

CATALOGUE OF THE  
SIGMA PHI









**CATALOGUE  
OF THE**

**S I G M A P H I**

**E. P. V.**

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## **Preface**

Since publication of the 1949 Edition of the Sigma Phi Catalogue, nearly three thousand new members have shared the mysteries of our order.

From a small college group, this Society has grown to a size where members are found in all parts of the globe, in every walk of life. Trying to keep track of our brothers is an increasingly complex task.

Given the magnitude of the organization, a long lead time is a necessary factor of any new edition of the Catalogue, with the unfortunate result that some data becomes obsolete before printing. Further, the constant search for updated material dilutes the effect of the appeal, fostering an untoward apathy of response from many brothers as demonstrated by the large number of members with only addresses or no recent information.

Begun in early 1974 the new edition suffered with the death of its first editor, William C. Maver, L10. While our present Secretary, Roland A. Smith, F'51, attempted to continue the work, the demands of his position precluded sufficient time for the task. Thus the new edition, the present editor, and the sesquicentennial year came together.

While previous editions have been compiled by committees, this has been gathered primarily by each of its editors working alone in succession. This accounts for some of the differences in style found in the book. To hold down costs a computerized index was included. In keeping with modern publishing techniques, a slight change in size was accepted and the memorial and abbreviation sections deleted. Nevertheless, this is an expensive undertaking for the Society, but well worthwhile if it can better acquaint her members with one another.

While few people had formal contact in the preparation of this book, several supplied vital information and a necessary boost over the rough spots.

Acknowledgements must go to members of the active chapters for their information on recent classes; to Fen Kagan U 70, Bob Schultz W'38, Bob Olcott W'42, Tom Carson, Jr. G'33, Ned Holden G'38, Jack Van Ingen G'41, Charles Boswell G 47, Don Millage, Jr. M 75, F. Henderson Dudman F 70, Jim Ware C'62, Tim Egan F'61, Jim Cline I'47, Bill Pfann

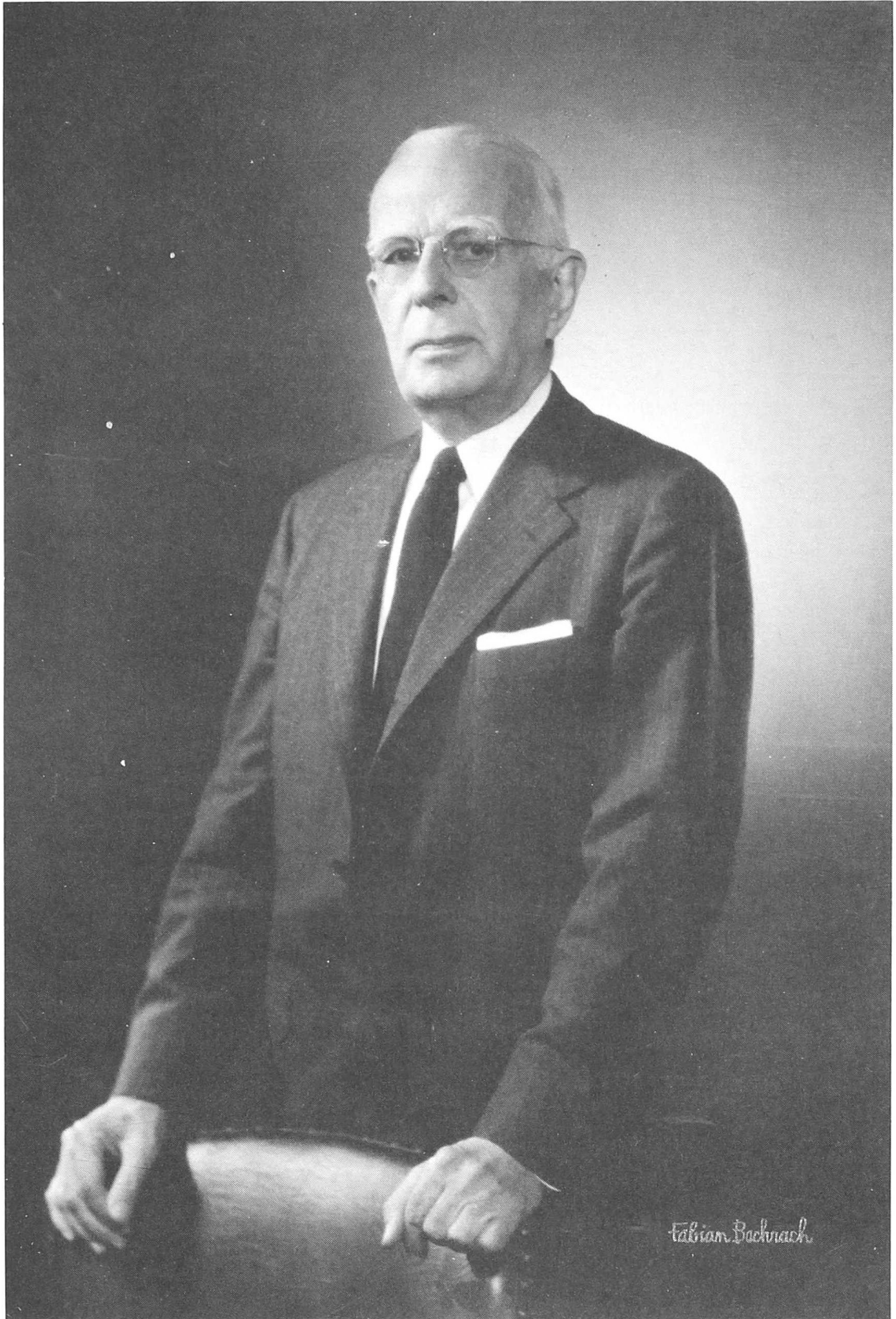
I'61, Doug Gester 173, and Cal Howard S'53 for their assistance in preparing chapter histories and rosters; to Bob Coe G'43 for his fine historical sketch; to Ted Stevens S'55 and Rollie Smith F'51 for their support and aid; and to Jill Muercke for her clerical assistance.

PATRICK B. POLLOCK *Catalogue Committee*



## **DEDICATION**

**This sesquicentennial edition of the Sigma Phi Catalogue is  
dedicated to the memory of William C. (Wink) Mayer, L'10,  
Secretary of the Society from 1942 to 1971.**



*Fabian Backnack*

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# HISTORICAL SKETCHS

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

THE Sigma Phi was founded at Union College, March 4, 1827, John Quincy Adams being, at the time. President of the United States, DeWitt Clinton, Governor of the State of New York, and Eliphalet Nott, President of Union College - three illustrious men. Previous to that date there had been in the College only one of those peculiar organizations, of which there are now so many, distinctively known as "Greek-letter societies," and to Union College belongs the honor of originating in 1825, Kappa Alpha, the first one of all these fraternities.

At that time Union was fast nearing the zenith of its prosperity and renown, and its president was already in the full enjoyment of that large measure of reputation so generally conceded to him as an eloquent preacher, a sagacious guide and instructor of young men, a wise counsellor within the domain of private life, and, frequently, a potent factor in public affairs. The fame of Doctor Nott attracted young men to the College from all parts of the Union, especially from the region extending on the seaboard from Maryland to Louisiana. For many years Union College drew from this section of the country more than its share of students. President Nott made the most of this peculiar patronage, nursing and strengthening it by every possible means. As a class, the young Southerners were rich, generous in heart and purse, good-natured, well-mannered, honorable, and on the whole gave less Double to the College faculty than did students from elsewhere. The Southern boys liked Doctor Nott for what was so dear to them, a certain bonhomie readily assumed on occasions, and an easy, careless disregard of ceremony, also on occasion. But more than this, and above it, they saw in him a veritable embodiment of power, plan and achievement. Moreover, it has been said that to them he was always gracious.

However all this may have been, the Sigma Phi, in the beginning, was made in great part out of Southern material. In the familiar list of its founders — four in all — stand the names of Thomas F. and John T. Bowie — *par nobile fratrum* — of Upper

Marlboro, Maryland, and T. S. Witherspoon of Greensboro, Alabama, with that of Charles T. Cromwell of Mosquito Cove, New York.

To account for the formation of the Sigma Phi, or to give a statement or summary of its principles and methods, is a task which cannot be definitely accomplished. It is a secret society, and that fact would seem to shut off all explanations in such a place as this. Inquiries touching its origin, addressed by neophytes to veterans, have been answered in a way that, no doubt, was satisfactory at the time; but a comparison of notes from time to time has demonstrated that, in some things, memory is a poor conservator and that tradition is not always history. The nature of the Society is of that order which altogether escapes analysis; so that in its portrayal it would be more difficult to determine what it is than what it is not. An enthusiastic Sig of long standing was known to declare that it was the glory of the Society that there was nothing in it; while another enthusiast has said that, although he had known the Society twenty-five years, he had not found out all that it was. A strong infusion of Southern blood undoubtedly gave the Society – in its inception – its own tone and coloring, which the parent chapter retained for many years. Changed conditions in national life, one might say, would be likely to alter all this; but in the same way in which certain Southern characteristics found their Northern affinities in the outset, the work of assimilation still goes on.

The Society having been formed, its mechanism, so far as it had any, adjusted itself automatically to its work. Very soon, lines of principle and conduct appeared, as if spontaneously, and determined its character; and from these there has been no departure. In this regard Sigma Phi has experienced neither loss nor accretion. It is unconscious of development.

At an early day it became manifest that the college life of such a society could be only its infant life; and the experience of a hundred years has demonstrated this conclusion. In college its office has ever been to exercise a true guardianship. Afterwards, it becomes, in the world, an unseen, unsuspected force, quiet, watchful,



self-contained. It lives and is felt in the turmoil of cities, in the quiet of village homes, and in the seclusion of country life. It “vaunteth not itself”; and yet sorrow and bereavement find it faithful. In moments of sudden and sharp disaster the response of its loving sympathy is instant, cordial, and unfailing.

The lamented Peissner<sup>1</sup>, though he was “one born out of due time,” appreciated the Sigma Phi and loved it accordingly. In a Fourth-of-March speech at Schenectady, remarkable for its expression of feeling and gratitude, he said that, familiar as he was with university life in Europe, he knew nothing in it at all comparable to this association into which his American friends had so kindly brought him, and that the Sigma Phi, in form and essence, was the thing lacking, more than all else, in old-world student-life.

Few have worn its badge who have not retained its influence – not as a memory merely – but as a living force, sometimes dormant, but ever ready to waken to earnest activity.

A sketch of our history would be imperfect without some reference to the peculiar politico-social atmosphere in which the Society originated, and to its policy in the matter of extension and of the establishment of new chapters.

Sigma Phi was founded at a period when the popular mind, prejudiced and inflamed by political intrigue, had been taught by the leaders of the Anti-Masonic party that secrecy was inherently evil, and *only* evil; that the sole reason for existence of any institution which veiled itself, however slightly, from the gaze of the world, must of necessity be for selfish, immoral and if the truth were known, for revolutionary ends. The power of state legislatures was everywhere invoked to suppress them; in vain the adherents of these bodies pointed to the high reputation and the stainless character of the large proportion of those who adhered to them; no words too severe could be found by their opponents to stigmatize those who refused to renounce their vows.

While this is preeminently true as to the Masonic order, it is scarcely less true, though of course in a narrower circle, of college secret societies; they had their birth-place in the very state where Anti-Masonry was born; where its partisans were most unscrupulous, and where it attained its greatest power. It is not strange therefore that the political

excitement of those days found its way into college halls; that as soon as the secret societies appeared in Williams, an anti-secret society, styling itself the "Social Fraternity," destined later to become the mother chapter of the (non secret) fraternity of Delta Upsilon, long since a friendly and respected organization on the roster of college fraternities, was formed to oppose them, and that various attempts at Union and Hamilton were made to crush them, as but "Masonry in embryo." The press had found a ready sale for the so-called "revelations" and "exposures" of that order; and when a certain Greek-letter society "swung out" its members for the first time, a similar "exposure" of its aims, its secrets, and its initiation service, was freely circulated, in the hope of destroying it in its infancy.

How violent were the prejudices of that period can hardly be realized now. Fathers sometimes refused to permit their sons to unite with the Society then – whether their fears were justified by the event, this Catalogue sufficiently shows: how Sig fathers feel today, need not be told here. The strife against these brotherhoods has happily ceased. The serpents sent by Juno to destroy the infant Hercules were slain by the demi-god, while yet in his cradle, and the youthful societies seem to have been endowed at their birth with a like vigorous strength.

In the earlier years of her existence Sigma Phi was very conservative. The first chapter that sprang from the Alpha of New York, was the Beta, at Hamilton. This may justly be called the first step towards creating a more fraternal feeling among colleges. Phi Beta Kappa, whose parent chapter had long been extinct – restricted in its membership by carefully drawn lines, and limited to a single year of college life-long declined to admit to its fellowship any but the older colleges, and of these but a single one in each state; it was rapidly becoming, if indeed it was not already what Dr. Edward Everett Hale calls it, in his interesting account of it, a "fossil from the Tertiary," and there was nothing in its character to draw closer together its membership from different institutions, much less the institutions themselves.

It was largely due to the prejudice which has been mentioned that the early days of the Beta were days of trial, though destined to be followed by ultimate triumph. After Sigma Phi had thus taken the initiative in planting sister chapters, its example was speedily followed by other similar organizations.

The next chapter to be established was that at Williams. Here an attempt to secure a branch of Phi Beta Kappa, though favored by that eminent divine and noble man, President Edward Dorr Griffin, had failed. Chiefly, we believe, as a result of that failure, two local societies were formed within a few weeks of each other. One of these applied almost immediately to Kappa Alpha and, receiving the necessary authority, founded one of its most flourishing branches; the other continued for some months its solitary existence, but at last followed the example of its companion, and obtained from Sigma Phi the charter of the Alpha of Massachusetts. The records of those early days, still carefully preserved, are most interesting to the student of our history.

Two years later, the Gamma Chapter was instituted in the University of the City of New York (now New York University); but the opportunities for Sigma Phi to develop its peculiar character were wanting in a college where students rarely met each other except in the recitation room, and before many years the charter was withdrawn, though its membership included some of our most devoted brothers.

The Delta Chapter of New York, at Hobart (then called Geneva College) was the next in order of foundation, having been chartered early in 1840.

Thus far the policy had been to establish branches within easy distance of each other. Applications from Yale, Dartmouth, Trinity, Bowdoin and Amherst had been refused. Finally, one from the University of Vermont received favorable action, though not without some opposition, solely on account of its distance from the other chapters. Today the "Vermont Sigs" are as well known among their sister chapters as those of any other. Certainly none are more devoted or enthusiastic.

The intercourse between the chapters has been constant and ever most cordial; in

the first fifty years it was greatly stimulated by a system of Summer Conventions, when were assembled at the various colleges in order of seniority, as on the "Fourth of March" at Union, graduate and undergraduate members from all the chapters – often one hundred and more participating in these delightful reunions. Orations and poems, as well as more private exercises, lent a peculiar charm to such occasions, and did much to preserve the homogeneousness so universally recognized as a distinguishing characteristic of Sigma Phi, while the younger men learned to know their elders from other chapters. It was only when the dates of the various college commencements became so nearly simultaneous that the custom was reluctantly abandoned.

Passing by the foundation of the Alpha of New Jersey, in a college where the lingering opposition to secret societies had found its last abiding place, and where the rules forbidding these bodies were, not long after its establishment, so strictly construed and rigidly enforced that honorable men could not accept membership while retaining their connection with the College, it was many years before another charter was granted. Again and again petitions were presented and refused. "Sigma Phi was not a missionary society," and she was willing to leave the field to others. But at length the love of the graduates for the Society compelled a change.

Views as to the utility of higher education had been modified and broadened. While the old idea of the value of a liberal training at a college, as distinguished from the special courses provided by a university, is held as firmly as ever by many, yet it is realized that the intensely practical character of American life demands not merely ability, but the best educated talent for the successful management of affairs. The day has passed when it was the accepted theory that a liberal education must be provided for the learned professions alone. The recognition of this fact has led many college men to prepare their sons to enter institutions which aim to meet this demand. It was the anticipation of such a conviction that brought about a somewhat different policy in our Society. The older Sigs, who desired that their sons might receive this university training, and at the same time have opportunity to unite with Sigma Phi, rather than

any new-born missionary zeal on the part of her undergraduates, persuaded her to light her altar-fires at Ann Arbor, in the University of Michigan; at South Bethlehem, in Lehigh University; at Ithaca, in Cornell; at Madison, in the University of Wisconsin; and again at Berkeley, in the University of California. These younger daughters of the Society quickly gained recognition in their respective universities, and have emulated their elder sisters in all that has won for them the unfading love of every member.

The development of the present organization of the Society as an entity distinct from the individual chapters composing it was a matter of slow growth. From the granting of the earliest charters until 1887 a general convention, at which delegates represented the several chapters, was held on each Fourth of March at Schenectady, with the Alpha of New York as host and the Society's concerns were discussed and acted upon, for the year.

"Summer conventions," so called, were held at the various chapters in rotation in most years from about 1841 until 1874. These, with rare exceptions were not business meetings but social gatherings affording opportunity for Sigs of one chapter to become better acquainted with those of other chapters, to attend a banquet and to enjoy listening to an orator and a poet selected from among their eloquent or talented brethren. These meetings were held at the time of Commencement of the college in which the chapter acting as host was located. It was only when the dates of the various commencements came, more and more, to coincide that these meetings were abandoned.

Prior to 1885 each chapter had organized a corporation to own and manage the chapter's property and in that year by decree of the annual Convention a business corporation, to hold and control the General Fund (then less than \$5,000.00) of the Society, was organized under New York laws. It was not a social organization and a new initiate of the Society did not automatically become a member though each chapter was requested to adopt a bylaw under which each new member should take membership in this corporation and as a result of this action nearly all the undergraduate members in 1892 were enrolled in the corporation. It financed the

publication of the Sig catalogues of that year and of 1915, which were much more elaborate and useful than any earlier editions and also published the "Sigma Phi Annual," a pamphlet of reports, obituaries, etc., in each year from 1887 to 1901 when the publication lapsed until 1909. Then it was revived with a pamphlet summarizing the Society's activities during the years that had intervened and thereafter issued each year until it was succeeded by the Sigma Phi Flame in 1920.

As the years passed after 1892 fewer and fewer undergraduates enrolled as members of the business corporation of 1885, probably because the matter was not emphasized by their respective chapters.

About 1920, members of the Society procured the amendment of the New York Membership Corporation Law so as to make it apply to societies of one thousand members or more instead of to societies having at least five thousand members. Then the old business corporation of 1885 was dissolved and the Society's General Fund turned over to the new membership corporation organized in its place, which became identical with the Society itself. The Standing and Advisory Committee became *ipso facto* the Board of Directors of the incorporated Society. But the incorporation did not necessitate any change in either the Society's fundamental law or its methods of holding its conventions or of conducting its affairs generally.

The idea of an executive body to attend to the routine business of the Society between Conventions was apparently first thought of in 1887. The Convention of that year was the first under the new system of holding the annual meeting with the several chapters in rotation instead of at Schenectady on each March Fourth. But it was not until 1898 that the idea took definite shape, was adopted by the Convention and a Standing and Advisory Committee authorized, appointed and organized. Some years thereafter the duty of visitation and supervision of the chapters as to scholarship and standing in their colleges was placed upon it and the present system of the appointment by the committee of an alumnus advisor nominated by the active chapter was put in

operation.

The committee's proposals that a central office be maintained, a Sig be employed as a paid secretary and that annual dues payable by all members be fixed, were adopted in 1911; and such facilities have functioned to the advantage of the Society since that time. Failure to pay dues however, does not affect any Sig's membership or standing in the Society in any way. Once a Sig always a Sig!

It is an understatement that the Society's attitude toward expansion has been conservative. Although the first of the Greek-letter social societies to establish a second chapter (thus becoming the first "National Fraternity"), its insistence on high quality and close bonds led to only ten active chapters (not counting the late lamented Gamma of New York and Alpha of New Jersey) with the establishment of the Alpha of California in 1912. Nevertheless, the quest continued over the years. Petitions and less formal overtures were considered from such diverse institutions as the University of Washington, Yale, and Washington and Lee; but all were politely declined. The Standing and Advisory Committee established an Expansion Committee which determined that four conditions were necessary for the successful establishment of a new chapter: a substantial alumni group in the area; reasonable proximity to an existing chapter; college conditions generally similar to those institutions where Sigma Phi already existed; and an adequate financial foundation.

The end of the Second World War brought the quick revival of all Sig chapters and Sig campus life resumed much as it had been before the War. There matters stood at the time of the publication of the 1949 Catalogue, and only the more discerning saw the groundswells of radical change that were coming in the next three decades.

This historical sketch is meant to be just that: an overview of the Society in general, particulars being left to the individual chapter histories. The areas of interest that were to concern all Sigs during the next 25 years were rather quickly identified in the early Fifties. Some were old, such as scholarship and expansion. Some were rather new: chapter size and spirit, and the growing attitude of some college administrators



and students that fraternities were a relic of a bygone day and the sooner they were jettisoned, the better. Such societies were said to be undemocratic and thus inimical to the wave of egalitarianism sweeping the country. Conveniently ignored by holders of this view was the proposition that the right of free association in private matters was a hallmark of a truly democratic society.

The decline of scholarship early aroused the concern of the Standing and Advisory Committee. Taking the position that scholarship was the very reason for attendance at an institution of higher learning, the Standing and Advisory Committee stated its position clearly: "With our claim to members of carefully chosen caliber, we can expect an average higher than the men's averages." Recognizing that poor academic performance was one of the basic causes of friction between fraternities and college authorities, Sigma Phi strove to improve its image. Incentives were set up: awards to chapters showing the highest average and the most improvement, and the purchase by the Society of Phi Beta Kappa and Tail Beta Pi keys earned by Sigs. The results were generally satisfactory. While chapter standings fluctuated and there were ups and downs, chapter scholarship improved and today it is a rare and lonely voice that deprecates the need for good academic performance by fraternity men in general and Sigs in particular (Being a cut above the others, this is to be expected!). The time for "amused tolerance of low scholarship" had indeed passed, to paraphrase a report of the Standing and Advisory Committee in 1957.

Of perhaps greater impact on Sig chapters in the Fifties was not so much open hostility as disinterest on the part of undergraduates, combined with spiraling costs. The day of the Ideal Twenty as the size of a Sig Chapter vanished earlier, but it became a real problem to meet the costs of operating chapter houses and still keep membership low enough to insure cohesion.

The trend to off-campus living in apartments effected occupancy of chapter houses. In addition, undergraduates seemed turned off by some of the distinguishing marks of the Greek-letter secret society: formal meetings; ritual; pledge duties; class

hierarchy, to name but a few. It might be called a general decline of fraternity spirit.

While all Sig chapters were affected to some degree, three particularly suffered: Union, Hamilton and Hobart. In 1959, the problems of the Alpha of New York with finances and undergraduate (and alumni) apathy became acute. However, with prodding from the Standing and Advisory Committee and the rallying of Union alumni, the minutes of the Convention in 1962 were able to record the good position of the Alpha. In 1967, the Trustees of the Beta closed the House at Hamilton because of intolerably poor performance by the active chapter. The Chapter did not become extinct, however; and loyal and devoted actives and alumni, with support from the Standing and Advisory Committee, solved their problems. So, in the Fall of 1969, the House reopened, stronger than ever. In 1971 came the turn of the Delta at Hobart, and the House there was closed. Again, a handful of devoted undergraduates with strong alumni support and the material assistance of the Standing and Advisory Committee dealt with their problems and, once again, "like the Phoenix of old," the Delta arose and the House reopened in the Fall of 1973.

One clear fact stands out from the darkness of those times: Sigma Phi's long held reputation for the closeness and devotion of its members is well justified; once alerted and aroused, old and young alike rally to the aid of him who is in need, regardless of chapter. The tragic fire at the Alpha of Wisconsin heavily underlined this proposition.

One other lesson emerged clearly: the value of the Standing and Advisory Committee. Sigma Phi has always avoided a large national organization, being content with one paid Secretary and utilizing as chapter representatives, alumni residing in the New York area, constituting a Board of Directors. However, in the middle of the turbulent Sixties, an effort was made to bring the Society in general closer to the active chapters and their individual members. Interchapter visits had always been encouraged and indeed practiced. An old maxim of the Society was that every Sig should visit every chapter as soon as possible after his initiation. To accomplish this renewal, an Expanded Standing and Advisory Committee was created, to consist of an active and an alumnus from each chapter, the alumnus to be from the geographical area of the chapter and the

regular delegates and alternates in New York. This Expanded Committee met several times over several years in New York. This Expanded Committee met several times over several years in New York, with expenses paid by the Society. While the cost prevented a continuation of this group over the years, it is believed that the meetings that were held invaluable in improving the cohesiveness of the Society as a whole, all chapters drawing added strength to survive the troubled times. For several years, a traveling secretary was employed to improve the contact between the chapters and the New York Committee.

The ways of Providence are indeed inscrutable at times, so it would appear no coincidence that the same period, the very beginning of the Sixth Decade of this Century, brought both the first warning that trouble lay ahead for the Alpha of Massachusetts and the first intimation that the University of Virginia was very fertile ground for the first new chapter in 40 years. Despite great efforts of the Expansion Committee which investigated many possibilities for expansion, all had come to naught. Plans for a Beta of California at the University of California at Los Angeles had progressed so far that it seemed certain to open in the Fall of 1952. However, all went awry, and the chapter died aborning.

However, at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Mr. Jefferson's University, were several Sigs attending The Law School, and living just outside Charlottesville was Jefferson W. Baker, V'17. At The University was a local club, the Serpentine Club, which showed an interest in a national affiliation. Suffice it to say here that this providential combination produced a formal petition by the Serpentine Club to become the Alpha of Virginia, which petition was duly accepted by the 1953 Convention at Cornell. On October 3, 1953, the Lehigh Chapter with all appropriate pomp and circumstance initiated the Virginia men, and a new bright star appeared in the Sig firmament. The new brothers from Virginia have proved one of the most loyal of chapters, and the older ones could well take notice.

What the Lord giveth, He sometimes taketh away, and the process begun in the early Fifties on the campus at Williamstown reached its most unfortunate conclusion in

June 1967 when, with the graduation of the last members of the active chapter, the Alpha of Massachusetts ceased to exist. The concept of "Total Opportunity Rushing" had developed in the early postwar period. Essentially, it meant that any student who wished to join a fraternity could do so, regardless of the wishes of the fraternity; and any student so desiring who was not asked to join a fraternity would be assigned to one at the end of the rushing period. This concept was so at variance with the very fundamental purpose of a fraternity that the Standing and Advisory Committee resolved in 1958 that the imposition of such a rule on a campus where a Sig chapter existed would be cause for the withdrawal of that chapter's charter. In an era of student demands that college authorities renounce the idea of being "in loco parentis," the consistency of total opportunity rushing with the demands for greater student freedom escaped many thinking persons. However, consistency was not a particular virtue of the student movements of the Sixties

Hamilton too faced a threat from total opportunity rushing, but the resistance from students and alumni proved greater than at Williams. The active chapter may be gone; but, as long as there is an alumnus left alive, the Alpha of Massachusetts, long the spawning ground of loyal Sigs, will never really die.

To single out individuals by name in a general sketch of Sig history would run a great risk of omitting others equally worthy of note. But it would be most appropriate to mention here those stalwarts who have served the Society as chairmen of the Standing and Advisory Committee since publication of the 1949 Catalogue: Thomas H. S. Andrews, C'05, 1947-1950; John H. N. Potter, U'16, 1950-1953 (Jack was a direct descendant of old Doctor Nott who "reigned at Union."); Clancy D. Connell, H'40, 1953-1956; Halsey T. Tichenor, G'40, 1956-1957; Aertsen P. Keasbev, C'36, 1957-1968; and Calhoun L. H. Howard, S'53, the present Chairman. The accolades of all Sigs are due to these hardworking men.

An era of Sig history ended on January 1, 1971, when Wink (William C.) Mayer, L'10, retired as Secretary of the Society. There are few in the Society's annals who could share with Wink the personification of Sig ideals. Each new generation of Sigs came to

know him as a generous friend, wise counselor and bon vivant par excellence. Sigs of all ages and chapters gathered at his funeral on December 19, 1974, for their last tribute to a great and good man. But even as the old order passes, the new takes over; and the day-by-day work of the Society has been ably carried on by Wink's successor, Roland A. (Rollie) Smith, F'51.

On March 4, 1977, one of the largest gatherings of Sigs ever joined at the Alpha in Schenectady to mark the Sesquicentennial of the Sigma Phi. The Founders, from whatever celestial heights they viewed the occasion, would have been well pleased with their progeny. There is an old poem of anonymous origin that begins "I cannot sing the old songs I sang long years ago; For heart and voice would fail me and foolish tears would How . . . ." Sig hearts and voices do not fail at the old songs that ring out at every Sig gathering, for the old songs are also very new. One of the more striking phenomena of the Seventies has been the proliferation of religious and quasi-religious cults attracting many young people. The common thread is a revolt against the crass materialism that seemingly dominates the Twentieth Century. Yet, these cults offer no more than our Society has always offered — Friendship, Love and Truth — with our feet firmly on the ground, demonstrating that one does not have to withdraw from the world but can play a vital and rewarding role within it.

Sigma Phi enters the second half of its second century through a bright doorway. Wars and rumors of wars — Korea, Lebanon, Cuba, Vietnam — have come and gone; turbulence has racked our campuses and cities; confusion and doubt sometime seem to reign supreme. But our Society has survived them all; and, although the future is far from serene, there is every reason to believe that our ideals and traditions have emerged strengthened from the past thirty years, as indeed we would do well to remind ourselves they emerged from the storms and stresses of the first 150 years of our existence.

Fortunate is a Society, like the Sigma Phi, whose traditions remain supreme, whose secrets are those of the heart inspired by the soul; whose brotherhood is so simple, so lofty, yet so democratic that it fears no change in the outward machinery of life, for its

justification and its glory lie close to the center of man's being.

As was done in 1949, it seems most fitting to bring this historical sketch to a close with a reprint in toto of a letter from one of the Society's most loyal and well beloved brothers and one of the Nation's most devoted servants, sent to a March Fourth gathering in New York; March 4, 1935.

*Dear Brothers in the Sigma Phi- Dear boys, old and young:*

*No human institution lives long unless it meets a human need. It is this quality which has carried out Society into its second century, full of life and vigor, and which justifies an old man of ninety in writing to a body, a large part of whom trot in the same class with his grandchildren.*

*The need that the Society meets to be found in the nature of the institutions of learning with which the Chapters of the Society are indissolubly connected and which are devoted to training primarily intellectual.*

*Given human nature as it is – moved to action by all sorts of emotions, following naturally its prejudices, its perversities, its affections, its likes and dislikes, the learning of the college course tends by itself alone to become merely a basis for criticism in real life; logic by itself alone falls upon deaf ears; pure reason by itself alone makes a horrid mess of human affairs when it gets control.*

*If a young fellow entering college is to become an effective, valued force in his own community, if he is to gain the durable satisfactions of life, he must develop a side of his nature to which the college curriculum does not and cannot pay very much attention. He must achieve capacity for sympathetic understanding of his fellow men and for genuine interest in them. He must acquire a habit of kindly consideration and regard for the rights and feelings of others. He must be exercised in the practice of friendship, in a sense of proportion and of humor, in good fellowship and in feeling for the joys and sorrows of others. These are qualities of character, and upon the development of character along these lines, civilization must depend for international peace and for domestic liberty and order more than it depends upon statistics and argument.*

*The Society which a century ago undertook to supplement the intellectual training of the*

*college course by the training of character through self-devotion to the cult of friendship and human sympathies, was not a mere social incident. It was an expression of the better part in human nature. The collective body joined in this expression became something a little different from any of its members – it became superior to the limitations upon human life, it acquired the mysterious gift of spiritual succession, so that you, a century later, share in the spirit that moved the founders, and inherit their title to honor and affection; and it became the mother of happy memories that warm all our hearts – even the oldest.*

*Esto perpetua,*

ELIHU ROOT.

'Elias Peissner. Professor at Union College. Killed at the head of his men in the battle of Chancellorsville, May 2, 1863.

## Chapters

ALPHA OF NEW YORK (**U**) .....

BETA OF NEW YORK (**H**) .....

ALPHA OF MASSACHUSETTS (**W**) GAMMA OF NEW YORK (**N**) .....

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### CHAPTERS

**Union College** ..... 1827

**Hamilton College** ..... 1831

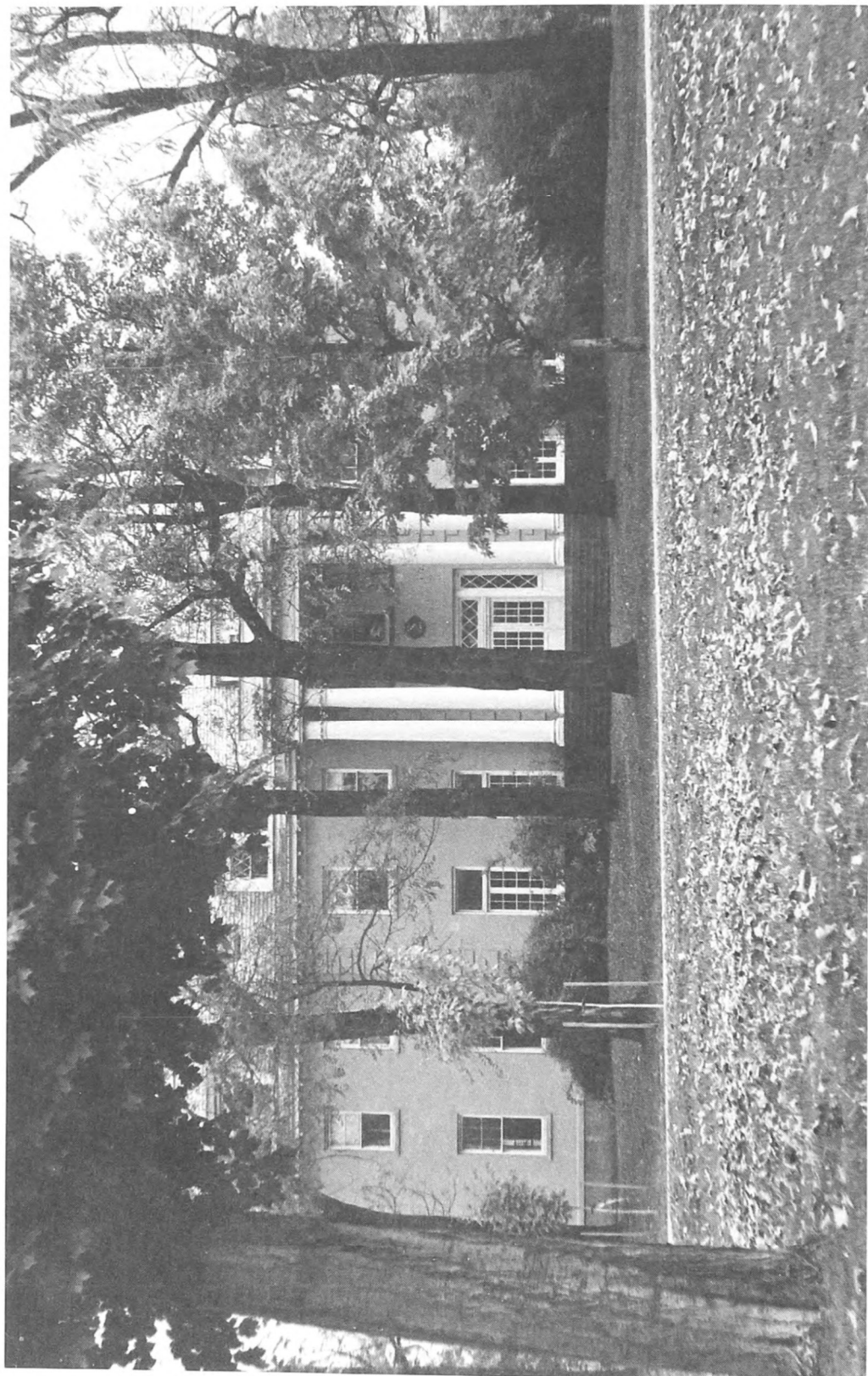
**Williams College** ..... 1834-1968

**New York University (formerly the University of the City of New York)** 1835-1848



|  |           |
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| Hobart College .....   | 1840      |
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ALPHA OF NEW YORK—UNION COLLEGE

# ALPHA OF NEW YORK

1827

## UNION COLLEGE Schenectady, N. Y.

*Founded 1795*

UNION UNIVERSITY

*Established 1873*

### FOUNDERS

THOMAS FIELDERS BOWIE

THOMAS SYDENHAM WITHERSPOON

JOHN THOMAS BOWIE

CHARLES THORN CROMWELL

## ALPHA OF NEW YORK

BECAUSE of the reticence of the four Founders of Sigma Phi and the necessary caution of a period when all secret societies were regarded with suspicion in New York State, the earliest stirrings of the Society in 1826 are unchronicled and now unfortunately are beyond finding out. It is known only that in that year four undergraduates of Union College recognized their need for a companionship more intimate than one comprising the College's entire student body and more general than one comprising only a few neighbors on the floor of the dormitory's "Section." Those four were Charles Thorn Cromwell (whom the Alpha always names first for no known reason save his magnificent presence as a Jove-like marble bust in the Chapter House), Thomas and John Bowie, and Thomas Witherspoon. Because their own friendship was warm and their spirits high and their youth radiant — they ranged from 18 to 22 — these four decided to widen the circle which gave them pleasure and admit to it a select group of their fellow students. Forthwith they chose six more of similar qualities of good mind and lofty character and cordial manners and then, presumably to make sure that their own brotherly ideal should have abiding form and guiding pattern, they determined to make of these ten not merely a short lived group of happy young fellows but a society dedicated to friendship. There were other ideals, suggested by the written record and by the Founders' own lives in later years, but they were contributory to the stated ideal — friendship which should last through life. To that end, The Four held a formal initiation ceremony in the College room which two of the company occupied that year. The location of that room in North College, although stated to be at the south end of the fourth floor is otherwise unrecorded and now unknown. The dates of the preparatory discussions are lost too, but the date of the first initiation, March 4, 1827, is secure. That the Founders wished it to be the Society's remembered birthday was made evident one year later when they held on that now memorable day a celebrating anniversary banquet, brightened with toasts which are chronicled in the surviving archives.

Why that exact date was chosen is a matter of conjecture. Perhaps it was a whimsical choice faintly related to the circumstance that quadrennially (until 1937) March 4 was the date for installing a new national administration. Perhaps, and quite probably, it was plain chance. It was a good date anyway, whether by old or present standard, far enough from Christmas or Easter or term examinations, or that appalling day when now the income tax blanks must be filled out, to be free for an evening of good fellowship, when the names of the four Founding brothers of 1827 are linked with the names of the eight thousand and more who have followed proudly and loyally in their footsteps.

Can they have dreamed in March, 1827, that generations later there would be such a band of followers standing each year at their altar of friendship at Union and at likenesses of that altar in other colleges, with identical oaths of friendship and identical endowments of the spirit, scattered from the hills of Vermont to the coast of California? Who can doubt it who reads the Constitution they approved (the work of their young companion, William D. Waterman), or who listens to the initiation ceremony they adopted (which Chester Averill composed), or who fully grasps the beautiful meaning of the Society's name (which Witherspoon chose and the others joyfully accepted)? For this was much more than a club of carefree young fellows, or a band organized in defiance of college authority, or a group dedicated solely and laudably to scholarship. It was designed rather as an aid and tribute to friendship which would last not only through college but through life. Its qualifications for membership were so high that the bonds formed at 18 would outlast the storms and strains of 80 years. That their hopes were fulfilled the Founders themselves saw, for they and their fellows of 1827 lived long enough to see as patriarchs how good and true and beautiful and lasting was the altar which they had built in their youth.

After the initiation of March 4, 1827, then, there were not four but ten in the circle, and in June of that year there were 20 altogether, ten seniors with six juniors and four sophomores to carry over into the next year. Until 1832 no freshman was admitted, and only five up to 1837. What it was which then convinced the ancients that a freshman is

sound material for initiation the archives fail to state. Perhaps it was at last recognized by those wise men that, more than others, a freshman needs a friend, and also that, if caught in time, he can be skillfully trained, particularly in useful and arduous labors about the house which otherwise his elders must perform. From whatever motive, freshmen were admitted to membership then as now, late enough in the year to make sure both that they were well qualified for membership and that they would probably remain long enough in the active chapter to have the Society's meaning indelibly impressed upon them.

Presumably there was a conscious desire to protect the young organization from the attributes of a local "club," designed for parochial reasons and suffering from them. Of the 20 who composed the band in June, 1827, eight were from New York State, three from Maryland, two each from Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Virginia and South Carolina, one from New Jersey. The next year added initiates from Maine, Vermont, North Carolina and Alabama, so that within two years this whole assembly was representative of areas widely dispersed over what composed the United States of that era. When these young men went out from Union's gates as graduates they carried to great distances the learning acquired from Eliphalet Nott and, no less precious, the devotion fostered by the Society in which, more fully than in most of man's societies, they truly remained brothers all their lives. The Catalogue records the eminence which many of them attained in world affairs. The traditions of the Society no less surely record their abiding love for the Sigma Phi, marked for men's eyes by the Badge they wore (itself unchanged from its creation in 1828 or 1829), by the letters they wrote, by the visits they made, by the friendships they preserved, by the brothers and sons and nephews and cousins they sponsored as living legacies.

Sigma Phi was not the first Greek letter fraternity. Phi Beta Kappa long preceded it, but with an aim wholly toward the fostering of scholarship. The first for more markedly fraternal purposes was Kappa Alpha, also founded at Union, but in 1825. Sigma Phi was soon followed by Delta Phi, and these three, by their pioneering, became known as the Union Triad, thus distinguished from several others which sprang from Union's



fertile soil in later decades. But while the others remained for many years as Union College fixtures, Sigma Phi's flame soon spread outward. One is at liberty to surmise that some such thing was in the Founders' presumably all-wise design, but he will be safer in attributing it to happy circumstances, plus a young man's right to change his mind. John Cochrane, a student at Hamilton, came to Union for a year (probably like a great many Eastern college students to study for a term or two under the phenomenal Doctor Nott) and then, for reasons unrecorded either by him or by Eliphalet, decided to return to Hamilton. In that year of 1830 he had become a member of Sigma Phi and, because he thereafter neither wished to do without it himself nor to doom Hamilton to permanent darkness, he urged on his comrades the creation of a chapter of Sigma Phi at this well-liked neighboring institution to which he was returning. The plan approved, three others from the Alpha – Rowley, Bryson and Allen – moved on to Hamilton with him and formed the nucleus about which a new band of brothers was swiftly formed. Expansion, thus well begun, continued, so that by 1858 when the Society was 21 years old there was a total of six active chapters, apart from two others which for reasons elsewhere recorded had passed from existence.

For years the Alpha remained first in authority as well as in age, itself granting charters to the new chapters and summoning all members to the Hall of the Alpha for annual convention, but as it grew older the Society grew even wiser. The Alpha surrendered its post of priority and the General Convention became the governing body. Thereafter the annual assembly moved from chapter to chapter in regular rotation, a celestial precession interrupted only by high authority itself capable of halting even a planetary cycle in favor of a centennial or other notable celebration at a chosen spot. Thus the one hundredth anniversary was observed at the Alpha of New York by a great gathering of 450 brothers from all parts of the land, their pilgrimage rewarded by the sight of old friends rarely seen and the sound of many voices too soon to be stilled, notably the memorable voice of the Orator Eloquence of that occasion, Elihu Root, one of the great Americans of his time and one of the great Sigs of all time.

Through a good half century of the Alpha's long life its activities centered not within

the College gates as in the beginning and as in the days since 1906, but in almost the center of the city, where there would be a privacy not attainable in the College dormitories and also easy access for the alumni resident in Schenectady. That came to be a large factor in the particularly close relationship which has existed between the Chapter and those local alumni whose unfailing support of the Society in its dark days was of value beyond reckoning. The chosen house was the so-called Pepper Box at 5 Yates Street, until its demolition a monument beloved of all Sigs and a curiosity to all worldlings by reason of its octagonal shape, and by reason of its external similarity to the white-and-gray pilastered walls of the distant College, and perhaps by reason of the frequent gatherings of lordly figures assembling there.

Exactly when the first conclave was held in the Pepper Box cannot be determined, for tax records are destroyed and the date was not set down by a Scribe pondering only matters of the non-physical world. The house was first rented, early in the fifties, and then purchased in a period of prosperity suddenly attained and suddenly ended. There the Conventions were held as well as the formal Conclaves, and there less formally the wandering birds Hew home for over fifty years, their flights ended only after 1906 when the new Place was finished and the old one sold, amid pained outcries from old Sigs who loved it well and almost wept when eventually its ancient shell was torn down and carted away.

Nobody who in its last years ever spent an evening in that damp, ill- lighted and shabby old Place, above or below stairs, can ever forget either the happiness that reigned there or the oddity of its mingled odors, not so much of sanctity as of mustiness and tobacco and faintly escaping gas. It was no suddenly acquired quality, for a letter written long ago by Percival f. Parris, of 1871, relates that in his undergraduate day too "the atmosphere was heavily charged with coal gas. It seems that the gas company, by some error, had failed to register the Sig Place in its list of consumers. For years before, and I am told for years afterward, no bill for gas was rendered. There were bad leaks in the pipes and the place smelled most awful vile, but for some undeclared reason, perhaps prudential, we never complained to the gas company. It is well known how

vividly an odor or a once familiar air will revive the memories and emotions of the long ago. I was from the land of woodfire and kerosene lighting and knew not the coal gas. I first met the odor in the Sig Place and, when now encountered, it never fails to take me back to the mood of those halcyon days when the dear old Sigma Phi held everything in life worth having."

The old house may have looked frail as well as shabby, but it was ruggedly made. Certain worldlings must have assumed otherwise however, and because their ways were dark they chose to attempt to break into the very sanctum sanctorum – not for tobacco or such other few purchasable properties as we had, but in order to profane the Hall and remove some of its world-famous (if not readily convertible) jewels. To this end the miscreants broke their way through the rear door, only to find themselves faced by another and wholly unbreakable door leading aloft to the treasure chamber they were seeking. Then they ingeniously beat their way through a plaster wall which they assumed would lead them to the staircase, squeezed through the orifice – and then found themselves not in the stairway, but in a mysterious vertical chute again blocked off from aloft so fully that they could go no further. It was almost the last of the "raids" of that somewhat rowdy period now well buried and almost forgotten.

On three occasions the Alpha of New York faced disaster far worse than the raids of worldlings which always could be beaten off, and worse even than the financial threats which harass the Society like the rest of mankind. For on those occasions the threat was to existence itself, with membership reduced to one. In those difficult times less hardy fraternities died and some of them never were revived. But on each occasion the devotion of the one youth in the active Chapter of Sigma Phi, and of comrades from other Chapters, and of determined alumni in and beyond the community combined to keep the flame glowing. The first such test came in the time of the unforgettable Nicholas Van Vranken Franchot, when he alone maintained the flame for over a year, in 1873-74. His own recital of the event, written for an earlier issue of the Catalogue explains: "The class of 1871 graduated seven Sigs and at the Commencement period W. C. McCamus and myself were initiated. We were the only active members for about a

year and a half. Then we initiated Frank P. Wemple. McCamus and Wemple did not finish the college course and left during the early part of 1873. After they left, William C. Duell was initiated in 1873, but he did not graduate, only staying about a year, and I was left the only active member for over a year. During the period I was in college we had weekly meetings on Tuesday nights. Many times I went there alone. Whether I was careful enough to record all the meetings or not I am not sure, but I know I considered it my Sig duty to be there. Some of the alumni would sometimes come."

The next year brought a swift and memorable revival, with Franchot and the alumni initiating a large delegation including the great names of Alexander Duane, David B. Paige, William D. Maxon, Frederick Bidleman and others, and close behind them came that noble group led by Oscar H. Rogers, William Ward Britton, DeLancey W. Watkins and Edward Ten Eyck Lansing, without whom the conventions would not have been nearly so glorious.

That mid-seventy famine was succeeded by plenty, but that in turn by another famine coincident with the college's own acute troubles, and at length, in 1884, William Gibson Gilmour alone remained. Like Nick Franchot in his time, he too kept the Flame glowing until help should come, not this time from Union itself, but from the faithful Alpha of Vermont. Two of that Chapter's members, John M. Cantwell and Charles Lester Barstow, gave up their Burlington obligations, entered Union and graduated from it, after having joined Billy Gilmour in restoring the Chapter to proper size and strength.

There was one other famine, this time brought on by World War II when one by one the active Chapters went off to war and The Place itself was leased by the College as a dormitory. In 1943-4 the Chapter again drooped as close to extinction as in 1884, with Gordon Newell, '43, the only survivor on the campus. But soon Robert Potter, also of '43, returned to college and these two together maintained the Flame a little dimmed but not obliterated. "We often went to the conclave room" reports Newell "to read the records and to plan for the future." In February, 1945, they initiated two neophytes, and in the fall three more, and when the boys came back from the war they found their

hoped-for welcome. So rapidly did they rally and so eagerly did they labor together that a single year restored the interrupted glory of The Place, renovated and greatly beautified, welcoming as in other years the Sigs of all times and all chapters.

Those three danger-filled periods so bravely passed were unmistakable times of crisis and thus surely they capture attention, but there were other critical periods less sharp in outline and hence not so well remembered, save by those who experienced them. Of these the Alpha of New York had its share in those middle decades of its life when the college itself suffered from a fantastically inept financial management. Repeatedly the Chapter was reduced, not to a single man, to be sure, but to only a handful and at times to a state of deep discouragement. This was particularly true just after the turn of the century. But large needs sometimes produce great remedies, as if by magic. Those who were there in the days of Howard Opdvke will always feel sure that he came to us by some sort of magic brewed over the fires of the Alpha of Massachusetts, from which he came to take a Union College professorship. More hilly than almost any other of his day he was the very incarnation of Sigma Phi, with such beauty of mind and sweetness of spirit as still in long retrospect command a wondering admiration. His labors for the active Chapter individually and collectively were untiring. He had the gift, for all his gentleness, of rousing sluggish natures to abnormal performance. He kept in College youths who certainly would otherwise have failed, and thus influenced them all their lives. His own perfection of manners and morals at first startled the recklessly over-rugged, and then began their transformation to something faintly approaching his own lofty standard. In his tragically short life he did more, one would say, to sustain an ailing Chapter than any other Sig of his day, and to improve the hearts of men who came under his spell. In dying he left from his small estate a hind to help the generations he never saw. God grant more men like Howard Opdvke to the Alpha, and to the Society, and to a dark and needy world.

More recently, in the late 1960's and early '70 s, a wave of anti-fraternity sentiment swept campuses across the country, and Union, the "Mother of Fraternities," was no exception. Again, chapters of less hardy fraternities died, but the Sigma Phi flame was

kindled anew. During the undergraduate days of the present chronicler a resurgence of spirit was awakened. Grades improved and traditions were revived; publication of the "Pepper Box" was re-instituted, and the bust of Peissner once again resides in the Chapter House as in former times. Most gratifying has been renewed interest among the young alumni, which has manifested itself most strikingly in recent years. During this period, and for almost 20 years from the late '50's to the early '70's, one man was a remarkable influence upon generations of Sigs. Taylor was cook, humorist and frequent advisor, and although never initiated, a true friend of Sigma Phi.

How many examples of Sigma Phi devotion spring to mind! The mention of these few tempts a chronicler to go on and on in a recital of men who have nobly influenced the Alpha and still do so. To Van Shanklin, Win Paige and those others who have lived in and near Schenectady — one can refer only in a group, so many were they and so loyal in their attendance at meetings and in their prompt response to pleas for advice and encouragement. Of those who live far away but who return time and time again on not too weary wing, no listing is needed, for they are known to all their comrades. To all whose sacrifices of one sort or another made possible the 1927 enlargement of The Place, its perpetual repair and refurnishing, its embellishment with books and paintings and silver and memorials, go abiding thanks, warmed by their own consciousness of deeds well done. Most recently, in 1969, following a bequest - which enabled a financially-troubled Brotherhood to pay off an old mortgage debt, the memory of Wolcott Calkins II was honored by re-dedicating the front parlor, later the Modern Room, now the Calkins Room.

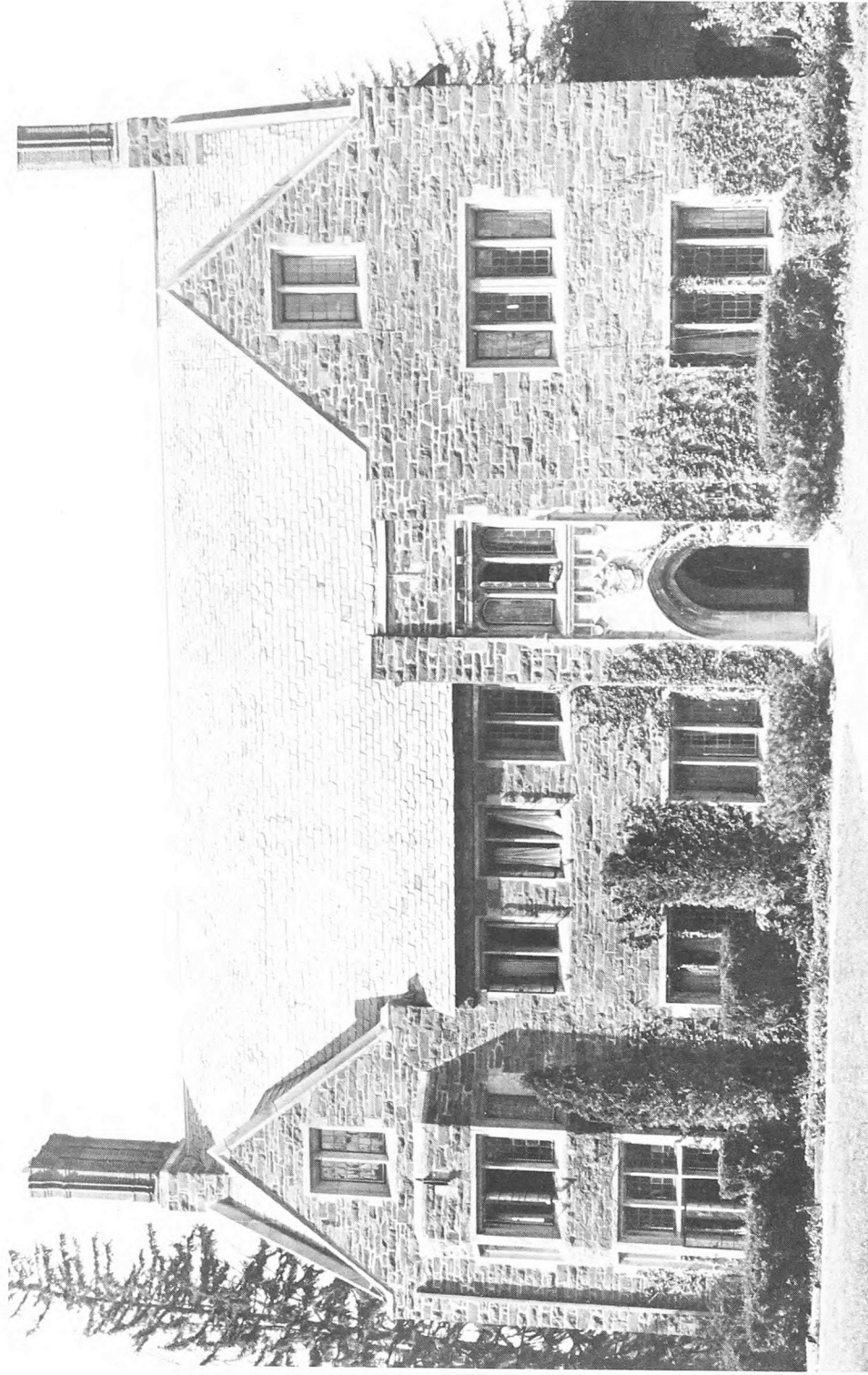
In its alumni is the proof of the Society's immortality and a large part of its justification. If any skeptics among the worldlings still exist, let their doubts be cast aside. The enormous success of the Sesquicentennial Celebration, held at the Alpha of New York on the weekend of March Fourth, bears witness to the vitality of the Sigma Phi. This important event brought 250 people to Schenectady and to Union College, some from great distance, to commemorate our founding. The presence of brothers from each of our chapters, alumni and undergraduates alike, was a reminder that ours

is a society devoted to friendship, and that our legacy and thrice-illustrious heritage are steadfast and eternal. On two successive days, with Len Kagan presiding, the Hall of the Alpha was filled to overflowing. A most memorable conclave on Friday was followed by an initiation and banquet on Saturday unlike any ever held before. One hundred and fifty years after the Founding a new generation of Sigs was brought forth to keep the altar fires burning, the newest link in an ancient chain which justifies our motto: *Esto Perpetua*.

Can anyone doubt that the old boys of 1827 did not set up an undergraduate club for their own amusement but, as the archives reveal so impressively, an altar of lasting friendship. To it high-minded youths could confidently repair as undergraduates, and there learn the way toward a richer life than would exist without it. To it those same spirits return in maturity, eager to see who have succeeded them as acolytes. Of it they think as old men, rejoicing that the same flame still burns on the same altar. God bless the Sigma Phi, and long live the Alpha.







BETA OF NEW YORK—HAMILTON COLLEGE

**BETA OF NEW YORK**

*1831*

**HAMILTON COLLEGE**

**Clinton, N. Y.**

*Founded in 1793*

**FOUNDERS**

CHARLES N. ROWLEY

JOHN COCHRANE

CORNELIUS HENRY BRYSON

SOLOMON PADDOCK ALLEN

*From the Alpha of New Yor*

## **BETA OF NEW YORK**

THE Sigma Phi Society in 1827 already had an intercollegiate aura. Among its members were six men who had transferred to Union from other colleges: one each from Hampden-Sidney, Williams, Brown, Waterville (now Colby), and two from Hamilton.

The Sigs of 1827 were a brilliant group. Fifteen out of twenty-four became members of Phi Beta Kappa. Every man of the other nine, except one, became a doctor, a lawyer, or a minister. There were many from each group who had distinguished careers in life. The high standard of individual merit established at the very start by the Alpha has been a goal for all Chapters ever since.

There were two more Hamilton men who became Sigs before there was any Sigma Phi Chapter at Hamilton. It was probable that four ex-Hamilton men having become Sigs helped, but it was John Cochrane, 1829, who brought Sigma Phi to Hamilton.

It is fitting therefore to pause a moment and review his record briefly. A lawyer from 1834 to 1898, long active in public affairs; Member of Congress, Atty. General of N. Y. State, acting mayor of New York City and a brigadier general in the Civil War. Certainly, he was a founder in whom any group might justly take pride.

In September 1829, Cochrane who in 1828 had left Hamilton to enter Union, returned to Hamilton, entering the Junior Class. He roomed with Thomas Treadwell Davis, son of President Davis of the College. Cochrane speedily convinced his roommate of the worth of Sigma Phi.

Negotiations were opened with the Alpha at Union and in July, 1831, Bowley, Bryson, and Allen of the Alpha of New York came to Clinton and joined with Cochrane in founding the Beta of New York. Fifteen undergraduates were initiated in 1831 and twenty more in the next three years. Of the thirty-five, thirteen became lawyers (including several judges of the higher courts and two members of Congress), six became clergymen, three physicians and three teachers; Litchfield was the founder of the observatory bearing his name and Shearman, as State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Michigan, helped greatly in keeping fraternities a part of student life at

Ann Arbor, when the first faculty had determined to exclude them.

But despite this propitious start the most serious crisis in the history of the Beta occurred very shortly. There were only two men initiated in 1835, and neither of them was graduated. There was only one Sig graduated from Hamilton in each of the years '35, '36, and '37. In those same three years, eight Beta Sigs were graduated from Union.

It was the era of strong national agitation against all secret societies. The college faculty placed a ban on any society the constitution of which had not been submitted to them for approval. Sigma Phi refused to permit its Constitution to be inspected and was consequently held for some years under faculty disfavor. Subsequently, faculty interference ceased, however, and the Chapter established itself in that strong position at Hamilton which it has maintained for more than one hundred years.

The previous references to the Alpha of New York might properly be included in the history of any Sig Chapter, because without the genius and enthusiasm of the men of Union there would have been no Sigma Phi. Their vision was responsible for the beginning of the American college fraternity system as distinct from local societies, since the Beta was the first branch in another college. The benefits of the system have been so great that there is glory enough for all – Kappa Alpha for having conceived the idea of the college fraternity, Delta Phi, the third member of the “Union Triad” for adherence to like ideals. Alpha Delta Phi (at Hamilton) and Psi Upsilon (at Union) complete the roll of the oldest five. Alpha Delta Phi established the first Chapter outside of New York and New England and in 1837 had seven branch chapters – more than the other four fraternities combined. It was following, not only the high ideals, but the specified objective of becoming national as set forth by its founder, Samuel Eells. In so doing it pioneered at eleven colleges and was a major factor in the early rapid growth of the fraternity system.

This is of particular interest to the Beta, not alone as its earliest and worthy rivals, but also because – as Baird's Manual of American College Fraternities puts it – the founding of the Beta “probably resulted one year later in the founding of the Alpha Delta Phi.”

This seems to make a prima facie case for the theory that Alpha Delta Phi owes a debt to the Beta. Be that as it may, the Beta is heavily indebted to Alpha Delta Phi. Oren Root, 1833, Alpha Delta Phi, was the father of one of the most illustrious Sig families and Henry Platt Bristol, 1846, Alpha Delta Phi, of still another.

The record of the Beta like that of all the older chapters of Sigma Phi is illumined by many shining family names, and third and fourth generation Sigs are becoming numerous. Successive generations saw great changes in the physical plant of the college – improvements by gifts for which Sigs were responsible were more than from any other group – and in the facilities in which Sigs might meet regularly. Until 1850 the home of the Beta was in College buildings. In that year the Chapter rented an entire story in a new building on College Street. These modest quarters, “over Watsons’ Drug Store,” were occupied for twenty years.

The first “Hall of the Beta” was built in 1871, largely through the devotion of D. Mandeville ’45, and with the assistance of C. H. Duell ’67, who supervised and controlled the work. It is located on College Street in Clinton and now serves as Town Library. For fifty years that Sig headquarters, visited regularly every day, was over a mile from the Campus. In addition, during this period, the successive eating places for the Sigs all required trudging up and down the “Hill.”

The Second Sig Hall was built on the Campus in 1900. This 60 x 60 striking stone building was planned and its construction supervised by M. V. Strvker ’67. There was no dining room since college policy forbade eating in the Hall. From then on, however, the Sigs did eat together on Campus. Originally only two men roomed in this Hall. The 30 x 60 great Hall on the first floor with its high ceiling was a splendid room for entertaining. The conclave room of equal size and two stories high fulfilled its function admirably. It was expected that this building would serve Beta for a long time, but on December 11, 1915, it was totally destroyed by fire. Many portraits of Sigs were destroyed – a serious loss – but the Archives were saved.

The present Hall was completed and occupied in the Spring of 1917. It is a good example of the skill of architect C. B. Newkirk, C 03, whose work has added much to the beauty of the Campus. The Building Committee, with R. U. Sherman, 00, as Chairman, and the Architect, had a difficult problem. They fully foresaw a change in the use of the Hall, but it had to be designed in such a way as to receive the approval of the College authorities, under the old restrictive lease, which limited occupancy to four men. Although the result was a tribute to their ingenuity, of course, it was early recognized that future changes would be necessary.

Subsequently the lease was so modified as to permit the Chapter to eat in the Hall. About a dozen men were crowded into existing bedrooms. In 1924- 25, moreover, the building was altered to provide additional bedrooms. Living quarters for the house staff were also provided by extending the building. Further alterations were made in 1946, changes which afforded better opportunity for study and general comfort for the large group living in the Hall.

The total cost of the present building and furnishing was approximately \$150,000. At current prices it would doubtlessly cost much more to replace. The gifts, large and small, which made possible these successive buildings testify to the matchless loyalty of members of the Beta. So do the gifts which established and enlarged the Stocking Fund, the Beta Fund, and the Soper Fund, now totaling about \$40,000.

Since the Chapter moved onto the Campus there have been two especially notable gatherings. The first was a splendid celebration of the seventy- fifth anniversary of the Beta. The next was the hundredth anniversary, celebrated on June 13 and 14, 1931. Five brothers initiated during the first fifty years were on hand. Despite conflicting dates limiting the attendance from other Chapters, there were more than 150 Sigs present and many Sig sisters. Friday evening there was dancing and visiting at the Sig Hall. Saturday there was a luncheon at the Yahnundasis Club. One of the brightest spots of the occasion was Mrs. William N. Bristol's response to the toast, "Sig Sisters." The banquet was Saturday evening. For Sunday luncheon, as was the custom for many years, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Rogers were at home to all Sig families and friends. The

usual Sunday night feast and sing brought to a close a memorable weekend.

For more than a hundred years Sig songs have given great joy to Sigs. The Beta had added substantially to this storehouse of song. "Oh! Why Must We Part" the first known Sig song was written by Henry Spencer, '43. Horace Mack's ('54) "There is a Little Valley" is still a great favorite of all chapters. From the full heart of Oren Root, Jr., '52, poured the immortal fourth verse of "Never Forget." For those who knew him, the very soul of "Square" Root is crystal clear in "The Love that Lasteth", "Prexy" Stryker's ('67) enthusiastic voicing of his own and other songs will be remembered by every Beta Sig who heard him. For those not so fortunate, "Oh, Sunshine Days," and "Esto Perpetua" will continue throughout the years to give tongue to the fervor that finds fitting expression in the singing of Sig songs. After seventy- two years came John Gilman Clark, '03 – to delight with piano and organ. The beautiful words of Mrs. Bradford's, "In Memoriam" were revitalized by his music.

To do justice to all those who have been Beta Sigs through the Chapter's 146 years within so short a sketch as this is, to be sure, impossible. It is proper, however, to refer briefly to proportionately more of the older brothers whose biographies are not reprinted in this catalogue. It has been necessary, therefore, to shorten or eliminate references to many later brothers living or dead. But since this catalogue will for many years be the most accessible permanent record for all Sigs it seems appropriate to summarize special phases of the story of the Beta and at least to list those who have brought honor to Sigma Phi as well as themselves by their attainments in certain important college activities. There must always be kept in mind, however, that many of those who were not particularly outstanding in undergraduate activities, curricular or extracurricular, and who did not win any of the more widely recognized rewards of success, nevertheless added greatly to the life of the active Chapter when in College and to helpful, friendly fellowship among Sigs in after life.



Through the years Beta undergraduates have on average won a larger than proportionate share of scholastic, rhetorical, athletic and other recognized undergraduate honors. A large number have continued active in support of Sigma Phi and Hamilton. After-college records confirm that able men have been frequent during the entire life of the Beta. Here are some of many available specific illustrations to support these generalizations.

Of the top honors as then rated from 1855 to 1893 Sigs won nearly one for each eight graduating against a general fraternity average of one for fifteen.

Phi Beta Kappa was established at Hamilton in 1870. For nearly seventy years Sigs averaged more than one key a year. Four delegations '71, '79, '80, and '86 won three each. The Sigs of the class of 1905 topped the list with four graduates, four keys.

Sig Valedictorians have averaged about one for each eight years, Clark Prize winners one for ten, Salutatorians one for eleven, Prize Debate winners one for seven.

In athletics captaincy of football has been considered the top athletic honor at Hamilton and as undergraduate athletic honors have been omitted from the biographies in this catalogue, here is the list since 1900, averaging about five years apart: Esty Stowell, Dave Peet, Howard Bramley, Don Sidle, Fee La Force, Van Pope, Dick Fowler, Sherwood Chatfield, Mac Bristol, Roy Julie, and Hank Formon, captain for two years. An interesting high spot in athletics was reached by the class of 1906 senior class year with captains of all teams except one.

During the twentieth century membership in Pentagon, the senior honor society, has come to be the most highly regarded undergraduate honor. Sigs averaged one a year for the first twenty years. This was exceeded in 1947-48 by the election of five Sigs.

The most representative recognition for an alumnus of Hamilton is election to the Board of Trustees. It was 25 years after the founding of the Beta before a Sig was so elected, but since then there has always been a Sig on the Board.

Being a Trustee of the College seems to have been for Sigs an invitation to longevity.

Ten Sigs averaged over 32 years as Trustees. The longest term of service was 54 years. Because of the number already members, the Sigs on the Board frequently felt it necessary to hold back before voting for the election of additional Sigs. Despite this conservative attitude, so many Sigs have done so much for the College that for the last 50 years Sigs have averaged nearly one-quarter the total membership of the Board. This unique record strikingly illustrates that Sigs of all Chapters have long demonstrated by their actions their belief that service to Alma Mater is service to Sigma Phi.

President Stryker did more than any other man of his generation and perhaps of any generation for Hamilton College. Oren Root, '52 gave unstintingly of himself to three Sig Chapters, the Beta, the Alpha of Michigan and the Epsilon.

Elihu Root—a man of highest character—was an outstanding international figure for generations. His was a rare intellect and he used it to great purpose in service to the nation both in domestic and foreign affairs and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Many times he gave testimony of how dear Sigma Phi was to him. James Sherman, as Vice President of the United States, held the highest elective office ever held by a Sig. Sherman won his place in public life not by intellectual power, but by the helpful, friendly services he rendered to many. He was a living example of Sig spirit actually at work. These two are selected for special mention because it is believed that on account of their high position their example will carry exceptional weight with future generations of Sigs. Philip Jessup with the rank of Ambassador is now representing our country on the council of the United Nations.

Three additional names are selected because they were the three Beta Sigs who have acted as Chairman of the Standing and Advisory Committee and, as such, titular head of the Society, Harry Coles Bates, Harry Kimball and George Sicard, who also served with characteristic enthusiasm and diligence as General Secretary.

Loyal as always to higher calls, Sigma Phi has done its part well in the crises of our national life. In the Civil War, twenty-eight Beta members served in the military forces. Of these, Spencer, '43, lost his life at sea; Turner, '61, was killed in action. Emmet, '54, after being specially commended for gallantry in battle, Law, '35, Cowden, '45, and Spencer, '47, died in service. Among those with unusual records were C. A. Johnson, '43, bvt. brig. gen. for gallantry; Colonels Barto, '44, Jeenney, '66; bvt. col.; G. S. Hastings, '52, J. E. Lee, '55, G. H. Starr, '57, bvt. maj. H. P. Lloyd, '56, and Capt. Emmons Clark, '44, afterwards Col. of Seventh Regiment of New York for twenty years.

In World War I, sixty-six from the Beta (an even larger proportion of its living members) served with the combatant forces. Many other Beta men performed valuable war work as civilians. Fortunately not a life was lost in service, though nearly half saw service abroad.

In World War II, as in World War I, the Beta had a large representation, both in the armed services and in war work in civil life. This time four of the finest younger members gave their all. Their records appear hereinafter in the memorials.

For the first time in the history of the Beta, because of World War II, the active Chapter ceased to function and for a period of three years no new members were initiated. With the resumption of regular college activities and with a very large college body, there came sudden and extraordinary growth featured by the return of many Sigs from war service. Married men were numerous for several years, eleven being the maximum. Eighteen men were initiated in 1947 exceeding the previous record of thirteen made in 1847. For the first time the active Chapter exceeded forty. The situation was and is a challenge to both undergraduates and alumni.

The house continued to flourish during the fifties, bringing much recognition to the membership of the thrice illustrious. Sig consistently provided the best of the hockey squad, including three successive holders of the high scoring title.

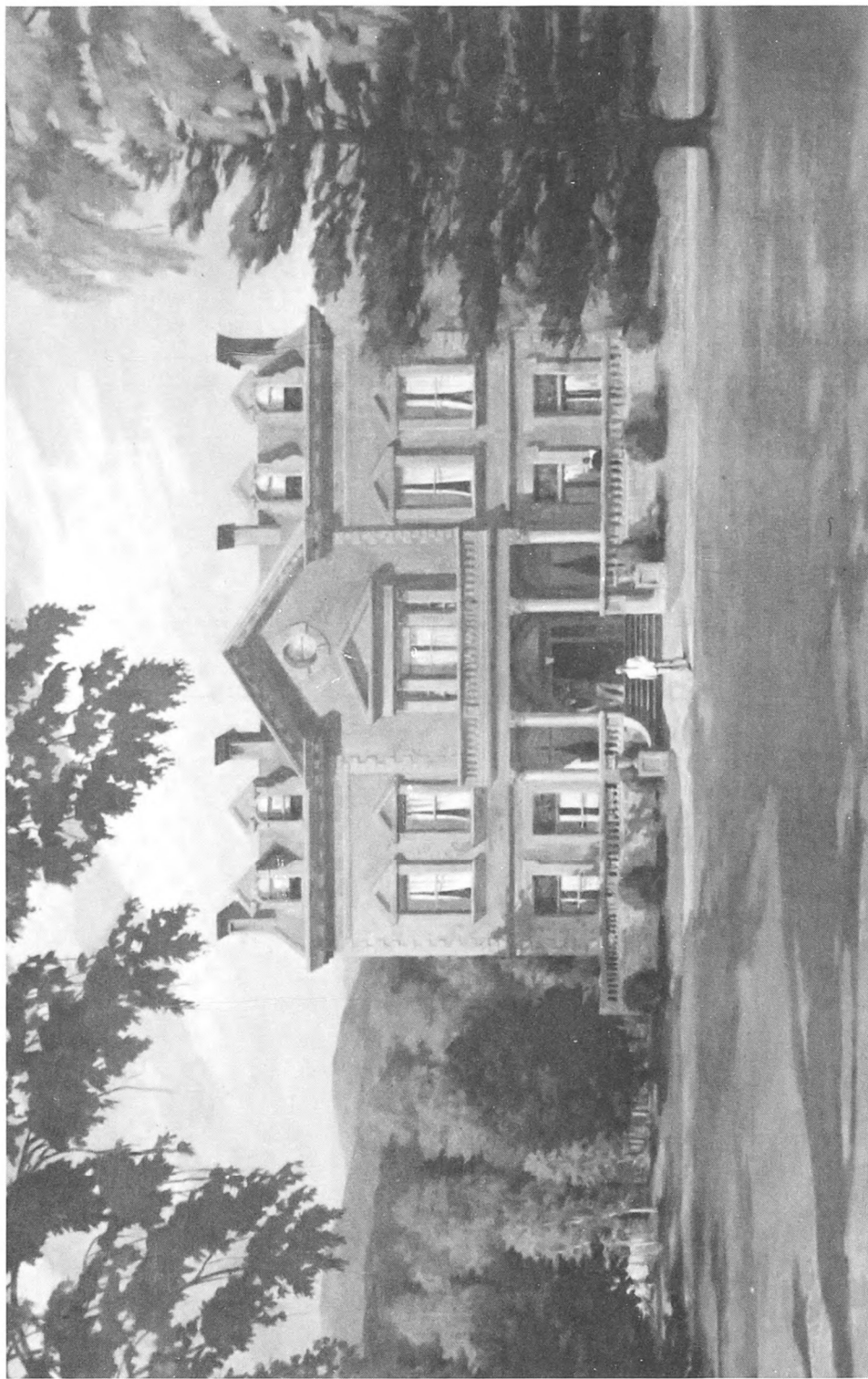
While fraternities became a less popular phenomenon on college campuses across the country, Sig maintained its place of primacy on the hill. The sixties witnessed changing attitudes among college students, and Hamilton College was not totally removed from these changes. However, the strength of the alumni support prevailed, and the house reopened in 1971 after a two year period when the building could not be used. The House was completely refurbished in 1971 at a cost of \$50,000 and the continuity provided by the Beta alumni allowed the house to return to its designated role as the best fraternity on the hill.

The Beta is happy to record that its second century finds the early ideals of Sigma Phi, brought from old Union, still dearly cherished. Such a catalogue as this must primarily set forth the outward and the visible evidence, but we know that more vital are the inward and the invisible. They are of the essence.

Said Elihu Root, "Sigma Phi is of the Spirit." Continued James Van Rensselaer of the Delta: "in the practice of Friendship, Love, and Truth is begotten the Spirit of Sigma Phi.

**"While each pulse with life is beating And our gatherings bring back youth,  
Brothers dear we'll still be greeting Praising Friendship, Love and Truth.  
For one hundred years they've loved thee, All true sons of Sigma Phi.  
Thru the untold years we'll love thee We, thy sons in Sigma Phi."**





ALPHA OF MASSACHUSETTS—WILLIAMS COLLEGE

# ALPHA OF MASSACHUSETTS

*1834*

## WILLIAMS COLLEGE

Williamstown, Mass.

*Founded in 1793*

### FOUNDERS

LYSANDER HARVEY BROWN

JOHN SKELLIE

DUNCAN KENNEDY

*From the Alpha of New York*

ASAHEL CLARK KENDRICK

THOMAS WILLIAMS SEWARD

*From the Beta of New York*

## ALPHA OF MASSACHUSETTS

The Alpha of Massachusetts sprang to birth in the bright Sig heaven in 1834, and for over a century and a quarter provided warm friendship for its members and strong leadership on the Williams campus. Finally, in 1968, 134 years after its founding, as a result of a decision by the College Trustees, the Alpha – and all other Williams fraternities – ceased all undergraduate activity. This present history of the Chapter, following precedent, draws heavily upon the histories appearing in the *Catalogues* of 1915, 1927, and 1949, which record only the happy and triumphant years.

The beginning was propitious enough.

Early in 1834 a local society called the Phi Alpha, which had been established the previous autumn at Williams College, made application to the Alpha of New York for a charter from Sigma Phi. After several months' consideration, the request was favorably entertained, and Abram Baldwin Olin, Bushnell White, and Samuel Wilkeson, having been duly empowered to complete the union of the Williams society with Sigma Phi, went to Schenectady for that purpose. The successful consummation of the proposed union was effected.

The officers of the Alpha of New York for the institution of the new chapter were Lysander H. Brown, John Skellie, and Duncan Kennedy. Asahel C. Kendrick was the Beta's delegate, but was unable to be present; and that chapter was represented by Thomas Williams Seward.

Soon after their return to Williamstown the three newly initiated brothers associated with themselves their companions in the Phi Alpha and some other students of Williams, eleven in all, and the Alpha of Massachusetts entered upon its hundred and thirty-four year career of prosperity and good fellowship. For some time after its foundation, the meetings were held in the rooms of members, and occasionally in private houses in the village. Later they were held in a chamber secured for the purpose, in a residence on what is now South Street. Very soon after its institution, however, the Chapter leased and furnished the upper story of the Union House, then standing on Main Street where now the Methodist Church stands.



In these apartments its meetings were held for many years; but in the summer of 1857, the Society carried out a plan which it had long been considering and built a brick house of its own, on land which had been bought for the purpose on Spring Street; this is believed to have been the first chapter-house erected by any Greek-letter fraternity in the country. This house was comparatively elegant for its day. In September, 1871, through the liberality of its graduate members, the Chapter was enabled to buy an estate in the heart of the College grounds, containing nearly four acres, on which there stood a frame dwelling. This was remodeled and adapted to the purposes of the Society except that it lacked space for conclave purposes. The former Chi Psi Chapter hall accordingly was taken over and used until the autumn of 1876, when occupation of the old Spring Street lodge was resumed. In the autumn of 1879 it became possible to return to Sigma Phi Place.

The last meeting of the alumni members at Commencement, 1883, was one of peculiar interest in the annals of the Chapter. It was decided to begin at once the erection of a new chapter-house which should be worthy of Sigma Phi. As the Chapter hind already gathered was not sufficient to carry out this plan in accordance with the designs proposed by the trustees, subscriptions were requested, and in the course of the evening between nineteen- and twenty-thousand dollars were pledged for the purpose.

To provide a site for the new house, the old house was sold and removed.

On March 22, 1884, just half a century from the first step taken towards the foundation of the Alpha, the erection of the new house was begun. The first meeting therein, including an initiation, was held on the 11th of the following October, with a large number of graduates in attendance.

At Commencement, 1884, the Alpha formally commemorated the semicentennial of its existence. Thomas Nelson, WT835, presided at the public exercises, which were held in the College Chapel, Charles E. Fitch, W'1851, delivering an oration and Edward G. Benedict, V'1877, a poem. Representatives of nearly all the chapters were present, and congratulations and pleasant attentions from alumni, and particularly from the other

Greek-letter societies of the College, expressing their kindly feeling, were most generous, and were gratefully accepted. During the banquet which closed the evening, and still later at its home, the Chapter was visited and serenaded by two of the older societies of the College, and when the festivities closed, the eastern sky was rosy with auspicious promises of a new half-century.

The new home stood only until January 7, 1893, when it was destroyed by fire, together with many priceless records and memorabilia. Prompt steps to rebuild were taken. At this time the Van Rensselaer Manor House in Albany – its original grandeur now compromised by surrounding railroad tracks and other impedimenta of the industrial revolution the House long pre-dated – was scheduled for destruction. Through the generous assistance of Marcus T. Reynolds, W'86, a young architect connected with the Van Rensselaer family, some of the stonework and timbers were brought to Williamstown and a new structure erected, much resembling the original Manor House and hilly incorporating its dignity and charm. Until the new structure was ready for occupancy, in September 1894, the Chapter occupied various other houses in town. The formal opening was held May 30, 1895, with a joyous housewarming reunion. Of Sigma Phi Place, with its majestic house, sweeping lawn, and elm-lined drive, the Alpha has been justly proud.

The seventy-fifth anniversary of the Chapter's existence was celebrated at Commencement, 1909. It was marked particularly by a luncheon wherein many Sig Sisters participated; a banquet enlivened by an address by Charles E. Fitch and a poem by Edward G. Benedict, who had each spoken at the semi-centennial twenty-five years before; and a conclave; as well as by congratulatory visits, with serenades, from other societies, whose courtesies were similarly acknowledged.

With America's entrance into World War I, fraternity activity was, of course, severely curtailed. There was no initiation in 1918. At Commencement that year, only two undergraduates were on hand to welcome five alumni returning for the Chapter's annual reunion, and following Commencement these two enlisted.

When peace returned, however, the Chapter resumed its illustrious career.

The Centennial of the Alpha of Massachusetts was celebrated with the 107th Convention, at Williamstown on Friday, June 15, 1934.

The ceremony opened with a conclave presided over by W. S. B. Hopkins, W'90, and was followed by a dinner held in the gymnasium with Col. George F. Perkins, W'91, acting as toastmaster. The attendance numbered about 125.

A description of what the college looked like 100 years before; the achievements of the members, and a message of greeting from Elihu Root, HI 860, are embodied in the address of Frederic T. Wood, W'97, reprinted in the 1934 *Flame*.

In the meantime, various "house-keeping" problems were accumulating, reflecting the deferral of maintenance so characteristic of the Great Depression. With support from the Trustees of the Chapter, other alumni, and the undergraduate members, a massive renovation program was undertaken. The refurbished main hall was finished with wall paper duplicating the paper from the original Manor House, which is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

A legend over the fireplace in the hall read: "December 21, '39. This hall completed through the generosity of Anne Parrish Corliss in memory of Charles A. Corliss, '90, and Marcus T. Reynolds, '90."

Pearl Harbor came less than two years after this renovation, and College life, including fraternity activity, was completely disrupted by the national needs of World War II. The Chapter House was placed at the disposal of Williams, although never used by the College. In 1943, only one man was initiated into the Alpha; in 1944 and 1945, none.

With the return of peace, and the return of veterans to the campus, joining their

younger brothers whose education had not been interrupted by the War, the Alpha resumed activities, and future prospects appeared bright.

In 1956, as the Chapter was well on its way to the 125 year mark, the undergraduates pledged two black students. While black members were not unknown, even then, in the ranks of major American fraternities, such members were still rare, so that the Chapter could claim, once again, to be demonstrating leadership. This leadership provoked considerable controversy, however, both among alumni of the Alpha and among alumni of other Chapters. After considerable discussion, this controversy was resolved in the spirit of Friendship, Love, and Truth, and all pledged students were duly initiated.

In 1959 the Alpha celebrated the 125th anniversary of its founding. Long before then, however, storm clouds were gathering which threatened that the future might not be as bright as the past.

The basic problem was not in the Chapter, but in the growing hostility of the College administration and faculty — and, ultimately, of many alumni — toward the fraternity system as such. It was always difficult, at a distance, to understand the reasons for this hostility. The stature of the College was growing. Applications were many times greater than the number which could be accepted. The performances of these carefully selected young men, in the classroom and in the athletic and extra-curricular programs of Williams, were invariably outstanding.

Further, the undergraduates devoted much effort to adapting the fraternity system to the needs of the “new” Williams. There was widespread campus feeling that any student wishing to join a fraternity should be able to do so. The undergraduates ultimately worked out an ingenious program of divided bids, so that “total opportunity” would not mean that the strong houses got stronger while the weak got weaker.

Yet through all this period of fine achievements by the undergraduates, and of earnest efforts to amend the fraternity system, hostility in other quarters was growing. What had begun as concern for the situation of the non-fraternity student, a question which had surfaced as a campus problem as far back as 1927, grew to embrace a general antagonism toward selective societies. The faculty complained that the fraternities were interfering with the "totality of the Williams experience. The Administration, legally unable to cross fraternity thresholds to enforce discipline, complained of problems of serious misconduct in the houses. Various alumni, perhaps returning less frequently than in pre-War days and thus having less close contact with the undergraduates (and perhaps being more easily shocked than in their own undergraduate days) complained that the fraternities were confusing liberty with license.

In 1962, The Angevine Committee, made up of Williams alumni, most of whom were fraternity men, surveyed the fraternity situation. The Committee recommended that the College take over responsibility for feeding and housing all undergraduates. The College Trustees accepted these recommendations. Fraternities were allowed to continue as associations, but by 1968 even this tolerance was abandoned, and fraternities were outlawed from the Williams campus.

As mentioned as long ago as the 1927 *Catalogue*, the general attitude of students and alumni has for years been: "Williams first." Given this attitude, while abolition of the fraternities aroused wide-spread protest, there was little attempt at effective resistance; very few, for example, stopped contributing to the Alumni Fund.

The "Williams first" attitude was hilly exemplified by the actions of the Trustees of the Alpha, and of the other fraternities on the campus. Following the adoption of the Angevine recommendations, and with the approval of the membership, the House was leased to the College. In 1969, following the abolition of fraternities, the Trustees agreed, subject to membership approval, to sell the Chapter House to the College, for one dollar, with the College obligated to maintain it, and with title to revert to the Trustees if fraternities returned to the Williams campus within ten years. In accordance with the "Williams first" tradition, this policy received the preponderant if reluctant

endorsement of the membership.

In 1973, the College asked the Trustees of the Alpha for permission to tear down the House to make room for a new library building. Averse to destroying this graceful structure, so long an ornament of the campus and with historic roots in another age, the Williams administration had explored the possibility of moving the building, but found that costs were prohibitive. Once again, the "Williams first" policy prevailed, both among the Chapter Trustees and among the alumni who solidly approved their recommendations. The College was authorized to raze the House, with the obligation to provide another, suitable, structure should fraternities return within the original ten-year period.

On June 2, 1973, with demolition already well along and with fraternal memorabilia stored in a local warehouse preliminary to delivery to the officers of the national Sigma Phi, the Trustees of the Alpha held their last meeting in the House the Chapter had so triumphantly built seventy-nine years before. Interestingly enough, an Albany group, the Van Rensselaer Mansion Committee, had obtained from the College rights to the stonework and timber which had come from the original Mansion. The Committee plans, money permitting, to resurrect the Manor House in its old locale.

The membership of the Alpha hereby recognizes the devoted and unheralded leadership that Al Vinal and Jim Hoyt gave during this very difficult period.

This history of the Alpha has been an honorable one, as attested by the leadership records of its members, both in undergraduate years and in subsequent careers. The Chapter has provided Williams with valedictorians, salutatorians, and other Honors graduates. Our members have been well represented in the ranks of Phi Beta Kappa and of Gargoyle, the senior honor society, and have been football captains and *Record* editors, as well as leaders in other aspects of the extensive athletic and extra-curricular programs of the College.

Our members have similarly achieved distinction in the outside world. It may be improper to speak of the living membership, but we may certainly remember with pride the achievements of Brothers whom death hath borne away. It is, of course,

impossible to enumerate all who have been successful in the eyes of the world, but such a listing must certainly include Abram B. Olin, Representative in Congress and Judge of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia; Bushnell White, one of the most brilliant lawyers at the Cleveland bar; Samuel Wilkeson, journalist and promotor of the Northern Pacific Railway Company; Edward W. B. Canning, teacher, litterateur, and poet of the Sigma Phi; Israel W. Andrews, President of Marietta College; Addison H. Laflin, Representative in Congress and Naval Officer at New York; Henry Fowler, eminent as a professor and preacher; Freeman J. Bumstead, internationally known in the medical profession; William Stark, author of some of the most beautiful songs of Sigma Phi; William R. Dimmock, Master of Adams Academy, among the first of Grecians; Samuel Burnham, editor, author, and poet; Thomas Nelson, Sr., Thomas M. North, Charles A. Davison and W. S. B. Hopkins, Sr., able lawyers; William D. Whitney, most eminent scholar, philologist, author and teacher; John J. Ingalls, brilliant lawyer, senator and acting Vice-President of the United States; Henry M. Field, clergyman, editor, and author; William T. R. Marvin, publisher, author and scholar; Eugene M. Jerome, most loyal of Sigs; Wilhelmus Mynderse, devoted Sig and leader of the American Admiralty Bar; Eugene Delano, international banker, philanthropist, ever-faithful Sig; Stillman F. Westbrook, insurance executive; Marcus Tullius Reynolds, architect, who brought the Van Rensselaer House to Sigma Phi Place; Frederick Taylor Wood, industrialist, always in the service of Sigma Phi and of Williams College, of which he was a permanent Trustee; Cornelius Lynde, distinguished member of the Chicago bar; Anthony Martin Menkel, attorney and town planner; Max Brombacher Berking, textile executive and founding member of the Williams Club; Louis Hooker Palmer, transportation executive and historian of Sigma Phi; Bethuel Boyd Vincent Lvon, renowned physician; James Alexander Linen, Jr., financier and educator; Francis Bowes Sayre, noted diplomat, who left Bataan with MacArthur by submarine in World War II; Edwin Albert Fish, Irving Duncan Fish (long Dean of the Chapter), and James Berwick Forgan, distinguished financiers; Leonard Jacob II, international industrialist; Emerson Law Stone, physician, educator, and author; Alger Baldwin Chapman,

attorney and public servant; Ezra H. Ripple, III, insurance executive, Norman Hutton, Jr., securities broker, and Douglas Worth Oleott, financier, each a dedicated Trustee of the Alpha at the time of his death.

The Chapter contributed 47 of its members to the War for the Union, and of these Lewis Benedict fell in battle at Pleasant Hill, in 1864; Charles E. Halsey died in Baltimore, in 1862; Horace I. Hodges died in the service in Plymouth, N.C., in 1864; Henry Shaw Leonard sank in the monitor *Tecumseh*, in the battle of Mobile Bay; George A. Parker died of fever on the *De Soto*, in Portsmouth Harbor, in 1864; Edgar Philps fell in battle at Gaines' Mills, in 1862; Joshua Kennedy, an officer in the Confederate Army, fell in battle near Richmond in 1862. In the Spanish-American War the Chapter was represented by eight members.

In World War I, 118 members of the Alpha answered the call to service. Three of these gave the last full measure of devotion; Wilhelmus Mynderse Rice, Norman Delafield Dubois, Richard Ashley Blodgett.



World War II found 148 Williams Sigs in the service, of whom 108 were officers and 40 enlisted men. Seven of these men were killed in action or died in the service.

The names of the Chapter's initiates who met the supreme test and died for their country are: Lt. John H. Ballantine, Jr., Lt. Frank D.eCase, Jr., Lt. Duncan McL. Crane, Sam Adams Lvnde, Peter Prime, Lt. Charles Sefton and Sgt. William W. Skinner, Jr. With the active Chapter itself now gone, "Never Forget," born of the Civil War, takes on new and more poignant meaning for all who cherish the memory of the warm fellowship once found at Sigma Phi Place.

On September 13, 1975, Williams College dedicated its new Sawyer Library. In the new building there is prominently displayed a large mural of the former Chapter House. Beneath the mural is a bronze plaque which reads:

### **The Sigma Phi Fraternity House Williamstown 1895-1973**

**In grateful recognition of the gift made by the Sigma Phi Society of Williams College of this land and of its Fraternity House, which stood on this site from 1895 to 1973 and was known as the Van Rensselaer House.**

**The original Van Rensselaer Manor House was built by Patroon Stephen Van Rensselaer II in Albany, New York in 1765. It was demolished in 1893. The ornamental stones were numbered and these, together with some of its bricks and timbers, were moved to Williamstown and reconstructed as the Sigma Phi Fraternity House by Marcus T. Reynolds '90 in 1895.**



# **GAMMA OF NEW YORK**

*1835-1848*

**UNIVERSITY OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**(Now New York University)**

## **FOUNDERS**

**WILLIAM W. CAMPBELL**

**WILLIAM DWIGHT WATERMAN**

**AMOS GERALD HULL**

**DANIEL SMITH.**

**LEWIS JOHN WALKER BROWN**

**SAMUEL MOSES CRAWFORD**

**GILBERT CHICHESTER MONELL**

*From the Alpha of New York*

**GURDON HUNTINGTON**

*From the Beta of New York*

**AUGUSTUS WACKERHAGEN, JR.**

*From the Alpha of Massachusetts*

## **GAMMA OF NEW YORK**

THE history of the formation of the Gamma Chapter of New York is somewhat peculiar. In other colleges where Sigma Phi had established herself, she had gone by the invitation of undergraduates who were desirous of uniting themselves with her fortunes and had sought a charter from her hands. In the early days the power of granting this privilege was vested in the parent chapter, as it had been in the Phi Beta Kappa, some of whose ancient customs Sigma Phi seems to have adopted: but in the establishment of the Gamma in the University of the City of New York, the movement was initiated by resident graduates of the Society who were in attendance on the professional schools in that city, or who had but recently entered upon their professional life.

It appears from the Catalogue of 1838 that there were seventeen of these brothers who united in the preliminary steps to secure a charter, of whom all but one (Augustus Wackerhagen, Jr., of the Alpha of Massachusetts) were initiates of the Alpha of New York. Very soon, however, Guidon Huntington, who was at that time a student in Hamilton, but whose home was in New York City, and who was even then looking forward to entering the General Theological Seminary, became associated with his brothers in the movement, and his name is added in the Catalogue of 1841 to the others who petitioned for the charter.

As in previous cases, there was considerable delay between the inception of the plan in the Autumn of 1835, when the petition for a charter was signed (and from which time the Chapter dates its precedence), and the action of the parent Chapter, in the early spring of 1836, authorizing a charter to issue. The preparation and presentation of this charter were entrusted to Samuel Wilkeson, of the Alpha of Massachusetts (then the junior charter-member of Sigma Phi, having not very long before been initiated as one of the representatives of his chapter, at the Alpha of New York) and the traditions of that presentation are still preserved, although they cannot here be given.

The Gamma ceased its active life as a working chapter, by an edict from the Convention of March 4, 1848, exactly twelve years after its foundation. The chief reason

was the fact, well known to all, that the close associations of college life, as found in the other chapters, did not exist in the University; there were no dormitories, where the familiar intercourse of the students might ripen into a closer friendship; classmates saw but little of one another outside the cluster of recitation and lecture rooms, which filled the only College building. The field being thus limited, it is not surprising that occasionally the stricter rules of the older chapters were not closely followed, and under the broad construction which based itself on the fact that the Chapter had been established in a university, members were taken from the professional schools, as well as from the undergraduates; and the links which bound the University to the professional schools seem to have been remarkably flexible. *(Even the General Theological Seminary, and the College of Physicians and Surgeons, as well as Columbia College, which had no connection with the University discernible to the ordinary observer, supplied material for the Gamma's membership. Doubtless quality compensated for irregularity in these cases. This was entirely contrary to the laws of the Society, and doubtless had its influence on the subsequent course taken by the Convention.)*

In spite of all difficulties — some of which made themselves manifest almost immediately after the Chapter had been established — it was always the pride of the Gamma's membership that Sigma Phi has had no more loyal or devoted sons than were found among the initiates of the University of the City of New York.

One of these brothers, long deceased, who had assumed his vows more than seventy years before, at one time kindly consented to record his reminiscences of the companionship whose traditions are not forgotten, that his younger brothers might know something of them, and that we might thus preserve the record as made up by a contemporary. From these reminiscences of A. Oakey Hall, the committee have inserted below as much as seemed proper to be given to the world; the original manuscript from which they are taken is preserved in the Society's files, and can be seen on application to the proper authority.

"The Gamma of New York is a chapter that contradicts the old rhyme, 'If so soon she was done for, what was she begun for?' Few college societies, how-ever, can make a better showing of names and careers in such a brief period of existence. Gamma was fortunate in her godfathers, and in her very first initiate member. One founder in after-life decidedly emphasized the old song of his clan, 'The Campbells are Coming.' That soul-stirring refrain of Scotch victories William W. Campbell caused to be heard in the New York Assembly, in Congress, on the bench, at the bar, and along the walks of literature. Medicine was illustrated grandly by another founder, Amos Gerald Hull, who was one of the early apostles of Hahnemannian doctrines, and whose treatise on medical practice has reached many editions. Divinity was illustrated in the life of Daniel Smith Lewis, who, after serving as founder of faith in Sigma Phi, became an illustrator of Christian faith by remarkable and exemplary labors in religious works, as did also his friend and companion, John Walker Brown, whose brilliant poetical fancy was so often invoked by his Alma Mater as well as by Sigma Phi. These were founders who at the same time illustrated the history of the worthy mother Chapter, the Alpha of New York.

"When the Gamma was instituted, there was every reason to believe that its foster mother, the University of the City of New York, would become a great seat of learning. But two things soon began to fetter its growth and prosperity. One was the rivalry of Columbia College, which was both venerable and liberally endowed. The other antagonism consisted in the fact that the College stood in a large city, without any of those fraternal and social surroundings which appertain to institutions of learning having locations in rurality, with the commons of joint residency. To be frank, the University had risen but little above the dignity of a high school, where recitations alone gave aroma to college life, and where 'Home, Sweet Home' could not even be realistically sung. The high hopes of foundation, therefore, were not realized, and in 1848 the Gamma ceased to exist.

"Moreover, while it always had a local name, it did not possess a local habitation, over the portals of which could be significantly written *esto perpetua*. The Gamma was ever a peripatetic Gamma, never having even a room which it could call its own. Its lamp – as cabalistic as any in the realms of Buddha and Mohammed, or at Rome – was never swung, but was always trimmed and carried like those of the virgins in Scriptural parable. Not to be censorious, its seat of authority was always in motion – like the Ark of the Covenant through the wilderness. The brethren met at the private houses of members, while sacred lamp, and all the holy paraphernalia so prized and venerated by Sigs, were in diversified keeping. Perhaps the absence of a rallying point made the fulcrum of brotherhood less perfunctory and more loyal for action than if there had been a point of leverage in some such permanent workshop of Sigship as other chapters maintain. As before intimated, there came an omen at the first initiation, auguring a success in prestige. The first pilgrim to her shrine was the one young orator of the University who in after-life remained pre-eminent for eloquence – Theodore Edwin Tomlinson. If the

members of the Gamma, in comparison with membership in other chapters, were deficient as to numbers or quantity, they could well afford comparison as to quality in excellence of scholarship and later worldly fame.

"To name all those who have distinguished the Chapter by their achievements would be but an advance statement of the pages which follow, and which bear such convincing evidence of the worth and eminence of the membership of this branch of Sigma Phi. A few of these names, taken at random from the Catalogue, are given, which without invidious comparison, may fairly be taken as affording only a glimpse of this goodly fellowship.

"Since commerce, even among alumni, has taken the place of professional kingship – once almost exclusively held by divinity or law or medicine – let us begin with Sigs of the Gamma who became merchants. How did these fare or stand? There can be included William Almy Wheelock, the son of an honored merchant, and who, as can be seen by reference to his proper biographical place in the Catalogue, stands today *primus inter pares* among metropolitan money-changers, for usefulness, wealth and probity; Willard L. Felt, whose influence in mercantile life can be estimated by the sound of his name; Charles A. Cooper, who may literally be said to have poured, at Titusville, Pennsylvania, oil upon the troubled waters of trade; Walter Kellogg Marvin and Azor Smith Marvin, truly 'safe' Sigs in mercantile life; Francis Atterbury, of a most distinguished mercantile family at home and abroad; Thomas Edward Vermilye, a name as eminent in the banking as in the theological circles of New York City; Wm. Augustus Torrey, whose name frequently appears in those mercantile leagues which work for metropolitan prosperity, and Runyon W. Martin, who in life was a noted Wall Streeter. Among the medical Sigs of Gamma are found physicians of high international repute – as by reference to the Catalogue narrations can be well estimated – in Doctors Sayre, Van der Poel, Baldwin, De la Montagnie, and Leroy.

"The pulpit seems to have attracted more Gamma Sigs than any other profession. Chief among these may be ranked Monsignor Preston, who recently died in high Roman Catholic rank, and who, rumor has said, would have won the red hat of a Cardinal had he lived. We also recall Dr. Edward Hopper (whose hymns many congregations sing); the Rev. John Sheffield, who had even in mortal life experience of Celestials, as missionary in China; Dr. Charles Henry Augustus Bulkeley (known among Sigs, through his initials, as 'Chab'), who also in two other classifications must be elsewhere mentioned; Dr. Salter, a St. Paul of the State of Iowa; Dr. Thomas H. Skinner, who even rivaled the theological memory of his gifted father and namesake; the Rev. Reuben S. Goodman, who, as all his congregations agreed, fully realized the appropriateness of his surname; Frederick Gorham Clark, D.D., a worthy son of a worthy clerical father; Thomas Randolph Mercein, who for a long time was an eloquent Wesleyan, and who prematurely wore out his zealous energies; Wilson Phraner, D.D., who acceptably held one pastorate during forty years; the Rev. Abraham S. Gardiner, who quitted the tortuous steps of legal temples for the Jacob's

ladder of the pulpit; and Rectors Phelps, of scholarly New Brunswick, New Jersey, Freeman, of Louisville, Kentucky, and that learned pundit, Francis J. Clerc, of Phillipsburg, Pennsylvania. Many of these clerical Sigs were authors of deserved repute.

"The bar and bench are rich with Gamma Sigs. The list comprises not only Tomlinson, heretofore inscribed, but John E. Parsons, a distinguished leader at the bar in New York City, famed for skill in cross-examinations and for tact as a jury advocate; also are to be remembered William H. Ludlow, William R. Martin, U.S. District Attorney Wheeler, David P. Belknap, who wrote legal treatises as well as extorted verdicts: 'Mat' Pleasants, long a leader at the national capital, and Judge John Newton Rogers, of Iowa, to whom lawyers frequently quoted some of his own legal treatises toward winning their briefs.

"The number of journalists and authors among Sigs of the Gamma makes notable showing. Clearly at its head is the name of George Long Duvckinck, son of an eminent old-time publisher in New York, whose boast was that he gave the Harpers their first book to print. There was an equally eminent brother, Evert A. Duvckinck. These brothers edited an Encyclopedia of American literature, and George, the Sig, became a recognized metropolitan litterateur. Ex-Consul Oscanyan, yet an active New York journalist, once conducted a newspaper in Constantinople. Other professional journalists among the Gamma membership were John Kimberly, of the 'North Carolina Citizen,' and James F. Bowman and John E. Benton, both having edited at San Francisco newspapers of their own.

"Of Gamma Sigs who did patriotic service for the Union during the war are to be remembered Surgeons Savre, Van der Poel, and De la Montagnie; General Ludlow, and Chaplains Bulkeley and Goodwin.

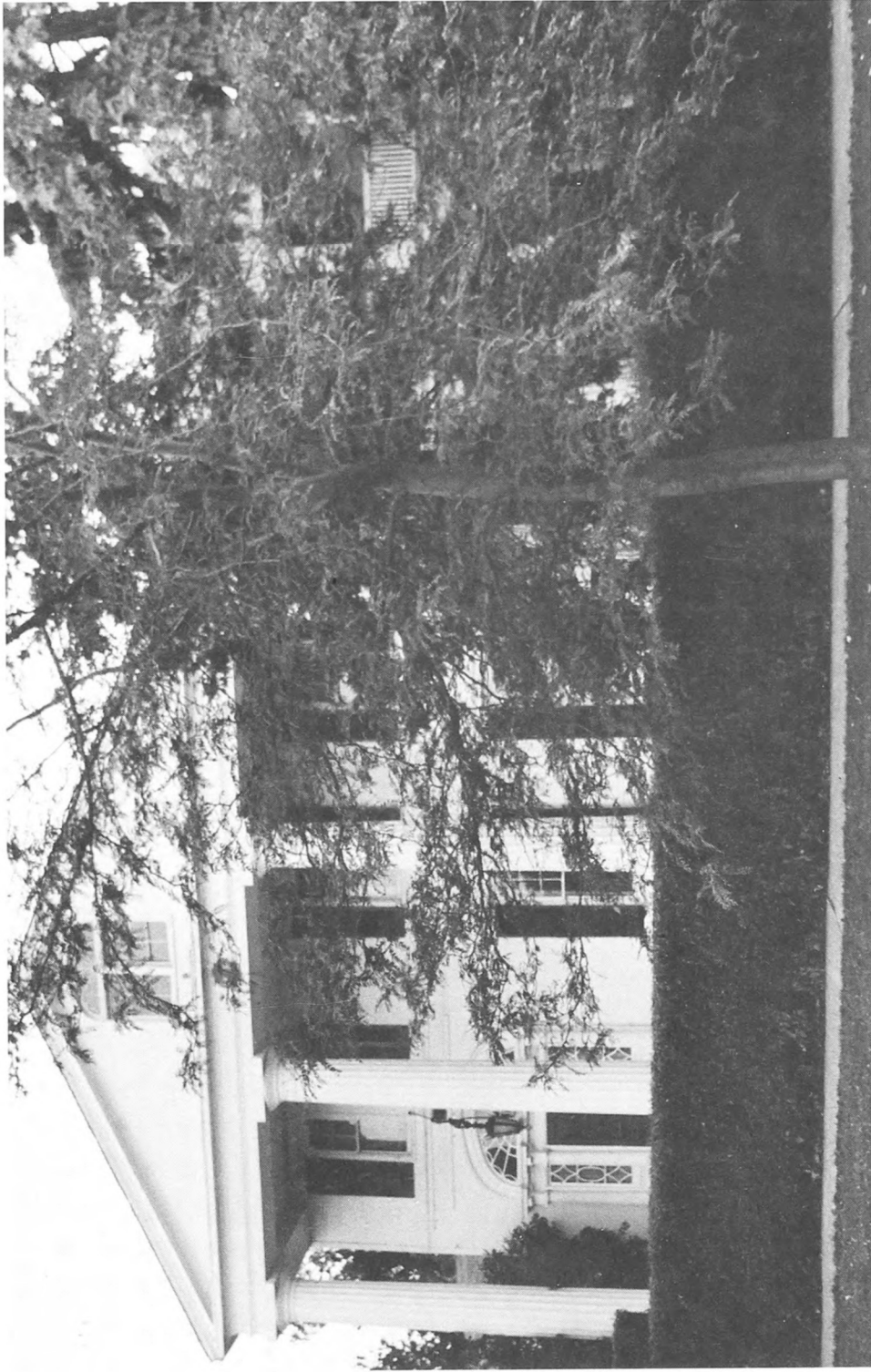
"Mention has been made of the want for the Gamma of a permanent local habitation. But this lack of a home made no difference in the hilarity and spirit, or in the loyalty of Sig brotherhood and companionable intercourse. The hospitable houses of the families to which the Sigs belonged, came into full use for the meetings. George L. Duvckinck lived in charming quarters on Clinton Place – then a fashionable location, but now abandoned to Mantalinis and the music of 'dives' – where the charming Duvckinck library, with a supper room adjacent, were always at the service of Sigs who came together to celebrate their mysteries. In like manner the Wheelock, Le Rov, Martin, Hall, Belknap, Montagnie, Atterburv, and Felt houses became temples *pro tern*. 'Working the Lodge' being ended, the resources of the meeting-places, as regarded music, amusement, books, games, and supper, were liberally offered by hosts, whose hospitality gave stimulus to happy companionships. Now and then a veteran Sig like Charles T. Cromwell or John Cochrane would obtain 'the tip of time and place,' by which means of consociation the phrase of the Brussels Waterloo ball would be passed (and realized), 'let joy be unconfined.' " . . .



Here we must drop the veil. Gamma is dead; but its traditions survive. These are now passed into this Catalogue to supplement those of other chapters.

A. Oakey Hall, N 1842, who contributed the above quoted reminiscences had at least as interesting a career as any Sig of the Gamma he mentioned. He was a lawyer and District Attorney of New York County from 1855 to 1858 and from 1861 to 1868. He was Mayor of New York City from 1868 to 1873. While in that office he was prosecuted for the misdemeanor of neglect of duty in not discovering alleged frauds of a so-called Tammany Ring, but without offering any testimony in defense he was acquitted amid the applause of court room. He was managing editor of the *New York World* from 1878 to 1883; editor of the London and Paris editions of the *New York Herald* from 1884 to 1889 when he resumed the practice of law in New York. He wrote a play, "The Crucible," produced at the Park Theatre in New York, in which drama he played the hero. He was the author of several other plays and literary items of various kinds. He died in New York in 1898 at the age of seventy-two.





DELTA OF NEW YORK—HOBART COLLEGE

# **DELTA OF NEW YORK**

***1840***

## **HOBART COLLEGE**

**Geneva, New York**

**Founded in 1822**

### **FOUNDERS**

**JOHN SKELLIE**

**JOHN MELANCHTHON**

**BRADFORD WALTER CARY**

**SAMUEL DYER CARR**

**EDWARD COOPER**

*From the Alpha of New' York*

**JOHN BARBER BURNET HARVEY ADAMS DOWE**

*From the Beta of New York*

**TALCOTT ENOCH WING**

*From the Alpha of Massachusetts*

**WILLIAM HANDY LUDLOW**

*From the Gamma of New York*

## **DELTA OF NEW YORK**

EARLY in the spring of 1840 six undergraduates of Hobart, then Geneva College — Francis Beveridge, Charles Cotes Brown, Charles Goodrich Brundige, Albert Gallatin Hemingway, John Palmer McGregor and William Henry Watson — names memorable in the annals of the Delta — applied at the Alpha of New York for the establishment of a chapter of Sigma Phi at Hobart College; after mature deliberation their application was accepted, and on the fourth of August, 1840, during the festivities of Commencement week, these applicants became by initiation the Delta of New York of Sigma Phi, and from the hands of the delegates from the Alpha, Beta, Gamma and the Alpha of Massachusetts received their sacred trust.

The spirit of hostility to secret societies with which the older chapters had so vigorously contended had vanished in college halls as well as in the political world.

These pioneers of the Delta made records in and after their college days. They left to the Delta a goodly heritage, and laid that foundation of character and social gifts on which the Delta has built throughout the one hundred and nine years of its existence; a foundation which has enabled it to maintain the ideals of the Society in its brotherly love and in striving at all times for those attributes which are covered by the all-embracing word “gentleman.”

A few years after the founding of the chapter Hobart College passed through a critical period in its history; the number of students in attendance was considerably reduced, and with it also the membership of Sigma Phi, so that 1852 passed without an initiation. In the spring of 1853 there were but two undergraduate Sigs remaining in Geneva — Alexander E. Andrews, a senior, and Alexander D. Adams, a junior, and it was the generally accepted belief that the chapter had been withdrawn. Andrews was graduated at commencement, 1853, and Adams, through sickness, was aimable to return when the term opened in the autumn, so that for a period of over two months there was no undergraduate Sig in Hobart.

But the Chapter was far from dead. On the afternoon of December 20, 1853, through

the well-timed exertions of Adams, the Delta was strengthened by the initiation of ten men, three of whom only the day before had been invited to join what was then much the largest society in College; and so quietly had all this been done that up to the evening of the 20th apparently no one had imagined that Sigma Phi would again leap into vigorous health.

For fifty years the Sigs of the Delta met in conclave in a rented upper room, oppressive for lack of ventilation, frigid for lack of heat and dim for lack of light.

The story of how the first chapter-house was built is a story of struggle and self-sacrifice, of generous gifts and patient work. It was a happy day for the Delta when in 1890 the house was opened, burdened though it was with a mortgage debt. It was a still happier day when on March 4, 1907, by the generous gift of one Sig brother the mortgage was burned by the assembled Chapter on its own hearthstone.

A glance at the records of Hobart College will show that of the honors and prizes awarded to students the Sigs have carried off a percentage of which they may well be proud. Of these college honors, until 1862 the Philosophical Oration was held to be second to the Valedictory, and the Salutatory the third. After 1862 the Salutatory took second place and the Philosophical, the third. Unfortunately orations by members of the graduating class, who have received the highest scholastic standing, no longer form part of the Hobart commencement proceedings. The first elections to the Phi Beta Kappa were in 1874.

The Delta has added its share of illustrious names to the brilliant roll of Sigma Phi, both in public and private life; among its honored dead are Charles J. Folger, chief justice of the Court of Appeals of New York, and Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, who had recently graduated when the Chapter was founded, but aided indirectly in its establishment, and was an early initiate; Douglass Boardman, long one of the justices of the Supreme Court of New York, who continued his hearty interest not only in the prosperity of his own chapter, but in that of her younger sister, the Epsilon, through all the cares of his active and useful life; Thomas Hanford Hay, so terribly

wounded at Gettysburg; Charles C. Gray, whose patient suffering at Andersonville endeared him greatly to his brethren and comrades; John Nicholson, the skilled surgeon, who gave his life to his country; John N. Norton, so long and so eminent in the councils of the Church; Foster Swift and Robert D. Hamilton, well-known surgeons and physicians; Thomas J. Ennis, the generous and brave soldier, who led his regiment, ten days after their term of service had terminated, to the field of Atlanta, where his noble young life was given for his Country's cause; Truman A. Merriman, prominent as a journalist and as a representative in Congress from New York City; Henry S. Munroe, the learned and eloquent advocate; George Worthington, Bishop of Nebraska; Montgomery Schuyler, the brilliant journalist and writer on architecture; Theodore Sterling, the cultured president of Kenyon College; William J. Ashley, the author of several of the often-sung songs of the Signet; Alexander L. Chew and Samuel H. Ver Planck, on each of whom the Delta for over sixty-five years was privileged to call for guidance and advice; Andrew D. White, who was President of Cornell University for many years and also one of the greatest of American diplomats; Beverly Chew, the well-known financier and bibliophile; Charles E. Cheney, Bishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

The history of the period of the First World War evidences further the vitality which the traditions and the experience of former years have instilled into the Delta. At the beginning of that war, the entire active Chapter enlisted with the American forces. Their record and that of the graduate brothers is a shining page in our annals. With the signing of the Armistice, reconstruction was speedily undertaken and the energetic devotion of a few brothers carried the Chapter through several months of inactivity into the most successful period of its life.

For some time the house built in 1890 had been considered inadequate and in the spring of 1925 this sentiment found real expression. Immediately a campaign for a new Den of the Western Lion was begun. The results were overwhelming. The loyalty and generosity of the brothers made possible an unparalleled achievement. Three-fourths of

the living membership of the Delta subscribed Eighty-five Thousand Dollars. This allowed the Chapter to purchase one of the largest and finest colonial homes in Geneva. The house was completely and luxuriously furnished. A Permanent Endowment Fund and a Self-Perpetuating Student Loan Fund were established. Finally there now adjoins the new house the Beverly Chew Memorial Lodge (for chapter conclaves), the gift of Phineas P. Chew, 1869, Thomas H. Chew, 1874, and Alexander D. Chew, 1876, in memory of their brother, Beverly Chew, 1865. These brothers are the sons of Alexander Lafayette Chew, 1841, the first of a long line of well-known and devoted Sigs and this tribute to their elder brother is a noble emblem of the strength and the beauty of the ideals of the Sigma Phi. Of the lodge-rooms owned by Greek Letter Fraternities, this is probably the most perfect and certainly one of the most beautiful.

On the occasion of its 100th birthday, the Delta assumed the role of host to the National Convention of 1940. While this centennial period in the history of the chapter was marked by no sensational happenings, the traditional strength of Sigma Phi on the campus was well maintained.

Among Delta alumni of national prominence was George H. Mead, Delta 1894, B. L. Hobart 1897, LL.D. 1922, B.Sc. Mass. Inst. Tech., 1900. George Mead has not only had an astonishingly successful business record in Dayton, Ohio but has also had an equally notable civilian war record, being a member of the War Mobilization & Reconstruction Board, the National War Labor Board, the Federal Control Board, etc. Walter H. Durfee, Delta 04, was appointed Dean of Hobart in 1938, continuing in this capacity until, upon the death of President Potter in 1947, he became Acting President. Then, upon the appointment of Dr. Alan Brown as President in 1948, "Durf" was made Provost of Hobart and William Smith Colleges.

Among the notable Delta Alumni who died at about this time was Arthur Cosslett Smith, Delta 1869, who wrote "The Monk and the Dancer," "The Turquoise Cup" and several other beautiful and charming things. At this time, too, the Delta lost one of its staunchest supporters in the death of G. M. B. Hawley, Delta 1888. George Hawley's home and his law office were always open to the boys, countless numbers of whom



were advised and aided by this loyal Sig.

In 1942 the effect of World War II was felt at the Delta as the boys started to leave college to join the armed forces. By June in 1943 the last signs of normal Sig life at the Sig house disappeared. A Navy V 12 Unit was established at Hobart and the house was taken over, largely by Naval officers, including the commanding officer, and their families. Undaunted by the drop in civilian enrollment at Hobart the Sigs held three initiations in 1943, at one of them initiating two third generation legacies. It is interesting to note that, although the enrollment in the college was greatly reduced, an initiation was held each year during the war, while in 1946 two initiations took place.

The low point in Sig enrollment at Hobart during World War II was reached in the spring of 1945, when there were two undergraduate members on the campus. Then "the Delta arose like the phoenix of old," and reached an all-time high three years later when, in the spring of 1948, there were thirty-two undergraduate members, and one Sig pledge. During the fall of 1946 the Sigs took possession of their house again, although they had enjoyed some use of it when it was been occupied by the Navy.

During the war many Delta Sigs served in the armed forces and six of their number gave their lives in their country's service. These men were: Cleveland Beach Coe TO, Farwell Kenlv '33, George Ashmun '38, John Slater '38, Nicholas V<sup>7</sup>. V. Brown '41 and Charles Campbell '42.

The post-war period saw the Delta strengthened by returning veterans with the house overflowing and it again rose to position of dominance on the campus and in the community. The chapter flourished until 1952 when Hobart, with its expanded enrollment, established a college eating facility and to finance the project required all students to use the new operation. This retarded fraternity living and as a result membership was reduced. However, after two years this restriction was lifted and the Delta regained its former status of leadership.

Also during this period, the Korean War erupted and siphoned off some of the young brothers, but none are known to have been lost in this conflict.

An important event for the Society took place in February, 1954. The Alpha of

Virginia was officially installed to become “the youngest sister of our band.” Walter H. Durfee, G '04, was one of the founders and in 1956, Halsey T. Tichenor, G 40, acted as the second delegate for the young chapter on the Standing and Advisory Committee. A year later, Halsey became chairman of the Standing and Advisory Committee for a brief period.

The Delta hosted the Society’s 1954 National Convention (the first to be attended by an Alpha of Virginia delegation) which received much acclaim from all quarters of the Society as being one of the finest ever.

Through the years, Hobart College and the Delta have maintained a strong tie with the Episcopal Church and such notables as Frederick G. Budlong, C '()(), and Oliver j. Hart, G 12, became bishops and Guv E. Shipler, G 02, exerted his influence as editor of the *Churchman*.

This was an era when the Delta was probably at its strongest due to a long line of Sig alumni living in the area who provided the chapter with constant support: Foster P. Boswell, G '97, Perry M. Shepard, C '00, Paul M. Dove, G '11, Harold F. Lane, G 12, Theodore Schuyler Smith, G 12, Alanson W. Chamberlain, G 15, William H. Delaney, C T5, and Charles R. Mellen, G '20, to name a few.

When Vietnam became a factor in 1964, life at the Delta began to change. Brothers became involved in what seemed to be a needless war and the values of life itself set new standards. Nevertheless, the Delta held to most of its ideals and traditions and continued to maintain a stature of leadership. In April, 1965, the Delta celebrated the 125th anniversary of its founding by hosting the National Convention of the Society. The occasion was memorable but lacked some of the enthusiasm of the past. In the late sixties, the use of drugs became prevalent on the Hobart campus. With this trend came a lack of responsibility and the condition of the chapter started to deteriorate and the situation became so chaotic that the trustees closed the house at the start of fall term in 1971. A year later the disruptive influences had left the scene and a small band of devoted brothers, who remained together in their displacement, petitioned the alumni to reopen the house. After deliberation with the Standing and Advisory Committee, it

was decided that the house would be available to the brothers in the fall and a gala reopening ceremony was held on home-coming weekend. Since then the chapter has continued to grow and regain its predominance in college and civic affairs.

The 1973 March 4th Dinner at the 7th Regiment Armory in New York was Delta night. Col. Robert Coe, G 43 was the toastmaster and Howard Van Rensselaer Palmer, G 99, long active in both college and Sig affairs, regaled the assemblage with pearls of wisdom garnered from his three-quarters of a century as a Sig. The occasion of the Delta's 135th anniversary was high-lighted by the National Convention held in April, 1975. The affair was an unqualified success and a tribute to the brothers in their restoration of the Delta. At this event, Allan "Eagle" Willis, G 15, was presented with a memento for his unfailing support to the chapter and the task he performed so often and so well — the Sire at swing.





**ALPHA OF VERMONT**

**1845**

**UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT**

**Burlington, Vt.**

**Founded in 1791**

**FOUNDERS**

**VARNUM SHEFFIELD KENYON**

*From the Alpha of New York*

**JAMES DOUGLAS**

*From the Beta of New York*

**DAVID LYMAN BUTTOLPH**

*From the Alpha of Massachusetts*

**JOHN ELIOT BENTON**

*From the Gamma of New York*

**CHARLES STEBBINS, JR.**

*From the Delta of New York*

## ALPHA OF VERMONT

The Alpha of Vermont of Sigma Phi dates officially from March 4, 1845. On that date informal negotiations which had been under way with the Alpha of New York and a number of petitioning undergraduates from the University of Vermont who had somehow caught a gleam of the warming fires kindled at Union culminated when Charles Nelson Starbird and James Almon Warner got off the little train from Mechanicville to Schenectady after a stage coach trip down the winter roads from Burlington. The two tired Northerners were physically and spiritually comforted and were that night initiated into the Sigma Phi.

The next day the new Sigs started back to Burlington entrusted with the ideals and secrets of the Society and commissioned to select and initiate such undergraduates of Vermont as might in their judgment be properly appreciative of the newly revealed values. On their return to Burlington, Starbird and Warner prepared and initiated in dark college bedrooms and libraries 16 promising men, men who promised more than they knew. In May 1845, the new Sigs swung out their badges in chapel and revealed to the surprised campus a still damp but fully feathered chapter of Sigma Phi.

The new chapter was born to strife and jealousy which must have tried it sorely but certainly stiffened its convictions and purposes. The campus of the little college, of six faculty members and 112 students, was already organized in two fevered if somewhat barren political parties, apparently political for political sake, the Blues and the Bloats, the Blues evangelical, the Bloats riotous. The original 16 revolvers came from both factions. As revolvers they were regarded, for the new idea from the south, in substituting the ideal of a close social group for the old political free-for-all, challenged prevailing purposes and vested interests, and a bitter internecine war of ideologies was on.

The one closely knit organization already on the campus, which was more or less a control group for a political party, headed the opposition, and the strife was prolonged, involving political boycott, invective, and sabotage. But gradually opponents **acknowledged the advantages of the new social form by adopting its manifestations;**

**the nuclear group of the opposition became more and more indistinguishable from a local fraternity. As such it remains to this day, obstinately the oldest local in the country. Other groups** formed in anger on a non-secret basis slipped into the new pattern, and the strife gradually settled down into the amity of the modern fraternity campus. Starbird and Warner had brought to the Vermont campus not only a chapter of the Sigma Phi but the mold and purposes of the modern fraternity system.

But perhaps the establishment of the Vermont chapter was but little less an experiment in the history of the Society than it was on the Burlington campus. Sigma Phi had not yet fully made up her mind on expansion, how desirable it was and in what direction it should go. The first moves toward nationalization, probably taken without full realization of their import, had been most promising. But of the five chapters prior to Vermont, four were in colleges of the small private pattern; only the Gamma of New York, later proved to be unsatisfactory, had been an attempt to transfer the Sigma Phi to another type of institution. The University of Vermont, though geographically remote in those days, was not radically different in its structure from the small college of the Union-Hamilton-Williams type, but through its proclaimed connection with the State, tenuous as that connection was at the time, Vermont was in posse if not in esse a public institution. Could the Sigma Phi adapt itself to the new conditions? Vermont was an experiment, geographically as well as institutionally, an experiment whose success was later proclaimed in the establishment of the chapters at Cornell, Michigan, Wisconsin, and California. Without the history of the Vermont chapter the Society might not have had the courage of a broad development, after the failures at New York University and Princeton. The Alpha of Vermont helped teach the Sigma Phi to know herself and her strength, and lent a confidence that was a factor in developing the present character of the Society.

But it was over 130 years ago that Starbird and Warner made their memorable journey to Schenectady to bring home the babe; in these years the infant, so fortunate in her heredity, has grown to a stature of her own. The first toddling years might have been uncertain and brawling, but the environment must have been favorable and the



growing child well fed and properly exercised, for before the time of her majority the Alpha was sturdy enough in body and spirit to survive the crisis of the Civil War. Although the chapter was reduced to one man unfit for military service, Samuel W. Torrey, the spirit that was in the man and the Chapter could rebuild the Chapter without loss of purpose or stamina. Torrey proved a good name to rebuild on; Vermonters had tested its quality. Nor have the latter days of the chapter been less enduring; the First World War brought another crisis and one hundred years after the founding the Second World War closed the chapter house and decimated the chapter. Yet today the Alpha stands restored and well into her second hundred years, in hill strength and confidence.

It is not necessary that all the stars of a galaxy should be identical in color and brilliance; each of the chapters of the Sigma Phi has taken into itself something of the character of its fostering university and of its environment. The Alpha of Vermont has been true both to its heritage from the Sigma Phi and to the quality of its university and its state.

The Alpha has been industrious. The original 16 initiates have grown in number to almost 900. Campus leadership has been maintained. Housed by chance or by charity in its earlier days the Alpha vindicated its establishment as the first national fraternity on the campus by opening the first fraternity house in 1903, largely through the efforts of Henry L. Ward (V '78), The Sig Place at College and Williams Streets, on land given by Mrs. J. C. R. Spear of Burlington, a longtime friend of the Society, the building erected and soon paid for by the members of the chapter and furnished by Sig friends and Sig families.

The Alpha has been proud. Its debt to the University of Vermont for the use of material which the early faculty families, the Benedicts and the Torreys, the Buckhams and the Wheelers, contributed to the personnel of the chapter in 25 years, the chapter could discharge by furnishing to the University one of its most able and beloved Presidents, certainly its head for longest term in office, Matthew Henry Buekham, President from 1871 to 1911. The interest has been paid in hill and running over in

faculty members and trustees, provided beyond the Alpha's share.

To Burlington and the state the Alpha has been no less generous in editors, public officials, doctors, lawyers, business leaders, churchmen, and scientists. To the nation many of the Alpha's sons have given their lives, in the quick sacrifice of the battlefield as well as in the long response of public service. To the society the Alpha has contributed in song, and in more concrete offerings from her peculiar emphases to supplement the strengths of the other chapters, and in the well-remembered leadership of "Phil" Ross (V '91) in the General Secretary's office. If her privileges have been immense, her proud return has been adequate.

In recent years with the great upheaval of traditions on college campuses the Alpha of Vermont has maintained a naturally conservative inner protection of her ideals, while being able to induce healthy and sometimes radical leadership for the University and the Greek System.

The Sigs at Vermont have assumed a great deal of the responsibility regarding the Greek stature on campus. They have been at the forefront of an attempt to revive not only the spirit and importance of the Greek System, but of the whole student body. This has been accomplished by having Sigs involved in community projects, administrative positions in student government, and leadership in the social and athletic aspects of college life.

The Alpha continues to benefit from exceptional support from its graduate body, as can be evidenced by the manner in which the Sig House on the Hill has been maintained in its original magnificence and beauty in the midst of improvements for safety and convenience. Time and distance have been no obstacles to the many grads who have returned to the Green Mountain State to participate in Swings and Tunks.

The number of sons who have followed their fathers into the bonds of the Thrice Illustrious is ample evidence to the undying love of the Sig Alumnus. The ceremonies which the freshman of today meets are those which met his grandfather and great-grandfather. In an ever-changing world the tradition of the Sigma Phi lives on at the Alpha.

She has been adaptable but steadfast through 130 years. There is no sign that the flame brought North in 1845 has dimmed or lost any of its inspiration; and there is no sign in the undergraduate of this day that the world has lost its old trick of bringing forth the type of men that made Sigma Phi what it is, nor that Sigma Phi has lost her genius for finding and developing the stuff of SIGS.

# **ALPHA OF NEW JERSEY**

*1853-1858*

**COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**(Now Princeton University)**

## **FOUNDERS**

**DUNCAN KENNEDY JOHN FOSTER**

**WILLIAM AYRAULT JACKSON**

*From the Alpha of New York*

**HENRY TWEEDY SPENCER RREESE JACOB STEVENS**

*From the Beta of New York*

**WILLIAM THEOPHILUS ROGERS**

**MARVIN CHARLES**

**AUGUSTUS STODDARD**

*From the Alpha of Massachusetts*

**HIRAM ADDISON GILLET**

*From the Alpha of Vermont*

## ALPHA OF NEW JERSEY

THE Alpha of New Jersey was organized under the most flattering auspices. Eight years had elapsed since the foundation of the Alpha of Vermont. Frequent petitions for charters had been presented, from various colleges, but the policy of Sigma Phi had been so long opposed to extension that it had become understood that applications for new chapters were useless. There were, however, many devoted members of the Society in the City of New York, who, after the Gamma had ceased to exist, were desirous to see a chapter established within easy access of that city. The College of New Jersey<sup>1</sup> seemed to them the most favorable point in which to accomplish this design. The fact that several of the original founders of Sigma Phi were from the South, and that a somewhat unusual number of Southern students were in attendance at Princeton, had weight with many of the graduate Sigs, and inquiries were set on foot as to the feasibility of an attempt to place a chapter in that institution. It was well known that for many years a hostile feeling toward secret societies had obtained among the authorities of the College, but it was also known that such societies were in existence there, and that though not recognized, they were unmolested. There seemed, therefore, to be good ground to believe that Sigma Phi might enter that field with success—certainly without active opposition from the faculty or trustees.

Some of the leading men of the College, encouraged by the knowledge that these investigations had been made, organized with the design of obtaining a charter from Sigma Phi, and presented a petition to the Annual Convention, held at Union on the Fourth of March, 1853. While that Convention, on the representations which were made, was inclined to give the matter a favorable consideration, the opponents to the policy of extension were strong and active. They succeeded in postponing immediate action. A committee was however appointed to consider the matter—to visit the College of New Jersey, and learn, on the ground, what were the prospects of success, and to report their conclusions to the Summer Convention, to be held at Williams the same year.

On the 16th of August following, one of the largest, perhaps the largest, Summer

Convention which Sigma Phi ever held, met at Williams to hear the report, and to decide the question. About one hundred and Unity brothers responded to the summons. The Hall of the Alpha was far too small to hold the members in attendance, and the local Lodge of Odd Fellows kindly offered their commodious rooms to the Society for its meeting. The report of the committee on the probable success of the effort was favorable; they had made the acquaintance of many of the petitioners — all of whom were on the ground when the committee visited Princeton — and were enthusiastic in their praise. The matter was long and carefully discussed; but the old arguments against extension seemed to have lost their power, in the face of the report, and by a nearly unanimous vote the petition was granted, and the opening of the college year, the following September, was ordered to be the date for the initiation of the representatives of the new Chapter, and to the Alpha of New York, in accordance with ancient custom, was assigned the privilege of carrying into effect the ceremonial issue of the charter.

At the appointed time the Hall of the parent Alpha at Union was crowded with brothers from every chapter, including delegates from all the active branches, who were in attendance in their official capacity, and a large number of the older graduates, among them the Rev. Dr. Kennedy of Albany, Prof. Foster of Union, with many from more distant places, showed gratified interest by their presence. The representatives of the Alpha of New Jersey who had been appointed by their companions to receive the charter were Clinton G. Reynolds, Edward D. Pierson and James P. Lovejoy. The ceremonies of the initiation having been completed, and the charter delivered, the Alpha of New Jersey was formally welcomed by her sister chapters, with the brightest hopes for her future.

Hardly had the youthful Chapter begun its work, when the opposition of the College authorities to Greek-letter societies took on new zeal; and two years later, the trustees passed a stringent law forbidding the students to unite with any such organization, under pain of expulsion if discovered. Hitherto the existence of such societies had been ignored by the faculty, and on the other hand, the societies had

refrained from making their existence publicly known, by the display of badges, or by taking active part in College politics. After this action of the corporation, the fact of their presence could no longer be disregarded. The prohibition was printed year after year in the annual catalogue, and pledges were demanded from students entering, that they would unite with no College society except the two recognized literary societies long established there. For a time this promise was evaded, on the ground that it was made under duress, and therefore was not binding. The pledge was then put in a somewhat different form, and the students were required to declare "upon their honor" that they would have nothing to do with such societies while members of the College. This change decided the matter, so far as Sigma Phi was concerned. Rather than exist by deception and fraud, the Alpha of New Jersey surrendered her charter to the Convention of 1860 before she had completed the seventh year of her existence.

This is not the place to discuss the justice or the policy of the course taken by the authorities at Princeton. Whether the threatened penalty could have been successfully enforced, had the Greek-letter societies carried their case into the courts of the State, may well be doubted, in view of decisions rendered in other states. No steps have even been taken to test the matter in New Jersey, so far as we are informed. At that time none of the societies were incorporated, and therefore no organized action was possible, or indeed contemplated. There are those, however, who believe that the prohibition is one *ultra vires*, and that it would not be sustained by judicial authority.<sup>2</sup>

Short as is the chapter roll of the Alpha of New Jersey, many of the names found upon it became honorably known throughout this country. Gansevoort and Wood, Lindsly and Field won distinction by their bravery and gallant conduct in the Union Army, while Graham, Brvan and Sulivane (the youngest brigadier general in the Confederate service) were equally conspicuous on the Southern side. The fame achieved by each is happily to-day the heritage of the whole country, and thus the pride of Sigma Phi. In the church, Henderson, for twenty-five years the beloved rector of his parish in Buffalo; Eccles- ton, twice elected to the Episcopate, which he declined; Van Lear, the eminent representative of the sturdy theology for which his alma mater is so

renowned; with Wiekes, an eminent judge, and Alan P. Smith, the distinguished professor, the skillful surgeon, and trustee of John Hopkins, sufficiently prove, if proof were needed, that Sigma Phi made no mistake in selecting the men to whom she entrusted her honor at Princeton.

It seems a coincidence that the last surviving members of the Princeton chapter should all have passed to the life beyond in the course of a single year. The year 1923, the seventieth since the granting of the charter, witnessed the passing of Major Brvan in January, Judge Wiekes in October, and Major Graham in December. All were octogenarians, but Major Bryan and Major Graham were in active life to the very last, the former as president of the National Bank of New Bern, North Carolina, and the latter as Commissioner of Agriculture of the State of North Carolina. The law of Maryland regulating the retirement of judges compelled Judge Wiekes to retire in 1907 on reaching the age of seventy. He was, however, in the full possession of his powers at eighty-six, and death came to him quite suddenly and unexpectedly. As a matter of fact, he had granted an interview for the following day to Mark S. Watson, U '04, of the Baltimore Sun, who had been requested by the editors of the Sigma Phi *Flame* to ask Judge Wiekes for reminiscences of his college life and of the Princeton chapter.

The life of the Alpha of New Jersey was short, but the historical material available and the biographical data regarding her sons show her to have been the peer of her sister chapters. While her light was permitted to shine in the darkness of prejudice, it burned bright and clear; and Sigma Phi will never cease to regret the fate which extinguished it.



The College of New Jersey existed from 1746 to 1896. In the latter year the name was changed to "Princeton University."

'The issue of the "Secret Society War" at Ann Arbor, an account of which will be found in p. 454 ff. of the **SIGMA PHI CATALOGUE** of 1891, and the subsequent decisions of the Supreme Court in California, are precedents, which appear to establish the position that College authorities do not possess the power still claimed and exercised by the government of Princeton University, to interfere with the individual rights of students in such matters, simply because they connect themselves with such an institution; and that boards of trustees and college faculties do not stand *in loco parentis* for those in attendance on their instruction. It will not be forgotten that under a similar exercise of power, the ancient rules would not allow a married man to become a university student; the college was virtually a cloister; but this relic of "medieval monkish customs" was long ago abandoned. The view now almost universally accepted by experienced teachers is, that the older college societies, with their loyal alumni, are not an obstacle, but an aid, to discipline and good government, and add strength to the ties which attach graduates to their alma mater.





ALPHA OF MICHIGAN—UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

# ALPHA OF MICHIGAN

1858

## UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Ann Arbor, Michigan

*Founded in 1817*

### FOUNDERS

JOHN FOSTER

From the Alpha of New York

OLON WALTER STOCKING

From the Beta of New York

JAMES RAYNOR WHITING

From the Alpha of Massachusetts

ABRAHAM OAKLEY HALL

From the Gamma of New York

ROBERT DE LANCEY HAMILTON

From the Delta of New York

LAWRENCE MYERS, JR.

From the Alpha of Vermont

CHARLES STRATTON HOWELL

From the Alpha of New Jersey

## **ALPHA OF MICHIGAN**

The Alpha of Michigan of Sigma Phi is located at The University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. It is outstanding among a large and enthusiastic group of college fraternities, both undergraduate and graduate.

The fraternity situation at the University of Michigan is better understood if a little attention is paid to the history and background of the University itself.

The origins of The University of Michigan date back to 1817 in Detroit. Michigan was then still a Territory. It was administered under the famous Northwest Ordinance of 1787. In this Ordinance was a specific clause on education which laid the groundwork for the large state universities of the Midwest. The words are inscribed above the entrance to Angell Hall, the main building of the literary college, in Ann Arbor:

“Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.”

A small group of progressive Detroit citizens headed by Father Gabriel Richard founded “The Catholepistemiad, or University of Michigania” in 1817. The Territorial Legislature of 1821 officially named the institution the University of Michigan. The idea of a university as a part of the state educational system was thus recognized, although the founders only realized in actuality a small academy or secondary school.

In 1837 the constitution of the new State of Michigan formally provided for a university. It was at this time that Ann Arbor was selected for the location. The legislative act, which provided for a university rather than a college and specifically mentioned instruction in the sciences, forewarned something new in the field of education. A comprehensive system of education closely related to the needs of the general populace has been developed by The University of Michigan over the past century.

In its early years the University was continually struggling for its existence. It was beset by political and financial difficulties. Frequent bitter and angry contests between

the students and faculty and regents marred this period of its development. In 1850, after several crises, the entire enrollment was only fifty-eight undergraduates.

A new state constitution in 1850 set up the method of government for the University that, with only minor changes, has persisted to this day. A Board of Regents of eight members is elected by the people on the basis of two every two years. The Regents are supreme in the state with regard to all matters pertaining to the administration of the university and its educational policies.

The University of Michigan has compiled a record of continuous progress since the admittance of its first freshman class in 1841. Until a comparatively recent time, the development of fraternities had been aided by the absence of an official men's dormitory system. In the late nineteen thirties, however, dormitory space was built to house all freshman men.

Education at the University has embraced many fields at the undergraduate level and a large number of professional schools. The high level of scholarship maintained in all its fields of endeavor has won for Michigan the flattering name of "Harvard of the Midwest."

Women students have been admitted since 1871. The excellence of professional and scientific training in Ann Arbor yearly attracts a large number of students from all over the world. Tuition and other fees are remarkably low on a comparative scale with other colleges and universities, even at their present figures. This is natural because the institution is supported generously by state funds.

Of the 38,000 students enrolled in The University of Michigan, about 22,000 of them are in undergraduate schools, while more than 16,000 are attending the Graduate School or other professional branches. Women students number in the neighborhood of 14,000.

Fraternity history at Michigan began in the early autumn of 1845 with the installation of a chapter of Chi Psi, followed in November of the same year by Beta Theta Pi, and by Alpha Delta Phi at Commencement in 1846. These three waged the famous "Secret Society War" with the faculty and regents which began in 1846 and

ended in October, 1850.

This dispute embraced more than just those immediately connected with the University. The townspeople in Ann Arbor and many leading figures in the state took an active part. The provisions for the University in the state constitution of 1850 were largely the result of this conflict. Though a hard and bitter struggle, it is responsible for firmly fixing the status of fraternities as a recognized feature of life at the University of Michigan.

Four Sigs stand out during the clash between the faculty and students over the issue of fraternities. They played a significant role in the foundation and early organization of the University. These brothers were Edward Forenzo Fuller, Anthony Ten Eyck and Edward A. Warner of the Alpha of New York, and Francis Willet Shearman of the Beta. Fuller, who lived in Ann Arbor, was a member of the State legislature- first in the House and then in the Senate, and with him was Warner. Both were active in the legislative work on the free school and University laws. Fuller had much to do with securing the location of the institution at Ann Arbor. In 1846 he became the champion of the students' cause in the "Secret Society War" and planned their campaign for its successful conclusion. (A detailed account of the Secret Society War appears in the Sigma Phi Catalogue of 1891, p. 454 et seq.)

Ten Eyck was secretary of the Board of Regents from its organization until 1849, as well as secretary of the House of Representatives, from its first session for some years. He was known as a ripe scholar and a leader in educational matters in Detroit (then the State capitol). He was constantly consulted on the advisability of the new departures, and his advice had controlling weight.

Shearman came into Michigan when it was a territory. His position as coadjutor and assistant of Schoolcraft in government work brought him prominently before the public, and when released from his first official duties he at once gave his attention to educational matters. He edited and published "The Journal of Education," the first monthly of its character issued in the Midwest. In 1849 he was appointed State Superintendent of Public Instruction, which office he filled during the turbulent period

of the "Secret Society War," and until 1855. In this office he held quasi-oversight of the University, appointed its board of visitors, and annually reported on its current affairs to the State legislature. He managed his office with such consummate skill and judicial fairness that he held the respect and confidence of both sides in the society contest, while he publicly backed up Fuller in the students' cause. It was during his incumbency that the new State constitution with its changes in the governmental set-up of the University was adopted.

It was only natural that the brothers named above would try to introduce a chapter of their beloved society into the institution in whose future they had so much confidence and in which they were so deeply interested. Warner died in 1844, but the other three took active steps in 1849 to secure a charter for a Sig chapter. Fuller formulated a petition and selected from the classes of '49, '50, '51, eight men as a petitioning club, with four others from '52, who stood as conditional petitioners, not feeling at liberty then to sign the petition, but hoping for the abrogation of the faculty's iron-bound pledge not to join a "secret society," which they had taken on entering. Full of enthusiasm, Fuller expected to win the victory in the Society War, then just coming to an open rupture, and to have a clear field for the induction of the proposed chapter. He forwarded the petition to the Fourth of March Convention in 1849. It arrived too late, under the rules, but it was informally considered and laid over for a year.

However, the secretary of the Convention, William A. Jackson, wrote to Fuller that without a doubt favorable action would be taken in 1850, and advised the sending of delegates to receive the charter. But when that time came, every fraternity man in the University had been suspended. The conditional petitioners had become disgusted and gone to another college, as had some of the actual petitioners. The class of '49 had graduated; that of '50 would soon follow, and only two of the petitioners would be left in college. Shearman, Fuller and Talcott E. Wing of the Alpha of Massachusetts made a careful review of the situation and advised that the petition be withdrawn since it was clearly impossible to organize a successful chapter at that time.

It was not until 1855 that any fraternities besides the first three went into Michigan,



but Delta Kappa Epsilon and Delta Phi installed chapters during that year, and Sigma Phi followed in 1858.

Of the six pioneers, four have enjoyed uninterrupted existence since their installation. Beta Theta Pi has had two lapses, one from 1850 to 1854, and one from 1864 to 1875. The Delta Phi chapter died in 1875 but was revived in 1924 only to collapse completely sometime later.

It is significant that Michigan was the first state University in which Sigma Phi installed a chapter, and that with one exception, the Alpha of Pennsylvania, all of her new chapters in the last seventy-four years have been placed in similar institutions. In point of time, Michigan was farther from Union in that day than California now is from Vermont.

The second and successful attempt to establish a Michigan chapter of Sigma Phi was entirely independent of the first. It was championed brilliantly by that faithful and enthusiastic Sigma Phi. Andrew D. White, then a young professor of history in the University, and always the warmhearted friend, advisor, and helper of the Alpha of Michigan. His efforts were seconded by the Sigs resident in the State, in Chicago and in the West. Their arguments could not be resisted, and the Convention of 1858 granted a charter.

The petitioners were Alexander Richard, John Welles Paine, John Quincy Adams Fritchey, Samuel Ezra Smith, Charles Stewart Patterson, seniors; Richard Beardsley, Judson Clark Lowell, juniors; and Charles Dan Lyon, who during the pendency of the petition went under appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point.

On advice that the petition had been granted, Beardsley and Lowell were delegated to go to the Alpha of New York, where they were to receive initiation and to bring home the charter.

On their return Henry S. Monroe, of the Delta of New York, and Edwin R. Woodruff, of the same chapter, coming as delegates from the Sigs resident in Chicago, and the Sigs resident in Ann Arbor including Professor White, Hoi ace M. Darling, of the Delta, and the two recently initiated delegates, proceeded to institute the Alpha of

Michigan. Before the close of the college year the band was strengthened by the addition of Samuel S. Walker, Archibald B. Darragh, then freshmen, Richard C. Sabin, then a junior, and at the beginning of the next college term Conway W. Noble, then a freshman.

The presence in the new chapter of Darling, who was a student in the medical school, and who always wished that he could have been enrolled a founder; the frequent visits of Professor White and his hearty assistance, socially and financially, at all times; and of Daniel B. Briggs, of the Alpha of Massachusetts, then principal of the Ann Arbor High School, and later State Superintendent of Public Instruction — all these circumstances were of the greatest value and soon infused the characteristic Sig spirit into the youthful chapter. The counsel and aid of those loyal brothers were fully appreciated by the men of that time, and their influence has continued to be felt to the present hour.

The next year found James L. Adams, of the Alpha of New Jersey, an active member. He was also a student in the medical school. David A. Baldwin, of the Gamma, at that time resident in Ann Arbor, and Oren Root, of the Beta, who was connected with a seminary at Monroe, Michigan, were often present at the meetings. To the latter especially and to Brother George W. Perry, of the Alpha of Vermont, who was a co-teacher with Root and inspired with a like fervor, the chapter owes enduring gratitude. Nor should the names of James M. Oliver, of the Alpha of New York, of Talcott E. Wing and Charles G. Johnson, of the Alpha of Massachusetts — other residents of Monroe — be omitted from the list of active friends.

The chapter was most fortunate in having this willing band of graduate members of the Society for its early guardians and helpers. Under such training it rapidly became possessed of all the ancient traditions and legendary lore of the Order. Every existing chapter of the Society was represented at the initiation in April, 1859, of Theodore R. Chase, the only representative of the first petitioning club who ever joined the Alpha of Michigan.

Sigma Phi has always held a prominent and respected position in the student life of

the University. The "Sig spirit" that is expressed in the generous and continuous loyalty of its alumni has also instilled in its members the true "Michigan spirit." It is this active "Michigan spirit" which has aided the University in its growth and excited the envy of other colleges and universities throughout the land.

Early in its lifetime the Alpha was one of a group of Greek letter organizations that published the *Palladium*, the original campus yearbook. Among the fraternities associated with Sigma Phi in this venture were Chi Psi, Beta Theta Pi, Alpha Delta Phi, Delta Kappa Epsilon, Delta Phi, Zeta Psi, Psi Upsilon, Phi Delta Phi, Phi Kappa Psi, and Delta Tau Delta. The *Palladium* was published over the years from 1859 to 1896. Its fraternity sponsors continued to be closely tied for many years afterwards, however, and always have been known as the leading groups.

Meetings and initiations of the Society were held in various temporary places after the chapter was founded. Dean Mortimer E. Cooley mentions his initiation in 1881 above a store on Main Street in the downtown business district of Ann Arbor in his autobiography, "Scientific Blacksmith" (University of Michigan Press, 1947).

On March 2, 1882, valuable real estate in the city of Ann Arbor was purchased from Prof. Moses Coit Tyler. The property was located on the spur of bluffs overlooking the valley of the Huron River, possessing a beautiful view of the nearby island recreational park and the outlying residential areas of the community. This made Sigma Phi the second fraternity at Michigan to own its own home. Psi Upsilon had moved into its first home in 1880.

At the time of the purchase the buildings on the property consisted of a two-story, nine-room, frame house painted red and a one-story brick library with sheet-iron shutters, situated about one hundred feet from the house. For nearly twenty years this library was used as the meeting place of the chapter. The "Red House on the Hill" was a landmark to the Sigs and was the scene of all the chapter activities as long as it stood.

In the spring of 1899 the old house was sold and moved away to make room for a new chapter house. While the new building was being erected, temporary quarters were occupied on North Thayer Street.

In 1900 the new home of the chapter was completed and dedicated with imposing ceremony. It was a remarkably pure example of brick colonial architecture, containing, with its sub-basement, five stories and having accommodations for twenty-three men and two servants.

Through the generosity of Brother Franklin H. Walker, M 1869, and that of the loyal Sig sisters of Detroit, the house was furnished and equipped with unusual completeness.

The home of the Alpha was used uninterruptedly by the members until the time of the First World War, when it was taken over by the University as a barracks for members of the Reserve Officers Training Corps registered in the University.

Naturally many Sigs rendered loyal service to the country during this great conflict. Their records are contained in the histories of the individual brothers found in the 1927 and 1949 Catalogues.

During the four months' period of Army occupation, the few Sigs who were still enrolled in the University gathered in rooms maintained by them above one of the stores on North University Avenue between North Thayer and North State Streets. February 1919 found the house again occupied by the Sigs and conditions quickly got back to normal with the return of many from the service.

The House was given a considerable overhauling at that time at the expense of the United States Government. In 1926 it was further and thoroughly repaired so that it would be most comfortable and admirably suited to its purpose.

Over the next decade the Alpha of Michigan continued to grow and to prosper. Many fine new members were added to its numbers. Fraternities at the University generally seemed to be on a firm footing and in the graces of the administration. The different houses were organized into an Inter- Fraternity Council. This group set up rushing rules and presented the fraternity viewpoint to the campus at large. It often acted as arbiter in any disputes that arose between the fraternities and the Dean of Students' Office, which governed general student activity and set up certain rules of discipline.

In the late nineteen thirties, however, fraternity men were somewhat shocked by the establishment of a men's dormitory system by the University. All freshman undergraduate students were required to live at least their first year in an official dormitory.

This posed serious strain upon the fraternities, as they now had to revise their systems to exist with a three-class rather than a four-class group in residence at the House. Higher costs of living made it necessary to slightly increase the numbers of each class. Although this ruling was repealed in the early nineteen seventies, its effect is still felt by the houses on campus.

Sigma Phi withstood this temporary crisis well and soon adjusted itself to the new situation. The Alpha remained on a strong basis, and though a little larger in members, its quality was still outstanding.

The Second World War reacted on University life much as the first one had. The drafting of students by the armed services finally forced the closing of the House in the fall of 1943. Once again the University leased the Home of the Alpha. Many Sigs remained on the campus in the Navy and Army student programs. The few who were still civilians roomed in the home of a retired university professor. Meetings and even one initiation were held in a room above a garage belonging to an Ann Arbor alumnus.

The House was used as a girls' dormitory until the spring semester of 1945. At that time the University converted it into an English house for Latin American scholars studying on the campus.

With the ending of the war, Sigs began returning to college. Throughout the fall semester of 1945 meetings and rushing took place in the homes of various Ann Arbor alumni. Sufficient strength had been regained to enable the House to reopen in the spring of 1946. At first there were non-members living in the House, but by the next fall a full complement of active Sigs were again in residence in Ann Arbor. When the non-members were in the House, university regulations made some sort of chaperone necessary. A married Sig and his wife who had returned to school lived in the guest room to fulfill this requirement.

Generous alumni support made it possible to once more redecorate and repair the building in the summer of 1946. All the old traditions and activities returned as before. The active chapter resumed its trips to the annual Fourth of March banquet at the University Club in Detroit, where they were the guests of the alumni organization.

As throughout the whole student body the larger portion of the post war active Sigs were veterans attending school under the GI Bill of Rights. While a little older than the usual student, they acted as experienced leaders within the house.

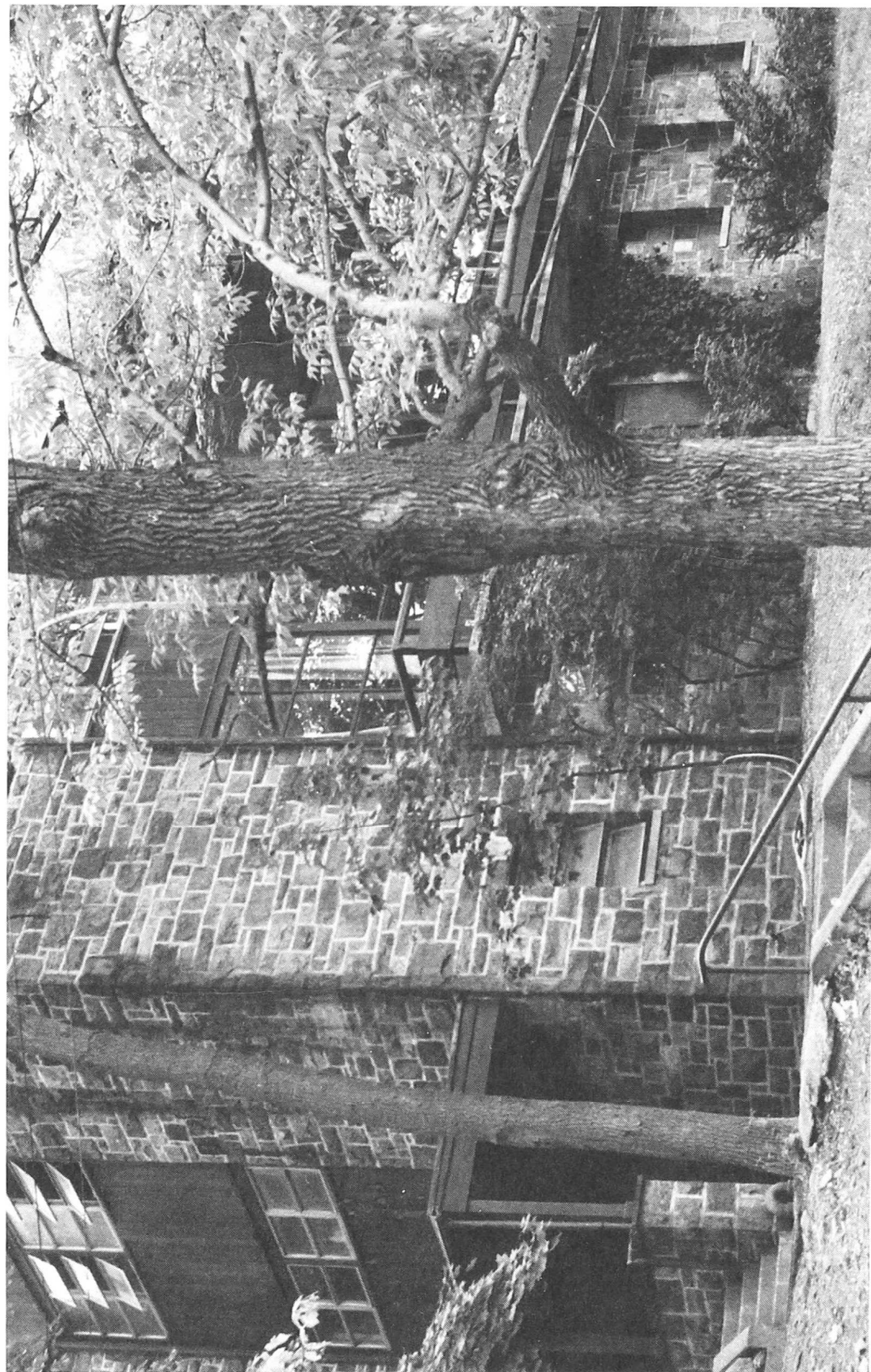
As the nineteen sixties approached, the chapter began to weaken. The house was showing the decay of the 60 years of rigorous use. Also the number of actives had fallen. Most of the fraternities were in the areas south of the campus. For these reasons, and because of an offer to buy the property from the neighboring St. Joseph's Hospital, the chapter sold the property and house that was located at 426 North Ingalls in 1962.

A new site was located and a modern new house was built at 907 Lincoln. The new structure is noted around Ann Arbor for its unique design. The house and its architect, David W. Osier, have won numerous national awards for design and construction. An important point that must be noted is that through the hard work and sound financial planning provided by the local Alumni Board, the Society was able to move into the new house debt-free; no mortgage was necessary.

During the 1963-64 school year the Sigs were forced to find their own housing, but in the fall of 1964 the active chapter first occupied the new house. Since moving into the new house, the chapter has continued to grow and prosper.

The continued strong participation and cooperation of many Michigan Sig Alumni, as well as many Sigs from other chapters who have served on the Board of Directors for the Alpha of Michigan, have been instrumental in the growth of this chapter. With their continued cooperation, guidance, and support, the Alpha of Michigan looks forward to continuing her position of strength and unity among all the other organizations here at The University of Michigan.





ALPHA OF PENNSYLVANIA—LEHIGH UNIVERSITY



# ALPHA OF PENNSYLVANIA

**1887**

## LEHIGH UNIVERSITY

**Bethlehem, Pa.**

*Founded in 1866*

### **FOUNDERS**

JOHN FOSTER

EDWARD WINSLOW PAIGE

WILLIAM GIBSON GILMOUR

*From the Alpha of New York*

RICHARD ALLISON ELMER JOHN RIPLEY MYERS

*From the Beta of New York*

CHARLES ELLIOTT FITCH WILHELMUS MYNDERSE WILLIAM NELSON

JOHNSON

*From the Alpha of Massachusetts*

WILSON PHRANER

*From the Gamma of New York*

WILLIAM GORDON VER PLANCK WILLIAM EDWARD HAYES

*From the Delta of New York*

WYLLYS BENEDICT JOHN MILES CANTWELL

*From the Alpha of Vermont*

DeWITT CLINTON BLAIR

*From the Alpha of New Jersey*

WILLIAM HENRY BOARDMAN JOHN DENISON HIBBARD

*From the Alpha of Michigan*

## ALPHA OF PENNSYLVANIA

HISTORY of Sigma Phi would not lie complete without an acknowledgement of the debt Sigma Phi owes to Lehigh University, and a brief description of Lehigh up to the time of the founding of the Alpha of Pennsylvania. Lehigh had in 1887, when the Alpha of Pennsylvania was founded, operated for a period of 21 years.

Lehigh University was chartered by the Legislature of Pennsylvania by act dated February 9, 1866. It was formally opened at exercises held Sept. 1, 1866.

The founding of Lehigh was the outcome of a movement inaugurated in 1865 by the Hon. Asa Packer of Mauch Chunk, with the purpose of affording education in the learned professions then recognized and likewise training in technical branches, the importance of which was then just becoming apparent in the economic readjustment following the close of the Civil War. Judge Packer was a pioneer in a most significant phase of industrial development, the transportation of coal from the anthracite mines of Pennsylvania to tide-water. He became the recognized master of canal boat transportation. Then foreseeing the supplanting of boat by train as a carrier of coal, he built the Lehigh Valley Railroad from Mauch Chunk to Easton, later extending it to the Port of Perth Amboy and deeper into the coal region of the Wyoming Valley and into New York State. The crowning work of the life of this great industrial leader, whom President McCrea of the Pennsylvania Railroad once termed conspicuous among great men and public benefactors, was his conception of a university in the Lehigh Valley which should provide for "a complete professional education." His purpose, as set forth in the first Register of Lehigh University, included this statement:

"While such an institution promises to be of peculiar benefit to the Lehigh Valley, and to the numerous other districts of Pennsylvania which are rich in mineral resources of many kinds, its usefulness will not be thus limited. It is intended for the benefit of the whole country; the instruction which it imparts will enable its graduates to play intelligent parts in exploring and developing the resources of all portions of the United States."

From its early years to the present, the University fulfilled this aim; Lehigh has always been more than local in enrollment, appeal and influence.

Judge Packer's initial donation to Lehigh included \$500,000 and a large tract of land, to which he added considerably during his lifetime and by his

**will. He did not permit his name to become a part of the corporate title of the institution, believing that, "the new University would be called upon for service far in excess of what could be done by the original endowment, and he did not intend, through self-glorification, to deny others the opportunity of forwarding the work." Since its foundation the equipment and resources of Lehigh have steadily increased, due to the continued interest of the University's trustees, alumni and friends.**

The first President of Lehigh University was Dr. Henry Coppee, a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, who served with distinction in the Mexican War, and had experience as an educator at West Point and at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Coppee served both as President and as Professor of History and English Literature.

The "general plan" of study as originally outlined and carried out up to 1872, provided for two years in elementary branches, in which the students were called First and Second Classmen, and two years in professional subjects, in which the students were called Junior and Senior Schoolmen. There were five schools: General Literature, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Metallurgy and Mining, and Analytical Chemistry.

In 1871 Judge Packer increased his original gifts to the University and the tuition fees were discontinued. In 1891 the Board of Trustees were compelled to again charge for tuition.

The Wilbur Scholarship, a prize of \$200 given annually to the student in the Sophomore Class having the highest general average, was established in 1872 by the late E. P. Wilbur, for many years a trustee of the University.

Dr. Coppee resigned the Presidency in 1875, retaining the chair of the English Language and Literature. Dr. J. M. Leavitt was President of the University from 1876 to 1880. During his administration the Lucy Packer Linderman Library was built.

The third President of Lehigh, Dr. Robert A. Lamberton, served from 1880 to 1893. These years were marked by an enlargement in the scope of the School of Technology, including the establishing of separate chairs of Mining and Geology, Mechanical

Engineering and Electrical Engineering, subjects which had formerly been given in other departments. The buildings erected in Dr. Lamberton's administration were a gymnasium completed in 1883, a Chemical and Metallurgical Laboratory in 1884 and Packer Memorial Church, the gift of Mary Packer Cummings, daughter of Judge Packer, in 1887.

In 1887 when Sigma Phi came upon the scene Lehigh was well established as an educational institution and had then an enrollment of approximately 400 students. Of this total enrollment the number of fraternity men was 197.

Sigma Phi was the ninth fraternity to establish a chapter at Lehigh, being preceded by Chi Phi in 1872, Alpha Tau Omega in 1882, Delta Phi in 1884, Psi Upsilon in 1884, Theta Delta Chi in 1884, Delta Upsilon in 1885, Sigma Nu in 1886 and Phi Gamma Delta in 1886. Phi Delta Theta also brought a chapter to Lehigh in 1887. Some other fraternities had come and had disappeared before our advent.

In 1884, to all appearances, the Lehigh Chapter of Delta Tau Delta was a smoothly running body of men, but inwardly there was discontent with the policies of the national organization. In the summer of that year while the members were still Delta Tau Deltas, a delegation from Lehigh went to the convention of that fraternity in Detroit, making the journey in a Lehigh Valley Railroad private car. At this convention the Lehigh delegates came to the conclusion that their best interests would be served by leaving Delta Tau Delta, which they did upon their return to Bethlehem; each man sending in a separate resignation. The group also returned its charter to the Grand Chapter.

In order to keep the group together they then organized a local society which, for want of a better name, was called Beta Beta – some people said this stood for “Bully Boys” and perhaps it did. The purpose of the formation of this club was to enable its members to maintain an organization through which to apply for a charter from a national fraternity. Soon after their return to college in the fall they began to cast about for a connection suitable for them. It is recorded that the first contact any of the Beta Betas had with Sigma Phi representatives was a meeting between Dr. Alexander Duane

and Rollin H. Wilbur, held in the latter's office at Bethlehem. Later on other meetings were held between representatives of Sigma Phi, Robert P. Linderman and Rollin Wilbur. Among the Sigs who represented the Society were William Gordon Ver Planck and Wilhelmus Mynderse. In 1886 these conferences resulted in a petition to Sigma Phi for a charter, although the Society had not granted such a petition since 1858.

The application was sponsored by the Alpha of Massachusetts and had the endorsement and support of many prominent Sigs. During the Christmas holidays of 1886-87, on January 4, at the General Convention of Sigma Phi, the following active members of Beta Beta went to the old Brunswick Hotel in New York City and were initiated into Sigma Phi:

Robert P. Linderman, Rollin H. Wilbur, Robert H. E. Porter, William H. Sayre, Jr., Garrett B. Linderman, Charles P. Coleman, Philip Sidney Webb, E. VI. McIlvain and David B. Abbott.

On Friday evening, Feb. 4, 1887, the chapter was officially installed at Lehigh. The guests from New York arrived in Bethlehem at 5:40 in the afternoon on a special Lehigh Valley train consisting of the directors' car and two passenger coaches. The visiting members of Sigma Phi included about 80 men prominent in all walks of life, among them ex-Governor Hartranft of Pennsylvania, ex-Governor Hoffman of New York, Hon. John Jay Knox, Eugene M. Jerome, Elihu Root, Wilhelmus Mynderse and E. P. North of New York City; S. S. Gould of Seneca Falls, New York; Prof. John Foster of Union College; B. Lincoln Benedict and Robert D. Benedict of Brooklyn; Henry M. Keim of Reading, Pa., and others from Geneva, Rochester, Syracuse, Philadelphia, and Williamstown.

At 8:00 o'clock that evening the visiting brothers and the members of Beta Beta proceeded to Grand Army Hall, Main Street, Bethlehem, where William A. Stevenson, John B. Price, T. Hughlett Hardeastle, Robert S. Mercur, Murray B. Augur, George V. Snyder, Jose R. Villalon and Francis V. Dalrymple were initiated into the mysteries of the Society. After these exercises had been concluded, the party proceeded to the residence of Garrett B. Linderman on Fountain Hill, where a reception was held. The

guests included about 200 prominent Bethlehem people, and were received by Mrs. R. A. Lamberton, Mrs. E. P. Wilbur, Mrs. Rollin H. Wilbur, Mrs. W. H. Chandler and Mrs. R. P. Linderman.

The house was handsomely decorated with palms, other tropical plants, flowers and flowering plants. Geiseman's orchestra of New York furnished the music and the affair was in every particular a most delightful one. The festivities were continued until about 3:00 a.m., when the guests departed, wishing Sigma Phi many years of life and success.

The members of Sigma Phi. both old and new, then proceeded to the chapter house on Fourth Street, where the festivities were renewed and continued up to 6:30 o'clock, when it was decided that the Alpha of Pennsylvania of Sigma Phi was well and thoroughly launched. A large measure of credit for the success of the chapter is due to the type and character of its founding members.

The problem of a proper house for the Alpha of Pennsylvania was soon solved by the newly initiated members of Sigma Phi. Ground was broken for the house on Fountain Hill in June of 1888. The new building was erected by J. S. Allam, a well-known Bethlehem contractor. The young Sig chapter impatiently awaited the completion of its new house and gave Sam Bevsher, who had charge of the construction for contractor Allam, considerable trouble as they tried to get past him and roam around to "note progress.

The addition of the new Sigma Phi house to Delaware Avenue added considerable prestige to Fountain Hill. The most attractive room in the new<sup>351</sup> house was the clubroom, wainscoted and finished in antique oak with contrasting wall painting of dark red. The outstanding feature there was the great stone fireplace familiar to us all with the Society badge carved above it in relief.

When the house was first constructed no provision was made for serving meals on the premises. Because the members had previously eaten together at a nearby boarding house the sociability and friendly rivalry of the dining table was not totally lost. In the fall of 1904 the service of meals was inaugurated at the house. A caterer, rejoicing in the appellation of Monsieur De Buis, from New York, was engaged and provided the

brothers with amusement as well as food.

Shortly after the founding of the chapter the University passed through a period of severe financial strain. A grant of \$150,(XX) to the University by the Legislature of Pennsylvania and the contributions of young alumni together with the unfailing support of its Trustees and friends kept the University from closing its doors. This generous financial help started the University on its steady growth and expansion.

Sigma Phi finances have gone through similar periods in which many of the alumni have been generous in their support of financial drives. The periodic alterations and additions to the original house have all been financed and supported by loyal alumni. Led by Art Drisler, the alumni succeeded in June, 1916, in the drive to burn the mortgage.

During the trying days of World War I, except for the weekly meetings, all fraternity life practically ceased for the active chapter.

In 1937 the chapter celebrated its semi-centennial with appropriate exercises including an exceptionally fine chapter history prepared by the late Philip H. W. Smith, L '88.

World War II dealt a severe blow to the campus life of the Alpha, to the extent that for a year there were no actives at the house. Volunteering started soon after Pearl Harbor, and by the start of the college year in September, 1942, nine of the 12 actives to return to the University had volunteered. Ten neophytes were swung that year, but as a result of departures to military or naval service and to graduations, only three members returned to the Alpha in the fall of 1943.

In order to keep the house open as long as possible it was decided to allow non-Sigs to live there. A "Sigma Phi Living Group" was accordingly formed, under the direction of the long-time steward Fred Salber, and members of six other fraternities took up residence. The three Sigs who had returned that year kept up the activities of the Alpha, but because of the reduced enrollment at Lehigh only two men were swung that year. By the end of the college year in June, 1944, the three remaining actives went into the Army, Navy, and Red Cross, and the Halls of the Alpha were closed for a year although

the "Sigma Phi Living Group continued to occupy the house.

Sigma Phi life returned to Lehigh in September, 1945, when one of the veterans returned. Four others returned the following semester, and before the end of the academic year four new men had been swung as the chapter took up its post-war reactivation. The beginning of the 1946 college year saw the membership up to 12, and September, 1947, showed the return of traditional activities and the house filled to capacity.

A great deal of the credit for the continuation of the Sig spirit during the trying war years, and the reactivation of the chapter, is due to the wholehearted and generous activities of William C. ("Wink") Mayer. The chapter also owes much of its strength and vitality to many others who have given freely of their time and experience in the guidance and furtherance of the activities of undergraduates.

Although 506 Delaware Avenue had served the Alpha very well for over 60 years, the changing life at Lehigh and Bethlehem made an ever-increasing number of Sigs feel that the interests of the chapter could be served better through a house on the campus. The present site was reserved early in 1948 and a building committee organized. Nelson L. Bond L '22 served as chairman, Hugh E. Hale L '93, secretary; George L. Childs L 17, treasurer; with committee members of Yellott F. Hardeastle L 01, Robert M. Hinehman L T7, William C. Mayer L TO and Everett F. Warner L '39. "Christy" Hanks L '38 was retained full time as Executive Secretary for the project.

On June 8, 1950 title closed for the sale of Lehigh's first fraternity house at 506 Delaware Avenue to James and Theresa Bunderla for \$15,500. Following taxes, payment of remaining mortgage, etc., this brought Sigma Phi \$7,962.66.

Chick Muhlenberg, of Muhlenberg Brothers, Reading architects designed the house which, at inception, had two wings, one to the east and one to the west. Because of the financial state of the country, due to the war, etc., it was decided to eliminate both wings reducing the cu. ft. from 142,000 to 112,000 (which was still larger than Delaware Avenue's 93,000 cu. ft.). On August 4, 1950, Earl W. Ecker, a Bethlehem contractor, received the bid.



With all being in order according to Andrew W. Litzenberger, Lehigh's superintendent of buildings and grounds, and John I. Kirkpatrick, university treasurer, and with solid plans to raise what came to be \$127,500, ground was broken for the first new fraternity house to appear on campus since Beta Theta Pi's in 1926.

With the Sigs homeless from September of 1950 through May 1951, plans were needed. The second floor of a building on South Bethlehem's Fourth St. served as headquarters, and as residence for ten brothers. The rest of the brothers were dispersed among dormitories and private homes. The brothers held semi-formal meetings in Drown Hall and preserved some semblance of social life at a small bar which an understanding landlord helped us build in "our" basement. Thanks should also be extended to the other fraternities at Lehigh who graciously invited us to their Saturday night parties. 471 Vine Street was the gathering place for meals. It was the home of the Hamilton's – Cook Margaret, Husband George, and the twin boys who formed an unwanted gallery on the stairs during many meals.

May 9, 1951 the first meal was served in the new house by Fred and Mrs. Salbor (who had been convinced to continue following a meeting at the Maennerchor) which was now complete, including a bar which was not only the best on campus, but the best in the country (according to the actives). Provisions for a bar in the new house had been rejected as an economy measure. The actives felt that a good-looking fraternity bar was indispensable and therefore donated the \$250 themselves to build it (mostly out of left over construction materials, but with professional carpenters and plumbers).

Of the eleven men pledged while "houseless," five were initiated on Sunday, May 13, 1951 including Richard Bee Bland, John Howard Boardman, William Jubb Corbet, Jr., Philip Tileston Mudge and Jeffrey Weaver (the only engineer of the group) with more than 40 alumni illuminating the way. With furniture still on the way, Fred Salbert's excellent banquet was served on borrowed tables. Omar Greene L 'IS served as toastmaster and introduced speakers Art Drisler L 05, Nels Bond L 22 and "Wink Mayer L TO. Besides the Lehigh men and Cornell's Tom Andrews, six actives from Union attended the weekend. The remaining six, John Archibald, Jim Kressler, John Nichols,

Byron Ober, Dave Rosenau, and Steve Yates were swung in 1952 bringing in the entire class.

Looking back on that year, Lin E. Webster L '50 wrote:

“Viewed in retrospect, it can be seen now that the hardships and the inconveniences of this past year, rather than being detrimental, caused the euphoria in which we now bask. I look at our men, I look at our house, and I feel our spirit – and I thank God I am a Sigma Phi.”

Ten years later the East wing was added including the additions of a library and alumni suite, bringing capacity to 36 men.

This history would not be complete without mention of Mrs. Mary “Mom” Richards who saved the Alpha for over 20 years as cook, “stand in” mother, and loyal Sig Sister and special recognition to our most loyal alumni William C. “Wink” Mayer.





EPSILON OF NEW YORK—CORNELL UNIVERSITY

# **EPSILON OF NEW YORK**

**1890**

**CORNELL UNIVERSITY**

**Ithaca, New York**

*founded in 1865*

## **FOUNDERS**

**WILLIAM DENSMORE MAXON**

*From the Alpha of New York*

**OREN ROOT**

**BRAINARD GARDNER SMITH GEORGE PRENTICE BRISTOL**

*From the Beta of New York*

**CHARLES ELLIOTT FITCH**

*From the Alpha of Massachusetts*

**ANDREW DICKSON WHITE WILLIAM JARVIS ASHLEY**

*From the Delta of New York*

**BENJAMIN LINCOLN BENEDICT**

*From the Alpha of Vermont*

**ROBERT McMURDY**

*From the Alpha of Michigan*

**ROBERT PACKER LINDERMAN**

*From the Alpha of Pennsylvania*

**EPSILON OF NEW YORK**

I HE founding of the Epsilon in 1890 broke a precedent of fifty years standing. All other

Chapters, except the Gamma, had been established following a petition from undergraduates of the college concerned. The Epsilon was founded after an insistent demand of a group of graduates, not even in or around Ithaca. This group was the Sigs of Chicago.

Only a few years after the founding of Cornell University, many Sigs residing in central New York felt that the Society would benefit by the establishment of a Chapter at this young and flourishing institution, whose President, Andrew D. White, was a Sig. Twice petitions were drawn up and presented to the Convention, but they were refused.

In 1889, a group of twenty Sigs, representing seven chapters, met in Chicago to make another effort. A committee was appointed, representing every active Chapter, to bring the matter before the next Convention. The leader of the group was Robert McMurdy, of the Alpha of Michigan, and others who at once joined in the effort included Charles E. Fitch, Alpha of Mass., Oren Root, Beta, and William j. Ashley, Delta.

On Jan. 20, 1890, the Alpha of Michigan presented the formal petition to the Convention, held in New York under the auspices of the Alpha of Vermont. A committee was appointed with power to proceed with the establishment of the Chapter. This committee met in Rochester and appointed, as Trustees of a Building Association, Douglas Boardman, Andrew D. White, Charles E. Fitch, Oren Root and Seabury S. Gould to raise the funds necessary to build a suitable chapter house.

On Oct. 3, 1890, this group announced the success of their fund raising activities to the committee, meeting in Ithaca, and the institution of the Epsilon was voted. The following evening, at the Hall of the Delta, four students of the University selected by the committee, were initiated into the Society. Four weeks later, seven more were added at the Hall of the Beta, and another one, at the Delta, on Nov. 23. This last was George R. Williams, son-in-law of Judge Boardman, and close personal friend of the Bostwicks in Ithaca. Although an officer of the First National Bank of Ithaca, he matriculated and took courses in the University to comply with the rule that an active member of a Chapter must be an enrolled student.

Through the interest of President Andrew D. White and Judge Boardman, one of the choicest locations on the campus was leased to the Chapter, and on this plot the house was completed, in 1892, which was to be home to its members for the next thirty-five years. Some ten years after the original house was finished, an addition was built, largely through the generosity of the parents of the then active members, thus enabling all active members to live in the house.

During the first few years of its life, the Epsilon was blessed with a group of Sigs resident in Ithaca who gave of their counsel and friendship to the young Chapter. This group included President Andrew D. White, Judge Douglas Boardman, George R. Williams, Horace Mack, Herman V. Bostwick, William Bostwick, Brainerd G. Smith, George P. Bristol, and Howard C. Williams. With the passing of the years, we lost these wise counsellors, and, still early in its life, the Chapter learned to develop a spirit of independence, which has remained one of its outstanding characteristics ever since.

The lack of close contact with older men was, at times, keenly felt by the Chapter. So much so, that a group of alumni, largely in the New York area, formed the Epsilon Association, in 1913. This is an incorporated body which functions in the handling of all matters, other than the actual operation of the chapter house. It likewise gives organized support, when needed, to the Chapter. Every alumnus, on leaving the Active Chapter, automatically becomes a member. This Association has grown with the years, and is a powerful force in keeping the alumni interested and in touch with one another and with the Chapter. The originators of this Association included Edward S. Sanderson, Floyd W. Mundv, Frederick Willis and James Lynah, and among succeeding Presidents of the Association have been James W. Cox, Jr., Robert B. Lea, William D. Crim, Thomas R. Hughes, Graham Livingston and Thomas H. S. Andrews.

The expansion of the physical plant of the University began to cause us concern in the late twenties, and at last came the fateful news that our house must give way for a new Law School Building. In 1929, this threat became a reality, and the house was torn down. The University gave us one of the faculty houses as a temporary home pending negotiation for the construction of a new one. The discussion finally resulted in our

being granted a long term lease on another very desirable plot on the campus, on which we started to build. The allowance made by the University for taking over our house, enabled us to build what is one of the most attractive fraternity houses at Cornell. Alumni contributed an additional \$25,000 for landscaping. In 1938, the Epsilon Association received one half of the residual estate of James Norris Oliphant (C'97), the other half going to Cornell University as an unrestricted gift. "Nod" Olipliant was born in Brooklyn, New York on April 22, 1880. After acquiring his M.E. degree from Cornell in 1901, he became a member of the firm, Jas. H. Oliphant and Co., bankers and brokers, New York City until his death January 22, 1927. Through the astute management of our endowment fund, largely the labor of Floyd W. Mundy, Jr. (C'23), Marshall P. Hoke (C'35) and their fellow trustees, we have maintained an income sufficient to provide for proper upkeep and emergencies, as well as to provide a limited number of loans and scholarships for undergraduates.

By rare good fortune, Harold H. Sleeper (C'11) and Wakefield Worcester (C' 11) were among the architects retained by the university for development work, and the new Sigma Phi Place is the result of their design and craftsmanship.

Under the added stimulus of this new home, the chapter became one of the leaders, although one of the smallest numerically, of the fifty-odd national and local fraternities at Cornell.

During World War II, since all of the actives were in service, the Epsilon lived in the person of Alanson W. Chamberlain (G'16), an officer and director of the Tompkins County Trust Company. He was our direct Sig contact in Ithaca, and he inspected the house frequently during the period it was leased to the U.S. Navy. Philip Will (C'96), the Chapter Advisor without a Chapter, made frequent visits from Rochester, and it is largely due to these two men that the Epsilon had a house to return to after the war. The House was reactivated largely as a result of the efforts of Edward D. Eddy (C'41) and returning veterans such as Halbert Pavne (C'42) and John Shafer (C'42). With the very active support of the Epsilon Association, headed by Thomas H. S. Andrews (C'05), the Chapter gained a leading position on the hill which it has never since relinquished.



Working closely with “Chambie” since the early 50’s, Jack Downing (C’37) has served continuously on the Board and has given invaluable advice on maintenance of the physical plant.

Presidents of the Epsilon following Tom Andrews were William A. Drisler, Jr. (C’34), Edward D. Eddy, Jr. (C’41), Peter M. Wolff (C’39), John D. Mills (C’40), Marshall P. Hoke (C’35), James M. Kittleman (C’31), Gordon Kiddoo (C’40), G. Michael McHugh (C’47), Charles Brate Bryant (C’47), John W. Allen (C’50) and Frederick 14. Bloom (C’57).

In writing “a history” of the last 30 years, it is impossible to mention all of the Sigs who have contributed so much of their time, wisdom and efforts on behalf of the Epsilon. To mention some might be to slight others, however, no group is more “unsung” than those who have served as Secretary- Treasurer. Their term of office has traditionally been five years, whereas that of the President has only been three. While this purposeful overlapping of terms has strengthened continuity on the Epsilon Board, it has also meant that one man has been shouldered with most of the Association’s affairs. Chronologically since the war, the Secretary-Treasurers have been: Edward D. Eddy (C’41), William A. Rossiter (C’34), G. Michael McHugh (C’47), Harrison R. K. Jahn (C’49), Theodore M. Hogeman (C’33), James Maresh (C’61), and currently, James P. Ware (C’62). However, it must be pointed out that Mike McHugh has served the Epsilon Association virtually continuously since 1954. As noted above, he has been President, Secretary-Treasurer, Chapter Advisor, Director and friend for almost twenty-five years.

Many Epsilon Sigs have served on the Board of Directors since no one person can serve more than two consecutive three-year terms. Thus, the Association has been able to involve many Sigs in its affairs, bringing in younger brothers yearly to keep the organization vital.

Sigs have not only served their Chapter, but also their Alma Mater. Among those who served on the Cornell University Board of Trustees in recent years are: Philip Will, Jr. (C’24) (who as Chairman of the Buildings and Properties Committee oversaw the

post-war building expansion of Cornell), Frank Zurn (C'47), Bob Ridgley (C'53), Mike Hostage (C'51), Ezra Cornell, IV (C'69), and Bob Harrison (C'73) and Steve Foley (C'74), student Trustees.

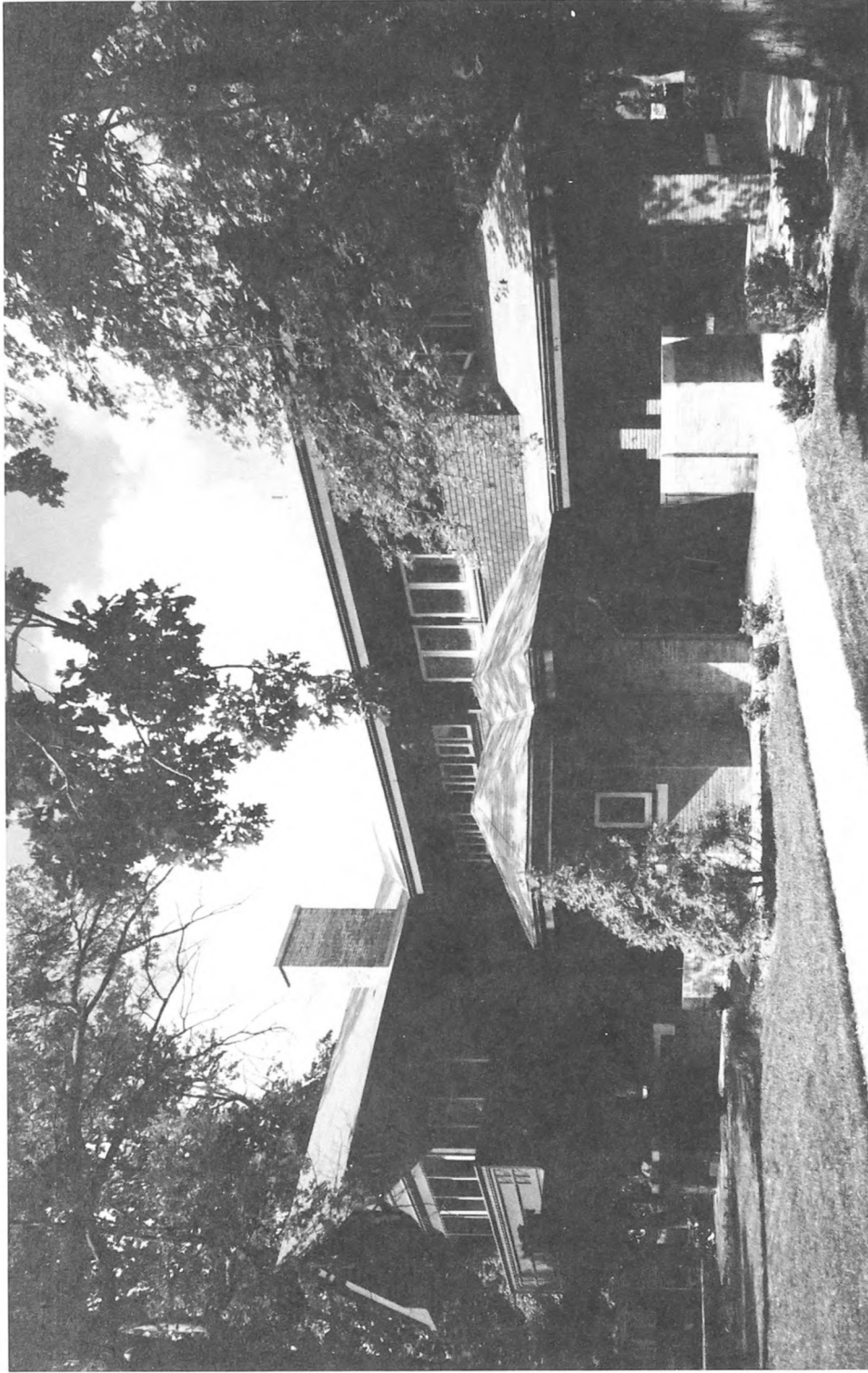
Of special interest is Bob Harrison who served as one of the first student Trustees and who, in 1976, was elected a Rhodes Scholar.

Many Sigs have also served on the Cornell University Council, a group of 300 of Cornell's leading alumni. The list is too long to enumerate but it is sufficient to say that Sigs have been active in University affairs.

Besides a long list of outstanding athletes and scholars, the Chapter has also been consistently active in undergraduate affairs, especially in student government, and for many years won the Inter-Fraternity Council Award for Outstanding Fraternity at Cornell. In fact, the Epsilon won it so frequently that the award was finally officially "retired" in the halls of the Epsilon. This same interest in student government resulted in the election of Harrison and Foley to the Board of Trustees, so the tradition carries on.

One of the most stimulating and intellectually rewarding programs for both the undergraduates and the entire Cornell Community has been the development of the James Norris Oliphant Lecture Series which has brought to the Cornell campus in the last ten years such notable public figures as Theodore N. Sorenson, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Senator George McGovern, columnist William F. Buckley, prize fighter and poet Muhammad Ali, former CIA Director William Colby and former Vice President of South Vietnam Nguyen Cao Ky. Perhaps the all-time favorite was cartoonist Walt Kelly, creator of Pogo, whose thank you note to the Chapter in the permanent register of guests is of special pride to the members of the Chapter. Another recent favorite was Isaac Asimov. The speakers not only give a public address to the community at large but, more importantly, live with the undergraduates and hold informal seminars and bull sessions for the actives. This series is viewed as a very important part of the Epsilon's enrichment programs.





ALPHA OF WISCONSIN—UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

# ALPHA OF WISCONSIN

## 1908

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

Madison, Wisconsin

*Founded in 1849*

### FOUNDERS

**WILLIAM AUGUSTUS PRINGLE MORRIS**

*At large—of the Beta of New York*

**ALBERT WILLIAM HARD**

*At large—of the Alpha of Michigan*

**FREDERICK LINCOLN SIVYER**

*At large—of the Epsilon of New York*

**RICHARD FRANCHOT WARNER**

*From the Alpha of New York*

**ALEXANDER COBURN SOPER, JR.**

*From the Beta of New York*

**WILLIAM WARREN TRACY**

*From the Alpha of Massachusetts*

**CHARLES VALLETTE KASSON**

*From the Delta of New York*

**CHARLES LINCOLN GOSS**

*From the Alpha of Vermont*

**ROGER SHERMAN**

*From the Alpha of Michigan*

**MURRAY BLATCHLEY AUGUR**

*From the Alpha of Pennsylvania*

**HENRY BRYANT**

*From the Epsilon of New York*

## **ALPHA OF WISCONSIN**

The first proposals for a chapter of Sigma Phi at the University of Wisconsin were made in the 1870's. The 1878 Convention received a petition and appointed delegates to visit Madison. However, it was decided not to establish a chapter. An enthusiastic Sig who favored a chapter at Wisconsin was Breeze J. Stevens, H'1850. Among many items in an illustrious career, Stevens was Mayor of the City of Madison and a Regent of the University of Wisconsin. He died in 1903, just as the movement which led to the establishment of the chapter got under way.

The Convention of 1903 received a proposal for a chapter at Wisconsin and sent a committee to Madison. The committee reported favorably. The Convention of 1905 established a committee of founders, who were authorized to establish the chapter when conditions became suitable. The founders began raising funds, searching Madison for a chapter house, and looking for prospective future Sigs.

In the fall of 1908, five young men, two of them sons of Sigs, were pledged. The chapter's inception, and their initiation, took place on Halloween, October 31, 1908. The ceremonies and banquet were held at the Congress Hotel, in Chicago. That they were held there, and not in Madison, is an indication of the great support the chapter received from the Sigs of the Chicago area. Since then, the Chicago Sigs have continued to be the strongest supporters of the Chapter.

With two transfer Sigs, David Mack Warren, C'04, and George Blair, L'07, the Chapter started operating. The first year the Sigs were located in rooms at Gilman and Pinckney. From 1909-1915 the Sig Place was a house on Mendota Court. The Chapter moved to the present Sig House, 106 North Prospect, in 1915.

The house was designed by Louis Sullivan, and had been given as a wedding present by the family of the bride of a professor at the University. The house is of great interest to students of architecture, who frequently visit it. It is a National Landmark, the first City of Madison Landmark and has been entered in the National Register of Historic Places. The professor and his wife felt dissatisfied with the house shortly after moving in, feeling it unsuited to their needs. Fortunately, Sig Alumni learned of the

situation, and Sigma Phi bought it from them for \$40,0(X), much less than the cost of its construction.

Over the years the Wisconsin Chapter has had excellent relations with the University faculty. Two faculty Sigs contributed greatly, in time, effort, and understanding. Stephen W. Gilman, F'12, was initiated while a Professor of Business Administration. From the chapter's inception to his death in 1930, he took an enthusiastic and helpful interest in the Chapter's affairs. Lilian E. Mack, M'21, of a large and distinguished family of Sigs, joined the University of Wisconsin faculty as a Professor of Physics in 1930 and remained until his death in 1966. All Sigs who were fortunate enough to know him will long remember his interest in them and in the Chapter, as well as his kindness, wisdom and understanding.

The Wisconsin Sigs have distinguished themselves in athletics, campus activities, and in competition with the other Wisconsin fraternities, particularly in scholastics. Likewise, the chapter has won a number of awards from the National Society for academic achievement. The active chapter's studies and campus activities have almost always been well balanced, with no field of study or avocation predominating inordinately.

Since the house holds only twenty men, the Chapter has found it relatively easy to restrict itself in accordance with the limitation on numbers which is found in the Sigma Phi Constitution and which has been reinforced by many years of tradition. Any disadvantages which may have been caused by limited membership have been more than overcome by warm and enthusiastic Alumni support, from graduates of the other Sig chapters as well as from Wisconsin Sigs. The experience of the Wisconsin Chapter bears out in full measure the statement found in Baird's Manual of American College Fraternities to the effect that Sigma Phi is preeminent among the fraternities in the loyalty of its Alumni.

Theodore Robert Hover, F'13, Lyman Case Ward, F'13, and Charles Judson Snyder, F'15, died in World War I. Biographies are found in the 1927 Catalogue.

Richard C. Lintleman, F'36, John McPhee Cate, F'37, William E. Rost, F'42, Robert J.

Dixon, Jr., F'43, and Albert Ward Holmes, F'43, died in World War II. Biographies are found in the 1949 Catalogue.

Any history of the Alpha of Wisconsin must include a note of appreciation and gratitude for the thirty-three years (1939-72) of loyal service given to the Chapter by Florence and Dallas Beatty. Sigs from those years will long and fondly remember the many things Mr. and Mrs. Beatty did for the Chapter, particularly the excellent meals which graced the Sigma Phi round table.

Perhaps the greatest challenge to the Wisconsin Chapter came on Friday, March 17, 1972. A fire broke out on the second floor, and fierce flames quickly ensued. Fortunately, all the Sigs in the House escaped unhurt. One senior was rescued from the balcony of the Senior Suite sleeping porch.

The Madison Fire Department responded quickly, and damage from flame was limited to the second floor, the attic and the roof. The roof was extensively damaged. Caving in places, and the "attic" and second floor were completely gutted. In addition, the main floor and the basement were severely damaged by water which fell from the second floor.

Immediately after the fire the Board of Directors of the Chapter's Alumni Corporation met to deal with the pressing needs of the undergraduates and to plan the restoration of the House. Among the problems considered were the following:

- A. The Madison zoning ordinances;
- B. The choice of an architect; and
- C. Financing the repair work.

One of the first steps taken by the chapter was to hire Mark Purcell, F'73, (he was initiated in gratitude for his role in the restoration of the Sig Place) as architect. He was given an award by the American Institute of Architects for his work on the House. The House's status as a Landmark was an important factor in clearing the restoration with the zoning authorities.

The active chapter obtained quarters together, and were able to use the House for

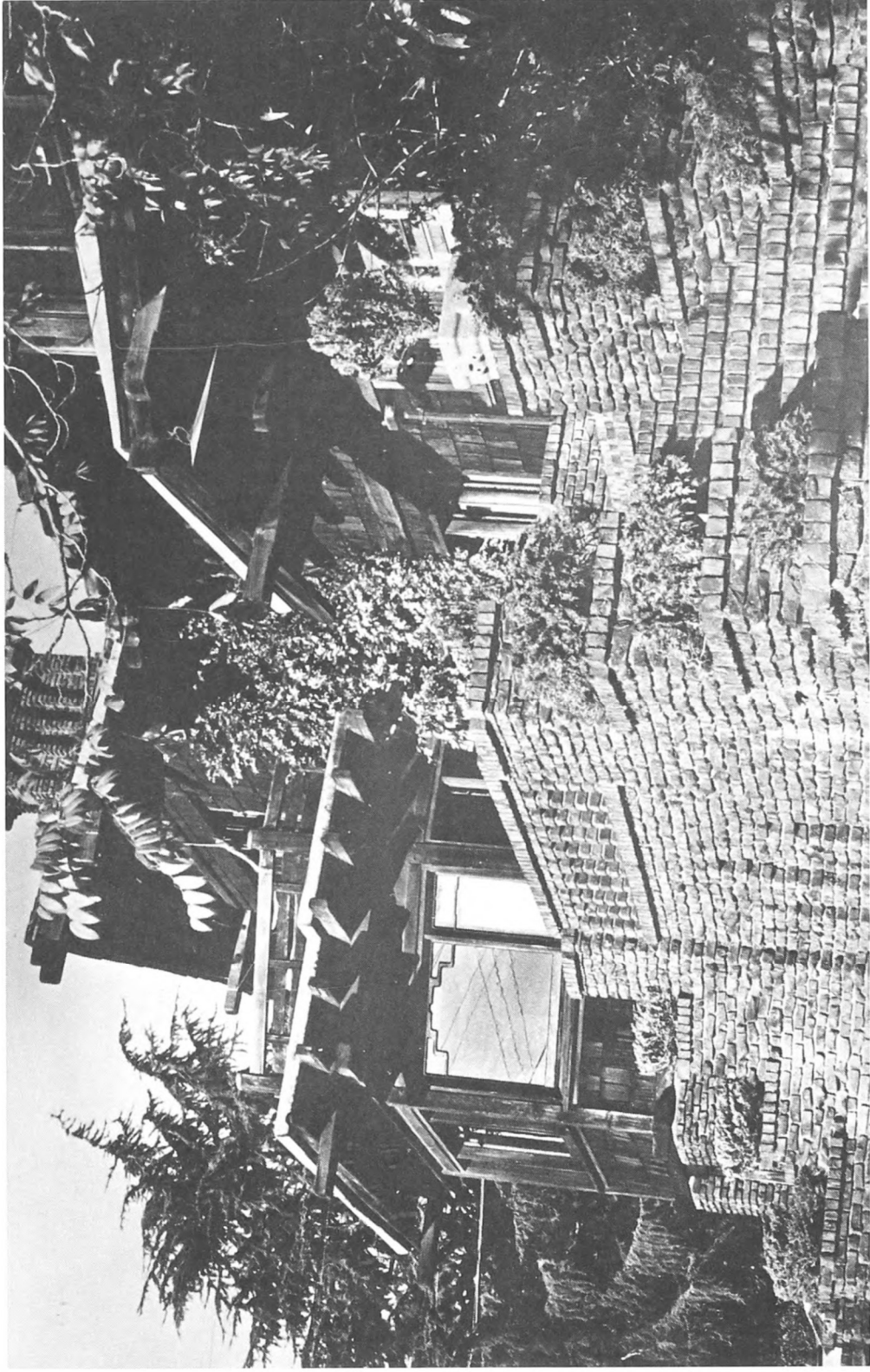


initiations and some social functions during the period of restoration. The Chapter functioned well, considering the handicap, and initiated five Sigs while not being able to live in the House.

Although the distinctive features of the House were carefully restored, many modern improvements were made. They included, among other things, an automatic temperature control system, a fire alarm and sprinkler system, and recreation areas, a library, and an additional room in the basement.

Due to dedicated effort by the Actives, Directors, and Alumni, particularly Arthur C. Nielsen, F'16, the restoration of the House was completed in time for the academic year which began in September of 1973, and the event was celebrated at a Rededication Dinner on October 27, 1973. The principal speaker at the dinner, which was attended by 200 Sigs, wives, and guests, was Arthur C. Nielsen, F'16, who rendered great assistance in planning and carrying out the restoration and who bore the lion's share of the financial burden involved.

The Chapter has published a book, *Trial by Fire*, which tells the story of the fire and rebuilding in much greater detail than this sketch.



ALPHA OF CALIFORNIA—UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

# ALPHA OF CALIFORNIA

*1912*

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Berkeley, California

*Founded in 1868*

## FOUNDERS

**WILLIAM WARD BRITTON OSCAR II. ROGERS ALEXANDER DUANE**

*From the Alpha of New York*

**GEORGE HEBER RICE BENJAMIN DWIGHT HOLBROOK FREDERIC  
PARKMAN WARFIELD**

*From the Beta of New York*

**WILLIAM SWINTON BENNETT HOPKINS DIXWELL HEWITT**

*From the Alpha of Massachusetts*

**CLARENCE MAITLAND SERVICE WILLIAM CORDON VER PLANCK**

*From the Delta of New York*

**JOHN BRAINERD STEARNS PHILIP JAMES ROSS**

*From the Alpha of Vermont*

**FRANK LEONARD SIZER MORTIMER ELWYN COOLEY**

*From the Alpha of Michigan*

**WILLIAM WHARTON THURSTON EDMUND MUNROE SAWTELLE**

*From the Alpha of Pennsylvania*

**HAROLD LEWIS LEUPP KENYON LLEWELLYN REYNOLDS**

*From the Epsilon of New York*

**RANDOLPH SPELMAN SIZER EDWIN CHARLES AUSTIN**

*From the Alpha of Wisconsin*

## **ALPHA OF CALIFORNIA**

The history of the Alpha of California differs in many respects from that of the other Chapters of Sigma Phi. Although the founding of the Chapter came as an answer to the fervent hopes of the Sigs of the Pacific Coast, it was at the behest of a group of undergraduates banded together in a small and highly regarded campus house club that provided the impetus for its inception. Thus, in 1912, the Alpha of California was born into the Society, fully organized with its own alumni, four classes, and a well respected and prominent place in the campus community. Additionally, despite the geographical remoteness of the Alpha of California from its sister Chapters, it has always enjoyed the support of Sigs from all Chapters which was so important in its formation. To this day the Alpha of California flourishes in the care and affection of a devoted, resilient and spirited family.

The Sigs of the Pacific Coast had long cherished a fervent though apparently hopeless wish that they would have an altar of the Sigma Phi within their reach. It was thus with unbridled enthusiasm and joy that they responded to inquiries from the La Junta Club regarding installation as a Chapter of Sigma Phi.

The La Junta Club was an organization typical of the era, a house-club formed as a result of the lack of University housing. The La Junta Club, however, represented the best of these clubs. It was highly esteemed among campus groups and enjoyed the hearty approbation of the University faculty and administration. In its tenth year it had coalesced into a very tightly knit local fraternity with a body of devoted alumni. The advent of many new chapters of national fraternities brought about the realization that they too were destined to become a chapter of a national society. The members of the La Junta Club recognized the need to take a firm hand in the process, and rather than allow themselves to be incorporated into a less than desirable society, they chose to investigate the national fraternities and to strive for membership in the best of them or to take none at all. A committee of three seniors was appointed to determine the organization they would petition and soon thereafter, Sigma Phi was selected. It was through the good offices of University President Benjamin Ide Wheeler that William G.

Donald, a member of the committee, was directed to a Cornell Sig on the faculty, Harold L. Leupp, C'98, University Librarian. Subsequent events proved that they had gained the support of one of the best and wisest councilors that any petitioning body ever had.

The potential realization of their long cherished dream galvanized the of the Pacific Coast into action. They established contact with a group of loyal Sigs in southern California and hence garnered the support of every Sig in California. It was with the high hopes and dreams of a ready and able body of Sig Alumni that Harold L. Leupp traveled across the continent to present the petition of the La Junta Club to the Convention held in December of 1911. Sigma Phi has always been wary of overexpanding and diluting the strength of the Society, but the persuasive arguments of Harold L. Leupp led to a decision by the Standing Committee to investigate the possibility of a Chapter in so remote a location. The Sigs of California created a formal organization and enthusiastically attempted to persuade visitors that came to see for themselves of the merits of their proposals. In addition, they generated voluminous correspondence with those brothers that could not come. Their efforts culminated in March 1912 at an adjourned session of the convention, when it became apparent that the remaining opposition was simply the aforementioned wariness of over-expansion. The final affirmative vote came in June of that year and steps were immediately taken towards the installation of the newest Chapter.

On September 7, 1912 the Alpha of California was born in Berkeley. The initiation and installation of the chapter took place at the Masonic Temple with the Standing Committee officiating. Dr. Alexander Duane had arrived a week prior to the ceremony and had been invaluable in supervising the preparations. At the banquet which followed, twenty one Sigs representing all but one of the Active Chapters, greeted the nineteen charter members of the new Alpha, who, with a Cornell Sig who just transferred to the University of California, made up the quota of the Chapter.

In 1915, after a generous waiver of her rights by Michigan, the Convention was held in California. The fledgling Sigs of California were anxious to exhibit California at its

best to their newly found brothers. In the absence of their own Sig Place the Convention sessions were held in California Hall on the campus and the final banquet at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco.

World War I brought its share of trials to the Alpha. Nearly all those actives eligible and fit for service responded to the call and by 1917 only five men were left in the Chapter. This brought financial woes to the actives who gratefully received alumni donations to help offset their inability to make the rent. Their faith and perseverance prevailed and the end of the War in 1919 brought about one of the brightest periods of the Chapter.

From the installation of the Chapter until September 1922, the Alpha was housed in the old place at 2426 Virginia Street. The house was kept in ill repair by the landlord, and the conditions were less than exemplary. A change in the lease in 1921 resulted in the place becoming a boarding house. It was arranged that only Sigs would become boarders but this situation was even less satisfactory than before.

It became apparent then that a Sig Place of their own was in order. In 1922 the Sigma Phi Building Fund, Inc. was founded for the purpose of raising the needed funds. The first house at 2731 Bancroft stood as a testament to the loyalty and generosity of Sigs everywhere. More than half of the total investment was contributed by the Sigs of Southern California. The Sigs of the Northwest made a nationwide campaign for funds and all brothers gave with such a generosity that will never be forgotten. At the March 4 banquet held at the University Club in San Francisco in 1922, fifty eight Sigs contributed \$4,000 and on the same night, the Sigs of Southern California added \$1,500 to their already generous contribution. It was then possible for the Sigma Phi Building Fund, Inc., to acquire the first Sig Place for the Alpha for approximately \$50,000. The actives paid a yearly rental to cover the cost of the taxes, insurance, and the interest on the mortgage. A subsequent subscription drive eliminated the mortgage and ownership was completely held by Sigs.

The "New Place" served the Sigs well throughout the years ahead. The boom years of the twenties led to the crash of our nation's financial institutions and the hard years

of the Depression. The resilience and durability of the Chapter was put to the test through these years and in the early forties the Sigs of California found they had to move the Chapter as the University was expanding and buying land for the purpose of erecting a law school, Boalt Hall.

William G. "Doctor Bill" Donald rose superbly to the occasion when he learned from his wife Minerva of the impending sale from estate of the beautiful Thorsen House located at 2307 Piedmont Avenue. His wife's desire to have her sorority buy the house was circumvented when Doctor Bill secured the winning bid for the house in 1943. The old house was sold to the University for a fair price and the new one occupied. It is of interest to note that the original Sig Place in California was preserved and moved to another location on campus where it is still in use today by a research group.

The years of loyal work on the Sigma Phi Building Fund, Inc. enabled the new house to be acquired with only a small outstanding debt. It is a beautiful house built by a lumberman and is well known as a showcase of Greene & Greene, a pair of famous California architects. It was, though, a family home, and the anticipated number of brothers returning from the War required that a new mortgage be taken out to make the vital improvements necessary to accommodate the number of expected brothers. This mortgage, too, has been paid off and the active Chapter delights in residing in an architecturally priceless structure that could not be duplicated today.

World War II brought hard times upon the active Chapter. Their numbers declined to five or six although the house remained open. Many of the brothers and alumni gave excellent accounts of themselves, with over 80 members in the armed services.

Once again, the end of war brought the Sigs to good times and a house overflowing with brothers. In fact, over 40 men now resided in the house- more than it had ever previously held. The situation was further complicated by the need to take pledges so that the Chapter would continue to be viable. With the passage of time the abnormal crowding dissipated and the actives were reduced in numbers to the more normal and traditional number of twenty.

The third Convention, and the first opportunity for the brothers to show their new place to their eastern counterparts, came in 1949. The Convention was well attended and the hospitality extended appreciated by all.

The early part of the fifties saw a hill and thriving Chapter. The Alpha initiated many fine men during these years. This period of the Alpha's history closely paralleled the great Cal Bear teams of 1949, 1950 and 1951 which represented the then Pacific Coast Conference in the Rose Bowl.

In fact, the Chapter excelled in both scholastic and athletic endeavors. The Alpha had men on the baseball team, the Varsity Crew, and the football team. Meanwhile, the house was consistently among the top five houses in scholastic competition. The disciplines of medicine and especially law were well represented and two men achieved the distinction of Phi Beta Kappa.

In the late fifties, concerned over the physical repair of the house, certain alumni saw a need for more control and coordination of the activities of the Alpha. Articles of Incorporation were drawn up and in October, 1957, the California Sigma Phi Alumni Association, Inc. was formed as a nonprofit corporation of the state of California. The long lived Sigma Phi Building Fund, Inc. was dissolved and its management was assumed by the new association as part of its duties. Formed as a Board of Directors with the usual officers of such, the purposes of the Alumni Association became the assumption of responsibilities for the activities previously handled informally, such as Conventions, communications with Alumni and the National, the maintenance of the house, and preserving the economic viability of the Alpha. A nucleus of alumni served as the Board over the next few years. The new organization was well prepared for the fourth Convention at the Alpha. The actives have greatly appreciated the sincere and devoted efforts of the members of the Board since its inauguration.

The transition years of the early sixties saw the beginnings of nationwide unrest over the war in Vietnam, with the focal point being the University of California at Berkeley and the Free Speech Movement. As ever, the activities of the campus community cast their influence over the Alpha. Increasing anti-traditionalism through



these years forced the near total collapse of the fraternity system at Berkeley. Although the Alpha remained open, many others were not so fortunate and at least 30 of the 48 fraternities closed their doors. The actives had to reassess their attitudes in light of the dawning social conscience and feeling among students of the unresponsiveness of fraternities. With the inherent pangs of change, the Alpha adapted slowly to the new environment of questioning the authority of seniority and tradition. A group of relatively younger alumni took over the responsibilities of the Alumni Association from men who had served in that capacity in excess of thirty years in some cases.

The Chapter persevered and in the seventies emerged as one of the strongest remaining fraternities. By contrast, some houses had become co-ed and others were reduced to various types of boarding houses. Nonetheless, the past few years have seen an overwhelming resurgence of interest in fraternities and the Alpha is pleased to report that it turns away far more applicants than it can possibly accept. It is a tribute to the Spirit of Sigma Phi that the Alpha has been able to cope with these unusual conditions and survive them without serious disunity.

The Alpha of California has contributed a number of illustrious members to all walks of life of whom the entire Society may justly be proud. The Alpha is pleased to note that there are now third generation Sigs among our members.

The Alpha of California has thrived through very difficult times and owes its success to the unceasing efforts of its alumni. It serves as high tribute to the Spirit of Sigma Phi that the flame planted here so far from the center of Sig activity in 1912 continues to burn unabated and never quenched after 65 years.





ALPHA OF VIRGINIA—UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

# **ALPHA OF VIRGINIA**

## **1953**

### **UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA**

Charlottesville, Virginia

*Founded in 1819*

#### **FOUNDERS**

**MEADE BRUNET**

**JOHN D. GUTHRIE**

**HARRY C. LAMBERTON**

**JOHN II. N. POTTER**

*From the Alpha of New York*

**ROBERT P. BAGG**

**LEE H. BRISTOL**

**FRANCIS B. HASTINGS**

*From the Beta of New York*

**JAMES A. LINEN III**

**EDWARD K. MORRIS**

**FREDERIC T. WOOD**

*From the Alpha of Massachusetts*

**WALTER H. DURFEE**

**RT. REV. OLIVER J. HART WOODRUFF**

**J. RANKIN**

*From the Delta of New York*

**DR. LYMAN ALLEN JEFFERSON**

**W. BAKER 'GEORGE F. HOWE**

**FRED B. WRIGHT**

*From the Alpha of Vermont*

**EMMETT F. CONNELLY**  
**HENRY L. NEWMAN, JR.**  
**GEORGE II. RODERICK**  
**ROBERT J. WILSON**

*From the Alpha of Michigan*

**NELSON L. BOND**  
**THEODORE N. GILL. |**  
**R. FRANCIS M. HUFFMAN**  
**ROBERT L. O'BRIEN, JR.**

*From the Alpha of Pennsylvania*

**HAMILTON ALLPORT THOMAS II.**  
**S. ANDREWS**  
**THOMAS R. COX**  
**FLOYD W. MUNDY**

*From the Epsilon of New York*

**EDWIN C. AUSTIN**  
**JOHN S. LINEN**  
**PHILIP D. REED**  
**PHILIP K. ROBINSON**

*From the Alpha of Wisconsin*

**CARROLL F. GLENNEY**  
**EDWIN S. PILLSBURY**  
**J. FRANKLIN VAN DEREN**

*From the Alpha of California*

## ALPHA OF VIRGINIA

The Alpha of Virginia was created by favorable vote of the annual convention of the Society in the summer of 1953, thus becoming the first new chapter of Sigma Phi since the creation of the Alpha of California in 1912 and the only one south of the Mason-Dixon line. The history of the predecessors of the Alpha is interesting and goes back some period of time, but space permits only a cursory review.

What is now Sigma Phi Place at 163 Rugby Road was first occupied as the Reta Iota chapter of Delta Tau Delta fraternity founded at the University in 1889. In 1908, the Board of Visitors authorized the building of a chapter house, and it was built in 1911 for \$20,000. The Platinum Porch was added in 1915, the gift of a Delt brother, who — it is said — acquired the funds by appropriating the platinum supply from the chemistry building. He was later caught but his family made good the funds.

The history of the Delts at the University of Virginia was somewhat checkered, with relations between the local and the “Arch Chapter” in Columbus, Ohio, in a strained condition much of the time. One of the incidents which led to this situation was the so-called “whiskey rebellion” which occurred during Prohibition. The local chapter was asked to pledge that it would neither make nor serve alcoholic beverages in the house. Local chapters of other fraternities on the Grounds (some hypocritically) had agreed to give such a pledge, but the local chapter of Delta Tau Delta refused to do so, feeling it would be more honored in the breach than in the observance and would result in violations of the much-venerated Honor System. The Arch Chapter put considerable pressure on the chapter, but it was resisted. This precipitated a cause celebre of some national prominence. A scrapbook compiled throughout these years contains news stories from all over the country and telegrams and letters, many supporting the chapter’s position, from its alumni, members of the general public and various notables (including no less a one than Hoot Gibson), but the Arch Chapter of Delta Tau Delta did not take too kindly to the independence of the Virginia chapter. The chapter operated more as a local than as a chapter of a national fraternity until its existence was terminated during the Second World War, all Actives having enlisted by the summer of

1943. In the fall of 1946, it became a local fraternity known as the Serpentine Club, the name being taken from the distinctive serpentine walls on the Grounds of the University, designed by its founder, Thomas Jefferson. It soon developed into a strong, select and smallish (membership limited to approximately 30) local fraternity which was considered one of the best houses on the Grounds.

Throughout its existence, the Serpentine Club had been approached from time to time by representatives of nationals not having chapters at Virginia seeking to establish one, but their efforts were not received with favor. Jefferson Wheeler Baker, V'11, who lived in nearby Ivy, Virginia, was among those who had made unsuccessful attempts, but it was his dream that there would someday be an Alpha of Virginia and he persisted. In the early fifties, his efforts met with greater reception and, after much discussion and investigation by the then-members of the Serpentine Club into the nature of Sigma Phi and discussion with its alumni and other people knowledgeable in such matters, the local became convinced that the ideals and ways of Sigma Phi matched their objectives and determined to petition Sigma Phi for membership. During the entire process and during the discussions which followed the filing of the petition, Jeff Baker participated actively along with several other Sigs in the area who were most helpful, among them John Edmonson, U'48, Stuart Brunet, U'49, and Robert Coe, G'43, who were attending the University of Virginia Law School at the time, John Marshall Tuck, Serpentine Club, and Harry C. Lamberton, U'25, a founder of the Alpha of Virginia and a practicing attorney in Washington, D.C., who provided invaluable help both before and after the establishment of the chapter until his untimely death.

The petition was signed, in order of seniority in the Serpentine Club, by the following individuals: Douglas Fletcher (now deceased), Jay A. Lipe, Julio De T. Noyes, Patrick J. Brill, Leonard S. Davey, Jr., Charles R. Sanford, and David S. Yates.

In the spring of 1953, the last pledge class of the Serpentine Club was admitted: Calhoun L. H. Howard, J. Wentworth Foster, Richard C. McDermott, Donald C. Bazemore, Galt Grant, and Edgar Snowden IV.

The process of establishing the new chapter was not without its difficulties, and

many Sig alumni from many different chapters were actively involved in discussing and explaining the situation to the satisfaction of all concerned and allaying such objections as were raised as well as in pledging financial aid to properly establish the new chapter. The arrangement agreed upon between the Beta Iota Corporation, the independent corporation which owned the house, whose membership consisted of all living Delt and Serpentine Club alumni and the active Serps, was that the chapter house, a valuable property with a small mortgage of \$7,000, and all its accoutrements, would be donated by the owners to the new chapter and that Sigma Phi would provide adequate funds to get the new chapter off the ground by making necessary repairs to the house, providing new furniture where needed, and so on.

The petition was acted upon favorably at the convention at Cornell in June, 1953, and the petitioning members and pledges of the Serpentine Club were initiated on October 3, 1953, at the Alpha of Pennsylvania, the sponsoring chapter, forming the nucleus of the Sigma Phi brothers at Virginia. Of these, several had graduated previously in June, and the rest returned in the fall. On February 27, 1954, the official installation of the chapter occurred, and the chapter began its life with 13 members. Contributions from hundreds of Sigs throughout the country resulted in a fund of \$25,000 used to significantly renovate the house including the addition of several new bedrooms and a chapter room. In 1956, a kitchen and dining room were added, and in 1964 two double bedrooms were built above the north and south porches.

As is true with any chapter, it has had its ups and downs, but it has had many more ups than downs and has been successful in establishing a strong and loyal group of Sigs. It is proud to number among its alumni the current Chairman of the Standing and Advisory Committee serving his third term, Dr. Calhoun L. H. Howard, the last initiated member of the Serpentine Club, and G. Edward Stevens, Jr., in his third term as treasurer of the Standing and Advisory Committee.

This history would not be complete without acknowledgement of the great help and support which the Serpentine Club and, before it, the Delta Tail Delta chapter, received from the members of the Beta Iota Corporation. One of the most active in this regard



was General John A. Cutchins, a prominent Richmond attorney and president of the Beta Iota Corporation. In fraternal spirit and loyalty to the group living at 163 Rugby Road, they were unsurpassed, and Sigma Phi would have been proud to have them as brothers.

By an interesting coincidence, the Alpha of Pennsylvania was also a former Delta Tau Delta chapter that severed its connection, remained a local for several years, and then petitioned Sigma Phi.

Another interesting aspect of the formation of the chapter was the considerable degree of help volunteered by alumni members of other fraternities, such as Chi Psi, Alpha Delta Phi, and Zeta Psi, which demonstrates the high esteem in which they held the Society.

The chapter faces the future with confidence in the ideals of the Society and in the ability of the Alpha of Virginia to perpetuate them at Mr. Jefferson's University.



