

# “Building for a life-time of research”

## Letters of Alfred Kinsey and Ralph Voris

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After the Indiana University zoology professor Alfred Kinsey published his first book of human sex research, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, in 1948, his correspondence became immense. And after *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* was published in 1953, he could barely keep up with the number of people who wanted his advice, endorsement, and thoughts on sexual behavior.<sup>1</sup> Other correspondents wanted to praise or to condemn his work, and still others shared sexual narratives with him, offered him sex-related materials such as artwork and films, or wanted to contribute their own sexual histories to his project. There are approximately seventy thousand letters in the Alfred C. Kinsey Correspondence Collection at the Kinsey Institute Archives in Bloomington, and only a small portion of them date from the period before Kinsey began his sex research in earnest. The letters between Kinsey (1894–1956) and one of his graduate students, Ralph Voris (1902–1940), are a rich source of information for understanding

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<sup>1</sup>Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia, Pa., 1948); Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy, Clyde E. Martin, and Paul H. Gebhard, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (Philadelphia, Pa., 1953).

Kinsey's biological research and his transition from studying gall wasps to studying human sexuality.

The letters between Kinsey and Voris demonstrate Kinsey's scientific background, training, and priorities. Kinsey learned the art of insect taxonomy from William Morton Wheeler, his graduate adviser at Harvard University's Bussey Institution. Kinsey's graduate school notebook shows how he learned from Wheeler (a committed field naturalist) the techniques of classification and speciation, or how to decide what characteristics in a group of specimens should delineate species.<sup>2</sup> Kinsey chose the genus *Cynips* for his dissertation and early research, in part because it was relatively understudied in comparison to other insect genera, and he could make significant contributions to speciation within it. Kinsey also came to believe strongly, as Wheeler did, that scientific research should be based primarily on observation and on the results of in-house breeding. At the same time, Kinsey absorbed Wheeler's profound dislike of laboratory genetics, which the senior man considered artificial and wrongheaded. He originally agreed with his adviser that evolutionary research should not be based on genetic manipulation of insects themselves, though he would soften his position on laboratory research somewhat in the 1930s.<sup>3</sup>

Kinsey published the three chapters of his dissertation and additional gall wasp-related articles during the 1920s. His first book-length text, "Gall Wasp Genus *Cynips*," printed in 1929, was the most thorough revision of the genus *Cynips* to date, and it was the book that Voris received with enthusiasm in the first letter reproduced below. As taxonomers like Kinsey collected and described specimens in lightly or poorly studied genera, they decided which specimens indicated new species and which were examples, subspecies, or variations of existing species. Then, as more specimens were available, taxonomers could dis-

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<sup>2</sup>Alfred C. Kinsey, "Lecture Notes of William Morton Wheeler's Course in Entomology [1917-1919]," series I.I.2, box 1, Alfred C. Kinsey Collection, Kinsey Institute Archives, Bloomington, Indiana. For a detailed analysis of taxonomy in the first half of the twentieth century, and of how taxonomic practice can be periodized, see Robert E. Kohler, *All Creatures: Naturalists, Collectors, and Biodiversity, 1850-1950* (Princeton, N.J., 2006), 227-52, esp. 239-45.

<sup>3</sup>Alfred C. Kinsey, "Studies of Gall Wasps (Cynipidae, Hymenoptera)," p. 4, Sc.D. diss., Harvard University, 1919, series I.D.1, box 1, Kinsey Collection; Mary Alice Evans and Howard Ensign Evans, *William Morton Wheeler, Biologist* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), 164-65. See Robert E. Kohler, *Lords of the Fly: Drosophila Genetics and the Experimental Life* (Chicago, 1994).



Alfred Kinsey inspecting insect galls, c. 1930.

Courtesy of the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction, Inc.

cover errors in earlier understandings of certain species and could publish revisions and updates of them.<sup>4</sup>

As Kinsey wrote to Voris throughout the 1930s, he was working on his second book-length study of the genus *Cynips*, which included both genera revisions and descriptions of new species. As that work progressed, Kinsey thought that he had discovered new ways of understanding evolution. In his second and last book on gall wasps, *Origin of Higher Categories in Cynips* (1936), he advocated reconfiguring the standard two-dimensional, uni-directional Darwinian tree of life into “an infrequently dividing chain in which the oldest species may remain coexistent with all of the derived species.”<sup>5</sup> He also argued against exper-

<sup>4</sup>Alfred C. Kinsey, “The Gall Wasp Genus *Cynips*: A Study in the Origin of Species,” *Indiana University Studies*, 84–86 (June, September, December 1929). On the techniques of speciation and their relationship to collecting practices, see Kohler, *All Creatures*, 228–36.

<sup>5</sup>Alfred C. Kinsey, *The Origin of Higher Categories in Cynips* (Bloomington, Ind., 1936), 60.

imental laboratory-based genetics and paleontology supplanting taxonomic research on the processes of evolution. Not all species—including gall wasps—could be bred in laboratories, and so it was necessary to continue collecting specimens in the field, in addition to breeding in-house in order to determine evolutionary patterns. Kinsey's students would learn to esteem observation over laboratory experimentation as they trained to become zoologists.

Ralph Voris was, at first, an inauspicious addition to the Indiana University (IU) graduate student body. He arrived in Bloomington, Indiana, in 1924 after receiving a bachelor's degree from Southwestern College in Winfield, Kansas. He finished his doctorate in zoology on the taxonomy of staphylinid beetles in 1928. Kinsey and Voris often took insect gathering trips together, and Kinsey taught Voris the processes of collection, organization, and description of species. Kinsey also instructed Voris and his other graduate students, as Wheeler had instructed him, in the art of drawing insect morphology. After Voris completed his dissertation, he took a position teaching biology at Southwest Missouri State Teacher's College (now Missouri State University) in Springfield.

The letters reprinted below begin when Kinsey was a decade into establishing himself in the intellectual world of evolutionary research and was mentoring Voris, his first advisee. They show that Kinsey encouraged Voris to work harder on the staphylinid beetles, in part so that Voris could make a name for himself, and in part because Kinsey wanted to see if his evolutionary ideas held for a different insect genus. Voris never published more than a few articles, due to some extent to his significant teaching responsibilities at an underfunded state teacher's college. He remained at Southwest Missouri State until his death from heart failure in 1940.<sup>6</sup> One letter of his is included below to provide a sense of his voice.

Biographer James H. Jones has suggested, using anonymous interviews as a source, that the relationship between Kinsey and Voris was sexual.<sup>7</sup> Their letters occasionally mention sexual techniques or erotic texts, and Kinsey describes seeing a burlesque show in one of the letters reproduced below. There is no other evidence that Kinsey and Voris were anything more than colleagues and friends who discussed sex with each

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<sup>6</sup>[Alfred C. Kinsey?], "Ralph Voris," c. 1940, typescript, folder 1, Ralph Voris File, Alfred C. Kinsey Correspondence Collection, Kinsey Institute Archives.

<sup>7</sup>James H. Jones, *Alfred C. Kinsey: A Public/Private Life* (New York, 1997), 272.

other. As Kinsey's interest in studying sexual behavior scientifically grew, the mention of sex in his letters became more about his findings than about his own experiences.

The letters from Kinsey to Voris, along with one letter from former graduate student Herman Spieth addressed to Voris and the "Soaks" (Kinsey's other former graduate students), demonstrate that Kinsey's defense of taxonomic research at the expense of laboratory genetics did not elicit strong support in the evolutionary science community, as he claimed to Voris. While Kinsey bragged to Voris about the good reception he received from his fellow evolutionary scientists for *Origin of Higher Categories in Cynips*, Spieth wrote to Voris that Kinsey's work had not been well received by Spieth's working group at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. In the late 1930s, evolutionary scientists were beginning to synthesize taxonomy, genetics, and paleontology. That blending of methods and fields—which became the intellectual movement known as the modern or evolutionary synthesis—ran contrary to Kinsey's long-time prioritization of taxonomy and observation.<sup>8</sup>

While Kinsey continued to publish his gall wasp research until 1942, he never again resumed it with the same level of time and attention after commencing his human sex research.<sup>9</sup> In one letter, he told Voris about some size correlations between the body parts of the same species collected in the same locations after a ten-year time difference, but he did not pursue those findings. He also never published on the genus *Xystoteras* as he told Voris he would. While his taxonomic training and knowledge of evolution were evident in his sex research, he did not return to full-time evolutionary studies after beginning his work on human sexuality. As the evolutionary synthesis developed through the mid-1940s, there was little room for pure taxonomers who were not

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<sup>8</sup>The scholarship on the evolutionary synthesis is growing. For examples, see Joe Cain and Michael Ruse, eds., *Descended from Darwin: Insights into the History of Evolutionary Studies, 1900–1970*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 99, part 1 (Philadelphia, Pa., 2009); Joe Cain, "Rethinking the Synthesis Period in Evolutionary Studies," *Journal of the History of Biology*, 42 (November 2009), 621–48; Alan C. Love, "Marine Invertebrates, Model Organisms, and the Modern Synthesis: Epistemic Values, Evo-Devo, and Exclusion," *Theory of Biosciences*, 148 (2009), 19–42; Vassiliki Betty Smocovitis, *Unifying Biology: The Evolutionary Synthesis and Evolutionary Biology* (Princeton, N.J., 1996); Joseph Allen Cain, "Common Problems and Cooperative Solutions: Organizational Activity in Evolutionary Biology, 1936–1947," *Isis*, 84 (March 1993), 1–25.

<sup>9</sup>Alfred C. Kinsey, "Seasonal Factors in Gall Wasp Distribution," *Biological Symposia*, 6 (1942), 167–87; Alfred C. Kinsey, "Isolating Mechanisms in Gall Wasps," *ibid.*, 251–69.

interested in pursuing laboratory-based genetic research.<sup>10</sup> Kinsey valued his own methodology too highly to accede to that of evolutionary science and compromise his intensive focus on taxonomic, observation-based scientific methods. The Voris correspondence suggests that Kinsey's shift in research focus was due in part to his discovery of an open field for research—human sexuality—in which he could utilize his favored method of scholarship.

These letters are an excellent source for Kinsey's thoughts as he transitioned to human sex research. Kinsey did not write an autobiography, and these personal letters to Voris show Kinsey's increasing enthusiasm for and interest in sex research between 1938 and 1940. They narrate his journey from co-teaching a marriage course at IU, to discovering that students were willing to talk to him about their sex lives, to finding that others—particularly members of homosexual communities in Chicago—would talk to him about their sex lives in-depth as well. Kinsey's growing excitement about the possibilities of his sex research is clear, especially as he began to interview men and women outside of Bloomington. Aside from Voris, Kinsey had no other correspondents whom he trusted with personal thoughts on his research. He made no other reflections of equal depth and intimacy about his work that survive.

Following Voris's death, Kinsey took custody of his book and beetle collections, at Geraldine's request. He sold the books, and donated the insects to the Illinois State Natural History Survey Division three months before his own death. He and Geraldine continued sporadic correspondence through 1956.<sup>11</sup> She returned to Kinsey the letters that he had written to her husband, and thus provided this unique and useful resource for understanding Kinsey's transition from entomological to sexological research.

#### A NOTE ON THE SCOPE OF THE COLLECTION AND ON EDITING

Voris's file in the Kinsey Correspondence Collection has 166 total pieces. There are 132 letters between Kinsey and Ralph Voris. The remaining 34 pieces are letters between Kinsey and Geraldine Voris (before and after Ralph's death), letters from those interested in buying

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<sup>10</sup>Cain, "Common Problems and Cooperative Solutions," 18–19.

<sup>11</sup>Alfred C. Kinsey to Geraldine Voris, September 14, 1940; Kinsey to Geraldine Voris, October 9, 1940; Kinsey to Geraldine Voris, May 11, 1956; all folder 2, Voris File.

Ralph's beetle collection, and letters between Voris and his friends. The selections below cover eleven years of the sixteen-year correspondence between Kinsey and Voris in the file (1930–1940). Spelling and typing errors are left intact and followed by [sic]. Some paragraphs or sentences were removed when discussing internal matters at Southwest Missouri State. Points of clarification are included in brackets or footnotes. Parentheses are in the original documents.

March 19, 1930

Dear Dr. Kinsey:

Did I get it ["The Gall Wasp Genus *Cynips*"]! And what a volume! The first part took me back to our talks. My only regret is that there was not more of it and we cannot get those that need the information most to read what there is of it. You are to be congratulated on this addition to our knowledge, on the origion [sic] of species and your correlation of laboratory genetics with this immense [sic] amount of field work. The paper has done more to stimulate me than anything I've done this winter. And to say that I am proud of my small connection with it does not in amy [sic] way express my feelings. I can only thank you for the honor you have given me and hope that you will understand the deep feeling of gratitude I have that I cannot express.

Don't forget that I will be very much interested in the way certain individuals in Washington and those others who have been none too complimentary take this work. If it doesn't make believers out of them they are hopeless and do not need to be converted.

You ask about the thesis. It is coming along very well now. The addition of new material has slowed me up some but am about thru now with the exception of a few drawings. . . . I have hopes of finishing the paper this spring and if I do I'll try and make it to Bloomington between terms if you have the patience to go over it again for me. . . .

Give our regards to Mrs. Kinsey and say Hello for us to Ann and Joanne [sic] and Bruce. We think the Christmas cards the girls sent us about the nicest we received. And I want to congratulate you again on the paper and to thank you for my copy.

As ever, Ralph<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Voris to Kinsey, March 19, 1930, folder 1, Voris File. Donald (1922–1926), Anne (1924–), Joan (1925–2009), and Bruce (1928–) are Kinsey's children. Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, *Kinsey: Sex the Measure of All Things: A Life of Alfred C. Kinsey* (1998; Bloomington, Ind., 2004), 67–68.

March 26, 1931

Dear Voris:

Ancil [Holloway] and I have spent the night in this town [Paducah, Kentucky] en route for a thousand miles of Tennessee River valley collecting. In the same hotel [Hotel Palmer], mayhap the same old room in which you and I lived some four and a half years ago. The place is as decrepit as ever—beneath its show of finery—the wall paper more black and broken, the weather as bad. We drove down from Bloomington yesterday P.M. —arriving here, as usual, at 11 P.M. That old road is really good now, with a long stretch of concrete! Think of it! I wish you were along, sir. I lecture in Birmingham [Alabama] this Sat., and am making spring collections to boot.

Ancil insists that the Mexican trip won't seem right without you, and so do I, tho I still feel that the good of Staphylinidae and your future research demands your riding them harder than Mexico will allow. I must have passed on to you [William Morton] Wheeler's advice, that the research I did in the first ten years out would determine my entire future in research.—Well, here's repeating that there is no one I would rather have along, while I believe something else would be better for you in this particular year of grace.

How about publication of the thesis. Let me know if you are having trouble, and I will do what I can.

Back to Bloomington a week from now.

Alfred C. Kinsey<sup>13</sup>

September 3, 1934

Dear Ralph Voris:

Many thanks for the two summer letters. I should have answered long ago. I am much interested to keep track of your doings—the financial affairs of your institution among them—and I hope they won't be financial worries much longer. Don't hesitate to write me about them. —

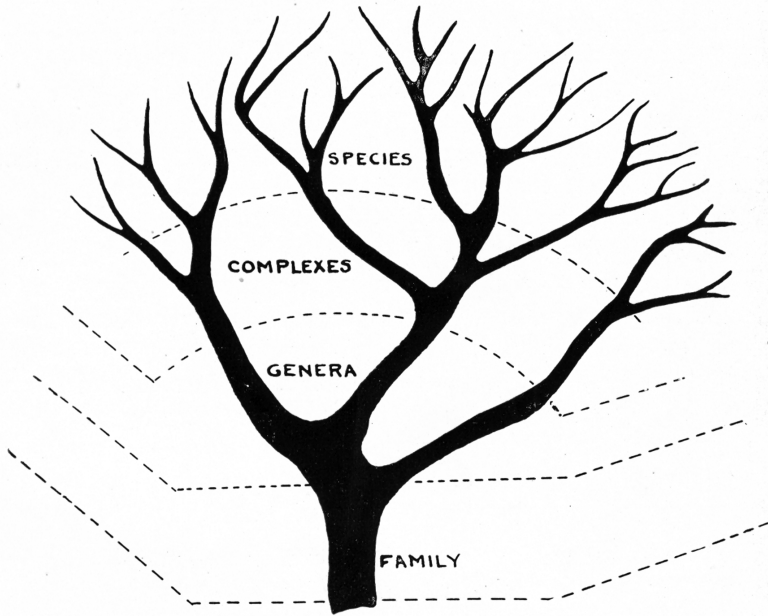
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<sup>13</sup>Kinsey to Voris, March 26, 1931, folder 1, Voris File. "The good of the...will allow": Kinsey was suggesting that Voris work harder to produce original essays from his own dissertation work on beetles, rather than continuing to act as a research assistant for Kinsey. Ancil Holloway was a graduate student in botany at Indiana University (IU). Ancil DeWitt Holloway, "A Summary of the Work on the Gambelii Group of Oaks" (M.A. thesis., Indiana University, 1934). Voris's thesis is not extant.

Mighty glad you got the FERA [Federal Emergency Relief Administration] help to get the bugs mounted. We have used a lot of it here. I had 2 extras, in addition to my regular 2 technicians, so we are up to date on all the great lot of material we have been breeding. Many of the Mexican galls still have live insects in them. One whole genus is just beginning to emerge as it goes into its 4th (!) winter. . . . it has taken a great lot of handling for these last few days.

Have spent the whole summer in Bloomington. The worst spring drought in our history left us with hardly 20% normal bloom in the spring garden. A good rain early in June gave us the best June & early July garden we have ever had. Wish you might have seen the daylilies then. But the summer burned off hot & dry. When rains did come the last half of August we had lost a lot of things. Everything, however, is now green again, and we feel better off than most of the drought area. Have gotten more work done in the garden than in the past 2 yrs. put together—hence the best spring garden is ahead of us, if we do not run into drought again. Following your lead, I have adopted shorts—nothing more—as the garden costume, and have the best tan ever—more than I ever thought a bleached blonde could have. And the most glorious live feeling that my skin has ever known. Incidentally, I weigh just 20 pounds less than I did in February—from 162 to 142—and practically all that came off the waistline. Had all my trousers let out last February, and now every pair is in folds at the waist. I shall see to it that something or other keeps that winter damage off of me this year! And, would you believe it! When hot weather came on, I went to the city swimming pool (which my family patronizes every day), and finding it hot as soup, I turned to the [Indiana] University pool and—swam at the end of every day until school closed!

[That was] the first I have been in the University pool since you deserted me here. I shall have to get into it a few times each week thru-out this next school year. Even as poor a fish as I have been[, I] have been able to improve some of my amphibious doings, and I found swimming great fun this summer. After the Univ. pool closed, the whole family took to Brown County days: swimming in their unusually fine pool in the A.M., picnic lunch, in bathing suits—at noon—swim all afternoon—picnic supper before we came home. All three of the children are good in the water. Anne is just too good—beats her mother now in every stroke. At the girl scout camp (west of Indianapolis) which she attended for two weeks, she was chosen to demonstrate certain strokes in a swimming carnival, even tho no other girl within 5 years of her age was in the car-

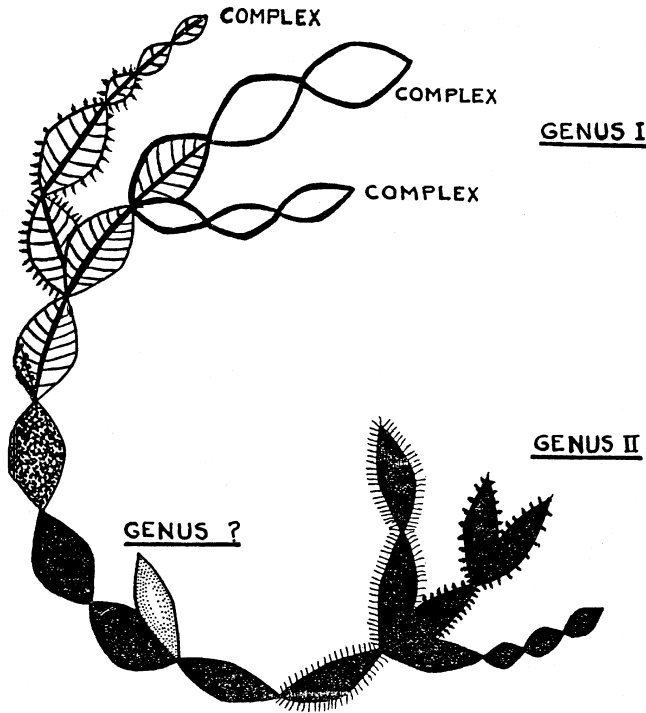


Alfred Kinsey's drawings of the classical Darwinian "Tree of Life" (above) and of his proposed revision of it, a "Phylogenetic Chain of Species" (facing page).

Alfred Kinsey, *The Origin of Higher Categories in Cynips* (Bloomington, Ind., 1936)

nival. Bruce suddenly took off this summer—is a regular fish—dives 5 or 6 different dives—etc. etc. So the family has played together, here at home, as never before. Have had supper out-of-doors in the garden practically every evening this summer—the garden was beautiful, the evenings cool no matter how hot the days. And at this cooler end of the summer we have build [sic] a stone fireplace—with log & stone seats galore, in a hidden spot on a new lot we bought last spring (adjoins the old land to the south), and the kids consider that more fun than anything. So you see the Voris's [sic] must come again and play with us when the weatherman is better to us than he was last time. We are now leaving tomorrow for a 10 day trip to the Smokies. The family has not been there before. Only 1000 miles to drive in all the 10 days—leaving plenty of time to climb mountains & browse thru deep forests.

Have spent the whole summer on "Cynips and the Origin of Higher Categories." Been headed toward it since the Cynips monograph in 1930. It includes all additional data since 1930 on the genus—have over 50 new species to add to the 93 described in 1930. Mostly Mexican,



but a number from our 1929 Western trip. Mexico a perfect gold mine! Two-thirds to three-quarters of my specimens bear red labels! Will easily have 700 n[ew] sp[ecies] from the Mexican trip when it is all described. And the complexes and subgenera, and even one genus which is far enough away from *Cynips* in the U.S.—all run together in southern Mexico until it can be established, I think, that the higher categories are nothing but sections in a continuous chain of species—the divisions between the categories purely arbitrary unless one has limited his collecting to an incomplete portion of the range, or unless nature has obligingly exterminated some of the older species. There is no tree of life—the simile should be to the creeping vine or plant with runners. The first species of the new genus is as closely related to the last species of the old, as any two species are to the other within the genus. Higher categories arise merely as species—by mutation or hybridization and subsequent isolation—with no greater degree of difference than is involved in the origin of any other species.

Amen.

Now, Mr. Man—tell me what your staphylinids say to all that. I am more interested in learning whether cynipid generalizations apply to other groups than you may realize. And especially to the groups which have had some contact with modern taxonomy & modern taxonomists. [Herman] Spieth was here for a week before going—with Evelyn—into Mich[igan] and across Canada to the north—and it is clear that he needs material, material, material—to work out any complete stories. Have you material enough to start on a generic revision? Can't you start, even if you have to delay along the line to get material to fill in the gaps. If not a genus, can it be a complex or two? I want your judgement [*sic*] on many things about your bugs. I know your environment isn't the best—but remember that out of 200 on our I.U. faculty we haven't half a dozen who are really getting anywhere on research—and my best friends on Harvard faculty are forever cursing their “poor benighted institution” (not in public). If anything better comes along, I will turn it your way, but I want the answers from Staphylinidae now, wherever you are.

Plans for fall field work upset. Must get this new Cynips thing to press early in fall. Maybe 200 pages. Have 4 grad. students to train into field work—Lord knows 2 of them need it, and the other two can still polish up—and there is the shocking news that the Mexican government may actually finish the Laredo-Mex. City highway this fall. If so, I fear I head toward Mexico, if for nothing more than a month's trip. With a good road, it would be nothing to get to Mex City in 6 days from Bloomington, and then we could strike deep into country we did not reach before. Mex. peso is down so it would cost only 2/3 what it was before. Might take Mrs. Kinsey with me—would like to have her see the country, and fear we would have to finance most of the trip ourselves anyway.—But may end up in the Ozarks or anywhere else. If there is any chance of our getting into the field together, I would very much like to. It was a glorious day we spent together last fall.

Remember all the Kinseys to Geraldine and all the Vorises—  
Alfred C. Kinsey<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Kinsey to Voris, September 3, 1934, folder 1, Voris File. “Origin of Higher Categories” was published as Kinsey, *Origin of Higher Categories in Cynips*. Herman Spieth (1905–1988) was one of Kinsey's graduate students, and Evelyn Spieth was his wife. Kinsey took a trip to Mexico with two graduate students (including Osmond Breland [1910–1984]) in 1935. Kinsey was Breland's doctoral dissertation adviser. Osmond Philip Breland, “Phylogeny of Some Callimomid Genera (Parasitic Hymenoptera),” Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1936.

July 8, 1936

(Written on train en route to Ames, Iowa—hence my much-improved scrawl!)

Dear Ralph:

I hope your long-taxed disposition will forgive my delay in replying to your last two letters. This has been a spring full of work—and I really have gotten things done even if some other things have had to slide. Any amount of detail to follow up after the return from the Mexican trip. Plenty of technique [needed for] handling the new material. Bad luck on breeding much of it, for the very sudden arrival of low temperatures, followed by the very arid spring & summer, has [recrucified?] most of the pupae. Can't be helped tho—and we have gotten thousands of good adults. Then I finished the volume on *Methods in Teaching Biology*. Lippincott has it in publication now—to bear a 1937 copyright. Next I expanded the second *Cynips* volume (*Origin of Higher Categories*) to include the winter's collections and got that to press here in the University. Two volumes which have been in brew for 5 years, both completed at last. Immediately I have started on the next monograph—*Xystoteras* is the genus—a larger group than *Cynips*—I have perhaps twice as much material—perhaps 20 species have been passing as "*Andricus*"—150 species are new. I will finish this in a year or 18 mos. at the rate it is going—and it will cover more ground than the 2 *Cynips* volumes on which I spent nine years. At long last I may be able to convince somebody that I have been laying a foundation in all these 18 years—on which the finished structure may now rise rapidly. While on *Cynips* I had to take a year and a half to lay the foundation of the generic rearrangement of the whole family—a matter of 6 months to solve the long-wing, short-wing riddle, much time over many years to make catalogs and orchestrate literature—endless technique in preparing collected material for future study. Now, suddenly, it has all come to a head—everything is ready for the new study, and I am writing thousands of specimens and ten or a dozen new species into the manuscript each week. That is the fruition of the dream I have had about building for a life-time of research. — But it is a dangerous program if one gets bumped off prematurely!

About the [Adalbert] Fenyés collection—I doubt if I should buy it if I were in your position. Material bought or bagged from other collectors (save your own good self) had rarely been comparable to material collected by myself. Small series, few distribution data—lack of the background of the biologic conditions, physiography of area involved,

etc. etc.—these greatly reduce the value of most other material. If you are anxious to spend part of your savings, put it into your own field-work. If you bought the whole collection, there would be next to no chance to sell off any part. Museums, etc. prefer to send their own men into the field—and hope to have all the big collections given to them some day, anyway. I know of very, very few purchases by private collectors.—The library would be more valuable to you—wish you might purchase what you really need out of it. . . .

As for the Staphy[linid] distribution—I have no preconceived theories. Every new Cynipid I study upsets all previous experience, so you will have to accept the facts as you find them. Mid-West things in Panama might mean wide distrib[ution] (which I do thoro[ugh]ly scout), or importation, or convergent evolution (I have a few similar relationships), or distinct species (physiologically) which are morpholog[ically] similar. Gosh, man, it will be interesting to follow your final conclusions! —And don't be frightened at the confusion in a beginning generic revision. I worked 9 years on Cynips before it finally suited me.

And now for the secret—as to why I am writing this on a train. There is a 3-day Genetics Conf. at Iowa State College (Ames) with [Sewall] Wright, [R. A.] Fisher, [L. J.] Stadler, (and [E. W.] Lindstrom?) on the program. Only 3 papers per day—all the rest round tables on application of genetic data to evolution. It looks as if it would be a very small group, several active workers, and perhaps a real chance to question there [sic] every conclusion and get their reaction to a mere taxonomist's criticisms. Perhaps a score of people there—therefore, the great advantages over the Christmas meetings. I am out for information and criticism of my own findings. I will write you again soon, with a report on the meetings.

As ever, sir,

Alfred C. Kinsey <sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Kinsey to Voris, July 8, 1936, folder 1, Voris File. Emphasis in original. Alfred C. Kinsey, *Methods in Biology* (Philadelphia, Pa., 1937), included an early statement on the importance of honest, open discussion of human sexuality in high school biology classes. Adalbert Fenyés (1863–1945?) was a staphylinid beetle researcher who wanted to sell his insect collection and personal library to Voris for \$3000. See for example, Adalbert Fenyés, "New Genera and Species of Aleocharinae with a Polytopic Synopsis of the Tribes," *Bulletin of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard College*, 65, no. 2 (1921). Voris to Kinsey, June 24, 1936, folder 1, Voris File.

Dec. 5, 1936

My dear Dr. Voris:

I find that I am going to be [at] the AAAS [American Association for the Advancement of Science] meetings at Atlantic City [, New Jersey]. The Naturalists are to have a symposium on December 31 on the evolution of higher categories. When they first asked me to take part I refused on the ground that I have little to give them that was not already in print. Nevertheless they insisted. [Edgar] Anderson of St. Louis, and [William K.] Gregory and [George Gaylord] Simpson of the American Museum of Natural History are to be the other speakers. We have had preliminary conferences and find that we are very largely agreed, so there should not be the fireworks exhibit that we had at St. Louis last year.

I wonder if there is any chance of your going with me to Atlantic City? I shall not attempt to make the trip by car at that season, and that will make it very expensive, but if there is any chance of your going that would be great. Mrs. Kinsey would be delighted to have Mrs. Voris stay with her. Let me know soon so I will know what to do about reservations.

Yours sincerely,  
 Alfred C. Kinsey  
 Professor of Zoölogy

Stenographers aside—we should be delighted to have a visit from both of you. We have completed our second-floor rooms, so could take care of you better than formerly. There is much to talk about—last Mex. trip to account for—I want to hear about *Philonthus*. I find a note here & there, now & again, that lets me know you are at it. I may get to St. Louis to confer with Anderson about the symposium. It would be this Sat. or the following week-end. That seems so near Springfield [Missouri] and yet a bit far when time is short. It is taking work to get together enough new material to make the symposium paper something more than repetition.

As ever—to both of you  
 Alfred C. Kinsey<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Kinsey to Voris, December 5, 1936, folder 1, Voris File. *Philonthus* is a genus of *Staphylinidae*. Edgar Anderson (1897–1969) attended graduate school at Harvard University's Bussey Institution with Kinsey and was a plant geneticist. William K. Gregory (1876–1969) and George Gaylord Simpson (1902–1984) were members of the American Museum of Natural History's paleontology department. Voris did not go to Atlantic City for the AAAS meeting.

Jan. 31, 1937

Dear Ralph:

Your last letter should have been answered long before this—I have thought of you often enough, Lord knows, but been snowed under with aftermath of the second *Cynips* publication, the Atlantic City Symposium, several Journal articles, etc. The reaction to the new *Cynips* volume is the most encouraging thing yet—especially on top of the fact that it was delayed a year in publication because of the doubts the publication committee had about it. Perhaps neglect more than doubts. At any rate, they held the Ms. [manuscript] 3 months without doing anything about it, then submitted it to a taxonomist and a geneticist for criticism. Taxonomist said the taxonomy was OK and important, but the genetics unprintably bad. Geneticist said the genetics was sound enough, but the taxonomy certainly not in accord with current work in taxonomy. They mused about with it so long I took back the Ms., put it in the bank vault while I was in Mexico, and refused to give it to them for six months after my return. By that time, [Fernandus] Payne was quite [meek?] about it.

—At any rate, you have seen [Clarence H.] Kennedy's lavish praise. The geneticists are strong for it—have had most interesting correspondence with a lot of them. [Theodosius] Dobzhansky, Sewall Wright, [Albert Francis] Blakeslee, Anderson, [Arthur Mangun] Banta, etc., etc. all quite convinced. Anderson has objected for all these years that I had a very special case in these bugs—that such major mutations were not to be expected in most groups. Now he writes he is quite convinced that it is my method that is unique—that he can believe that the use of as diverse means for recognizing relationships in other groups might show relationships that we have overlooked because of our dependence on morphologic similarity. He was handsome in his acceptance of this at the Atlantic City symposium. A number of the paleontologists have testified that their fossil connecting links make categories just what I find them. Even a number of the taxonomists are enthusiastic—tho they as a group offer the most objections. You are going to see a day when taxonomic contributions will be accepted as a fundamental part of biologic science, sir. And I am most anxious to know what your bugs are going to contribute to it.

I am delighted to know that *Philonthus* is moving. Were you flesh and blood of my own, I could get no more satisfaction out of the research you turn out. These other folk have a few printed pages of my ideas, a few minutes of verbal explanation. You and the others who have

finished theses with me have so much better grasp of my thinking—and I shall, therefore, be more interested in seeing how you react to it, modify it in the light of your own data, what you reject, what you accept, what you carry it on into. I spent a couple of days in New York after the meetings—saw Spieth's collection, home, etc. His series of mayflies, extensive records, etc., make me feel he is some child of mine. Glad the NYA has contributed help to you. [Osmond P.] Breland has help too. I am interested to know you have gone to Nat. Mus. Trays—each group will have its own best technique. Spieth has gone to double size Schmitt boxes. The Schmitt boxes still are the best unit for me (I get about 800 insects in a box by my new arrangement.)—And, by the way, if you are discarding your old Schmitt boxes, I will buy them from you personally. Let me know.

I discovered at Atlantic City that you were already booked for C.C.N.Y. [City College of New York] next summer—so I have not hurried about my advice. It is [a] most hearty approval of the plan. It will give you new atmosphere (hot & dirty as New York is in the summer), and just the many contacts you most need. Library, museum collections, etc. Go to it. But don't forget that the previous visit to Bloomington is an indispensable part of it. For long enough time to really do something! There are worlds to talk about, scientific problems to discuss, more gossip than we can hope to cover short of days. Added over 300 volumes to my own library in the last 6 months—surely there ought to be enough to do to keep you here a while. Our home is yours as long as you will stay. Mrs. Kinsey will be delighted to have as much time with Geraldine as I want with you—and the four of us should find enough in common to make it a delight. . . .

On another subject—if you get to New York and see what I saw during the holidays, you will wiggle as you ne'er have before—and you may warn Geraldine of that before you go. Burlesque at Broadway has the most gorgeously thrilling girls I ever except [sic] to see—And they stop at nothing. The G. strings to which they finally strip are half as wide as your little finger, and not a button wider at the strategic spot. When the audience insists strenuously enough, she will remove even the string—slipping a finger in place (to live up to the law)—with more damaging effect than the complete exposure of a nudist camp. Breland says it is criminal for such shows to go on in establishments that are not provided with side rooms where gentlemen may change their trousers and have shower baths—but the audiences seem to like it, to the extent of packing half the shows on Broadway, not even standing room avail-

able, thousands to the house, at least a third women. I thought Tehuantepec [Mexico] was hot enough—and I do have some stories from it to tell you—but you will find New York more pointedly bothersome. So there—do you want that summer job now?

Kinsey<sup>17</sup>

Dec. 11, 1937

Dear Soaks: (Fellow Soaks, Of Course!)

Water is flowing under the bridge pretty fast this fall, and it is Christmas time already. In spite of our much laid plans, we [Herman and wife Evelyn] are not going to be able to get to Indianapolis. . . .

Did you see [Richard] Goldschmidt's article in *American Naturalist* in which he criticized Kinsey very severely? I might say that several of the men in the museum [American Museum of Natural History] who think very well of Kinsey feel that the criticisms are justified. Kinsey's last paper has also been criticized by the ornithologists, particularly because of his use of the term species instead of subspecies. They feel that if he had used subspecies, his thesis would be a whole lot more lucid.

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<sup>17</sup>Kinsey to Voris, January 31, 1937, folder 2, Voris File. Fernandus Payne (1881–1977) was chair of the IU zoology department from 1927–1947. There were four articles published from the Atlantic City AAAS conference panel on which Kinsey presented: Alfred C. Kinsey, "Supra-Specific Variation in Nature and in Classification from the View-Point of Zoology," *American Naturalist*, 71 (May–June 1937), 206–22; Edgar Anderson, "Supra-Specific Variation in Nature and in Classification from the View-Point of Botany," *ibid.*, 223–35; George Gaylord Simpson, "Supra-Specific Variation in Nature and in Classification from the View-Point of Paleontology," *ibid.*, 236–67; and William K. Gregory, "Supra-Specific Variation in Nature and in Classification. A Few Examples from Mammalian Paleontology," *ibid.*, 268–76. For a discussion of the Atlantic City panel and its impact on Kinsey's decision to leave evolutionary biology, see Donna J. Drucker, "Creating the Kinsey Reports: Intellectual and Methodological Influences on Alfred Kinsey's Sex Research, 1919–1953," Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 2008, 36–38. Kinsey's other article in this time period was Alfred C. Kinsey, "An Evolutionary Analysis of Insular and Continental Species," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 23 (January 15, 1937), 5–11. That article outlined some of Kinsey's ideas on the role of geographic isolation in species formation. Clarence H. Kennedy was the managing editor of the *Annals of the Entomological Society of America*. Albert Francis Blakeslee (1874–1954) was a plant geneticist. Theodosius Dobzhansky (1900–1975) and Sewall Wright (1889–1988) were two of the architects of the evolutionary synthesis. Arthur Mangun Banta (1877–1946) was an entomologist. "NYA" probably refers to the National Youth Administration, established in 1935. "Nat. Mus. Trays" are National Museum trays, which vary from Schmitt boxes only in size. See Roger C. Smith, "The Tray System for Insect Collections," *Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science*, 31 (February 17, 1922–April 14, 1928), 77–81a. Schmitt boxes are sturdy wooden boxes with glass lids used for storing preserved insect specimens.

Have you seen Dobzhansky's "Genetics and the Origin of Species"? I understand it is very excellent, and have ordered a copy—but it has not yet arrived. . . .

By the way, Dr. Payne came through our city a month or so ago and we had a little visit with him then. Amongst other things (and this is strictly on the confidential side), we heard that Uncle Alf and the younger men of the Dept. have had some rather serious disagreements. Most of it, it seems, stems from the new course which [William R.] Breneman and [Robert L.] Kroc are giving. I hope it isn't too serious. Another complication arises evidently from the possibility of Payne's retirement as Head of the Dept. and his probable successor. Apparently no one but Kinsey wants Kinsey to have that post. . . .

Heaps of love and a Merry Christmas,

The Spieths<sup>18</sup>

P.S. Be sure to let us hear all the dirt you gather together at Indianapolis. We'll be interested in hearing all the details.

March 11, 1938

Dear Ralph:

Hope the enclosed reaches you safely. It offends my sense of rhythm in places—so I have made some emendations. As for its other effects on me, I shall have to report sometime when we have better opportunity. Tho I would suggest that you try the thing with the ♂ as the narrator—same story, same ♀ or ♂, but ♂ accounting for the first person.—Incidentally, it never rains but it pours. To my surprise, I find one of our faculty men here (not on the zoo[logy] faculty) has a collection of several of these poems, used for the same physio-anatomical research purposes elsewhere. If you are a good boy, I may let you see them some day.

It was fine to see you at Indianapolis—but hell to have so little time with you. Let's hope for something better another time. And I have

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<sup>18</sup>Herman Spieth to "Soaks," December 11, 1937, folder 2, Voris File. Richard Goldschmidt, "Cynips and Lymatria," *American Naturalist*, 71 (September–October 1937), 507–14. Theodosius Dobzhansky, *Genetics and the Origin of Species* (New York, 1937), was one of the founding texts of the evolutionary synthesis. Robert Kroc (1907–2002) and William R. Breneman were professors in the IU zoology department, and Kroc later taught in Kinsey's marriage course.

realized how much of an apology I owe Geraldine for getting so little time with her. But we must make up for it later.

Our spring vacation comes Apr. 7 to 12. Am not sure whether to take Grad students to the Smokies, where Mac & I should come to see the Vorises, whether the kids should be taken on a jaunt to the Gulf Coast—or whether the bugs deserve the time at home. When is your vacation?

News is endless. Out of all our political shakeup here, it looks as if [Paul V.] McNutt were now out of the picture for President [of Indiana University]. [Herman B] Wells, acting Pres., is running strong in newspaper comment. Not bad—in fact, very good as an executive, but not too long on scholarship. We have a faculty “Survey Committee”—and it is going to [the] rock bottom of everything, no regard for any precedents—men of my age—consequently our generation rides strong in this reorganization. Payne has been away 4 or 5 [weeks] out of this half semester. \$1500 renovation projection now in the Dpt. I have had to supervise. Bot & Zoo libraries are combined in old Zoo lecture room. Old Bot lecture room is now for joint use. Old grad lab is now advanced class lab, old Zoo & old Bot libraries are now grad labs, 2 other small grad labs in other rooms, two labs in basement getting real equipment. A glorious lot of new soap dishes, waste baskets, towell [sic] racks, tables, chairs, etc. \$1800 of new microscopes on top of all the other things. It does pay to hammer at things, and strike for big things, instead of accepting small gifts. We finally moved Dr. Payne to the point where he actually went after these things—and was surprised to get them.

Spite of which, I am not yet certain that I want to fix my future here. If it comes out right in this shuffle, I.U. will be a good place to stay; if it is screwed up as some things threaten to be, I shall be in the market for another job. Some place where there is active genetic work, and a graduate program that allows a better grounding for taxonomic-cytologic-genetic studies. Perhaps we can build that here.

Man—most of all, I want to know more about your Philonthus, and I have concluded I shall not unless I come to Springfield and see it. So you are going to see us—if you will have us sometime.

Best to you and Geraldine

Kinsey<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Kinsey to Voris, March 11, 1938, folder 2, Voris File. The poem that Kinsey discusses in the first paragraph is not extant.

Nov. 28, 1938

Dear Voris:

. . . These have been busy times. I wonder if I have told you in any of my previous letters about our Marriage Course here. Men from law, economics, sociology, ethics, medicine, and biology [are] contributing. I am in charge, and it has been quite a problem to whip the faculty into some sort of coordinative program. Student and state reactions superb. . . .

Alfred C. Kinsey  
Professor of Zoölogy<sup>20</sup>

Jan. 17, 1939

Dear Ralph:

It was a good trip we had together, and many thanks to you for everything in it. Sorry I have been delayed in writing since getting back. It has been a grand whirl to get the semester finished, work out the arrangements for the new semester, etc.

I have started toward five hundred measurements from a fourth locality. Been making simple distribution curves for some of the other characters, and made a half dozen more of the correlation diagrams. All of them show that peculiar double drift except the thorax abdomen set. Have had a couple of sessions with the astronomer in the institution, who is our best trained man in statistics, and by chance there have been two statisticians visiting here in the department since we have gotten back. Consequently I have had an abundance of help in planning the next moves. They are all very much excited, say that the double drift is an extremely rare thing, that it contains some mystery [*sic*] that warrants any amount of work to unravel, decide that I need at least a thousand from each locality in order to have enough in each part of the map to allow analysis of each part separately, etc. The young astronomer has dropped in now a couple of times since his first visit, he is so interested in seeing how the thing progresses. So I am all set up about the possibilities that lie in the work.

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<sup>20</sup>Kinsey to Voris, November 28, 1938, folder 2, Voris File. For an account of the IU marriage course, see Donna J. Drucker, "A Noble Experiment': The Marriage Course at Indiana University, 1938–1940," *Indiana Magazine of History*, 103 (September 2007), 231–64.

As for marriage course conferences, my record shows seventeen of them (all complete histories for our records) since New Years. I enclose a summary of the first lot of cases. Better destroy it or file out of reach so it doesn't get about. You have helped a lot in orienting me in the handling of a goodly number of these. . . .

Am sending the Licht in this package. It is a scholarly thing. Sorry I need it back again so soon, but keep it until you have had a chance to get the meaning of it. There are good stories enough in it to take some of Geraldine's time too. If I can get it back within a couple of weeks—or so—that is OK.—Am headed to Chicago about the second week-end in February. Will send you the bibliography for the research material on human sex behavior as soon as I can get to it.

The best of fortune to your work, both teaching and research. Again many thanks for the visit at your home, and the trip to Virginia with you. The best to Geraldine. And I am yours if there is anything which I can contribute. Mac sends her best to both of you.

A. Kinsey<sup>21</sup>

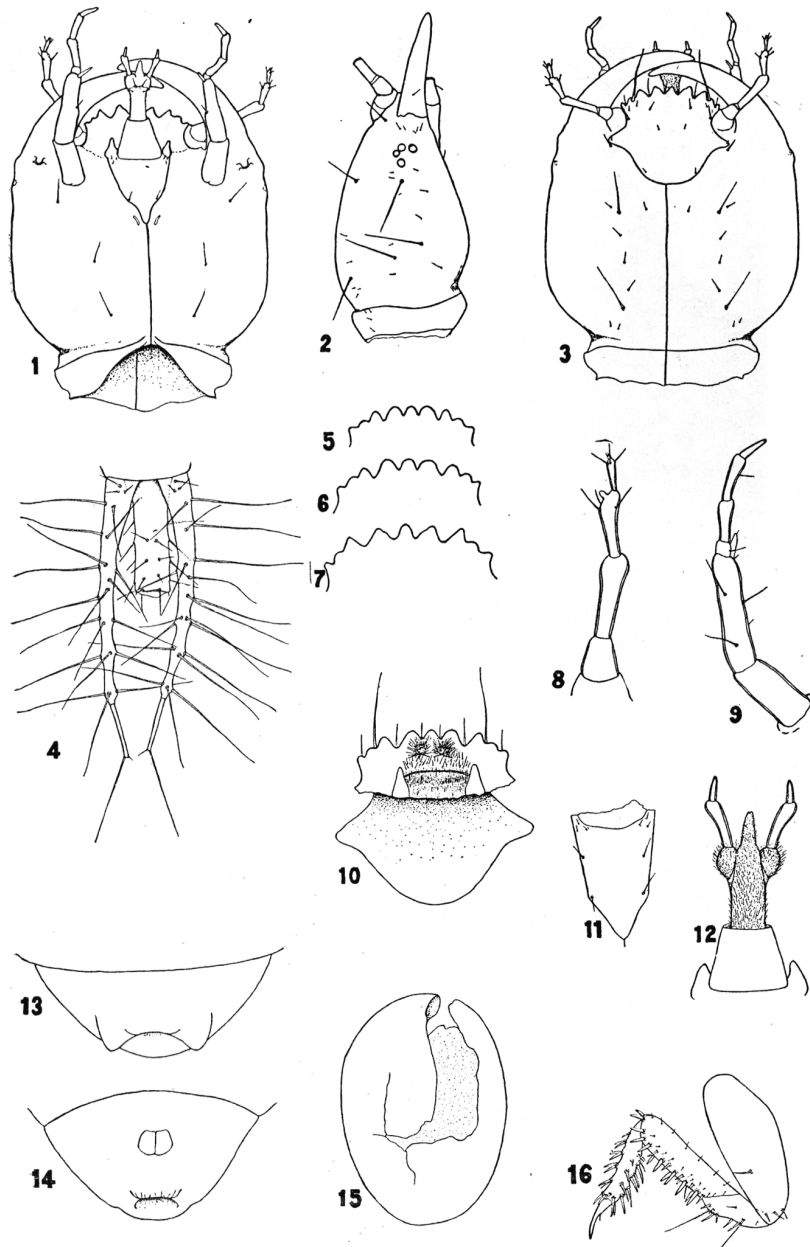
July 6, 1939

Dear Ralph:

The journals (Ann. Ent. Soc. Amer. [*Annals of the Entomological Society of America*] & N. Y. Ent. Soc. [*Journal of the New York Entomological Society*]) this week bring two installments of your material on Staphylinid larvae. That is great! I think I have hardly gotten more satisfaction from publication of any of my own material. It has been a rotten shame that they were not out long ago—and is, I agree, a shame that it did not come out as one big paper. But in many ways this publication of several things will do you more good—and bring the attention and cooperation that will help. The papers are fine stuff, sir, even if I should be more modest over something coming from out [of] our laboratories—but I repeat that they are darn good stuff, and you may be proud of them. God, man—I feel guilty that we have not managed to get them out for you before this. In time, let me have reprints.

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<sup>21</sup>Kinsey to Voris, January 17, 1939, folder 2, Voris File. Emphases in original. "Double drift" is probably Kinsey's discovery that there were correlations in the variation of the body part sizes of cynipids collected in the same locations across a ten-year time period. The astronomer was Frank Edmonson, an IU astronomy professor who helped Kinsey with statistics. The summary of Kinsey's first sex histories is not extant. "Licht" is Hans Licht, *Sexual Life in Ancient Greece*, trans. J. H. Freese and ed. Lawrence H. Dawson (London, 1932).



Ralph Voris's renderings of immature staphylinid beetles. In 1939, two scientific journals published articles based on his research, and Kinsey pronounced the pieces to be "fine stuff."

Ralph Voris, "The Immature Stages of the Genera *Ontholestes*, *Creophilus*, and *Staphylinus*,"  
*Annals of the Entomological Society of America*, 32 (June 1939)

It has been too long since I have heard from you—or I have written. This has been the busiest 6 months, I think, that I have ever spent. I have measured some thousands of bugs and gotten a series of variation curves and correlation in maps that is startling. Even if I have not gotten around to the letter writing, I think of the decent help you gave every time I look at the correlation maps. There is no question that the population in each locality is different from that in any other. They differ in range of variation for each character, in mode and shape of curve. They differ in correlations: in density at diff. pts., in location of drift, in extent of drift.

The close identity of the two correlation maps we made at Richmond is not continued thruout the series. There are genetic—mutational or whatnot factors that modify the locations of the drifts. The ends of the series are two different genera—but there are no discontinuities—it is an accumulation of local differences. The only real discontinuity comes where the High Plains cuts between the Rocky MT [Mountains] and Eastern forest area—and there too much of the story is lost.—Have you had a chance to consider local variation in *Staphys*? My man [Albert P.] Blair is getting a most remarkable series on toads—it includes every so-called species of toad in the US, except one peculiar runt in Florida. It looks as if we were getting a low-down on the nature of species. By invitation of the eugenicists—I was on a symposium program on local variation at the Milwaukee meetings of the AAAS two weeks ago. [Carl] Hubbs & [Lee] Dice from Michigan, [M. R.] Irwin on pigeons from Wisconsin, [Alfred H.] Sturtevant from Calif. Tech, & myself. An interesting time—no adverse comments, but much interest in key gall wasp curves. Think I will put on an exhibit at the Columbus meetings. . . .

Then, of course, this Marriage course program has prospered and multiplied work. In the first four semesters we have had 100, 200, 230, 260=790 students. A few flurries with unfavorable criticisms from older faculty who had no firsthand knowledge—but even that is gone. The students would do anything for us, their appreciation is so great. We have their written comments at the end of each semester. Several have written personal letters to express their appreciation for their personal benefit. Following your suggestion, we have tapped fraternity house gossip and find the course treated *most* considerately. The Gridiron [football] banquet brought only one reference to it—a reprimand to a couple of the boys for having engaged in biologic activities “without benefit of Kinsey’s course in connubial calisthenics.” The personal con-

ferences totaled 280 for me alone during the single semester Feb–June. It has given us a wealth of material by which, Mr. Man—I hope to prove to the world someday that any subject may be a profitable field for scientific research if zealously pursued and handled with objective scholarship. We have over 350 histories now—I will have my 1000 within another year and a half. Gosh, I wish I could show you these data, the summaries etc. I have presented a progress report to our faculty discussion club, nearly bowled some of them over—but they were game and objective, and most encouraging in their approval of further investigation. Wish you were here to see this material. I have just come back from the trip to Chicago—that we talked of last Xmas—safe and sound—with eight histories the like of which is in no published study. Again—wish I could summarize for you, or show you the detailed histories.

What are you doing this summer? Has the trip to the Southeast materialized? I hope so—am not clear whether you intend to go this summer or this fall. It is probable that I will go back over our 1929 route, Colo, Utah, Ariz—plus some additional localities—to duplicate our collections on this variable-winged insect. Shades of the good trip we had together then! Mac will go with me, probably Bruce—the girls will both be in summer camp for part of the time, home here with Mrs. Turrell (who helps Mrs. Kinsey) for the rest of the time. Cannot leave until after the middle of August. Have to be back by Sept. 15. I am teaching Entomology and Evolution this summer (10 hrs credit) plus the Marriage Course. A total of 27 hours scheduled class-room work per week, plus more than that in individual conferences. But I thrive, nevertheless.—what with a half day Sat. & the whole day Sunday in the garden. Wish the Vorises could see the garden now. It has rained abundantly this year, everything luscious green—the day-lilies giving more color now than the irises in their season. We have acquired the lot to the West of us—a hold-up financially, but we at least know that no one can build close to us. Planted 250 shrubs & trees on the new place this year.

The material from Paris-Portugal is finally arriving. You said you wanted to see it—I am sure you will. So come when you can—you and Geraldine. Hope she is well, your year has not been too grueling—and the best to both of you.

Kinsey<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Kinsey to Voris, July 6, 1939, folder 2, Voris File. Emphases in original. Ralph Voris, "The Immature Stages of the Genera *Ontholestes*, *Creophilus*, and *Staphylinus*," *Annals of the*

[October 1939]

Dear Ralph:

We too were much disappointed that we did not see you both in Springfield when we passed thru in September. Thanks for the nice letter, with its cordial wishes from both you and Geraldine. Do wish we could see more of each other. Seems as if we get busier every year—with the last year the busiest I have ever had.

I have kept the cynipid work going, tho it has slowed because of the other research problem. Have measured more bugs since you helped me on the first correlation maps last Christmas from more localities—and made many more correlations. Latest development is the startling discovery that *every* single character (head width, body length, wing variation, leg colors, etc., etc.) is correlated with *every* other. What are the mechanisms? I think the geneticist assumption that nothing but genic correlation mechanisms can be involved is not better than the suggestion for an embryonic-physiologic correlation mechanism. What are the evolutionary implications?

The Marriage Course has taken some time to manage—but infinitely more in connection with the personal conferences. Could never have afforded that time if it had not been the source of a research project that grows constantly more exciting. I had about 75 histories when you were East last Xmas. Now have about 570—which means we will have accumulated over 500 in the year from Xmas to Xmas. Average 1 1/2 hr. each—some 3 hr. or more—so you can see where *some* of my time has gone. It is the most complete exhaustive record ever had on single individuals, and already 2 1/2 times as much in quantity as the best published study has. While agreeing with previous studies as far as they go, our data go much further. Since we are getting entirely new types of histories and still new slants on interpretations, as we get additional histories, it becomes clear that we need many more before we have begun to top the true study of human sexual behavior. Will get my first thousand men in another year or so, when I will publish the first findings. The

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*Entomological Society of America*, 32 (June 1939), 288–300. Albert P. “Pat” Blair was a graduate student in zoology at IU. Carl Hubbs (1894–1979) was the curator of fish at the Museum of Zoology at the University of Michigan. Lee Dice (1887–1977) was the director of the University of Michigan Laboratory of Mammalian Genetics. M. R. Irwin was a geneticist studying cattle and pigeons at the University of Wisconsin. Alfred H. Sturtevant (1891–1970) was a geneticist in Morgan’s *Drosophila* (fruit fly) research laboratory. The nature of “the material from Paris-Portugal” is unknown.

thousand women will be accumulated a bit more slowly. Our records are on much better and fuller forms than the cards you saw, and the whole thing in a form that has convinced the several psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, etc., who have looked over the set-up. We will *prove* to these social scientists that a biological background can help in interpreting social phenomena. Wish so much that you could go over this material with me. You are among the *very, very* few individuals to whom I can ever tell *all* of the story—the part that has too much dynamite to get into even the most objective scientific print. Your reactions would mean much to me—as your common sense advice has so often before. So this is one reason I wish you were going to Columbus with me this Xmas.

Are you coming East or not? And if so, does Geraldine plan to go with you—or do you and I go again? Hotels are rare in Columbus, and we will have to make reservations as soon as possible if you are coming. Hope you are.

Among the other incidentals to take my time, I have been made Chairman of a faculty committee that has been appointed to work out a program in Biology (survey course) that might be required of *all* students in the Univ—all schools. This is part of a new reorganization of the whole institution that the faculty is now considering. Work with this committee is one of the most inspiring things I have done. 5 men in such perfect accord that even minute details of curriculum, sequence of topics, details of administration, etc. are quickly agreed on. [Ralph] Cleland, new head of botany, [Tracy M.] Sonneborn, new addition from Johns Hopkins to our Dpt., [Paul] Harmon from physiology, R. C. Davis from psychology, and myself. Psychology surprises me by fitting in here and there in the program without asking for a whole block. This is one of the many things I should like to talk with you about.

Must close if this is to get done. I'm on a heavy schedule of appointments collecting case histories here in Chicago—and it leaves little time for letter writing. I was very glad to hear as much of the news as you gave in your last letter. Hope to hear more later. Let me know as soon as possible what we can plan for the Xmas meetings. The best to Geraldine—

Kinsey

PERSONAL [new sheet]

I am not sure how much more I should put in a letter and there are a thousand and one things to tell. You must decide how much Jerry

[Geraldine] can take. I have wanted to tell you more about the Chicago H—— [homosexual] histories. Got the first ones last June. Took me 5 days to persuade 3 people to contribute. Now I can pick them up at 5 to 7 per day.—As fast as I can get time to make the records. Each case leads to other introductions, there are half a dozen centers from which I am making contacts on this trip. This is my sixth trip—am here for 8 days this time. Am trying to get cases in all classes, from the most cultured and socially-economically best to the poorest type of professional street solicitor. Am awaiting right now the arrival of a taxi driver whose amazing experience of 17 years here is already half in my history—all of the rest of it promised[—]he learned thru a friend that I was collecting data, came around to volunteer (gratis) all he knew[—]if there is anything anyone knows about variety and organized erotics, he is the one who knows it. Have the histories of a number of the women, and men all the way from beginners to those with active experience—a total now of about 40 histories out of Chicago who have had first-hand experience with a total of about 12000. You can figure the average. Several with 2000 and 3000 each. The most marvelous *evolutionary* series—disclosing as prime factors such economic and social problems as have never been suggested before, and a simple biologic basis that is so simple that it sounds impossible that everyone hasn't seen it before. Have been to Halloween parties, taverns, clubs, etc. which would be unbelievable if realized by the rest of the world. Always they have been most considerate and cooperative, decent, understanding, and cordial in their reception. Why has no one cracked this before? There are at least 300,000 involved in Chicago alone. What I would have done without your earlier help, I do not know. *For instance*, I have had to do more drinking in single week-ends than I thought I would ever do in a life-time—and I still think it bitter. I have diaries from long years—I have whole albums of photographs of their friends, or from commercial sources—fine art to putrid. Some of the art model material is gorgeous. I want you to see it. When do we get together again?

These Chicago histories are merely extensions of what I am getting on [the] I.U. campus. The campus gives me a better series of incipient cases, with all of their evolutionary significance. Several extreme cases also from the campus, with small town and sophisticated variations that Chicago does not give so well. Now have a total, from all sources, of 120 H—— histories. Also getting some other types of histories here in Chicago—some interesting divorce histories. One of the men in our Sociology Dpt. [Harvey Locke] is working on divorce cases for a

Governor's committee—and turning the sexual end of the investigation over to me. . . . And I think you would be interested in such I.U. campus matters as invade officialdom—even the goings on in the former President's [William Lowe Bryan] precincts (to his complete unawareness). Etc. Etc.

The best then until we can visit for enough hours—  
Kinsey<sup>23</sup>

March 2, 1940

My dear Ralph:

I suppose this letter should be addressed to Gerry, for she has been splendid in writing me twice recently. The letter is therefore to both of you, but particularly to you. I wish it might contribute something to cheering you up.

Of course, I am terribly sorry to know of your physical difficulties, though I am immediately encouraged to know that they have found nothing that is going to cause permanent difficulty. It is a shame, a perfect shame, and I hope it will bring everyone from your president down, to a realization of what is needed to prevent another break-up. . . .

I have settled down almost to a constant schedule of being out-of-town the last few days in the week. It is the research on human sex behavior that has piled on the extra load. At the start it was a problem to get contributors to our histories; now it is a scramble to find time to record all of those that are offered. The students here on the campus are increasingly getting the habit of coming over. I recently had two whole fraternity groups offer 100%[—]that is invaluable because it gives us the nearest substitute that seems possible for a random sample.

Every day mail brings requests from the outside for conferences whenever I travel their way. Within the past month I have lectured at the request of a clergyman in a small town where I picked up ten histories on the day following my lecture. I have given a series of three lectures to a group of 180 parents at Anderson [University], and during the past month staying over in the town for a day following each lecture, and getting histories of every variety from parents to high school boys and girls. The people in the high school are so enthusiastic that they promise me 1000 histories there if I want to take the time for them.

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<sup>23</sup>Kinsey to Voris, c. October 1939, folder 2, Voris File. Emphases in original.

Connections at the Y.M.C.A. at Indianapolis started me on a series of histories there, and I suppose I could get several hundred out of that building if I could find the time. My Chicago and St. Louis connections are spreading like the branches of a tree. We now have over 700 histories, and our tabulations, curves, correlation charts, etc. are beginning to be impressive. There continues to be a stray dissenter among the older members of the faculty who object to all this, but an increasing number of the faculty are offering a very definite cooperation. The people in physiology, psychology, and sociology have had long sessions with me, and are offering definite cooperation on their aspects of the matter. How I wish I could discuss all this with you at length.

If you are taking vacations after this hospital experience, can't you include Bloomington for a week or two? Spring is already beginning with us, and within two weeks our garden will be a mass of bloom. We have over 3,000 new bulbs into the ground last fall, and that added to our previous plantings should give us the finest garden ever. . . .

Gee, I wish you and I could get together for some hours in the sunshine which we have here today. Meanwhile, the best wishes for your physical recovery. Take care of yourself; mind Geraldine, for I know she will do all she can to help you come through. Tell me what I can do.

Alfred C. Kinsey  
Professor of Zoology<sup>24</sup>

March 29, 1940

My dear Ralph and Geraldine:

Just another note to tell you that we are still with you and hope that everything is going for the good. You must know that we think of you many times every day even though my letters may be several days apart.

I realize how filled Geraldine's days must be, and I marvel that she has written as much as she has to me. If she wants to save time by writing just a line or two on a card every two or three days, it would please me very much.

I have just had a conference with Dr. [Edgar] Allen, the endocrinologist from Yale, who was on the campus for three days. He is tremen-

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<sup>24</sup>Kinsey to Voris, March 2, 1940, folder 2, Voris File.

dously interested in this human behavior study which I have under way, and immediately suggests several foundations that would be glad to cooperate with the resources. It looks as if it was going to take a full-time assistant to help out on that end of the thing. Ideally, it should be an older married person but whether I will find the right one is difficult to guess.

I am going to have to make some drastic reorganization of the gall wasp work in order to concentrate on the study of the material we now have. Without any expansion of program, there is enough material to be studies [*sic*] for a long time to come. As usual, the publishers [*sic*] are after me for text books in biology, for both high school and the university, and evolution. The administration has inspired our biology staff to put on a special conference for high school teachers in biology this summer here, and I am having to head up that program. I shall teach two full courses here this summer and run the marriage course as well. The plans for the survey course in biology for the entire University are now before the faculty. You may understand how I manage to fill a day.

Through it all we think of you often.

Alfred C. Kinsey  
Professor of Zoology<sup>25</sup>

May 9, 1940

Ralph left us this morning services Sunday Springfield = Geraldine.<sup>26</sup>



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<sup>25</sup>Kinsey to Voris and Geraldine Voris, March 29, 1940, folder 2, Voris File.

<sup>26</sup>Geraldine Voris to Kinsey, telegram, May 9, 1940, folder 2, Voris File.