RICE UNIVERSITY
FONDREN LIBRARY

Founded under the charter of the university dated May 18, 1891, the library was established in 1913. Its present facility was dedicated November 4, 1949, and re-dedicated in 1969 after a substantial addition, both made possible by gifts of Ella F. Fondren, her children, and the Fondren Foundation and Trust as a tribute to Walter William Fondren. The library recorded its half-millionth volume in 1965; its one millionth volume was celebrated April 22, 1979.

THE FRIENDS OF FONDREN LIBRARY

The Friends of Fondren Library was founded in 1950 as an association of library supporters interested in increasing and making better known the resources of the Fondren Library at Rice University. The Friends, through members’ dues and sponsorship of a memorial and honor gift program, secure gifts and bequests and provide funds for the purchase of rare books, manuscripts, and other material which could not otherwise be acquired by the library.

THE FLYLEAF

Founded October 1950 and published quarterly by The Friends of Fondren Library, Rice University, P. O. Box 1897, Houston, Texas 77251, as a record of Fondren Library and Friends activities, and of the generosity of the library's supporters. Virginia Innis, Editor; Lauren Brown, Associate Editor. Editorial Committee: Dr. Wilfred S. Dowden, Sally McQueen Squire, Mary Woodson, Dr. Samuel M. Carrington.

Photographs by Pamela Morris (unless otherwise noted).
A LETTER TO THE FRIENDS

The year 1981-82 has been an active and productive one for the Friends. Early in the year we held our joint reception with the Rice Engineering Alumni in the Woodson Research Center on Homecoming Day. The reception was well-attended by approximately one hundred and fifty persons. In January, the Friends hosted the ceremony and reception for the transfer of the NASA archives to the Fondren Library.

Saturday Night II, the Monte Carlo Party held in the Library, was a great success both socially and financially. Approximately three hundred persons had a good time and the Friends' Endowment Fund was enhanced by more than $10,000. Dr. Frank Fisher's stimulating lecture on the biology of the Galapagos Islands took place in April and was followed by the Annual Meeting, representing our final event for 1981-82. For next year we are looking forward to the Homecoming party, a Brunch, again to be given jointly with the Engineering Alumni, on the morning of Saturday, October 16, 1982. The Monte Carlo Party has been scheduled for a re-happening on February 26, 1983. Please mark your calendars and plan to come to both. In addition, we are considering a Book Sale in September, possible trips to visit the Library of Congress in Washington, or to the LBJ Library in Austin. We will be discussing with the Shepherd Society and Sewall Gallery how we might work together with them. Finally, we want to continue our tradition of Sunday afternoon lectures. Although we can't do all the things mentioned, some might be scheduled for forthcoming years.

With Virginia Innis on board as our full-time Executive Director, we are able to carry on our activities in a more business-like manner. Her efforts have contributed greatly to the success of our programs this year. She also is the editor of The Flyleaf with the assistance of Lauren Brown of the Woodson Research Center and the Editorial Committee, and we are pleased that they have produced three good issues during this year.

At the regular bimonthly meeting in April, the Board of Friends of Fondren approved the establishment of a Friends of Fondren Library Award. This award will be given annually to a person or persons who have rendered outstanding support to the Fondren Library. The recipients will be honored at our reception on Homecoming morning with the presentation of the award to be made later that day.

On the suggestion of Dr. Will Dowden, the Board also approved the establishment in the Library of a current fiction shelf. This rotating shelf of current works of fiction will cost approximately $3,000 per year. Dr. Dowden and Ferne Hyman, Assistant Librarian for Collections Management, will draw up guidelines for selecting and designating these books which will be kept in an appropriate spot for the convenience of Fondren patrons.

The Friends of Fondren Endowment Fund stands at over $100,000. The fund was enhanced during the year by a generous gift from Mr. Milton Underwood. In addition, Mr. John Wright presented a gift of stock for the maintenance of the collection of Southern and Western history which he has given the Library over the last twenty years. Mr. Ed Redding contributed two handbooks outlining how things were done in Chemical Engineering in the 1860's. Mrs. Kay Dobelman's gift of the geological maps of Bill St. John is described in an article elsewhere in this issue.

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A LETTER TO THE FRIENDS

During the year, Mrs. Innis has been sending out letters to lists of persons furnished by members of the Board as part of our ongoing membership solicitation. These are personal letters signed by the writer and have been quite effective in securing new members. However, we need the assistance of all of you to reach our objective for 1982-83 of 1,000 members. We have almost 600 members at this time, so we hope you will encourage your relatives, friends and neighbors to join us.

We have many people in our community who have come to Houston from elsewhere. If I were living away from my own university, I would want to have a relationship with a local university at that place, even though I would continue to support my own alma mater. I believe that many of our newcomers would like to have such a relationship and there is no better way than to join the Friends of Fondren Library. They may not choose to whoop for our football team, but they cannot fail to enjoy our books and the activities of the Friends. One of the appealing things about working for the Friends is that libraries are beloved of everyone; there is nothing controversial about a library. We welcome new residents of the area.

Walter Baker, the immediate past president of the Friends, served as Chairman of a Nominating Committee to recommend persons for officers and directors of the Friends of Fondren Library for 1982-83. In accordance with the provisions of our Bylaws, the following persons were elected:

To be Directors:
   Peggy Abadie
   John Baird
   Kay Dobelman
   Doug Tuggle

To be Officers:
   President: Tom Smith
   Vice-President, Membership: John Cabaniss
   Vice-President, Programs: Peggy Abadie
   Secretary: Sally Squire
   Treasurer: John Heard

The Friends of Fondren Library is your organization. Please give your suggestions to our officers, directors or executive director. We would enjoy hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Tom Smith
President
WALTER AND ELLA FONDREN: BENEFACTORS AND BUILDERS

Virginia Kirkland Innis

IN MEMORY OF
WALTER WILLIAM FONDREN
1877-1939

He was praised for his character and ability, revered for his devotion to his church, and loved for himself by all who knew him. He was interested in youth and education and would have rejoiced in the benevolent action of his wife, Ella F. Fondren, and of their children, Sue Fondren Trammell, Walter W. Fondren Jr. and Catherine Fondren Underwood, who made possible the building of this library by their contribution toward its construction.

This inscription at the entrance to the Fondren library at Rice University aptly describes both Mr. and Mrs. Walter W. Fondren, their shared ideals, their deep generosity and simple modesty. Mrs. Fondren lived more than forty years longer than her husband, but she continued throughout her life to bring distinction to their name in the fulfillment of plans they had made together to bring the greatest benefit to the greatest number from the wealth that had been given them.

Mr. and Mrs. Fondren were pioneers in the oil industry of Texas, and their story is also the history of the origins and development of that industry. Born in 1877 in Union City, Tennessee to Thomas and Sue Fondren, Walter Fondren was taken in a covered wagon to Arkansas at the age of six by his parents who were looking for more productive farmland. He was orphaned by the time he was ten and until seventeen worked on farms and in sawmills. He gave up a salary of fifty dollars a year and board to migrate to Texas, and with thirty cents and the overalls he was wearing, boarded a freight train headed west. Legend has it that he fell asleep and missed his destination but left the train in Corsicana. There he worked on a farm and made enough money to buy a horse, selling it after a year for a good price. His son-in-law, W. B. Trammell, remembers Mr. Fondren’s story of the gold piece that he received in payment and lost while working in a corn crib. To find it he removed every ear of corn, examining each one until the gold coin finally appeared at the very bottom of the crib.

In 1897, Fondren began working as a driller’s helper on water wells, some of which produced oil, much to the surprise and dismay of many land owners. These were the first oil wells in Texas. In 1901, when the Lucas gusher at Spindletop was discovered, Mr. Fondren joined the throngs at Beaumont as an accomplished driller making good pay. His first business venture as an independent driller was on a tract only twenty feet square with an old rotary rig bought partly on credit. The well did not produce oil but he had developed such a reputation for dependability and skill that he was able to borrow enough money to rework the well and “bring it in.” He paid his debts, made a small profit and launched his career.

Walter Fondren’s first remarkable achievement consisted of making a profit in the oil business every year. That was a distinction few oil operators were able to claim due to wildly fluctuating prices for the crude oil, flagrant waste and resultant rapid depletion of shallow reserves. He moved from field to field along the Gulf coast — Sour Lake, Batson, and, beginning in 1905, the Humble field, where he was to become acquainted with other future founders of the Humble Oil and Refining Company (later to be Exxon) who were developing their skills and acquiring property as he was. It was not until 1909 that the Hughes rock bit was introduced and manufactured and before that time, these early oil men had to devise such drilling tools on the rig in the field and then find a blacksmith or machinist to make them.

In 1903, Walter Fondren returned to Corsicana to marry the “prettiest girl in town”, Ella Florence Cochrum, and brought her to Houston to make their home. Mrs. Fondren was born in Hazel, Kentucky and had moved to Corsicana as a small child. When her father died, and left her mother with five sons and two daughters, she being the eldest daughter had to give up her schooling and remain at home to help her mother. Mrs. Fondren often reminisced about the hard work she did in those days, cooking, sewing and “fluffing up all those feather beds.” Her lack of education was always an irritation to her — she used to say, “Oh, I don’t know anything,” but her mind was bright and quick and reading was a favorite pastime even as she approached the age of one hundred with her eyesight dimming.

An interviewer from the Houston Chronicle on the occasion of Mrs. Fondren’s one hundredth birthday in May of 1980 reported, “As a new bride in the early twentieth century, Ella Fondren enjoyed many quiet moments smelling samples of sand and mud her husband would bring home from the oilfields. Mr. Fondren would say proudly, ‘She’s got the best nose for oil I’ve ever seen.’ ” Often acting on the advice of Mrs. Fondren’s instincts, Mr. Fondren went on to acquire
acres of oil production, primarily in the Humble field and later at Goose Creek when deeper oil sands were explored. Improvements in drilling methods resulted in ever-widening areas of production in North Texas and Oklahoma as well as on the Gulf coast. "Prosperous though he was, Fondren was still merely a drilling contractor and producer and was dependent on others for transportation and marketing," according to The History of the Humble Oil and Refining Company by Henrietta Larson and Kenneth Porter (1959). In attempting to escape from that dependence, he had joined with other small producers as early as 1905 to sell their crude oil directly to the railroads and other buyers and refiners. These efforts met with little success and in 1911, Mr. Fondren went in with the Sterling brothers to organize the Humble Oil Company. He had known the Sterling brothers (Ross, later to be Governor of Texas, and Frank) since Spindletop days and they had high regard for each other. Also stockholders and contributors of property to the fledgling company were William S. Farish and R. Lee Blaffer. They too had encountered what they considered unfair purchase agreements with the major refiners. Understandably, the larger companies would enforce contracts made at low prices during times of "flush" production even when the development of the automobile brought increased demand and high prices for crude oil.

Fondren was frequently called the "real oilman" of the group for he was generally recognized as the "leading driller" on the Gulf Coast in a day when the driller also served as production superintendent, petroleum engineer and even geologist. His assumption of control over operations on the coast inaugurated a series of triumphs... In a rough and frequently unscrupulous environment, he was distinguished for strict morality, absolute integrity, and personal generosity, and was universally popular with men in the field." (Larson and Porter)

Farish and Blaffer had met at Spindletop and combined forces to buy up leases and drill wells in the Humble field. Harry C. Wiess, a Beaumont lumberman, had organized Paraffine Oil Company and discovered the Batson field in 1903. "The usual story — flush production with the price falling from 60 to 8 cents a barrel, waste, salt-water flooding, and rapid depletion. The field produced nearly ten million barrels in 1904 and less than four million in 1905..." William Wiess later founded the Reliance Oil Company and hired the brothers Flynn from Bradford, Pennsylvania's oil fields to operate it. Harry Wiess graduated from Princeton in 1909 with a degree in civil engineering and soon became involved with his family's oil interests due to his father's failing health. After an apprenticeship with the Flysins in the field, he assumed management of the Reliance Company and as a result of the decline in Texas production moved into Oklahoma. After several setbacks, the Oklahoma leases were proven at approximately the same time that Blaffer and Farish were achieving success in North Texas at Burk Burnett, Iowa Park and Ranger. It was no longer so important for these independent producers to find oil as to find a market for it on favorable terms. In 1917, the Humble Oil and Refining Company was organized to provide a solution to that problem.

W. S. Farish in his association with R. L. Blaffer had become disillusioned with attempts to negotiate with refiners at Corsicana, Beaumont and Port Arthur, and after forming the unsuccessful Gulf Coast Oil Producers Association in 1916, set about to merge several independent producing companies into one corporation that would be large enough to bargain with the major pipeline and refining companies. "Personal friendships, business relations and co-operative action" with the Sterling-Fondren team, the Wiess interests and Farish and Blaffer confined the negotiations to those three groups, but Farish encountered difficulty in welding them into a unified entity. Finally, he convinced them that "the larger advantages of such an organization outweighed any differences as to details or personalities." Walter Fondren, in addition to his holdings in the Humble Company, contributed privately-owned drilling equipment and more oil property than any of the others, therefore receiving the largest share of the four million dollar capital stock.
“Oilfield gossip (in the years 1915 to 1917) held that he had more cash than anyone else in Houston. The orphan farm boy, through hard work, thrift, honesty and uncanny drilling skill, and probably some luck, had spun his original thirty cents into not far from half a million dollars” (Larson and Porter)

As Vice-President and Director of the new company until 1933, Walter Fondren, in charge of drilling in the Gulf Coast Division, was always open to new ideas and technological advances in drilling methods. He designed an improved rig for drilling core samples of small diameter in 1924 and was a nationally recognized authority on drilling equipment. He disliked the confinement of the office and preferred to work directly on the rigs with the men. W. B. Trammell recalls that Mr. Fondren enjoyed playing “pitch” out in the field, and that he was trusted completely by the men who knew he would take a personal interest in case of injury. “Mr. Fondren was not afraid to enter the “pest house” where those with fever were cared for, protecting himself by lighting a cigar and wrecking his head in smoke.” During the Depression, he gave “hundreds of handouts” to unemployed men and even loaned money to his old friend, Jesse H. Jones. Walter Fondren retired in 1933, at the same time W. S. Farish went to Standard Oil of New Jersey as president (Jersey Standard had owned 50% of the stock of Humble since 1919 but had never exercised control). Mr. Fondren was only fifty-six, but he had been in the oil business longer than anyone else on the Humble board. His “career in retrospect illustrates how far the oil industry in Texas had progressed in a few decades. He had grown with the industry from nearly the beginning of production in the first oil field in the state and through the Spindletop boom to early prominence. . . He had been a pioneer in rotary drilling and was in his day regarded as the outstanding driller on the Gulf Coast, with a greater knowledge of salt domes than any other man in Texas. . . . He was intelligent, open-minded and progressive. But, without engineering education, Fondren, the orphan boy who had gone to work in a sawmill at the age of 13, had yielded place to . . . young engineers and production executives until, while still in his prime, his duties had become those of only a director rather than an operator . . . his withdrawal from active business gave him more time for the religious and philanthropic interests which his great wealth enabled him to carry on. . . . His retirement marked for Humble the end of an era; he was the last of the early Spindletop drillers and the last director of the original Humble Oil Company to occupy a seat on the board of Humble Oil and Refining Company.” (Larson and Porter)

Mr. Fondren’s last years were by no means idle. He founded the Fondren Oil Company, was a vice-president of the National Bank of Commerce, of which Jesse H. Jones was principal stockholder and chairman, and in 1934 accepted the post of district director of the Federal Housing Administration to oversee the depression recovery program for housing in forty-one counties of Texas. He was a director and vice-president of the Y.M.C.A., active in Kiwanis Club, and, of greatest importance to him and Mrs. Fondren, served as Chairman of the Board of Stewards and The Building Committee of St. Paul’s Methodist Church, to which they both gave their time as well as their financial resources. He was a trustee of Southern Methodist University where the Fondren Lectures in religious thought had been established in 1919 and where, in 1938, Mr. and Mrs. Fondren had given $455,000 to build a library. Fortunately, he allowed time to enjoy duck hunting with his children and picnicking with his grandchildren out in the country near what is now Fondren Road in Southwest Houston.

However, Walter Fondren could have been characterized as a “workaholic” and his myriad of activities strained his health beyond its capacity. In January, 1939, while attending a Methodist Council meeting in San Antonio, he complained to Mrs. Fondren of fatigue and went to his hotel room for a nap before lunch. There he was found a short time later having suffered a fatal heart attack. Burial services at St. Paul’s and Glenwood Cemetery were attended by more than a thousand mourners, but were noteworthy for their simplicity and brevity as he would have wished.

The Christian stewardship of his wealth had been of deep concern to Walter Fondren and, after his death, his widow and children were entrusted with
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Fondren with children, Walter W. Jr., Catherine and Sue, on Rice campus, around 1920. (from Fondren Family Archives, Woodson Research Center)

The responsibility of implementing his wishes for its distribution. Without doubt Mr. and Mrs. Fondren's strong motivation to benefit institutions of higher learning was due to their own lack of schooling. Through the Methodist Church they had become deeply involved with Southern Methodist University and Mrs. Fondren became the first woman to serve on that Board of Trustees when she succeeded her husband. Both Sue and Catherine Fondren, however, were graduates of Rice and Mrs. Fondren always felt a strong allegiance to the "home town" Owls, occupying a seat in her box at Rice Stadium as often as she could. It also meant much to her that Mr. Fondren's former associate and the brilliant President of the Humble Oil and Refining Company, Harry C. Wiess, was Chairman of Rice Institute's Board of Trustees in 1946 and it was Mr. Wiess with whom she and her family discussed their great gift for a new library at Rice.

A letter from Mrs. Fondren read by Dr. William V. Houston, President of Rice at Commencement, 1946, when he announced the Fondren gift, said in part, "Because of our sincere interest in the Rice Institute, and its future success, Mr. Fondren and I were considering the matter of making some contribution to its program when our plans were interrupted by his untimely death." At homecoming in November of 1946, Mrs. Fondren received the Rice Alumni's highest award, the Distinguished Service Medal and Scroll, and spoke of the benefits her children had received as students at Rice through the beneficence of William Marsh Rice, and the "companion responsibilities...which made (us)...anxious to participate in the further expansion of this great school."

The dedication and opening of the Fondren Library at Rice took place in November, 1949, with a ceremony attended by Mrs. Fondren and her children. She received a silver key to the new building from President Houston following speeches by Dr. John Burchard, Dean of Humanities at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Dr. Claude Heaps, and Dr. William Dix, Librarian. Distinguished visitors toured the magnificent facility which was designed by Houston architects, Staub and Rather, to house 600,000 volumes. At that time, however, the University collection consisted of only 200,000 volumes. By 1968, the library was bursting at the seams and plans for a Graduate Research Addition were drawn up. Again, the Fondren family gave a million dollars — this time through the Fondren Foundation which had been established by the family in 1948.

Throughout the years, large sums had been bestowed on Methodist Hospital in Houston for new buildings, Southern Methodist University for a science building, Southwestern University at Georgetown for a science building, and Scarratt College in Nashville, Tennessee for an education building which bears Mrs. Fondren's name. The Methodist Home of Orphans in Waco was also a recipient of Fondren funds, and Time magazine of February 18, 1957 described Mrs. Fondren's annual visit there at Christmas, when she always brought a load of silver dollars for the children. Her pastor, the Reverend Dawson Bryan of St. Paul's Methodist Church in Houston, was quoted in the same article, "She attends more committee meetings than anyone I know. Why, it's only been a short time ago that she stopped going down to the church and helping out at functions. She used to roll up her sleeves, cook, wash dishes, do everything the other women did." Ella Fondren received every conceivable honor from the many institutions on which she lavished her time and money and was continuously embarrassed by the notice she received. One of her favorite habits was to make surprise announcements of intended gifts at the end of a meeting when the local press would not be in attendance. She was described by the Houston Chronicle in June of 1954 as the "poker-faced little lady with the big heart" but there were occasions during splendid awards ceremonies when she would admit to some difficulty controlling her emotions. She did not seem to feel that she had ever done anything special, only that she had merely done her duty as a trustee of God's gifts.

In Texas, the Fondren name will always epitomize the highest type of philanthropy — funds derived from the pre-eminent natural resource and industry of the state, wisely and conscientiously returned to its citizens to build health and education facilities for the benefit of generations. Rice University has indeed been fortunate to be among the recipients of the enlightened stewardship of Walter and Ella Fondren.
A RECENT ACQUISITION

David S. Azzolina

The Fondren library has recently received as a gift two very important geological works written by Bill St. John, Rice alumna and Friends of Fondren board member Kay Dobelman gave St. John’s Geology and Hydrocarbon Potential of Antarctica and his Sedimentary Basins of the World with its accompanying text to the library early this year. These works are valuable since they were not produced in large numbers and have significant scholarly content.

Bill St. John, a 1965 Ph.D. in geology from the University of Texas, has had a distinguished and varied career. During many years with Exxon, he worked in Africa, the Middle East and the North Sea. Since 1980, he has been president of Agri-Petco International, Inc., and now Primary Fuels, Inc. Articles by St. John have been published in professional geologic journals and have been written for both the advanced scientist and the layman interested in geology. The works donated to the Fondren display both these qualities. St. John’s work on Antarctica describes in great detail the energy-producing potential of the coldest continent and its surrounding marine environment. He begins with a general introduction to Antarctica, making sure the reader understands that it is a place environmentally unlike any other on earth. For instance, he writes, “Even offshore the continent is distinctive in form. The continental shelf has a mean width of 30 kilometers, compared to a global mean of 70 kilometers, and in some places does not exist at all.” On this foundation he is able to give us a complete view of the geo-physical and marine features of Antarctica and its adjacent tectonic plates. From here he provides litho-paleogeographic reconstructions—a geologic history. Many of the nineteen plates that are integral to this book are associated with this section. Other plates are titled “Geology and Bathymetry” and “Total Sediment Thickness.” The section devoted to the sedimentary basins of Antarctica will be immensely useful to the field geologist because of its detailed descriptions. Like the rest of his book, St. John’s conclusion is set in a geo-political context. Here, he rates the sedimentary basins for their potential and in a more general way he notes, “The problems [of exploration] will be formidable [but]...many...have been addressed.”

According to the Cambridge Encyclopedia of the Earth Sciences even in the earliest geological surveys the importance of geological maps was clear. “Indeed, geologists the world over now accepted that careful field mapping...was the most fundamental task of their science.” St. John’s Sedimentary Basins of the World is a distinguished heir of those early nineteenth century pioneers. Identifying 579 sedimentary basins with a clear system of color coding, he provides a method of determining their productivity. The accompanying twenty-four page text is organized by continent and helps illumine the exploration interest with statistical tables. To be used to the greatest advantage, text and map, therefore, need to be studied in tandem.

The Fondren Library is appreciative of such generous and useful gifts and is proud to have these works available to the Rice community.

Bill St John, left, shows his book, Geology and Hydrocarbon Potential of Antarctica to John Anderson, who is cited as a reference in the work, and Albert Bally, Chairman of geology department.

The Flyleaf Page 7
THE COMPUTER BRINGS EASIER ACCESS TO AXSON

Nancy Boothe Parker

Outstanding among the Woodson Research Center's holdings is the 5500-volume Axson Collection of eighteenth-century British plays. The collection is highly significant for scholarly research but, to date, Fondren Library has not been able to publish a checklist or bibliography. However, a world-wide project begun in 1977, the Eighteenth-Century Short-Title Catalogue, promises to achieve that goal (as well as others) by means of late twentieth-century technology. The ultimate products of ESTC will be a machine-readable database containing all relevant titles reported by the over three hundred participating libraries, a COM (computer output microform) catalog of those same titles, and a potentially endless variety of computer-printed, hard copy catalogs of any portion of the reported titles. The ESTC will be of immense value to scholars in all aspects of eighteenth-century studies, to bibliographers, and to rare book catalogers.

The Axson Collection is interesting from the point of view of its provenance and the circumstances of its acquisition. It was named for Stockton Axson, a brother-in-law of Woodrow Wilson and professor of English for many years at Princeton and later at Rice Institute. His first visit to the Rice campus took place in January, 1913, to deliver in the Faculty Chamber a series of lectures on English writers from Dickens to Chesterfield. He immediately won the hearts of culture-hungry Houstonians who flocked to hear him and who insisted that he extend the planned series of lectures from six to eight.

In May of that year, Dr. Axson announced that he was resigning after fourteen years on the Princeton faculty to become head of the English department at Rice the following year. After refusing offers from several prestigious universities, he made his decision and was quoted in the Daily Princetonian of May 31, 1913, "Education in the southwest is still in the process of developing, so that I shall be more or less of a pioneer in my work there. I feel that there is more opportunity for me to help the cause of education there than here in the east where there are plenty of excellent men to fill professors' chairs."

An editorial in the same day's Princetonian expressed the students' view of Dr. Axson. "To Princeton men, Mr. Axson typifies the ideal professor: an inspiration in our English course, a warm sympathetic friend and counselor — a man who has found the best things of this life, and whose pleasure it always has seemed was the imparting of this secret to his students."

Within a remarkably short time after his arrival in Houston, Axson had attained immense popularity among both Rice students and townspeople. In March of 1914, Houston alumni of Princeton honored him with a dinner attended by, among others, President Edgar Odell Lovett and Rice Trustee, William M. Rice II, nephew of the founder and a member of the Class of 1879 at Princeton. Just a year later, Professor Axson was honored at a dinner in the Rice Hotel "given by his admiring friends in warm appreciation of his decision to make Houston his permanent home."

Another manifestation of Axson's impressive popularity was the formation in 1917 of the Axson Club by a small group of Houston women with cultural aspirations. They decided that Houston's phenomenal growth and its potential for the future merited another literary club, and that this club should be named in honor of Dr. Axson. In addition to being an honorary member, he was to become the club's most frequent speaker. The group was successful in raising funds for several scholarships which are still being awarded to Rice women.

On campus Axson very quickly became a favorite professor; the 1919 Campanile featured him as a "faculty star" and the 1920 yearbook was dedicated to "Stockton Axson, whose scholarly attainments we are privileged to share; whose genial companionship is ours to enjoy." He held open house on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings for those students who could not get enough of him in class. According to the late Dr. Alan D. McKillop, Rice professor of English from 1921 to 1976, "—his work made a real difference to his students; it was not merely that he knew his literature, or that he was a past master of the art of lecturing; it was the total impact of his character and personality, the courtesy and urbanity that were not
of the surface but of the very center of his being, the profound respect for humanity that led him to see possibilities in the scrappiest undergraduate that ever trod the campus."

In November, 1934, Axson appealed to Rotary Club members to help Rice build a library, reminding them that "the primary purpose of Rice Institute is education rather than football teams." He continued, "You've seen Rice Institute grow from a mudhole to a beautiful forest land and exquisite buildings. I think Rice Institute has the loveliest college campus in America. The trouble is that it does not go far enough. You gentlemen probably will see to it that Rice Institute gets a stadium, but remember that the Institute has no library. While you are taking care of the stadium, don't forget the intellectual things."

Axson died of a cerebral hemorrhage at the age of sixty-seven. Headlines proclaimed that the city was shocked and that the entire nation mourned his death. The Houston Chronicle of February 27, 1935 printed "A Tribute to Doctor Axson." by Jesse H. Jones. "No man has lived in Houston during the past twenty years, if ever, who so endeared himself to our entire citizenship. . . He gave us something that no one else has ever given us. His influence, his gentleness of character, and his great scholarship will long be remembered. His greatness was accentuated by that rarest of all human traits, humility." After Axson's death, it was discovered that he had willed $8800 (a significant sum in 1935) to Miss Willa Boord, executive housekeeper of the Rice Hotel, who had cared for him as his health failed during the last nine years of his life. Only four years later, Miss Boord herself died, the $8800 unspent. Of that sum, her will stipulated that $5000 go to the Rice Institute as a memorial to Axson, to be spent as President Lovett and Jesse Jones deemed "fitting and proper." The remainder of the original sum Miss Boord left to Axson's sister and his niece.

As late as 1955, no suitable memorial had been decided upon, although Dr. Lovett and Mr. Jones agreed that a distinguished literary collection would be desirable. In the meantime, Miss Boord's bequest had grown to more than $7600. In December of 1955, Dr. McKillop learned that John Rothwell, a London bookseller, was offering for sale at $15,000 a collection of two thousand volumes of eighteenth-century British plays, one of Axson's areas of interest. McKillop asked Rice professor Carroll Camden, who was spending the summer in London, to examine the collection in detail to see if it lived up to its description. Camden reported his literary adventures connected with the acquisition in his May, 1956, talk to the Friends of Fondren Library.

"We [Dr. and Mrs. Camden] had a slight amount of difficulty in locating the address, chiefly because it turned out to be an apartment house instead of a bookshop. A further difficulty was encountered be-

cause the porter at that address had never heard the name of Rothwell. But while we were talking, a Mrs. Stock came in and informed us that her husband used the name Rothwell for his book dealings. She invited us up to her apartment, and there we found the collection displayed in bookcases covering three walls of a room. The books were chiefly bound separately in red and in half morocco — although some of the plays were bound together in old bindings. . . We were amazed and delighted both at the wealth of the collection and at the fine state of preservation in which we found them. . ."

Armed with the complete catalog of the collection, Camden prepared a brief listing which he sent post-haste to McKillop in Houston. The collection, in Dr. McKillop's expert opinion, was indeed worthwhile. Other American and English libraries were also very interested in the collection so the rest of Camden's communication with McKillop was by transatlantic cable. Dr. Lovett, who was by this time retired, and Jesse Jones approved the purchase; Jones, in fact, provided the near-matching funds necessary to buy the collection.

According to Camden, the Axson Collection contained fifty percent of all plays published in Great Britain between 1700 and 1800. He added that the range of plays in the collection included "tragedy, comedy, farce, opera, dramatic entertainment, comic

THE THREE CONJURORS,

A POLITICAL INTERLUDE.

Stolen from SHAKESPEARE.

As it was performed in London Place at Aylesbury.

On Saturday the 30th of April, and Sunday the 1st of May,

All here included to see, asphalt and other Gentlemen.

J O H N W I L K E S, E q i

Late Printer in the Tower, and late Colonel of the Militia

for the County of Buckingham,

B U T S T L L

Member of PARLIAMENT for AYLESBURY.

Sent all three went in — about

All fine weather — and fine out.

Churchill's Ghost.

L O N D O N:

Printed for E. CARK, in Avis-Mary-Lane.

This unusual Axson Collection play, a political satire
directed against Lord Bute (who figures as "MacBoote"),
has been reported to the ESTC Project.

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interlude, ballad opera, musical interlude, allegorical masque, musical drama, tragi-comedy, burletta, ballad farce, pastoral, droll, historical tragedy, operatic farce, comic opera, sacred drama, and dramatic novel." The strengths of the Axson Collection are its comprehensive scope and its continuity. The unnamed bibliographer who assembled the collection obviously knew the value of variants to a researcher tracing the evolution of a play through variations in text or typography. The majority of the Axson plays are represented in multiple editions, issues and states. An astute bibliographic detective may be able to pinpoint different printings of the same play because in later issues, the type for a particular letter may have eroded or been damaged in some way. In addition to technical differences, the study of several "states" of a play can bring to light the author's intellectual vagaries. A playwright in the eighteenth century might have strolled into the printshop, scanned the set type, and decided on the spur of the moment to change a word, a sentence or a paragraph. This delving into a writer's mind two centuries away in time can be an exciting occupation.

The collection also contains critical works, volumes of collected plays, foreign plays translated into English, and a number of eighteenth-century editions of seventeenth-century plays. Adding to the Axson Collection is one of the highest priorities of the Woodson Research Center. It is particularly satisfying to choose titles for this collection because there is a seemingly endless number of variants and because there is such a large price range to pick from. We can easily spend several hundred dollars on a first edition by one of the major playwrights, yet find a later edition for as little as $15 or $20. It is almost entirely through Gift and Memorial donations to the Friends of Fondren that we continue to build the collection.

Browsing along the Axson Collection shelves, we run into such familiar works as Joseph Addison's Cato; Susanna Centlivre's A Bold Stroke for a Wife; William Congreve's The Way of the World and The Double Dealer; John Gay's Beggar's Opera (forerunner of Gilbert and Sullivan's comic operas) and works of Garrick, Goldsmith, Sheridan and Wycherley among others. Most of the plays were performed contemporaneously and achieved great popularity, as one can see by reading the theater advertisements of London newspapers of that period. The appeal of these post- Restoration plays, many of which were delightfully bawdy, can be partly explained by the English public's eagerness to forget Cromwell's age of Puritanism.

The Eighteenth-Century Short-Title Catalogue was conceived as an Anglo-American project which would use recently-developed library applications of computer science to "bring up to the year 1800 the retrospective national bibliography of the English-speaking world." Massive in scope, the project includes eighteenth-century imprints in the British Isles, Colonial America, the United States, Canada, and British territories, in any language, as well as English-language imprints in any other part of the world.

The project began with the re-cataloging and conversion to machine-readable form of the approximately 300,000 eighteenth-century titles held by the British Library (formerly the British Museum). Other major British libraries, including the Cambridge University Library, the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and the John Rylands Library, Manchester University, followed suit. The North American component of ESTC, headquartered at Louisiana State University, began soliciting reports from United States and Canadian libraries in 1979. The Woodson Research Center staff began reporting in the summer of 1980; by August, 1981, all appropriate Axson titles had been reported, followed shortly by all other rare eighteenth-century titles.

By the end of 1981, two hundred North American libraries had submitted around 360,000 records. Titles are also being reported from Australia, New Zealand, and France. The last stage of the ESTC project will be the merging of all machine-readable tapes of records reported from all countries. In addition to detailed bibliographic descriptions of all titles reported, libraries holding those titles will be indicated by symbols. It is expected that the computer software would permit a printout of all or part of a given library's reported holdings. Thus by some time in 1985, we hope to have a computer-generated bibliography of the Axson Collection.
CURRENT EVENTS

NASA CEREMONY

We gasped in simultaneous shock and amusement as Astronaut Joseph P. Kerwin described the amount of paper accumulated in the course of putting a man in space as "easily reaching from the earth to the moon and back if formed into a chain." Was the Library going to have to deal with so overwhelming an amount of material? In his speech to the audience attending the Transfer Ceremony of the History Archive of the Johnson Space Center, Dr. Kerwin soon assured us that a great deal of systematic culling of the papers had been under way in order to prepare the material for transfer, and we all breathed a great deal easier. Kerwin went on to explain that the information contained in the collection constitutes at least four different stories: the first discusses the political setting as the project developed; the second deals with technological aspects, the third details management, and the fourth story is the actual execution of the missions.

The ceremony held on January 28, 1982 in the Rice Memorial Center marked the official transfer to Rice of records of manned space flight missions of the Mercury, Gemini, Apollo, Skylab and Apollo Soyuz test projects. The agreement made in April 1981 between Dr. Norman Hackerman, President of Rice University, and Dr. Christopher Kraft Jr., Director of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Lyndon Baines Johnson Space Center, represented the continuation of a long relationship between the two institutions. As the Thresher of February 5, 1982 reported, "In April, 1959, Rice became involved with NASA in a grant to study ionization phenomena in hypersonic wind tunnels. In 1961, Rice University donated the thousand-acre tract of university-owned land on which the Manned Spacecraft Center is located...on September 12, 1962 (at Rice Stadium), President John F. Kennedy announced his desire to put a man on the moon."

Specifically, the archival collection consists of working papers used by the astronauts, memoranda, Telex messages, reports, proposals, and other historical data. It will make available a significant body of material for research by scholars wishing to study the United States manned space program. Work is now under way in the Woodson Research Center to index and sort the papers, so that they will be easily accessible.

The Friends of Fondren Library and Dr. Samuel Carrington hosted the ceremony and the reception following. Over one hundred persons attended and enjoyed the stunning exhibits installed by Library Exhibits Chairman Daviess Menefee and his committee.

Librarian Samuel Carrington, on left, and Dr. Edward C. Ezell, the Historian at Johnson Space Center, hear address of Astronaut Joseph P. Kerwin.
MONTE CARLO PARTY

"Can the sound of jazz music be coming from the Library? Can those elegantly-attired persons be headed in that direction? What were those people doing on Friday hanging up mobiles in the Reserve Room and putting huge plants on top of the card catalogs?" The senior Legal Studies major had returned to campus a few days before the end of spring break to finish his thesis and, with these thoughts, came to the realization that, indeed, Something was Happening in the Library!

On Saturday, March 6, 1982, the Fondren did undergo a startling metamorphosis for "Fondren Saturday Night II — Monte Carlo Party." The combined efforts and contributions of many resulted in an overwhelming success, not only for 250 lively participants, but also in terms of the net profit for the Friends' Endowment Fund — almost $11,000. Expenses were kept to a minimum through such generosity as Spectrum Plants' loan of abundant tropical greenery, Robert Kuldell's Houston Society Jazz Combo which provided spirited background music as a gift to the Friends, and the Lovett College Alumni who served as croupiers and waitresses, putting to good use their collegiate experience with Lovett's traditional Casino Night. The Friends also benefited from Lovett's loan of their sturdy dice tables.

Russ Pitman, Chairman, was the hero of the evening, fielding all questions and finding no problem beyond solution. For weeks beforehand, he applied his campus expertise and strong back to each and every task without hesitation. John Cabaniss, equally generous with his time and legal advice, steered the program committee, whose names follow this article, through bi-monthly meetings for four months, bringing to each the benefits of his extensive research into various facets of the casino. Tom Smith, President of the Friends, continuously gave his wise counsel and encouragement, not to mention a wealth of ideas and the use of a Condo in Vail and a Day Sail on Galveston Bay to the Auction following the gaming. He also secured the services of Harris County Commissioner Jim Fonteno as Auctioneer who was of invaluable assistance in organizing and executing that part of the evening which brought in two-thirds of the profit.

The date for next year's Monte Carlo Party has been set for February 26, 1983 and the committee has high hopes of doubling the proceeds. An even better evening is promised for those who attended this year and another chance for many who were unable to do so. The Friends of Fondren Library extends its sincere appreciation to the following persons and organizations who contributed so much to the success of the occasion:

Harris County Commissioner Jim Fonteno
Robert Kuldell and his Houston Society Jazz Combo
Lovett College
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The Friends sponsor a gifts and memorials program for the Fondren Library, which provides their members and the community at large a way to remember or honor friends and relatives. It also provides the Fondren the means to acquire books and collections beyond the reach of its regular budget. All gifts to the Fondren through the Friends' gift program complement the library's university subsidy.

Funds donated through the Friends are acknowledged by the library to the donor and to whomever the donor indicates. Gifts can be designated in honor or memory of someone or on the occasion of some signal event such as birthdays, graduations or promotions. Bookplates are placed in volumes before they become part of the library's permanent collection.

For more information about the Friends' gift program, you may call Gifts and Memorials or the Friends' office (527-4022). Gifts may be sent to Friends of Fondren, Rice University, P.O. Box 1892, Houston, Texas, 77251, and qualify as charitable donations.

The Friends and the Fondren Library are grateful to acknowledge the following gifts, donations to the Friends' fund and donations of books, periodicals, and other materials to the Fondren. All gifts enhance the quality of the library's collection and enable the Fondren Library to serve more fully an ever-expanding university and Houston community.

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A FRIENDS’ DESIDERATA LIST

Collection development librarians in an academic library such as the Fondren are constantly confronted with an enormous range of possibilities in selecting titles for the library. Very often, purchase of reference volumes and long runs of periodicals which would greatly enhance the collection must be deferred in order to acquire even more important titles.

The following desiderata list includes a selection of desired items presently out of the reach of the Fondren Library book budget. Friends who would like to assist the library in acquiring these valuable research volumes may call the Friends of Fondren Office (527-4022).


Since the early 1800’s, Congressional committees have held hearings to consider legislation, to oversee government operations, and to explore issues of public concern. Although many libraries, including the Fondren, have made an effort to build comprehensive collections of hearings, there has never been a uniform or consistent index to hearings published prior to 1970. CIS is offering a multi-access index to this rich source of information which can be used with Fondren’s hardcopy/microfiche collection of the hearings. The complete set: $9720.00.

U.S. Statutes at Large. 1-86 (1789-1972).

This extensive set is desirable for two reasons — in order to fill in several gaps in the Fondren’s collection and to convert from hard copy to microform, thus saving space in the library. $2386.00 for a microform set.

Bibliographic Guide to Maps and Atlases. 1980-

Published by G. K. Hall, this guide lists publications cataloged during the past year by the Geography and Map Division of the Library of Congress and the Map Division of the New York Public Library. It is at present the only available separate index to cartographic literature. $95.00 (for the years 1980-81).

Classica et Medievalia $1500.00 for a complete set of 28 vols.

Encyclopedias Dantescas $300.00 for 6 vols.

Romanische Forschungen, 1883- . $5000.00 for vols. 1-78.

Wartelle, A. Bibliographie historique et critique de' Eschyle et de la Tragedie Grecque, 1518-1974. $245.00.

The four titles listed above are basic reference and scholarly research tools, highly useful for those engaged in the study of classics, medieval studies, and German literature.

The Annals of Cleveland, 7 vols. 1818-1876.

The Annals of Cleveland is a massive and perhaps unique project undertaken by the WPA which indexed and abstracted Cleveland newspapers from the mid-nineteenth century. It is now available in 7 vols. on microfiche, and offers a great deal of useful historical information on slavery, cultural life, and contemporary politics in this region of the Old Northwest. $210.00/vol.


The two titles listed above are invaluable aids for finding relevant information and citations quickly and efficiently.


A facsimile publication (by Johnson Reprint Corporation/Harcourt Brace Javanovich) featuring the highest standards of scholarship and craftsmanship. The original sheets of Leonardo’s work were cleaned and restored before being photographed for this project; after repeated tests for accuracy the photographs were converted into plates and printed in six or more colors on 100% rag paper. The two text volumes are bound in royal blue Nigerian goatskin by Zaehnsdorf Limited, London. The sheets themselves are cataloged in chronological order with commentary by Professor Carlo Pedretti of the University of California, Los Angeles. $8000.00.
Mrs. Walter Fondren with her children around 1912.
(from Fondren Family Archives, Woodson Research Center)
MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Friends of Fondren Library is open to all. The membership year usually follows the academic year—beginning in September—and is arranged on a rotating basis. Membership dues are as follows:

- **Contributor**: $25
- **Sponsor**: $50
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Members of the Friends will receive *The Flyleaf* and invitations to special programs and events sponsored by the Friends. In addition, members who are not already students, faculty, or staff of the university will receive library circulation privileges.

Checks for membership dues should be made out to the Friends of Fondren Library and should be mailed to Friends of Fondren, Rice University, P.O. Box 1892, Houston, Texas 77251, along with your preferred name and address listing and home and business phone numbers. Dues qualify as charitable donations. Dues, like donations to the gift fund, also help meet the Brown Foundation Challenge Grant which last year, in response to gifts to the university for current operating expenses, added nearly $2.5 million to the university’s permanent endowment. The same opportunity exists this year.