

May 12, 1979

Dear Faculty Member:

You will have noticed in the April 24th issue of The Thresher that an effort is underway to document the crisis over the appointment and resignation of Dr. William Masterson as President of Rice. Source materials are being collected for ultimate use in scholarly assessments of these events as Rice history, and in the broader context of academic social change.

To forward these purposes, will you please give to the University Archives any documentary material which you may have acquired? Photographs, letters, diaries, and the like, are in order. We can make copies if desired.

Our second request is for your cooperation in a program of tape recorded interviews about your involvement in, and/or reactions to, the Masterson-centered events. The device of recorded interviews, usually called oral history, is becoming a common practice for documenting events which are inadequately reflected in written records.

In both collection of documents and in the recorded interviews, careful precautions have been taken to assure confidentiality and scholarly integrity. All recorded interviews will be closed to everyone, including directors of the project, until October 1974, and further restrictions may be imposed by the interviewee. The assembled materials will be retained in the vault of the University Archives, located in the Research Center of the Fondren. The interviewer, Miss Polly Moore, is a graduate student in history at the University of Houston, and the typist who transcribes from the recording tape is similarly selected from outside the Rice community; both are responsible, mature persons who are fully aware of the need for discretion.

The project is directed by Professors Joseph Cooper and Harold Hyman, and Richard Lytle, University Archivist; Professor Frank Vandiver, originally involved in the project, has retired from active participation since his appointment as Acting President. Professor Louis Starr, Director of the Columbia University Oral History Office, is a consultant. The project is funded by the Center for Research in Social Change and Economic Development.

To contribute memoirs or documents, to arrange for an interview, or to request more information, please call Richard Lytle at extension 304.

Sincerely,

Joseph Cooper, Department of Political Science
Harold Hyman, Department of History
Richard Lytle, University Archivist