

Finding Aid

to the

Rice Family Papers

1838-1964

Kaua'i Historical Society

Lihue, Kaua'i, Hawaii

MS 7

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Rice Family Papers, 1838-1964
2 cubic feet (4 boxes)

Abstract

This collection includes original letters, typescript and photocopied letters, newspaper articles and a few photographs, donated to the Kauai Historical Society by Frederick Bruce Wichman. The earliest dated material is 1838, with the latest dated 1964. Some of the material is undated, or has had dates added at a later time. Many of the personal letters have had notes added by another person.

The majority of the material is letters, personal in nature, although there are a few letters relating to business as well as the politics of the day. The newspaper articles are obituaries, with the exception of a series of articles collected by Josephine Wundenberg King which are about shipwrecks. The few photographs are of family members, and of the Waterhouse residence on Nuuanu Street in Honolulu.

The material is arranged by family unit. The majority of the correspondence was between parents, children and grandchildren. Miscellaneous materials follow those of a more personal nature. The scope and content notes detail the arrangement of the folders.

Appendices to the finding aid include a few pages of the excellent genealogy of the Rice family entitled Descendants of William Harrison Rice and Mary Sophia Hyde Rice by Christine Faye, published in 1960, to assist the researcher in the use of this collection. A short history of the Rice family is also included below. Additional information about each of the family member is included in the Scope and Content area, and explanatory notes are included in the container list.

A Brief Biography of William Harrison Rice and Mary Sophia Rice

William Harrison Rice was born October 12, 1812, at Oswego, New York, the oldest son of Joseph and Sally Rice. He grew up on his father's farm in Oswego on the banks of Lake Ontario. In 1839 he applied for a teaching position at the Whitman mission to the Indians in Oregon and was accepted. However, in 1840 he attended the graduation ceremonies at Fulton Seminary, a school near Oswego, listened with pleasure to the young lady who gave the valedictorian address. Her name was Mary Sophia Hyde.

Mary Sophia Hyde was born at Seneca Village (now Buffalo) in New York on October 11, 1816 to Rev. Jabez Backus Hyde and Jerusha Aiken Hyde. Her father was a missionary to the Seneca Indians at Eden, New York. Her mother died when Mary was four. She was raised by her step-sister, Eunice.

William and Mary were attracted to one another, and on September 28, 1840 were married at her home in Eden, her father performing the ceremony. Two months later they boarded the ship Gloucester, setting out for the Oregon Territory. On May 21, 1841 they landed in Honolulu and were guests of missionaries Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Hall. The Halls had just returned from the Whitman Mission at Oregon, and told them of the very bad conditions in Oregon, and urged them not to continue their journey until more information could be received. (As it happened, the entire Whitman mission was massacred a few months later.)

The missionaries in Honolulu were delighted to have the Rices. After a short apprenticeship at Waialua, Oahu, they were sent to Hana, Maui, where they stayed from 1841-1844. Maria described their home there:

...beautiful for situation, a grass house of one room with one small window, in the yard of our kind associates, Rev. and Mrs. Conde, where we resided three years. Our life at Hana was wholly amongst the natives, our two families being the only white people within forty miles. We had a large veranda with a Dutch door leading to the dining room and the upper half was always open. Large companies of natives would come and sit on the veranda, often spending the whole day here.

While at Hana, William was away for two or three days at a time teaching in the schools. He built Hana Church which still stands with an added steeple. However the climate at Hana gave him frequent attacks of fever, and at last he became so ill that the Rices had to leave. They first went to Lahaina where Mary remained to await the birth of their second child. William went to the General Meeting in Honolulu and then to Punahou School to which the Rices had been assigned. Mary later joined him there, and here they stayed for the next ten years. Three of their children were born at Punahou.

William served as a teacher, oversaw the farm that provided food for the school, and in 1852 built what is now called the Old School Hall. On Sundays he devoted his time to teaching and preaching to the natives of Manoa and Kamoiliili, and in 1852, supervised the building of the stone church of Moiliili. Mary served as matron to the school, taught the younger children, repaired the children's clothes which occupied two days a week, and taught them how to sew and braid.

In 1854, because William's ill health and a need for a change, the Rices resigned from Punahou and the Mission. Judge Lee offered William the position of manager of the Lihue Sugar Plantation, which he accepted as a salary of \$400 a year. As this salary would not always be paid, he reluctantly consented to take stock in payment. It was the increase in the value of these shares of Lihue Plantation that enabled Mary the means which to accomplish so much good in her later life.

William's greatest achievement as plantation manager was the creation of an irrigation system that brought a plentiful supply of water from distant rivers to feed the cane. He engineered a ditch along hillsides and by tunnels through the ridges. Under his guidance, the plantation became profitable. In addition to his plantation work, he served as deacon to the foreign church. And the Hawaiian servants they had at Hana came with the Rices, first to Punahou and then to Kauai, where they died after twenty-five years of service.

William Harrison Rice died May 27, 1862 at Lihue, Kauai. The Reverend Daniel Dole who came to the Islands on the Gloucester with the Rices and was at Punahou when they were, said in a memorial to William:

Mr. Rice, the faithful missionary, the father and friend of the Hawaiians, the upright magistrate, the tried and trusted friend, the loving and revered husband and father, a pillar of the Foreign Church of Kauai, had finished his course, and many were weeping because they should see his face no more.

Mary survived her husband for 48 years. Throughout these years, she continued her work for the church and her help to others, not just the Hawaiians, but to all the races.

Her first four years she resided with her oldest child, Hannah Maria, who had married the new manager of Lihue Plantation, Paul Isenberg. After Hannah's death in 1867, Mary accompanied the Isenberg children around Cape Horn to Germany where she left them with relatives. She returned by way of New York and visited her daughter Emily de la Vergne at Clinton, Missouri. Here, her daughter Mary died in 1870.

In 1871, she filled the position of matron at Mills Seminary, Benicia, California, where she was greatly beloved. But this was a temporary position. Later she made her home in turn with her son, William, and her two daughters, Emily de la Vergne and Anna Cooke; and afterwards, her granddaughter, Mary Dorothea Isenberg.

Mary Sophia Rice died May 25, 1911 at Lihue, at the age of 94. In her will, she provided for the Mary S. Rice Estate, a charitable trust, that continues to help those of all races.

The graves of Mary Sophia and William Harrison Rice are in the Lihue Public Cemetery which is off Wehe Road at Lihue, Kauai.

The above information is from: Koamalu: A Story of Pioneers on Kauai and of What They Build in That Island Garden by Ethel M. Damon; Mr. Dole's Report, Read June 4th, 1863, by Rev. D. Dole; A Brief Biography of William Harrison and Mary Sophia Rice by Frederick Bruce Wichman, and Mother Rice (author unknown). This information also appears in the preface to the book entitled: Descendents of William Harrison Rice and Mary Sophia Hyde Rice.

Scope and Content

The material is arranged in the following order:

the Rice papers include materials from William Harrison Rice and Mary Sophia Hyde Rice, their children and grandchildren;

the Waterhouse section includes materials from Mary Waterhouse and her family. She married William Hyde Rice, son of William Harrison and Mary Sophia Hyde Rice;

the next collection of materials are those of Josephine Wundenberg King, the mother of Grace Ethel King, who married Charles Atwood Rice, son William Hyde Rice and his wife Mary Waterhouse Rice; and

the final group of materials is related to Juliet, daughter of Charles Atwood Rice and Grace Ethel King, and her husband Frederick Warren Wichman.

The Rice records begin with the correspondence of William Harrison Rice (1813-1862) and his wife, Mary Sophia Hyde Rice (1816-1911). (They had five children -- this archive contains items from all except for their fourth child, Mary Sophia Rice (1853-1870).) Their correspondence is mainly to their grandchildren, though there are a few letters to their first child, Maria. The records are arranged in the same order as the birth of their children, and include material for their spouses and their children. Therefore, Hannah Maria Rice (1841-1867) and her husband Paul Heinrich Friedrich Carl Isenberg (1837-1903) and their children (Mary Dorothea Rice Isenberg and Daniel Paul Rice Isenberg) make up the second part of this section; followed by items from the second child, Emily Dole Rice de la Vergne (1844-1911). The largest part of the record are materials for their third child, William Hyde Rice (1846-1924) and his wife, Mary Waterhouse Rice (1847-1933), and contains a few items for two of their children, Charles Atwood Rice (1876-1964) and Philip LaVergne Rice (1886-1974). Finally, a few records are included for their youngest child, Anna Charlotte Rice Cooke (1853-1934).

The Waterhouse records begin with a family history and genealogy. Included are a few items from Mary Waterhouse Rice's grandfather and parents, as well as a few items concerning her brother Henry and his daughter. Mary Waterhouse began genealogical research into her family and those items are also included in this set of files, along with additional items received by other family members.

The papers of Josephine Wundenberg King (1848-1925) are arranged in chronological order. While a great deal of material exists in the file for her early life, there is little information about her husband, Thomas J. King. Their daughter, Grace Ethel King (1880-1940) married Charles Atwood Rice (1876-1964), the son of William Hyde Rice (1846-1924) and Mary Waterhouse Rice (1847-1933). Charles Atwood and Grace Ethel Rice's daughter, Juliet, married Frederick Warren Wichman (1892-1973), which brings us to the final section of this archive.

The Wichman section includes two manuscripts of Frederick Warren Wichman (1892-1973), as well as his daily journal for 1932. Materials for Juliet Atwood Rice Wichman (1901-1987) include a series of materials related to a Hawaiian Garden Display that took place in New York City in 1949. A few miscellaneous records complete this section.

The finding aid has appendices that will aid the researcher with the complex genealogy involved with these records. These include 8 pages of the Descendants of William Harrison Rice and Mary Sophia Hyde Rice, by Christine Faye published in 1960, as well as several other items. Explanatory notes are included in the container list.

William Harrison Rice (1813-1862) and his wife **Mary Sophia Hyde Rice** (1866-1911) were the parents of five children during the 1840s-early 1850s. The only letters we have written by William Harrison Rice are those to his daughter, Hannah Maria, called Maria. Of interest is an item written by **Mary Sophia Hyde Rice** entitled "Reminiscences of William Harrison Rice by his Wife", a hand-bound booklet, undated. **Mary Sophia Hyde Rice** carried on extensive correspondence with many family members, and some of her letters are included herein. One letter is addressed to her daughter, Maria, and includes a photograph that has become adhered to the paper of the letter over the years. Additional letters went sent to granddaughters Dora (Mary Dorothea Rice Isenberg) and Alice Theodora Cooke, and grandson Willie Henry Rice. Some of the letters that Mary Sophia Hyde Rice wrote to granddaughter Dora are included in a handbound volume, included in the materials listed below. While there are a few letters at the end of this group addressed to Mary Sophia Hyde Rice, those written to her by her immediate family members are included in the folders that follow.

Hannah Maria Rice Isenberg (1842-1867) called Maria. The first child of William & Mary Rice, Maria lived only 25 years. She married **Paul Heinrich Friedrich Isenberg** (1837-1903) and had two children, Dora and Paul. This file contains a great deal of correspondence between **Mary Sophia Hyde Rice** and Maria – it appears these letters were gathered together and keep in the same file, as the fading patterns are identical on much of the material. Also included are notes that Maria wrote to her daughter, while Grandmother Rice was taking care of the Dora. After Maria died, **Paul Heinrich Friedrich Isenberg** (1837-1903) married Beta Glade, and a correspondence developed between Beta and Mary Sophia Rice, even extending to the children of this second marriage.

Mary Dorothea Rice Isenberg (1862-1949) called Dora. The daughter of Maria & Paul Isenberg, she married **Hans Friedrich Wilhelm Isenberg** (1855-1918) in 1883. He was the pastor of the Lihue German (Lutheran) Church from 1882 until his death in 1918. His certificate of completion of theological studies is included in this file, as well as copy of his memorial service. The archive includes a large number of letters Dora wrote to Mary Sophia Hyde Rice during a trip the couple made around the world in 1908-1909.

Few items are included for Dora's brother, **Daniel Paul Rice Isenberg** (1866-1919). His file includes a description of his recollection of the funeral procession of King Edward in London, 1912. This is a transcribed copy.

Emily Dole Rice de la Vergne (1844-1911), was the second child of William & Mary Sophia Hyde Rice. A few items early childhood items are included in this record.

William Hyde Rice (1846-1924) and his wife, **Mary Waterhouse Rice** (1847-1933) were married for 52 years before his death in 1924, and had 8 children. Included is correspondence they had with **William Henry Rice** (1874-1945) their oldest child, as well as with **Mary Sophia Hyde Rice**, mother and mother-in-law. Also included are a group of letters from William to Paul Isenberg, and seven letters he wrote to "Friend Sam" during the period April 19 – August 3, 1889 (all transcribed). A few letters written by or to their children, **Charles Atwood Rice** (1876-1964) and **Philip LaVergne Rice** (1886-1974) are included herein. Mary Waterhouse Rice was interested in the genealogy of the Waterhouse family and additional materials are included in a later section of this archive that centers on her family.

Anna Charlotte Rice Cooke (1853-1934) was the youngest child of William and Mary Sophia Hyde Rice. This record includes two letters she wrote to her Mother, and one to Beta Glade Isenberg.

The **Waterhouse Family** records begin with a family history, and a genealogy, author not known. This material gives us background to Mary Waterhouse's ancestry – her Grandfather was **John Waterhouse** (1789-1842) a missionary in Tasmania where Mary was born, and her father **John Thomas Waterhouse** (1816-1895) became a successful merchant in Honolulu. Included in the file are pictures of the Waterhouse home on Nuuanu Street in Honolulu, along with a descriptive narrative. This section also

includes a great deal of genealogical information received by letters of request that Mary Waterhouse Rice sent to various family members, and additional materials gathered after her death in 1933 by other relatives.

Josephine Wundenberg King (1848-1925) has an extensive file, most especially about her years as a young lady in Honolulu. Her father, Godfrey F. Wundenberg, was involved in cultivation of coffee in Hanalei in the 1840s, where Josephine was born and spent her early years. We do not have any correspondence between Josephine, called Phina by some of her family and friends, and her parents, or her husband, Thomas James King. Of interest are childhood manuscripts written by **Anna S. Wundenberg (Wright)** entitled "The Hanalei Valley" and a poem written by the same author much later in her life, entitled "Our Childhood Homes in Hanalei Valley, Kauai". In 1863 the family moved to Honolulu, when G.F. Wundenberg was appointed treasurer of the Kingdom under King Kamahameha V. Josephine married **Thomas James King**, and their daughter **Grace Ethel King** (1880-1940) became the wife of **Charles Atwood Rice** (1876-1964). Their daughter, **Juliet Atwood Rice** (1901-1987) married **Frederick Warren Wichman** (1892-1973). This record contains no correspondence of Thomas James King and only a few letters written to Grace Ethel King Rice and to Charles Atwood Rice. There is an interesting collection of 8 newspaper clippings collected by Josephine Wundenberg King during the years 1860 through 1903, almost all include articles about shipwrecks in the Hawaiian Islands. Also included in this collection is a lecture by Rev. L.H. Gulick on the Marshall Islands.

The **Frederick Warren Wichman** (1892-1973) file includes two manuscripts, one on the Legislature of 1932, and another entitled "Hawaii Becomes American", which includes a set of notes prepared as a finding aid to the manuscript. There is also a daily diary for 1932. After serving two terms as Representative in the Territorial House during the 1930s, Wichman moved to Oregon where he spent the remainder of his life in the livestock business, first as the owner of the Haycreek Ranch, one of the world's largest livestock operations, and later on a smaller ranch. We do not have any correspondence for either Frederick Warren Wichman, or his wife, Juliet. **Juliet Atwood Rice Wichman** (1901-1987) was involved in the Hawaii Garden Display at the Rockefeller Center on July 1, 1949. There are both photographs and newspaper articles about this event, as well as a few letters addressed to Juliet Rice Wichman. Juliet Rice Wichman is well known as the founder of the Kaua'i Museum, as well as the Hawaii Branch of the American Red Cross, president of the Kauai Historical Society during the 1950s, and an author and botanist, very actively involved with the National Tropical Botanical Gardens.

A correspondence between **Katherine C. Hulme** and **Mary Kawena Pukui** rounds out this final part of the archive. These letters are dated during the summer of 1964. These letters are about the travelling chants from a visit by **Queen Emma** to the Alkakai Swamp in 1871. Copies of the chants and their English translations are included, along with a copy of an article authored by **Katherine C. Hulme**, which appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1964, entitled "The Timeless Kauai Swamp". (**Katherine C. Hulme** was a long-time friend of **Juliet Atwood Rice Wichman**.)