the purchase of the library were made available to Rice by a special grant from the W. S. Farish Fund. The entire cost of the books was covered by this gift, given in memory of the late W. S. Farish.

The story of Rice’s purchase of this private library resembles a cloak-and-dagger incident in a mystery novel. However the solution of this mystery is “not available for publication.”

The trail, ending with the successful purchase of the books, began in April of this year, when the library received a letter from an international brokerage firm, announcing the sale of the Nadler Library.

On President Pitzer’s instructions to look into the matter, Dr. Robert L. Kahn, now Chairman of the Department of Foreign Languages, collected information on Professor Nadler and his library. As a result of this information, Dr. Kahn was sent this summer to Vienna, to present Rice’s offer to the broker-

age firm.

Other interested parties included American, German, and Aus-

(Continued on Page 4)
trian university libraries, and the Austrian national government. Dr. Kahn said that there was a “highly adventurous atmosphere surrounding the story.”

He revealed that “our bid was not the highest received,” but could go no farther in explaining the intricate process by which Rice’s offer was ultimately accepted. The final decision was awaited with “bated breath” by all concerned.

The collection, summed up by Dr. Kahn as “the working library of a scholar,” consists of a diverse selection of German literature from the late eighteenth century to the present. Among the volumes are an almost complete collection of German literary histories and criticisms, works of philosophy and mysticism, novels and poems, literature of the theatre, German folklore and fairy tales, and a variety of journals and periodicals.

The Nadler collection should arrive on the campus early in October, and will immediately be incorporated into Rice’s present section on German literature.