

# Guide to the Rice Family Papers

MS 415



compiled by Diane E. Kaplan William E. Brown, Jr. and Paul Papali

March 1986

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
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**CALL NUMBER:** MS 415

**CREATOR:** Rice family

**TITLE:** Rice family papers

**DATES:** 1810-1916

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 17 linear feet (38 boxes, 1 folio)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The papers include correspondence, photographs, and writings which document the daily lives of the immediate family of John Rice and the activities of various members of the Blake and Seely families. Extensive correspondence concerns the construction and furnishing of the family home in Tarrytown, New York; of residences, travel, and schooling in California and Europe; and student life and teaching at the Sedgwick School, Yale University, Williams College, Acadia University, and Smith College.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0415>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0415>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to [http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr\\_copy\\_order.html](http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html). The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Maude B. Dickerman, 1950.

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## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

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## Preferred Citation

Rice Family Papers (MS 415). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

The Rice family includes the immediate family of John Rice (1831-1897), who was born in Worthington, Massachusetts, and was a businessman in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Albany, New York; and Atlanta, Georgia, before retiring to Santa Barbara, California, and Europe. He married Eliza Maria Blake Seely (b. 1841) in 1872. She was the daughter of Eli Whitney Blake of New Haven, Connecticut, the widow of John Frank Seely, and mother of Edward B. Seely, who became an architect in San Francisco, California. Following John Rice's death in Berlin, Eliza Rice became a housemother at Smith College. John and Eliza Rice had two children: Eliza Maria O'Brien (b. 1876), an instructor in German at Smith College, and John Pierrepont (1879-1941), a graduate of Yale College (B.A. 1900, M.A. 1901, Ph.D. 1909) who taught romance languages at Williams College, Acadia University, and the University of Buffalo.

JOHN PIERREPONT RICE, B.A. 1900, 1879-1941.

Born March 22, 1879, in New York City.

Died December 24, 1941, in Buffalo, NY

Father, John Rice, member Rice & Rising, wholesale druggists, Milwaukee, Wis.; son of Colonel William Rice and Wealthy (Cottrell) Rice of Worthington, Mass. Mother, Eliza Maria Blake Seely Rice; daughter of Eli Whitney Blake, LL.D. (B.A. 1816), and Eliza Maria (O'Brien) Blake. Yale relatives include: Eli Whitney (B.A. 1792) (great-great-uncle); Edward S. Blake (B.A. 1835) (great-uncle); George Bushnell (B.A. 1842), Alexander MacWhorter (B.A. 1842), Charles T. Blake (B.A. 1847), Henry T. Blake (B.A. 1848), Arthur D. Osborne (B.A. 1848), George Augustus Blake (ex-1854), Eli W. Blake (B.A. 1857), Edward F. Blake (B.A. 1858), and James P. Blake (B.A. 1862) (uncles); Edward B. Seely, ex-'86 (half brother); and George E. Bushnell, '76, Thomas B. Osborne, '81, Arthur S. Osborne, '82, Edward Blake, '84 S., Henry W. Blake, '86 S., James K. Blake, '91 (cousins); James Pierpont, Fellow of Yale College 1701-1714, was an ancestor.

Prepared in Berlin and Geneva and at Sedgwick School, Great Barrington, Mass. Oration appointment Junior year, high oration appointment and one-year honors in English Senior year; member Book and Bond.

Registered Yale Graduate School 1900-1909 (M.A. 1901, Ph.D. 1909: instructor in German 1903-1904 and French 1903-1909); studied and traveled abroad 1909-1910; instructor in French Williams College 1910-1911 and Romance Languages 1911-1912; assistant professor of Romance Languages 1913-1924; professor of French Acadia University 1912-1913; professor and head of department of Romance Languages University of Buffalo 1924-1941; visiting professor Yale-in-China, Changsha, 1919-1920; Westinghouse lecturer at universities in Italy 1929-1930; associated with Massawippi Summer School, North Hatley, Province of Quebec, from about 1911 to 1927; contributed to *Hispanic Anthology* (1920); corresponding member

Hispanic Society of America; member Dante Society (Cambridge, Mass.), Italy America Society, Dante League of America (honorary vice-president), American Association of University Professors, Modern Language Association of America, Medieval Academy of America, American Association of Teachers of French, and American Association of Teachers of Italian.

Married July 8, 1914, in Northampton, Mass., Ethel Manter Pool (B.A. Barnard 1903; M.A. Columbia 1905), daughter of Joseph and Harriet Ely (Redington) Pool. No children.

Death due to carcinoma. Buried in Old Cemetery, Worthington. Survived by wife and a sister, Elizabeth Rice (B.A. Smith Coll. 1920) of Easthampton, Mass.

From: *Yale University Obituary Record, 1940-1943*

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## Scope and Contents

The Rice Family Papers include correspondence, photographs, and writings which document the daily lives of the immediate family of John Rice, a businessman living in retirement in Santa Barbara, California and Europe. The extensive correspondence between Rice, his wife Eliza Blake Seely Rice, stepson Edward Blake Seely, and children Eliza Maria O'Brien Rice (known as Lily) and John Pierrepont Rice details the building of a family home in Tarrytown, New York; residences, travel, and schooling in California, Europe, and Latin America; the study and teaching of romance languages, and student life and teaching at several colleges and private schools. Also included is material concerning the lives of other Blake, Seely, and Rice family members.

The papers, which were donated to the library by Maude B. Dickerman in 1950, are arranged in two series:

I. CORRESPONDENCE, 1810-1916

II. MISCELLANEA, 1863-1912

The overwhelming majority of material is contained in Series I, which includes exchanges between family members who were constant and methodical correspondents. Family members wrote each other three or four letters per week and at some periods wrote each other daily. Family members, who were often separated by great distances, wrote what they termed "journal letters" in which they made diary-like records of their activities, health, weather, and acquaintances. These letters are lengthy, some numbering forty pages. Series II includes writings on the history of the family, photographs, and other items of personal family papers.

Series I is arranged in two sections: General and Select. General contains occasional letters addressed to the various family members from friends and relatives, while Select includes the more extensive intra-family correspondence. Some items in the General section are cited as enclosures in letters in the Select section.

General includes the oldest letters in the papers; in folder 55 there are 1810 and 1816 exchanges of Henry O'Brien. Folder 62 contains several items relating to James C. Rice, a Civil War general killed in battle and a brother of John Rice, while folder 63 includes letters of his wife Josephine Thorpe Rice written while accompanying her husband during the war. John Rice's business interests are represented by a few orders to A. McClure & Co., a family wholesale drug enterprise, while correspondence with the Perkinses in folder 58 concerns family real estate in Santa Barbara. Other correspondents include Yale friends of John Pierrepont Rice: Henry Seidel Canby, Alice Cheney, Helen Fox, and Mason Trowbridge; Smith College students for whom Eliza Maria Rice was a housemother; colleagues writing letters of recommendation for John Pierrepont Rice; and friends extending, condolences on the death of John Rice.

Letters in Select are organized by author: Eliza Maria Blake Rice, Eliza Maria O'Brien Rice (Lily), John Rice, John Pierrepont Rice, Edward Blake Seely, and his wife Daisy Farr Seely. Letters by each author are further arranged chronologically by recipient; recipients include these same six family members as well as members of the Blake family. Correspondence addressed to Blake family members is organized under the heading "Other". Thus letters by Eliza Rice to her son are found in folders 101-198, while letters from John Pierrepont Rice to his mother are found in folders 312-377. The letters as a whole give an extremely detailed picture of Rice family life.

Before 1891 the intra-family correspondence is sporadic, intense at dates, but non-existent at others. Letters from Edward Seely to his Blake relatives give his youthful impressions of life in the South, where he lived from 1872-1873 with his mother and new stepfather. Letters between Eliza and John from 1878 to 1879 describe the construction and furnishing of a family home in Tarrytown, New York (\*), while letters in 1882 and 1883 to Blake relatives describe the decision to move to California for health reasons.

From 1891 on the exchanges between immediate family members become steady; the Rice family moved to Europe and both children were placed in private schools in Geneva while their parents visited France, Italy, and Switzerland. The children's letters describe school life and their parents write of various travels. The family eventually settled in Berlin, but in 1895 John Pierrepont Rice returned to America to attend the Sedgwick School in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, and then to enter the Yale College Class of 1900. In 1897 Lily also returned to New England to work in the German Department of Smith College. Their letters describe student life at their respective schools. John Rice had hoped for an appointment to the consulate in Berlin, and folder 309 contains letters of reference for him. Letters in 1897 tell of his disappointment over not being named by President McKinley and then of his strokes, the second one being fatal. Eliza Rice returned to the United States in 1898 and worked as a housemother, first at the Parental School in West Roxbury, Massachusetts, and then at Albright House at Smith College. Her letters, through the rest of the section describe her life in West Roxbury and Northampton and her vacations. Lily's letters concern her life at Smith, time spent teaching at a private school near Santa Barbara, work at Talbot House of Miss Capen's School in Northampton, and her other travels. John Pierrepont Rice's letters portray his life as a graduate student of romance languages at Yale from 1900 to 1909. He describes cultural life in New Haven, studies, tutoring, and social life involving friends Alice Cheney, Henry Seidel Canby, Frederick Clapp, and Mason Trowbridge. His 1901, 1904, and 1909-1910 letters describe travel and study in Europe, while a trip to the Caribbean and Venezuela is detailed in 1903 letters. The letters of 1912 concern John Pierrepont's life in Nova Scotia while teaching at Acadia University, and there are similar letters from 1910-1911 and 1915 describing life at Williams College. Letters from several summers concern Rice's teaching at the Massawippi Summer School in North Hatley, Quebec.

(\*) Some plans for this house can be found in folio I.

At the end of the section are letters from Edward Blake Seely (Ned) and his wife Daisy. Most of these date from Ned's residence from the 1890s on in California, where he had joined the office of architect Clinton Day in San Francisco as a draughtsman. The letters tell of economic hard times, his long engagement, the births and lives of three children, and in 1906 of the destructive earthquake that shook San Francisco.

Throughout the CORRESPONDENCE series there are numerous picture post-cards depicting scenes from New Haven, Northampton, Williamstown, California, and Canada, as well as from travels in Europe, New England, New York, eastern Canada, and California. Family photographs will be found enclosed in letters in folders 150, 164, 165, 168, 180, 249, 271, and 413.

Series II, MISCELLANEA, includes additional photographs, as well as information on family history in the form of sketches written by John Rice for John Pierrepont Rice. An 1863 "diary" includes only printed obituaries and tributes to James C. Rice, while an 1883 diary contains very scattered entries by Eliza Seely Rice then in California. There are three folders of unidentified portraits (folders 423-425), while the photo album contains landscapes of New Hampshire. The last four folders include additional postcards, family correspondence, and memorabilia.

Additional Rice family correspondence is included in the Blake Family Papers.

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## Arrangement

Arranged in two series: I. Correspondence, 1810-1916. II. Miscellanea, 1863-1912.

## Collection Contents

### Series I: CORRESPONDENCE, 1810-1916

This series contains correspondence arranged in two sections: General and Select.

General files are arranged alphabetically by the name of the correspondent.

Select files are arranged alphabetically by the author of the letter. Letters for each author are arranged alphabetically by the name of the recipient.

#### General

b. 1, f. 1-11	A - Blake, H
b. 2, f. 12-23	Blake, I - Co
b. 3, f. 24-33	Cr - Gi
b. 4, f. 34-44	Gi - Ku
b. 5, f. 45-56	L - Os
b. 6, f. 57-68	Pa - Se
b. 7, f. 69-79	Sh - Tr
b. 8, f. 80-85	Tu - Z

#### Select

##### Rice, Eliza Maria Blake

b. 8, f. 86-91	Rice, Eliza Maria O'Brien	1891-1911, undated
b. 9, f. 92-100	Rice, John	1874 September - 1892, Dec, undated

##### Rice, John Pierrepont

b. 9, f. 101-104	1891 - 1893	1891 - 1893
b. 10, f. 105-115	1895 January - 1900 March	1895 January - 1900 March
b. 11, f. 116-127	1900 April - 1901 December	1900 April - 1901 December
b. 12, f. 128-139	1902 January - 1903 October	1902 January - 1903 October
b. 13, f. 140-152	1903 November - 1905 November	1903 November - 1905 November
b. 14, f. 153-165	1905 November - 1907 October	1905 November - 1907 October

Select &gt; Rice, Eliza Maria Blake &gt; Rice, John Pierrepont (continued)

b. 15, f. 166-178	1907 October - 1910 April	1907 October - 1910 April
b. 16, f. 179-191	1910 April - 1911 November	1910 April - 1911 November
b. 17, f. 192-198	1911 November - 1912 November, undated	1911 November - 1912 November, undated
b. 17, f. 199-200	Rice, John Pierrepont and Eliza Maria O'Brien	1891-1904
b. 17, f. 201-202	Seely, Edward Blake	1874-1891
	Other	
b. 18, f. 203	Blake, Eli Whitney and Eliza, O'Brien	1863-1885
b. 18, f. 204	Blake, Harriet Stiles	1862-1887
b. 18, f. 205	Blake, George	1847
b. 18, f. 205	Blake, Henry and Elizabeth	1882-1908
b. 18, f. 206	Bushnell, Mary Blake	1890-1898
b. 18, f. 207	Hazard, Ada and Barclay	1890-1891
b. 18, f. 208	Orcott, Frances and John	1866-1892
b. 18, f. 208	Osborne, Frances and Arthur	1884-1898
b. 18, f. 209	McWhorter, Henrietta Blake	1885-1897, undated
b. 18, f. 210-211	Unidentified, fragments	undated
	Rice, Eliza Maria O'Brien	
	Rice, Eliza Maria	
b. 18, f. 212-215	1883-1897	1883-1897
b. 19, f. 216-227	1898 January - 1901 November	1898 January - 1901 November
b. 20, f. 228-240	1901 December - 1904 August	1901 December - 1904 August
b. 21, f. 241-252	1904 September - 1907 November	1904 September - 1907 November
b. 22, f. 253-263	1907 December - 1913, undated	1907 December - 1913, undated
b. 23, f. 264-266	Rice, John	1880-1897, undated



Select &gt; Rice, Eliza Maria O'Brien (continued)

b. 23, f. 267	Rice, John and Eliza Maria	1891-1897
	Rice, John Pierrepont	
b. 23, f. 268-274	1891-1900	1891-1900
b. 24, f. 275-286	1901 January - 1911	1901 January - 1911
b. 25, f. 287-288	1912, undated	1912, undated
b. 25, f. 289-290	Rice, John Pierrepont and Eliza Maria	1899 January - 1909 Jul, undated
b. 25, f. 291	Others	1883-1903, undated
b. 25, f. 292-293	Unidentified	1883-1904, undated
	Rice, John	
b. 25, f. 294	Blake, Eli Whitney	1883-1885
b. 25, f. 295-297	Rice, Eliza maria	1882-1892
b. 26, f. 298-299	Rice, Eliza Maria	1892-1895
b. 26, f. 300	Rice, Eliza Maria, O'Brien	1891-1897
b. 26, f. 301-307	Rice, John Pierrepont	1890-1897
	Rice, John	
b. 26, f. 308	Seely, Edward Blake	1881-1882
b. 27, f. 309	Recommendations as Consul at Berlin	1896-1897
b. 27, f. 310-311	Other fragments	1870-1897, undated
	Rice, John Pierrepont	
	Rice, Eliza Maria	
b. 27, f. 312-319	1890 - 1898	1890 - 1898
b. 28, f. 320-330	1899 - 1903 July	1899 - 1903 July
b. 29, f. 331-341	1903 September - 1905 December	1903 September - 1905 December
b. 30, f. 342-352	1906 January - 1908 December	1906 January - 1908 December
b. 31, f. 353-363	1908 - 1910 December	1908 - 1910 December

Select &gt; Rice, John Pierrepont &gt; Rice, Eliza Maria (continued)

b. 32, f. 364-375	1911 January - 1916 September	1911 January - 1916 September
b. 33, f. 376-377	undated	undated
b. 33, f. 378-387	Rice, Eliza Maria and Eliza Maria O'Brien	1898-1912
b. 34, f. 388-394	Rice, Eliza Maria O'Brien	1891-1913, undated
b. 34, f. 395-399	Rice, John	1891-1897, undated
b. 35, f. 400-405	Rice, John and Eliza Maria	1891-1897, undated
b. 35, f. 406	No folder	
b. 35, f. 407	Others, Fragments	1882-1903, undated
	Seely, Edward Blake	
b. 35, f. 408-410	Rice, Eliza Maria	1882-1912, undated
b. 35, f. 411	Rice, Eliza Maria O'Brien	1890-1907, undated
b. 35, f. 412	Others	1872-1902
	Seely, Daisy Farr	
b. 36, f. 413-415	Rice, Eliza Maria	1895-1911, undated
b. 36, f. 416-417	Others	1882-1911

**Series II: MISCELLANEA, 1863-1912**

This series contains material arranged alphabetically by the name of the individual. Files for each individual are arranged alphabetically by record type and/or topic.

	Blake, Eli Whitney	
b. 37, f. 418	In Memoriam	1895
	Rice, John	
	See also: Folio I	
b. 37, f. 419	Family sketches	undated
b. 37, f. 420	Historical sketches	undated
b. 37, f. 421-422	Diaries	1863, 1883
b. 37, f. 423-425	Photographs	undated
b. 37, f. 426	Photo album	undated
b. 38, f. 427	Pierpont family genealogy	undated
b. 39b. 38, f. 428-431	Miscellanea See also: Box 39	1873-1912

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## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### Subjects

Architecture, Domestic -- Designs and plans  
Educators  
Families  
Literature -- History and criticism  
Private schools  
Romance languages -- Study and teaching  
Voyages and travels  
Women

Sedgwick School (Great Barrington, Mass.)  
Smith College  
Williams College  
Yale College (1887- ). Class of 1900  
Yale University -- Faculty  
Yale University -- Graduate Students  
Yale University -- Students

### Geographic Names

California  
Europe -- Description and travel  
Latin America -- Description and travel  
New Haven (Conn.)  
Northampton (Mass.)  
Nova Scotia  
Santa Barbara (Calif.)  
Tarrytown (N.Y.)

### Genres / Formats

Photoprints  
Postcards

### Names

Canby, Henry Seidel, 1878-1961  
Clapp, Frederick Mortimer, 1879-1969  
Rice, Eliza Maria O'Brien, b. 1876  
Rice, Eliza Maria Seely, b. 1841  
Rice, John, 1831-1897  
Rice, John Pierrepont  
Seely, Edward Blake  
Trowbridge, Mason

### Families

Blake family  
Rice family

### Corporate Bodies

Acadia University