"The Trail of Life in the Middle Years," 1934
MC.975.07.054
Finding aid prepared by Kara Flynn

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# Summary Information

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<th>Repository</th>
<th>Haverford College Quaker &amp; Special Collections</th>
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<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>Jones, Rufus Matthew, 1863-1948</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>&quot;The Trail of Life in the Middle Years&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>1934</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extent</td>
<td>0.16 Linear feet</td>
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**Preferred Citation**

"The Trail of Life in the Middle Years" (MC.975.07.054), Quaker & Special Collections, Haverford College, Haverford, PA.
Biographical note

Rufus Matthew Jones was born on January 25, 1863 in South China, Maine. His parents were Edwin and Mary Gifford Hoxie Jones. Their family had been Quakers, and he was brought up in a spartan and religious household. By his own estimate, Jones was deeply influenced as a child by his Aunt Peace Jones for her life of Quaker homily and, as a young man, the spirituality and philosophical powers of oratory and discourse of his other aunt and uncle, the ministers Eli and Sybil Jones. He attended Oak Grove Seminary, later Moses Brown School, and then Haverford College, where he received a B.A. in history in 1885. He wrote his senior thesis "Mysticism and its Exponents" under Prof. Pliny Earle Chase. After graduation, he taught Greek, Latin, German, surveying, astronomy, and zoology at Oakwood Seminary from 1885-1886 and received an M.A. from Haverford in 1886. He went abroad in 1886-87 with his friend Charles Jacob to study German and philosophy at Heidelberg University and to visit Ellen Claire Pearsall in Scotland, though he had been offered the position of principal at Damascus Academy in Ohio. During a month in France, he had a mystical experience in the bosky environment of Dieu le Fit during which he realized his life's work was in the realm of mystical religion. During his years of study of mysticism, he developed criteria by which the objectivity of a mystical experience might be verified.

Jones visited Karl Schmidt and Paul Sabatier and attended the University of Heidelberg where he studied with Kuno Fischer and decided to study philosophy.

Upon his return, Jones received a teaching post at Providence Friends School. There he met George Barton (Haverford 1882), who became his close friend. He remained at Providence from 1887-89.

In 1888, Rufus Jones married Sarah Coutant. In that year, he wrote the biography of his uncle and aunt, Eli and Sybil Jones.

From 1889-1893, Jones served as principal at Oak Grove Seminary. In 1890, he was recorded a minister at South China, ME Monthly Meeting and Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting.

Lowell Coutant Jones was born in 1892.

In 1893, Rufus Jones simultaneously was made editor of Friends Review and began his 41-year teaching career in philosophy at Haverford College. At the magazine, he set forth his ideas of salvation as a transformation of life rather than theological transaction. He had a tolerant attitude toward all the current Quaker factions and emphasized a thinking ministry.

In 1894, Friends Review merged with the “pastoral” Christian Worker to become the American Friend with Rufus Jones as Editor.

In 1897, Jones went to England, Italy, Ireland and Switzerland where he met various English Friends, including John Wilhelm Rowntree. He attended London Yearly Meeting, went to Oxford with Thomas Hodgkin, and went to Switzerland with Rendel Harris.

Sarah C. Jones died of tuberculosis in 1899. Rufus Jones declined an offer of the presidency of Earlham. He had determined his mission was to unite all the Yearly Meetings in America. “Shall there be a Central Body”? was his presentation at the Indianapolis Quinquennial Conference in 1897. He worked on this
statement with James Wood (“most weighty Friend in America”), and finished and published in 1900 the Uniform Discipline by which: birthright membership discontinued; employment of pastors was provided for; and vote rather than consensus of delegates, as well as statement of belief.

In 1898, he became a trustee of Bryn Mawr College upon the death of James Carey Thomas and was also elected to Haverford's #BK.

In this period, summer schools on Quakerism were established. This was the result of the Manchester Conference in 1895 which demanded of Friends that they become involved in the work of the world with greater knowledge of their own heritage and analysis of the Bible through scientific eyes and to deal with social questions and social needs. It may be said that the long range result of this same conference was the AFSC.

Rufus Jones became engaged to Ellen Wood; Wood died in 1900 of typhoid fever. Jones published A Dynamic Faith in which he explored “religious mysticism [as] an attempt to realize the presence of God in the soul.”

In 1900-1901, he attended Harvard to study under Josiah Royce, George Palmer and George Santayana and had hoped to study under William James though the latter was not there in this period.

In the summer of 1901, he was in England with his son Lowell and stayed with J.W. Rowntree. He lectured at Scarborough Summer School and became friends with Joan Mary Fry, Arnold Rowntree (John Wilhelm Rowntree's cousin), and Violet Hodgkin.

Woodbrooke was established for the study of Quakerism and its principalship was offered to Jones. In July of 1902, soon after Rufus Jones married Elizabeth Bartram Cadbury, he went to England to consider the proposition, decided against the post, but agreed to be there for the opening during which time Lowell died.

Rufus Jones looked for “the more” in people (more than what they were); also incorporated Kant's philosophy that consciousness depends on God rather than God on consciousness and Barclay’s notion that the inner light was not a foreign implantation causing duality in man, but of one, active not passive dwelling. The test is not only one of life-results, but by spirit in many men -- a sharing in a wider spiritual order.

In 1904, Rufus and Elizabeth Jones' daughter, Mary Hoxie, was born and John Wilhelm Rowntree died. Rufus Jones wanted to continue his history of Quakerism as an evolution in a series of volumes with himself as editor and writer of several volumes along with William Charles Braithwaite.

He was lecturing a great deal and convincing audiences of “modern thought” and living religion.

In 1907, he was again in England to study at the Bodleian; he gave the first Swarthmore lecture and finished Studies in Mystical Religion which was published in 1909.

Jones denounced hysteria (visions, trances, auditions, etc.). He believed ecstasy a false trail. As Elizabeth Gray Vining stated “Not ecstasy, but an enhanced and unified personality and increased energy to carry out God's purposes in the world were to him the hallmarks of the mystical experience,” while Jones expressed it as “the power of the experience of the Divine Presence among the members.”
In 1911, he was in Germany, visiting with Theodor Sippell whom he had met formerly. Sippell postulated that Casper Schwenkfeld was the intellectual forebear of the Westmoreland Seekers whose thoughts later impressed George Fox.

In 1912, Jones relinquished the editorial post with the American Friend, but in 1914, he became the editor of Present Day Papers, a monthly journal for the presentation of vital and spiritual Christianity (for England and the U.S.), but international publication became too complicated with the outbreak of war, so it ceased in 1915.

Rufus Jones suffered a concussion in 1914 as well as a drain on his physical and emotional condition. He and Elizabeth Jones built a cottage at South China, ME, named Pendle Hill after the place where George Fox had his vision.

In 1915, Jones helped to start the Fellowship of Reconciliation with Henry Hodgkin. Jones became chairman of the Board of Bryn Mawr College in 1916 and maintained a close relationship with M. Carey Thomas. He attended the All-Friends Conference in London in 1920 to discuss fundamental problems of war and peace from a Quaker perspective. On the conference eve, he gave the Swarthmore Lecture on “Nature and Authority of Conscience.”

In 1917, Rufus Jones investigated the concept of alternative service and organized the Emergency Unit at Haverford College providing students with a course of physical hardening and a training in mechanics and agricultural skills for volunteer work. Jones' idea of relief work in France was approved and this was the absolute beginning of the American Friends Service Committee. Morris E. Leeds and J. Henry Scattergood were the first to go to France. Some were appointed to go to Russia. Rufus Jones became the first chairman of the AFSC. The relief work was in the categories of medicine, agriculture, relief, and building and reconstruction. Jones made a follow-up trip to France after armistice and worked with others on reconstruction. He wrote a history of this period of the American Friends Service Committee, A Service of Love in War Time.

In 1919, Hoover suggested that the AFSC take over the childfeeding program in Germany. 40,000 Germans assisted in the preparation of food for 1,000,000 children daily.

In 1921, Jones published the last two volumes in the Quaker History series Later Periods of Quakerism.

In 1921, Jones went to Germany to inspect needs, then to Poland Austria. He negotiated to get the AFSC into Russia for child feeding by joining with Hoover's American Relief Administration which ran into problems because of Hoover's anti-Communist leanings and because of the destruction of Russian transport systems during the war with the result that food remained loaded on ships in the harbor.

In 1922, Rufus Jones received honorary LL.Ds. from Swarthmore and Haverford Colleges. In 1923, he was struck by an automobile, but in recovery, felt an increase in vitality and had a mystical experience. He also went to Greece, well-read in its history and then to Constantinople, Damascus, Ramallah, Jerusalem, Cairo (where he saw Rendel Harris), Rome and Oxford (where he worked on The Church's Debt to Heretics).

In 1926, he was scheduled to give the quadrennial lecture of the National Council (Y.M.C.A.) in China. He also was in Japan and visited with Japanese Quakers, speaking also with Viscount Shibusawa on Nippon-American relations. His lectures, published as Religion and Life, gave the basic structure of his philosophy. In China he was in Tai-Shan (where he saw Henry Hodgkin for retreat and study),
then Peking where he met with Wellington Koo and met the Chinese Cabinet. He also met with ex-premier W.W. Yen; then on to Tientsiu, Nanking, Lingnan where he visited with his brother-in-law, William Warder Cadbury, proceeding on to Manila, Singapore, Ceylon and India. In India, he met with Mahatma Gandhi, who, Jones reported, was acquainted with the Bible, but knew little of Quakerism. Jones described Gandhi as sincere and simple, very Hindu. He proposed to Gandhi that he visit China. Jones saw India not as a land of mysticism (or immediate personal discovery of God) and he saw Gandhi as not being catholic in his religious immersion; but later, he acknowledged that India possessed the knowledge that the soul is the eternally important fact.

In 1928, Jones retired as chair of AFSC and the committee itself was divided into four sections: foreign, interracial, peace and home service. The latter worked for miners. Henry J. Cadbury became the chair of AFSC and Clarence Pickett, executive secretary.

In 1929, Jones gave the “New Era Lectures” at the University of Southern California School of Religion; he also lectured at Harvard and in Athens during a trip that took him from London to Greece and Assisi. Rufus Jones wrote a paper in 1929 in which he spoke of the need for better training of missionaries, so they would have a wider vision in their work.

In 1930, Pendle Hill, an adult Quaker study center established in 1928, opened for religious and social studies with Henry Hodgkin as its first director.

In 1932, Jones traveled to Asia. At the same time, Japanese were invading China. The Joneses moved through devastated areas and reached Hong Kong, then went to Japan and Honolulu. A member of the Laymens Foreign Mission Inquiry, the group published Rethinking Missions as a result of their inspections and analyses. Essentially, the work stated that missionaries should be acquainted with the country in which they are proselytizing.

Rufus Jones retired from teaching at Haverford College in 1934. He went to England, giving lectures at Woodbrooke, Copenhagen, Germany, Prague, London, Ireland, Strasbourg, Berlin, Vienna, Italy, France, Switzerland and researched 14th century mystics along the way.

He was named editor of the Great Issues of Life series, but the war ended this project.

Jones recognized the meaning of mysticism through reading Emerson, through his mystical experiences at Dieu-le-Fit and prior to his son, Lowell's, death, proclaiming “quiet mystical receptivity,” i.e. without event, its measurement on a scale from simple awareness to rapt consciousness. He suggested that mysticism not the whole of religion which has full intellectual involvement. Thus for Jones, the definition of mysticism was the conviction of an individual that the human spirit and Divine spirit have met. There are two types of mysticism: negative or denying of self; and Jones' type, affirmative or union with God without loss of personality. The mark of the affirmative mystic is a transformed personality, radiance, vitality, and energy. Jones distrusted ecstasy as a symptom of hysteria and abnormality. He thought of George Fox as an affirmative mystic. He believed mysticism flourished best in groups.

In 1935, Jones again became chair of AFSC and sought to help Jewish refugees. He was also presiding clerk of Five Years Meeting.
In 1936, he resigned as chair, but remained on the Bryn Mawr College Board of Trustees. He still gave plenty of lectures at age 73. He met with Theodore Dreiser (at Dreiser's request) as AFSC gave aid in Spain and Dreiser wanted a committee set up of prominent citizens to provide civilian relief in Spain.

Jones was interested in bringing together people attracted to Quakerism and its philosophy, but who were not members of a Quaker meeting. This resulted in Wider Quaker Fellowship and, in 1936, the American Friends Fellowship Council.

Jones presided at the second Friends World Conference held at Swarthmore College in 1937.

In 1938, Jones was invited to South Africa by South African Quakers. He traveled to Capetown to meet with members of that meeting and also of Johannesburg and other South African meetings. He met with Senator Reinhault Jones who represented non-European races in Parliament and Gen. Jan Christian Smuts, minister of Justice and Deputy Prime Minister. Jones lectured at all the universities there, then went on to Singapore and Canton, Shanghai and Tokyo.

After the Day of Broken Glass (Kristallnacht) in Germany (Nov. 9 & 10, 1938), a special refugee division of AFSC was established. Three men were chosen to analyze the situation in Germany. These were Rufus M. Jones, D. Robert Yarnall, a businessman, and George Walton, principal of George School. Discretion was overturned by a newspaper account of their venture. The AFSC had already opened a refugee center in Berlin. The three men visited Jewish leader Wilfred Israel who reiterated that emigration was vital, much more so than food relief. They saw Consul General Raymond Geist who promised to assist them. They saw Myron Taylor, head of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees in London, who agreed with their plan. Geist arranged for their meeting with assistants of Heydrich, the real head of the Secret Police and “hangman” in charge of Dachau. After their presentation, the assistants conferred with Heydrich and he granted them investigation of “sufferings of Jews and to bring such relief as they see necessary.” Unfortunately, their effort brought no such results.

In the 1940s RMJ wrote and spoke extensively, mainly interpreting the Quaker stand on war and peace. He received the Philadelphia Award in 1939 and the Theodore Roosevelt Award for distinguished service in 1942. In 1945, he was made honorary chairman of AFSC to raise money to feed German children.

In 1947, General Meeting between the Hicksite and Orthodox branches of Quakers was established. Already the meetings had united their committees on peace, social order, race relations, but not discipline or finance.

In 1948, Jones organized a meeting of religious Christian leaders who would communicate with Palestinian religious leaders to somehow call an end to the fighting in the Middle East. An appeal was signed and sent to the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem and head of the Supreme Moslem Council. The former answered with approval; the latter thought the appeal was pro-Jewish.

Before his death in 1948, a Rufus Jones chair of philosophy and religion was established at Haverford. Among his numerous achievements were the publication of more than 50 monographs; within 7 years of his death, the Hicksite and Orthodox Quaker branches in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting achieved unification.

(Biographical information from Elizabeth Gray Vining's *Friend of life; the biography of Rufus M. Jones.* Philadelphia: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious
Scope and Content note

This collection is comprised of the single volume, handwritten manuscript of Rufus M. Jones, entitled "The Trail of Life in the Middle Years." This manuscript is the third volume in an autobiographical series, of which the two preceding volumes were: "Finding the Trail of Life," and "The Trail of Life in College." The narrative begins in the year 1893, when Jones became the editor of "The Friends Review" and began teaching philosophy at Haverford College. In it, he discusses the state of the Society of Friends at the time, and discusses his personal reconciliation of past Quaker separations, particularly during his time as the editor of "The Friends Review."

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections October 2015

Use Restrictions

Standard Federal Copyright Law Applies (U.S. Title 17).

Acquisition

"The Trail of Life in the Middle Years" was donated to Quaker & Special Collections, Haverford College, in 1934 by Rufus M. Jones.

Processing Information

Processed by Kara Flynn; completed October 2015.

Related Materials
Related Materials

- MC 950.130 Naomi and Rayner Kelsey papers
- MC 1130 Rufus Matthew Jones papers

Controlled Access Headings

Genre(s)

- Autobiographies
- Manuscripts

Subject(s)

- Quakers
- Quakers--Pennsylvania
## Collection Inventory

| Manuscript 1934 |