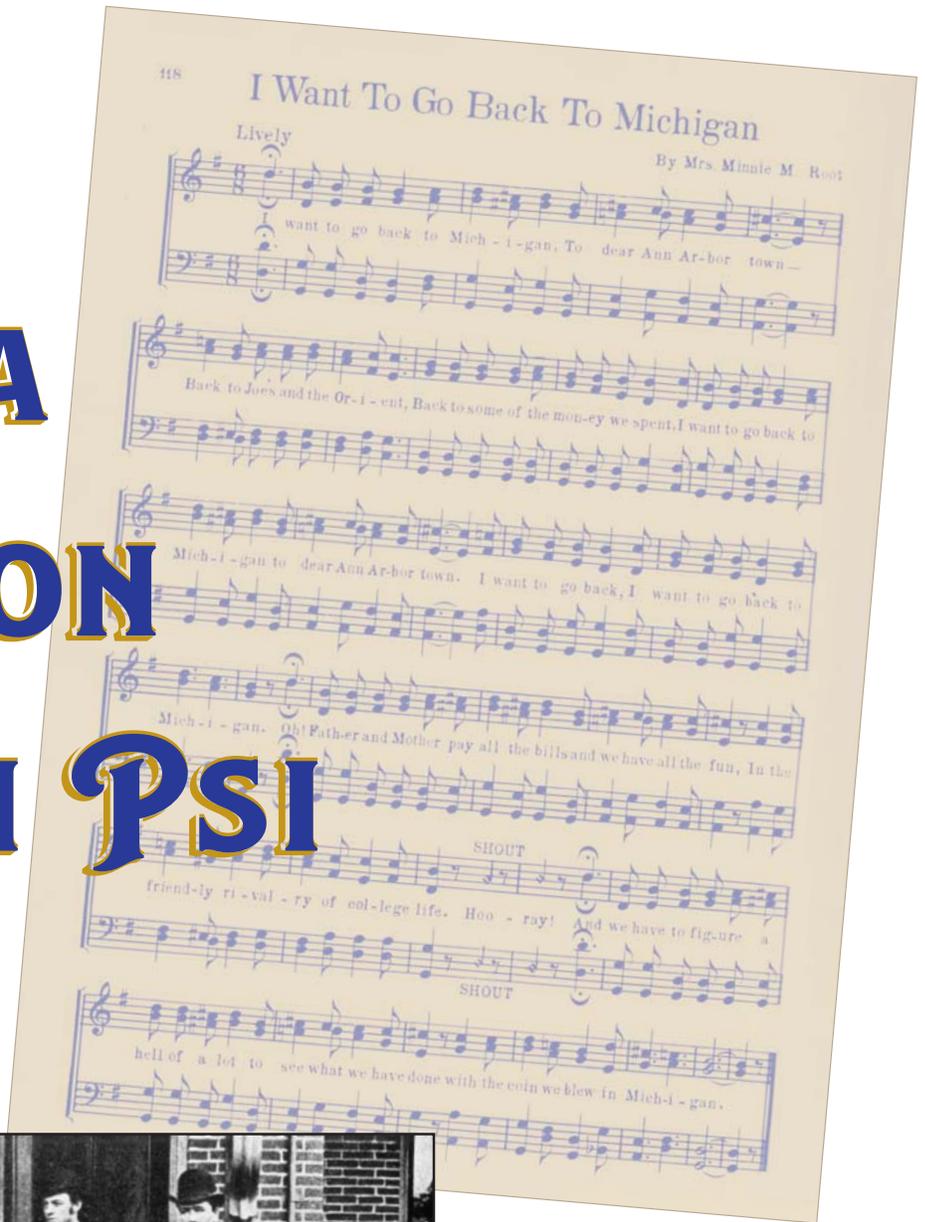


ALPHA & EPSILON OF CHI PSI





ALPHA EPSILON was established in 1845, at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, by George Brooks Alcott, Seneca Ewer, Henry David Goodrich*, David Elias James, George P. Kellogg, Aaron Burton Levisse, William Pitt Cleveland Whiting, James Bonaparte Witherell, Charles Wing Noble, Benjamin Franklin Parks, William Wallace Phelps, Homer French Schoff, William Howard Wait, and Savillon Story Schoff. Gamma, Josiah Addison Priest, Φ 1847.

* Died before initiation but is considered an Epsilon founder.



Alpha Epsilon in 1876 at the University of Michigan. Edward Cassius "Skipe" Swift, E'76, in center chair, was the first of four National Presidents from Alpha Epsilon. Swift served as Chi Psi as #7 from 1914-19.

At right, the University of Michigan seal. At top, the seal of Alpha Epsilon of Chi Psi.



ALPHA EPSILON AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

LITTLE IS KNOWN ABOUT THE FOUNDING OF ALPHA EPSILON of Chi Psi beyond the few meager facts gleaned from the archives of Alpha Phi, and the few priceless letters now in the possession of the Alpha. In 1845 some of the members of the Chi Psi Fraternity becoming convinced that the University of Michigan would, before many years, become one of the leading universities of the country, determined to establish, if possible, an Alpha of their Fraternity at the university. Accordingly, Cornelius Lansing Seymour, of Hamilton College, communicated with William Howard Wait (whom he had known at his home in Ohio) of the class of 1848 of the University of Michigan, inquiring if in Mr. Wait's opinion it would be possible to establish such a chapter at the university. Wait, after looking over the ground, replied in the affirmative, and received at his home in Oberlin, Ohio, the following letter sent by Seymour from his home in Cleveland:

September 7, 1845.

Friend Wait:

I received Monday eve your letter which stated that you were favorably disposed towards the plan of establishing a branch of Chi Psi Fraternity in your college or rather Michigan University. I tell you now, as I told you then, that what I have done, has been done on my own authority. But the first step must always be taken. When I found out by inquiry what station and importance the M. University was destined to take among the Western Colleges, I immediately saw the importance, also advantage, even the necessity of our society being the first to establish a branch there. Michigan is pursuing the right policy to ensure success to her colleges. The policy of Ohio in that respect is poor. For that reason I think that M. University is destined in these two States and undoubtedly in the Western States. My opinion may be wrong from my hasty judgment and scanty knowledge of facts. You say that you are ignorant of the mode of procedure in the organization of a society of this kind.



THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

has grown from the small, struggling school of its 1817 founding to become one of the outstanding educational institutions in the nation. Michigan among the best in the nation in most fields of study because it attracts some of the biggest names in academia to teach and conduct research. In the College of Literature, Science and Art, the strongest academic units are psychology, sociology, biology, anthropology, geology, classical studies, philosophy, political science and foreign languages. The colleges of engineering, business administration, and health services are highly regarded, and their professional schools, especially Law and Business, are top-notch. The campus is big, and the grounds are composed of several areas, the most important of which is Central Campus (the heart of the University). The architecture is diverse, from classic to post-modern. The campus has a natural charm not easily forgotten. The school has its own 144-acre arboretum, a hilly paradise complete with woods, trails and a river. Dormitories have well-defined personalities, and freshmen are guaranteed housing. Architecturally conspicuous are the buildings of the Law Quadrangle (across State Street from the Lodge), gift of an alumnus who refused to see them for fear of disappointment in what had been done to his ideal plans. Students can enjoy a surprising amount of visual and performing arts on or near campus, and Ann Arbor features the best and most varied group of restaurants of any college town in the country. Sports are big business in Ann Arbor, as typified by the football stadium, where every home game since 1975 has drawn more than 100,000 people (with 115,109 packed in for a Notre Dame game in 2013). The Wolverines are part of the Big Ten Conference (which now has 14 member schools).



Burton Memorial Bell Tower

We usually choose four, five, or six best fellows in each class, or as good as are caught. You will have to get a few fellows with you secretly of course, that is, unknown to others, who belong to the college. Then after our society has given its consent we are to send two or more fellows to you to initiate you into the secrets of the society, or you to send two to us to be initiated with us and they on their return to elect and initiate the rest. When your society is organized you can elect whomsoever you please. I think the best plan would be to have a couple of our fellows to come to Buffalo or half way and meet some from you and initiate them then. But all of this is unnecessary and before the time. I would request of you upon your arrival in Ann Arbor to write me informing me of state and prospects of the college, whether there are already any secret societies in existence there, and what would be the prospect of success in regard to the undertaking. I request this in order that I may be able to inform our society and give them correct information. I have not the least doubt that they will be very glad to give their consent. It will be necessary for you to speak to none on the subject except such as you intend to associate with yourself in the society. I am bound next week for Hamilton College, New York, if you please.

Most actively associated with Wait in this endeavor was Charles W. Noble of the senior class. He soon became the correspondent for the petitioners and J. Henry Black of Hamilton likewise became that for the Chi Psi Fraternity. As a result of the negotiations Charles W. Noble on 13 January 1846, wrote the following letter to Mr. Black:

*University of Michigan,
Ann Arbor, 13 January 1846.*

Dear Sir:

Enclosed I send you the names who have determined to link themselves to the fortunes of the Chi Psi.

It would seem foolish in me to praise them, yet I shall take the liberty to say that there is nowhere a finer set of fellows so far as warm hearts and ready hands are concerned. Your letter arrived at Ann Arbor during vacation, and as I have but just returned you will readily excuse this apparent tardiness of reply. But you may be assured that there is no lack of interest in the Society manifested by those who have placed their names to this paper. Your letter in reply to the interrogations was all that could be expected from a society laying any claim to secrecy. The age of the Society is hardly as great as we had thought, but its growth seems almost incredulous, and we hasten to join ourselves to a society which bids fair to eclipse any other in our republic.

It seems peculiarly fitted for us at the West, as one of our characteristics is 'go-a-head-a-tiveness.' So we here send you our right hands and our right hearts too. You must excuse this article of agreement as it is somewhat blotted, etc., but the names are there and we trust that our branch will not be a blot

upon the honor and high standing of the Chi Psi.

You must also excuse the shortness of this letter as we believe that it is not the length of letters that is to make the works go on, but the spirit.

We trust that we shall hear from you soon and until then believe that we shall do all we can to push the matter along

Yours sincerely and in haste,

Charles W. Noble.

We the undersigned having associated ourselves together for the purpose of becoming a secret, social, and literary society, and being convinced that the Chi Psi Society is worthy of our confidence do hereby pledge ourselves to become members thereof as soon as convenient for the several branches.

Charles W. Noble James B. Witherell

H. D. Goodrich Seneca Ewer

B. F. Parks William W. Phelps

H. F. Schoff W. P. C. Whiting

S. S. Schoff.

On 2 February 1846, the little band was deprived of one of its brightest and most beloved members by the death of Henry D. Goodrich, and although his name is in our catalogue as one of the founders of Alpha Epsilon, yet he never passed the mystic veil; but in honor of his memory the Alpha has ever seen fit to place and keep his name upon the roll of Chi Psi.

From this time until 11 February 1846, nothing of importance was done save the exchange of a few letters. On this date a meeting was held in the room of Charles W. Noble, located in the old South University Hall, the following men being present: W. W. Phelps, S. S. Schoff, H. F. Schoff, C. W. Noble, of the senior class; Seneca Ewer, of the junior; Witherell, Wait, Whiting and Parks of the sophomore class, with W. W. Phelps presiding. In this meeting the first real step was taken towards the founding of an Alpha. The meeting was called to consider an offer of the Chi Psi Fraternity to admit them into their Brotherhood. As all of them had signed their names to a document agreeing to become members of that society if elected and had received notice that their election had already been accomplished, there was not much further to do along that line. A letter was read from an official of the Chi Psi Fraternity at Hamilton advising them to form into a body such as they saw fit until properly initiated in the spring. This was done, and a society formed – "The Association" – whose purpose was to have its members become Brothers in Chi Psi. The Association met six times, and then on 9 April two more members were admitted and then the "ghost" of the Association departed.

THE INSTALLATION

EPSILON HAD FORMED THE BASIC CORE OF the future Alpha in the fall of 1845, becoming the first fraternity at Michigan; but it remained until 11 April 1846, in a room in Ann Arbor's old Exchange Hotel that the initial class was formally initiated into the Bonds. Initiated on that day by Josiah A. Priest, Φ 1847, then a junior in Hamilton College, were: Messrs. Allcott, Ewer, Levisse, Noble, Parks, James Phelps, H. F. Schoff, S. S. Schoff, Wait, Whiting, Kellogg and Witherell. The Alpha is indeed unfortunate in not possessing a more complete record of the happenings of that night, beyond the meager description furnished by the minutes and some recollection by Brother Noble, who says:

It was surely an event in the history of the university when Priest came from Hamilton to light our altar fires. He was dignified and agreeable and well suited to the occasion. All of the original thirteen were initiated the same day. I was the first and was put through privately by Mr. Priest; the others the same evening at the room we had hired in the Exchange Hotel. Great was the surprise among the other students when we "swung out." It hastened the work of the other societies then in embryo.

THE FIRST LODGE

ABOUT THIS TIME, THE PIONEER COLLEGE fraternity house came into existence through the efforts of Brother James and Kellogg. Brother James christened the new abode "David's Cottage in the Woods" and from May 1846 to July 1848, the Alpha held her meetings there. Widely recognized today as the first fraternity house in America and the reason all subsequent Chi Psi dwellings are called "Lodges," it was situated in a vast forest extending east of the campus from the Huron River on land now occupied by The Michigan Arboretum and Forest Hills Cemetery. Brother James conceived of the idea that this vast and lonely forest would be a fitting place to hold meetings of the Alpha as it would promote secrecy and add to the mystery of the organization. About this first Lodge Frank E. Whitman X 1885 wrote, "Here deep in the Wood on a spot where now stands the chapel of the new Forest Hill Cemetery, and about three quarters of a mile from any house, Chi Psi found a new temple ..." One of its occupants in those romantic days described it as "a plain, one story structure 20 x 24 feet, with gable roof. In the gable was a door, flanked on either side by a small window, fitted with sashes, each checkered by 12 panes ... a large rough chimney rose in the center, dividing the cabin into two rooms of about equal

size. It is said that the grave of H. Seger Slifer, E 1912, is at the foot of the knoll where this original Lodge once stood.

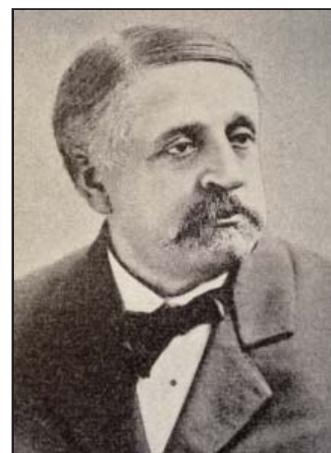
On 25 May 1846, the Alpha held her third meeting in the cottage and on this night the first two neophytes were initiated by the members of Alpha Epsilon, George L. Lee and Merchant H. Goodrich, "after which the tallow dips were lighted, wood was cast upon the smoldering black log in the fireplace, liquid refreshments were served, and each member pledged himself anew to old Chi Psi." The first bylaws were adopted at a meeting held on 9 June, and with one or two more meetings, the first year of Epsilon's existence came to a close. Much had been done, and what had been done was done well; a foundation had been laid both broad and deep upon which it was impossible to build any structure but one that would last for many generations to come.



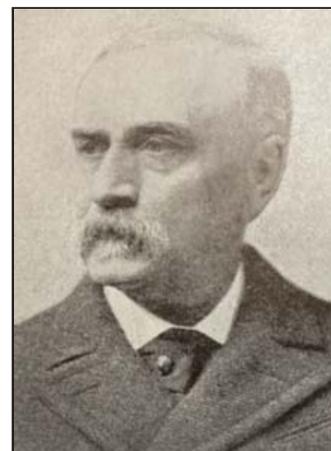
This illustration is reproduced from a publication called Fraternity Month. It's not known whether this is from a re-touched daguerreotype of the actual first Lodge of 1846, or whether it merely indicates the type of building and location.

THE EARLY STRUGGLES TO SURVIVE

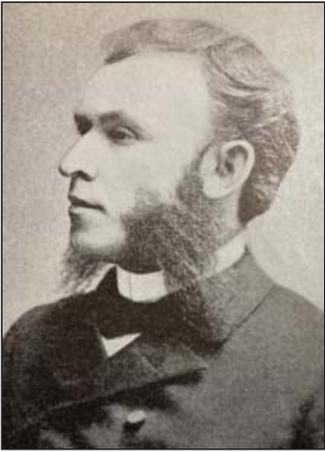
THE YEAR 1846-47 WAS INDEED A STORMY one for the Alpha. It was a year of hard struggling for existence. Shortly after school opened, some nightly student depreations were reported to the faculty, and while the faculty were subjecting these performances to an "inquiry," Professor Ten Brook took it upon himself to sneak about the grounds and follow whatever students he could see and learn where they were going and for what purpose they were out of their rooms after hours. So well did he succeed that he was able to furnish the faculty with the list of names of the students who had gone to "David's Cottage" the night previous. Later investigation disclosed the fact that two societies, secret in their nature, called Chi Psi and Beta Theta Pi, had been existing in the University for about a year and gave a complete list of their respective membership and their relations with similar societies in other colleges. Immediately the faculty, thinking to stamp out these organizations decreed that, although the present members could retain their membership, they were prohibited from initiating any new members, and furthermore all new men entering the University were required to sign a pledge not to join one of these societies. Alpha Epsilon succeeded, however, in initiating that year



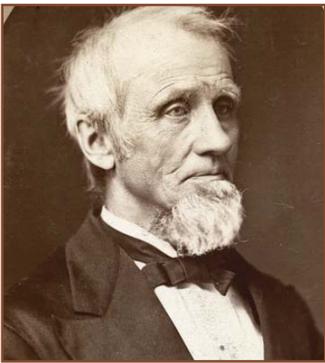
*Senator Thomas W. Palmer
E 1849*



*Secretary of Agriculture
Sterling Morton, E 1854*



U.S. Postmaster General
Don M. Dickinson, E 1867



Professor Andrew Ten Brook, nemesis of
the fraternity movement at Michigan



Michael A. A. Meyendorff, E 1870,
from a letter of 25 February 1868:
“When looking up towards the stars and
skies of the Heavenly vault, and all the
beauties of God’s Nature, I cannot but feel
that it is through its instrumentality that
even here, across this vast distance, the
golden ties stretching themselves through
thousands and thousands of miles unite us
all in our beloved Fraternity, as of we
were within heart’s beat of each other.
It is at least my experience.”

three new men and was further strengthened by John B. Myers, of Alpha Pi, who entered the University during the year. Nothing of further importance was done that year – the Alpha feeling that this action of the faculty was but the beginning of the end, and that an outbreak would come, which did come exactly three years later.

During the years 1847-48-49, the Alpha flourished quietly and initiated fourteen men. Nothing was done to those who were discovered to have broken their pledges to the University—and the fraternities, losing a little of their fear, became more bold. It is interesting to note that the typical Chi Psi dinner, much like the current Initiation Banquet, was inaugurated at this time, the first one being held on 16 December 1848.

BATTLE TO REDEFINE THE UNIVERSITY

THE YEAR 1849-50 WAS THE CULMINATION of the strife and the crisis in the history of Epsilon. The lack of space precludes us from going into the details of this year. It seems that the Alpha had printed a complete list of her members and had inserted a list in each catalogue of the University as it had been sent out. By some mistake, a copy of this list found its way to the faculty, and immediately all the men were called before that body. An old rule, which had been in the rule-book since the founding of the university, and relating only to Literary Societies was dug up and used as the basis of faculty operations. This rule, No. 20, Chapter 4, provided “that no student shall be or become a member of any society connected with the university whose constitution has not been submitted to and approved by the faculty.” Taking advantage of this, the faculty purposed to crush Epsilon forever. At this period the Alpha Delta Phi chapter came forward like true men and, turning in their list of names, asked to share the same fate as the Chi Psi. Beta Theta Pi turned in their constitution in compliance with the faculty order. The outcome was that the students were asked to leave the university at the end of the term. Naturally the matter which had been the topic of every conversation reached the Board of Regents, who immediately appointed a committee to investigate the matter. The report of the faculty and that of the committee are given below and are in a measure self-explanatory – the faculty report being distinguished by its lack of calm argument and because of the abundance of indefinite and unsupported assertions, which in hardly a single statement conformed to the truth:

Report Of The Faculty

Your faculty will proceed to state their positive objection to these Societies.

1st. The whole histories of these Societies is a detail of obliquities. One year they existed contrary to the known law, requiring the exhibition of their constitutions, holding their meetings at unlawful hours and in unlawful places, and when first detected by their after midnight depredations they attempted to overawe the Faculty, and have ever since stood their grounds by violating pledges and breaking laws.

2nd. These extended affiliations are a great irresponsible authority, a monster power, which lays its hands upon every college and college faculty in the country, requiring submission where there is no obligation. The will of the State of Michigan is the only power by which we are here placed. To the latter power we yield a compliance any time, to the former never.

3rd. They are exclusive and oligarchic in their selection of members and oppressive toward all who are not of their own organism. They are many who are refused—many who, conscientiously perhaps, refused to be admitted—the equal rights of the former and the conscientious rights of the latter are equally violated and trampled upon. They are oppressed and crushed between rival corporations and browbeaten if they attempt to set up rival secret societies or complain as they sometimes do to the Faculty. Yet, these despotic and intolerant oligarchies raise an outcry at the despotism and bigotry of all who question their tyranny.

Many have admitted that they were persecuted into a membership of these societies—they found no peace without, and surrendered to them as their only refuge.

4th. These Societies entrap into an immature commitment the sons of parents who wholly disapprove of them. Many a father believes that secret societies are in themselves wrong. He feels his responsibility for the moral character of his children and entrusts them to us. Forthwith they are beset on all sides by these affiliations and contrary to their filial duty and original purpose, are hastily committed. How can we answer our responsibilities to such parents?

5th. The meetings of these societies are liable to become and often are lawless and convivial. They are held, in private houses, beershops and hotels, at hours when by all laws honest folks should be at home and the student in his room. The transition is easy and is often made to the bar, the groggery, and the midnight haunt. Let parents be assured that this is often the route that their sons have taken to ruin.

6th. The poor student, and many of our students are poor, comes to the university to attain an education by his own exertions. Persecuted in these societies, the money that he has labored to earn goes for badges, paraphernalia, convivial entertainment, and journeys on society business.

These societies are the permanent sources of mutual intrigues and jealousies. One society or one generation of society may be comparatively elevated in character and pure in purpose, but the organization still stands a tool for mischief in crafty hands. There are young men whom we might name, of the most dangerous character, who coiled an influence through this means at which many parents have reason to weep and tremble. There are artful seducers whom

we could name who are this day through these societies standing not only between the Faculty and the students, but between the parent and the deluded victim. These combinations often exist in organized clans for the support of a few demagogue leaders, and for mutual offensive and defensive support, and while they thus stand in the varied relations of mutual combinations in the same clan of jealous hostility against the rival associations, of oppressive intolerance towards the uninitiated, and of ready common defiance of the authorities, societies of this sort are susceptible of indefinite, uncontrollable multiplications. If three (3) can exist, thirty may; and the government may be completely hemmed in and the community distracted by the collection of juntos mutually hostile to each other, but united in common opposition to authority.

The Faculty, Ann Arbor, 9 January 1850

Report Of The Regents' Committee.

In absence of any proof to the contrary, the Committee are bound to consider as true the statements embodied in the communication of the Faculty, and the question presented to the Committee is whether the Faculty are, under the circumstances set forth in their report, justified in the course which they have pursued in reference to the delinquent students. Upon this question the Committee entertained no doubts; a judgement less lenient could not under the circumstances have been expected. They must either submit to the laws of the University or their connection with it be dissolved!"

But this was by no means the end, for these reports were about what the students expected and preparations were made to carry the matter to the legislature which met that January. The object of the societies at this point was to secure a new election of the Board of Regents and by so doing secure the removal of most of the present faculty, and, most important of all, procure the repeal of the hated Rule 20 – no mean ambition for a band of students! Senator Finley from the Ann Arbor district became much interested, as did all the people of Ann Arbor, and shortly after the beginning of the session, a bill was introduced by him providing for a popular election of the Board of Regents as opposed to the present method of selection by the Governor.

Being familiar with rumors current about the trouble in Ann Arbor, a resolution was passed, instructing the Regents to furnish the legislature with all documents on the matter. This was complied with, and the fraternities' golden opportunity was at hand. A committee, composed of four Alpha Delta Phis and three Chi Psis, drew up a report which memorialized that legislature and is considered the most complete answer to any and all objections to secret societies.

Copies of these reports were sent to every part of the State and a flood of editorials headed "Rebellion," "Insubordination," "The Presumption of the Faculty of the University of Michigan," "Despo-

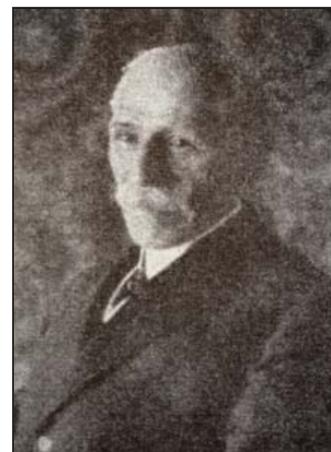
tism," etc., etc., appeared in every newspaper. The whole State was agitated and the citizens of Ann Arbor held mass meetings denouncing the action of the Faculty and upholding the character and conduct of the students. The following poster will show the temper of the townspeople of Ann Arbor:

In addition to these a paper was drawn up and sent to the Senate, demanding a change in the Board of Regents. No legislation followed these petitions. The faculty were jubilant and the fraternities saw ruin staring them in the face. In the fall, however, a committee appointed to draw up a new constitution for the state, provided for the desired change in the election of the Regents, and from the new Regents it was but a step to remove several of the faculty and abolish the hated Rule 20. Thus after five years of hard struggle and many defeats, the final victory was won by the Chi Psi and Alpha Delta Phi societies over their enemies and they rejoiced in seeing the entire Board of Regents and the entire faculty, with the exception of Professors Sager and Douglas, dismissed from the university, and the right to enjoy and to transmit to those that were to come after them their beloved societies forever secured to them.

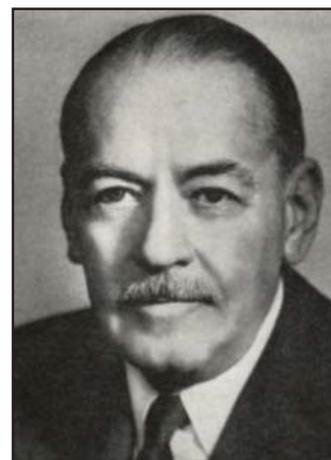
1850–1880: CHI PSI ESTABLISHES PROMINENCE ON CAMPUS

THE NEXT YEAR, 1850-51, WAS QUIET – the meetings, as before being held in the Exchange Hotel. There were four men initiated that year. The minutes of the years 1851-52 and 1852-53 are not all complete and about all that we are able to learn is that four men were initiated each year and that, in the year 1852-53, the Alpha became possessed of a hall – this time the third story of a new block erected at the northeast corner of Main and Washington Streets. This was leased to M. H. Goodrich and used by the Alpha. The year 1853-54 was not a very prosperous one for the Alpha. Although the Brothers initiated eight men and even bought a little furniture for the new hall, there was a seeming lack of interest – the literary exercises being temporarily dropped. The following fall, however, found them apparently rejuvenated. Rugs were bought for the floors, lamps were purchased, and a lively interest taken in all the meetings. Epsilon had passed her first period of depression.

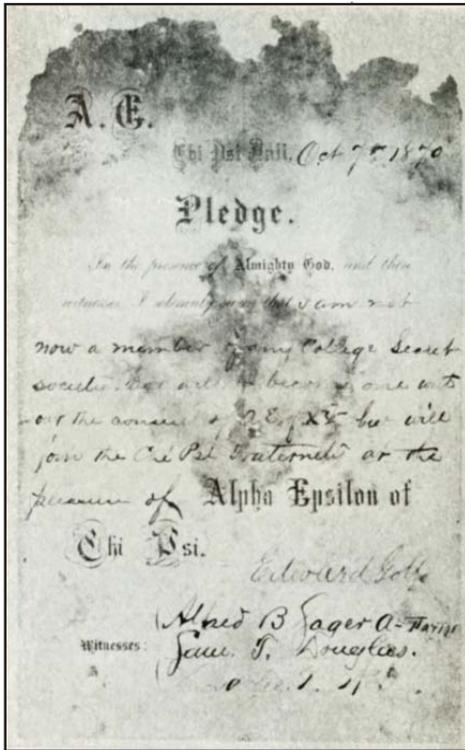
The next three or four years were not of much moment. The meetings were held during the year in the Firemen's Hall – why the other was given up, no one knows. It is interesting to note that Alpha Epsilon developed her most lasting trait at this early period, that of "working" the alumni for newer and



Pliny H. Van Buren, E 1870. "On the evening of 8 May 1924, Detroit alumni and Alpha Epsilon gave a farewell dinner to one of the most loved and loyal Chi Psis of Michigan. It was occasioned by the fact that Brother Van Buren has retired from business and is leaving to make his home in Tryon, N.C. The last generation at Epsilon recalls no man who has been as frequent a visitor as Pliny, or has helped or listened or counselled by example as much. No one more than he has made us feel that the spirit of Chi Psi is everlasting."



*J.K. Lilly, E 1916
Brother Lilly was the first recipient of Chi Psi's Albert S. Bard Award in 1963. The Indianapolis Pharmaceutical executive and philanthropist was in the Lodge in Ann Arbor during the same time as Slip Stijer, with Stijer in Law and Lilly in Pharmacy. Brother Lilly's many educational interests as pursued through the very active Lilly Endowment included support of the Lilly Library at Indiana University. It is interesting to note that three of the most famous libraries in the Midwest, the Lilly Library at Indiana, the Clements Library at Michigan, and the James Ford Bell Collection on World Trade at Minnesota, all came from Chi Psis (see The Purple and Gold Winter 1960 issue).*



The Epsilon Lodge in 1897, front view.

better quarters. During this period, while prosperous in numbers, the Alpha had no hall and was compelled to use hotels, lodge rooms, and the rooms of its members for meetings. It was not until the fall of 1858 that the Alpha again secured a Lodge room. This they retained until the fall of 1896. During this time they reached a pinnacle of success. Their numbers were large, their finances in good shape, and all things looked very bright for the Alpha. The year 1860-61, however, marked the second period of depression. "The faculty by virtue of the august power vested in their body, had the audacity to rusticate Brothers Draper, Montgomery, and Davidson." How true the saying, "History repeats itself!" With these three Brothers departed the backbone and prosperity of the Alpha. Furthermore, this was by no means the end of their troubles, as four more men found it necessary to leave college before the

year was out, and when Commencement came there were only three left to carry on the work. All correspondence was dropped—Epsilon was in the throes of her second illness, which lasted until the latter part of the year 1861-62. But in the words of Brother Sager, the end of the year found the Alpha not dead by a long shot—merely convalescent, with six good men to carry on the next year.

The next seven years were ones of uniform prosperity. Although the Alpha was at no time very large, the interest taken was intense and some of the best men that Chi Psi ever had on her roll were initiated within this period. In the year 1867-68 the Alpha moved into her new hall over the First Na-

tional Bank and, incidentally, began another of those glorious periods of Chi Psi supremacy which have made the Fraternity famous. Among some of the most important things that transpired during that period were the publication of the "Catalogue" in 1871 under the supervision of Brother Sager, the #6 of the Fraternity, during the year 1870-71.

The years of the seventies were still continued successes for the Alpha, her membership being high in quality as was evidenced by the activities in later life of the men of those delegations. In September 1878, the then members of Alpha Epsilon rented the Wiedeman House at the northwest corner of Packard Street and Fourth Avenue, and here began the Fraternity House as we know it, where members live and eat as a group.

On 2 November 1878, occurred the initiation of Paul and Hendricks of the University of Wisconsin at the hall of Epsilon. According to the minutes of Epsilon for November 1878, E. H. Guyer '77, H. J. Meyer '79, and Max Zinkeisen '80, are to be considered as the founders of this new Alpha. In 1879 we see the Alpha collecting money for a new Lodge, liberal contributions being received from many sources. The Lodge did not materialize at this time, nor for many years thereafter, and what disposition was made of the money so collected is unknown to the writer. The occupancy of the Wiedeman House continued until June 1883, and in the fall of that year the members rented the Gott House, now known as 709 West Huron Street, and continued to occupy that house until the close of college in 1883. This location, far removed from the campus, was found to be unsatisfactory, and in the fall of that year the Alpha moved into a house on Jefferson Street, directly behind the home of Professor Morris, at the corner of Jefferson and



From a "Fraternity Wars" Era Founder:

Seneca Exer, Epsilon 1847, was one of the original 14 Founders of Alpha Epsilon. He went West with the 1849 Gold Rush after his graduation, later he established one of the four founding vineyards of Napa Valley, as well as being a Judge, California State Congressman and State Senator. I am pleased to report his Badge was purchased by a Brother from eBay recently and will be available for viewing at this summer's Convention. It will be restored in the mean time.

Note, in the early days of the Fraternity, there was no centrally-produced Badge, and each Brother had to commission a jeweler to make a Badge for him. Hence, the number of gems on a Badge were often what the jeweler could fit in.

If this Badge could only talk ... from a Lodge in the woods of Ann Arbor to eBay and then back home.



State Streets. After occupying this house for one year they moved into the Hunt House on State Street, one door south of the home of Professor Morris, and what is now the property immediately north of the Michigan Union.

During all this period there had been considerable agitation for a permanent home for the Alpha. On 10 November 1880, the Articles of Association of the Chi Psi Association of Michigan were signed, this being the first corporate entity of the Alpha or its alumni, and in 1886 the triangular lot at the corner of Washtenaw and East University Avenues was purchased at a cost of \$4,000. An interesting sidelight on the history of acquiring a Lodge, is found in the following excerpts from a letter written from Detroit on 30 August 1886, by Fred A. Robinson, E'82, to Frank E. Whitman, X'85, at Amherst, Massachusetts:

As to the early traditions of the Alpha, her log hut, etc., (which an examination of the archives would give more accurately than I can recall from memory), and as to the progress of the Lodge question since 1882, I will refer you to W. A. Blakely, E'87, ... the present moving spirit in our Lodge question ... He returns to Ann Arbor next collegiate year, soon to open, and is managing editor of the Palladium, the organ of the secret societies. So far as I know the Chi Psi Fraternity was the first to discuss the idea of a chapter house or chapter hall, i.e., at Ann Arbor. It was started by the success we had in renting a house permanently and all living in it together, and called the Chi Psi House. This was about 1875. At that time no fraternity there had such a fraternity home. We occupied it seven or eight years. It was singularly adapted in its arrangement for our purposes. Shortly afterward, one or two other fraternities followed suit, and finally a fraternity couldn't compete unless it had a home that was known as its quarters ... In 1879 we had a subscription list for about \$5,000, payable 1/3 on demand, 1/3 on laying a cornerstone and 1/3 on

completion. The first third was called in soon after and the money held in the bank by the three trustees appointed for the purpose – Senator Thomas W. Palmer, E 1849, Don M. Dickinson, E 1867, and Henry M. Duffield, O 1861.

That is as far as we've gone financially. We were handicapped by not having an alumnus in Ann Arbor right on the ground to look after the scheme. The active members of the Alpha had all they could do in looking after college and society duties, and were themselves divided in opinion as to whether a 'House' or 'Hall' was the thing to have. I believe that if we had been a unit on either, we could have had it long ago. The merits and advantages of each were long and laboriously argued at our weekly meetings until the subject became a veritable 'chestnut,' and it finally got so we wouldn't take it up but would leave it on the table under 'unfinished business.' After a year or so of this, we concluded we would buy a lot first. We canvassed all the lots in town. The crowd was too fastidious. They wanted the earth, so to speak. We exhausted enough efforts to have acquired the whole town in fee simple, but couldn't settle on a lot.

The lot question became a thorn in the flesh. During any lull in a business meeting some one was sure to move 'I move we buy a lot.' This was always followed by the addition or amendment, 'I move we paint it red.' ... This summer Brother Don M. Dickinson, of his own notion largely, though encouraged by some of the younger members, went out to Ann Arbor and bought a lot, very well located and commanding in position, at \$4,000 ... I can't say how soon we will build, it may go through very soon and it may drag some ... Our annual banquets are very



Above: From a stereopticon slide of the interior of the Epsilon Lodge during the 1878-79 school year. The slide was preserved by Max Zinkeisen, E 1880. Max is pictured in the image below (on the left) with Edward H. Guyer, E 1877, in their study in the Epsilon Lodge the same year.



Below: The Epsilon Lodge in 1897, front and rear views





Alpha Epsilon in 1885 – Front: Adison B. Clark '87, Charles E. Roehl '88, Lester E. Campbell '88, Robert E. Hunt '87; Middle: Don C. Corbett '85, Harry Wiley '87, Charles G. Chaddock '83, William A. Blakeley '87, Henry S. Ames '83; Rear: Archibald Blakeley '87, Mason S. Thompson '86, Lewis C. Hunt '87, Charles D. Wiley '87, Harry S. Bartholomew '88, Harry Williams '88.

successful and are gradually paving the way to it ... Out of thirty alumni present we have a senator, congressman, a man who makes and unmakes governors and senators ('President of the United States for the State of Michigan,' as he has been facetiously dubbed, i.e., Brother Dickinson), a circuit judge, a U. S. district attorney, a clerk of the U. S. court, many leading lawyers, physicians and merchants...So far as money and brains go I think we could erect a castle, and I predict that when we do make a break and put up a building it will be something of which the whole Fraternity will be proud."

1890–1900: NEW CHALLENGES EMERGE BUT THE LODGE RECOVERS

WITH THE OPENING OF THE COLLEGE IN 1889 only four men returned and then began the fight for Epsilon's existence.

New men were secured, however, and an Alpha of about nine men maintained Chi Psi's position

throughout the year. But what a change was to be seen the next fall. Chi Psi's position at the head of fraternity life at Ann Arbor was certainly hanging by a thread. Only one of the initiates of the last year returned to college and consequently the year opened with only four men again in the Alpha. The troubles of the previous year had been bad enough, but added to these this year was the utter lack of a house. The Hunt property on State Street which had been occupied the previous year had been sold during the summer vacation, and the Alpha was forced to look elsewhere for quarters. Under the conditions the best that could be done was to secure rooms together and this they did. What shall be said for the record of the work of Epsilon? One neophyte only was added to the list, but suffice it to say that Epsilon, throughout that college year, did maintain her position and command recognition from the other fraternities as still an active chapter at the head of the Greek-letter societies at Ann Arbor. The opening of another college year (1891-92) found Epsilon in much the same condition. Again it was evident that success must mean a hard struggle against untoward circumstances. Brothers Cheney and Breakey were the only ones to return; but they were joined by Brother G. M. Tyng from Alpha Psi. There were thus three in all and they were not long in making it known to the fraternity world that Chi Psi had still an active chapter at Ann Arbor and that she proposed still to claim her rights as the oldest fraternity at the university. That this was regarded with much disfavor by our rivals, is needless to say. Alpha Delta Phi, as next in rank, was, naturally, most provoked at the stand Epsilon took. It required much persistence on the part of Epsilon to thus live on, and there were times when it seemed the best and only way to surrender the charter. Indeed, the same had seemed inevitable the year before, and our rivals were disposed at that time to look upon such ending as only a matter of time. It should be said, however, that not all of the other college fraternities held such a view. Many were our friends who duly appreciated the condition in which Epsilon was placed. That year five Brothers "passed the veil." Three of these were seniors in college, all well-known men, and their initiation had an almost magical effect upon the fraternity student body. No longer was it said that Chi Psi was dead or dying. In April 1892, occurred the annual convention. It had been given to Alpha Psi with the location undecided. As the time approached efforts were made to secure it for Detroit, with the idea and hope of again arousing the alumni of Epsilon to an appreciation of the struggling condition of their

The Lodge at 620 South State Street.



Alpha and its need in the way of a chapter house. After much hard and laborious work, the convention was assured for Detroit. In both of its aims it was a success. Much money was pledged for a Lodge but not enough to warrant beginning the work.

In April 1893, the Alpha secured the first house below Packard, on the west side of State Street, and remained there until the fall of 1897. Looking back now it seems altogether wonderful that Epsilon survived those two years. But soon the Alpha began to fare better, and although for many years it was a constant struggle to maintain her position (far more of a struggle than it should have been), the future became assured at Michigan for Chi Psi. Brother Cheney, '92, says, "We were glad those other days seemed safely over, and thankful after all that a part of the struggle was ours."

Beginning with the fall of 1892 we see a reinvigoration of Epsilon. Of necessity her progress was slow, but it was sure. The majority of her membership during the ensuing period came from the professional schools, especially the law department, and this was especially so in the years 1896-97 and 1897-98. As a result of the arousal of Epsilon's alumni by the Detroit convention of 1892 much solicitation was carried on for funds for a new Lodge. This campaign was a success and in 1897 the residence of a Mr. Whitman, one of the regents of the university, was purchased, at that time the finest home in Ann Arbor. With the new Lodge, a patent sign of stability, the reinvigoration of Epsilon was well nigh complete. As progress had been made from 1892 to 1897, so it was again made from 1897 on. Each year brought a fuller realization of the ideals of Epsilon; her membership increased, and so likewise her influence in university affairs.

1900-1920: THE DAWN OF THE MODERN ERA FOR ALPHA EPSILON

IN 1909 CAME A RENEWED MOVEMENT FOR a new Lodge and a new location. Upon his graduation in February 1910, Alexander E. Walker assumed the task of visiting the Epsilon alumni in quest of funds, as the result of which substantial subscriptions were secured. This was followed in 1913 with another personal solicitation by H. Seger Slifer '12. Shortly thereafter it was felt that ample subscriptions and funds were in sight to proceed with a new Lodge. On 20 March 1913, the Articles of Association of the Epsilon Realty Co., a Michigan corporation, with an authorized capital of \$20,000 and paid-in capital of \$10,000, were executed, the original incorporators being John W.



Above: Alpha Epsilon in 1905.

Anderson, W. W. Hannan, and Charles R. Wells; and the Jones property, at the northwest corner of State and Monroe Streets, was purchased at a cost of \$10,000. York & Sawyer, architects, of New York City, were commissioned to draw plans, after which the contract was let to the George A. Fuller Co., of New York City, and the building was dedicated, with appropriate ceremonies, on 30 October 1915. All indebtedness on the property was liquidated by 1928. Today we are the possessors of one of the finest pieces of fraternity property in the city of Ann Arbor, free from debt, in excellent physical condition and, thanks to the liberality of the alumni, with a current surplus for its maintenance and for the furthering of the educational ideals of Chi Psi.



1873 Alpha Epsilon Chi Psis gather in Ann Arbor to celebrate their 50th Reunion.

During the period of the S.A.T.C. and the First World War, this Lodge served as the infirmary, and the members who were left in college rented rooms on the third floor of 310 South State Street, where

Epsilon Parents in the early 1920s.





A large number of Epsilon undergraduates and alumni attended the 1941 Centennial Convention at Union College in Schenectady.

an attempt was made partially at least to preserve fraternity life.

Following the WWI, Alpha Epsilon consistently maintained a high place in the University and in the Fraternity. In 1940 the Epsilon Realty Co. was succeeded by the Epsilon Trustee Corporation as the alumni organization of the Alpha, in an effort to widen the base of alumni interest in the Alpha and control over its property.

1940–1950: PERSEVERANCE THROUGH MOMENTOUS TIMES

DURING THE YEAR 1940-41, THE LODGE WAS filled to capacity. There were 28 actives living in the Lodge with five to seven residing outside. These *outside Brothers* took their meals with the *inside Lodgers*. The Lodge was maintained in an exceptional manner by the Epsilon Trustee Corporation with the dedicated help of Holgar Rasmussen (known as “Doc”). The cook, Anna, later became Mrs. Rasmussen. Moonshine Rum, a great Dane, was the very competent resident watch dog.

Life was good until 7 December 1941, when World War II started to call to active duty the Brothers

of Alpha Epsilon. Many Brothers volunteered, and the loss of actives to the armed services greatly thinned the ranks of Brothers on campus. During this period, however, the Lodge excelled in both varsity sports and intramural competition.

The Brothers participated in many campus activities including the *Michigan Daily*. There was great fellowship and harmony among the Brothers in spite of the global conflict.

The University of Michigan called a meeting in April of 1943 to discuss the very existence of Michigan fraternities. At the time there were only fourteen undergraduate Brothers at Epsilon, nine in service and five civilians. The University took over the Lodge for a rent of \$215 per month to house Army nurses. From 1944 to 1945, the Lodge was occupied by members of the armed services, including the Judge Advocate General branch and the A.S.T.P. (Army Specialist Training Program). The Brothers remaining on campus lived outside the Lodge while retaining their fraternal Bonds. During this period, the Epsilon Trustee Corporation maintained the upkeep of the building and made plans to again house the Brothers as they returned from military service.

In January of 1944 a tragic event occurred. Brother Dick Kuehn '45 suffered a broken neck in a practice wrestling match at the IM building. Brother Kuehn survived until 1948 when he died at the VA hospital outside Chicago. He was in the Navy at Michigan and was the first Michigan man to die as a result of injuries incurred in any sport in the University's history. Brothers Dick Ranney '45, Willis Boice '45, and Russ Fisher '45 served as pallbearers at the funeral held in Detroit, Russ Fisher also having been a teammate on the wrestling team.

Even with the end of hostilities in 1945, there was considerable doubt about when enough men would return from the service to support the Lodge

In the late 1930s, generous alumni contributed a completely modern kitchen to the Lodge (just below), with stainless steel cabinets, sinks, and cook's table; a very large refrigerator; four-pot electric coffee maker, potato peeler, pot rack, plate warmer, etc. “Whenever a professor and his wife would come over for dinner,” writes one of the boys, “we show them the kitchen, and revel in their joyful exclamations. Maybe it will bring up our scholastic average.”

In bottom picture are attendees of the Chi Psi Formal in 1923.



being reopened. The Epsilon Trustees debated the question of opening in March of 1946 or waiting until the fall. Finally the vote was to give five months notice to the tenants and open March of 1946 with the expected return of ten actives and ten pledges.

The balance of the 1940s saw the Brothers re-enter the Lodge and thrive as the top fraternity on campus. The 105th National Convention was held in Ann Arbor during September 1945, and Alpha Epsilon was well-represented. The Brothers excelled in singing as a group and in 1947 placed second in the Inter-Fraternity Singing Competition. As to athletics, Chi Psis earned letters and numerals in a majority of varsity sports. Also, they held their own in inter-fraternity sports. In addition to various social functions, the Brothers raised money for the University by their involvement in the 1947 All-Campus Variety Show.

H. Seger Slifer, E'12, gave a lifetime of service to Chi Psi. Alpha Epsilon benefitted from his strong leadership and local presence that guided young men into understanding the Bonds of Brotherhood. Year after year, new Chi Psis grew into leaders under Slip's steady and firm counsel. His influence was felt in many areas over many years. When the Lodge at 620 South State Street was built in 1915, for example, Slip insisted the Lodge be constructed of solid block.

During the 1940s, as Alpha Epsilon felt the effects of the Second World War, Brother Slifer provided leadership during a period of great uncertainty. At the 2 December 1942 Epsilon Trustee Corporation meeting, at the University Club of Detroit, it was reported that 63 alumni were in the service of their country. Brother Slifer reported on a meeting between the National Interfraternity Conference and the War Department, college deans, and college presidents. The Conference anticipated closing chapter dining rooms and even discontinuing

EPSILON LODGE PIANO: The inscription on the 1926 Steinway Parlor B reads: "Samuel Blair Pursglove, 1906-1926." Pursglove was from a well-to-do Cleveland family involved in coal mining. Early morning Valentines Day 1926, he and four others were returning from a night in Detroit by car. Based on the newspaper accounts, they were in Ecorse, Michigan, and missed seeing an oncoming train at the crossing in the fog. Pursglove was killed, and the other four injured. The group seemed to be a carload of future Chi Psis, freshmen pledges returning from a night on the town.

Driving the car was Robert Fiske Warren, E'29 who went on to Harvard for his M.D. and became a very prominent Orthopedic Surgeon in New York City, after a stop at the University of Iowa. Kenneth Elsner Holmes, E'29, a future #1, became a landscape designer. Arthur Myron Hinkley, E'29, became Mayor of Petoskey, Michigan, and ran the newspaper there. The 5th, W. R. Henkle of South Bend, Indiana, is a mystery. Perhaps he left school or was never at Michigan, as he is not in our Chi Psi records. It appears that Pursglove was never initiated, as the accident was in February of his freshman year, probably before the class initiation.

The Purple and Gold of May 1926 reported, "Relatives of Samuel Blair Pursglove '29, a Chi Psi pledge who was killed in an auto accident in February, have presented the Lodge a beautiful Steinway grand piano. A silver engraved plate dedicates the gift in his memory."



educational operations at smaller all-male colleges.

The Lodge seemed always to be in need of expensive repair and replacement. In 1945, the first mention was made of a proposed two-story addition to 620 South State Street. In general terms, the proposal was to relocate the kitchen from the basement, add a study, living quarters, and a ladies powder room. The proposal included rehabilitation of other parts of the existing building. In January of 1948, Brother Slifer presented an architect's sketch of the addition that would increase capacity from 24 to 30 Brothers.

Another familiar figure over many years was Frederick S. Randall '23, the composer of the Chi Psi Marching Song. Brother Randall, similar to Slip Slifer, knew Chi Psis from the period after the First World War well into the 1970s. On fall football afternoons, Chi Psis and their guests would enjoy hearing him play the piano and often would join in with lyrics of some of the old songs.



George M. Gillette, E 1880, was president of the Minneapolis Steel and Machine Co. (makers of Gillette shaving products and such). His was a Chi Psi family, with brother Lewis, N 1876, son Raymond, N 1910, son Earle, Ψ 1921, and nephews Ralph, N 1902 and George, N 1904.



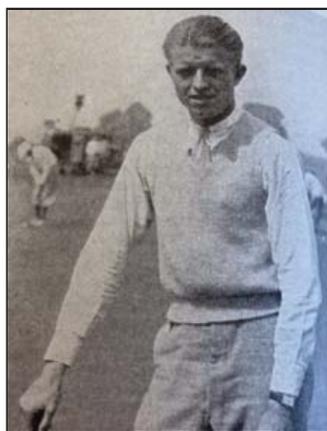
Alpha Epsilon conducted the first initiation of its name-sake Alpha as the franchise moved north to Northwestern University in 1947, as it did for the old Epsilon Delta at the University of Chicago in 1898.



Walter A. Murphy, E 1908, was well-known to Chicago-area Brothers for his many years of service as Secretary to the Chicago Chi Psi Alumni Association.



*Richard K. Degener, E'34
1936 Olympic Diving Champion*



*John W. Fischer Jr., E'34
1934 & 1935 Golf Amateur Champion*

1950–1960: YEARS OF RENEWED PROSPERITY AT THE LODGE

THE 1950s WERE GOOD YEARS FOR ALPHA Epsilon. Many Lodgers were campus leaders, and Chi Psi was always one of the strongest and most respected fraternities. Not just in athletics, Michigras, IFC Sing, or even academics; but more than these, by the very quality of the Brothers, Alpha Epsilon won the Thayer Trophy in 1956. Excellence across the board describes those years. It was a time also that added a second Olympic gold medal winner in diving: Richard Degener '34, was joined by Robert Webster

The wisdom Brother Slifer's earlier foresight was demonstrated in 1951. Several Brothers were excused because of illness from the trip to Detroit for the annual Initiation Banquet. At dusk they were awakened by the sound of Ann Arbor fire trucks arriving in front of the Lodge. Looking out from the third floor sleeping dorm to see firemen rushing into the building with hoses and axes in hand was a shocking sight. A living room fire had been started by careless disposal of a cigarette, and the fire was so hot that it melted paint from the second floor walls. Much of the living room was destroyed, but thanks to Brother Slifer's insistence that the Lodge be as fireproof as practical, Michigan was spared its own version of the Cornell Fire. His earlier efforts at fundraising also bore fruit in this decade. In 1958, at a cost of \$96,000, the addition and other rehabilitation work was completed. Again, when fund raising was required for this project, Brother Slifer was a key participant in getting the job quickly completed. Later, 1963, Brother Slifer was made an ex-officio member of the Epsilon Trustee Corporation.

One of Chi Psi's most loved Brothers cast a giant shadow on life at Michigan in this era – our 14th President, Stanley J. Birge, X'08, P 14. Several active Brothers met Brother Birge at a National Convention, went mountain climbing with him, and invited him to the Alpha to conduct initiation ceremonies. Over the years, Stanley returned regularly, and his deep love for Chi Psi rubbed off on the Brothers in the Lodge. Those friendships endured, with many Brothers visiting the Birges at their home in St. Louis, on vacation in northern Michigan, or at Convention.

1960–1969: THE LAST DECADE OF THE OLD WORLD ORDER

THE 1960s BEGAN IN MUCH THE SAME fashion of the prior decade. In many respects this period of time best represented the

Alpha's golden era. Longstanding traditions of gentility and decorum were reinforced in the first half of the decade by strong undergraduate leadership and a cohesive campus culture. Coat and Tie dinners Monday through Thursday were still the norm, nearly all brothers lived in the Lodge. As Jon Gandelot '66 commented "the strength of Chi Psi in my era was that we all lived and ate together." This era also brought recognition for Epsilon at the national fraternity level with the Alpha receiving the Thayer Trophy in 1962. During the first half of the decade, the brothers were fortunate to still have Anna and Holger ("Doc") Rasmussen present at the Lodge serving in the official roles of cook and housekeeper/custodian respectively. To many, they also served the unofficial roles as house Father and Mother. As Bob Peterson, '62 said of Doc, "He knew the history of the Lodge and as I recall would talk about the traditions and remind us when we strayed too far." Doc could even be counted upon for the early morning wake-up calls in the warm and cold dorms. Anna was with the Lodge until 1963. After a long illness Doc passed away in 1965.

In this era, college athletes were still permitted to join social fraternities. As a result, Epsilon in the early '60s had many brothers involved in varsity sports, including football, wrestling, track, swimming and diving. The Alpha's ranks included Olympic Gold Medalist, Robert Webster '60. In addition, Epsilon was inter-fraternity champion in 1961 behind fast pitch Jim Weber and catcher Price Watts. The early 60's was also a time when it was common for members of fraternities to be leaders on the wider campus. Lodgers were active in campus-wide events and organizations such as IFC and Michigama, with Brothers such as #1 Bob Peterson '62 also serving as IFC President and on Student Council.

The brothers of the early to mid 60's developed a strong bond with one another that has endured to this day. Brothers Peltz, Ogden, Peterson and Istock had an annual (30 year) golf match between the "Seniors" (Istock and Peterson) and "Juniors" (Peltz and Ogden E'63) continuously from 1975 until 2010. Brother John Edleman '57 has organized an annual homecoming gathering for his contemporaries and spouses that continues to this day. Their love of Chi Psi also translated into an ongoing commitment to Chi Psi, both at Epsilon and nationally, as well as to the University Michigan. The most notable of these contributions was Brother Verne Istock's election to the position of # 7 in 2014, making him the fourth Epsilonian to hold the highest office of our fraternity. He along with Peterson

(and many of this era) served on the the Epsilon Trustee Corporation board, and both also served as Presidents of the Michigan Alumni Association.

As the 1960's progressed, student life began to change dramatically toward the end of the decade. America's growing involvement in Vietnam unleashed sweeping changes to student-life and culture across the US, with the University of Michigan being at the forefront of these changes. At first, the fraternities on campus, including Chi Psi, were little impacted by these changes, as their recruiting numbers remained strong and the traditions that marked daily life at 620 S. State Street continued as they had for generations. However, as the 1970's approached, the evolving cultural divide began to gradually upend the longstanding cohesiveness of life at the Lodge. Further, with the loss of Doc mid-decade, the fraternity lost a positive and persistent influence over the care of the Lodge and the daily lives of the Brothers at a period in history when it would have benefitted from it most. On a positive note, in 1969, the Epsilon Trustee Corporation established the Epsilon Educational Endowment, which for the first time would create a dedicated source of funding for scholarships to the undergraduate Brothers.

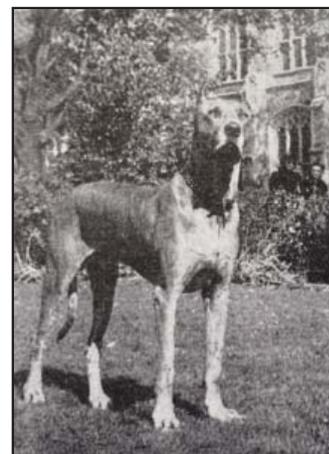
1970-1979: THE DJY ERA IS BORN

BY THE EARLY 1970s, THE CHANGES AT THE University that had begun in the second half of the 1960s had entirely remade student life on campus. In addition to the substantial upheaval across campus caused largely by the Vietnam era protest movement, the loosening of decades-old regulation of student conduct rules, introduction of co-ed dormitories, rise of the drug-culture and the broad rejection by the student-body for traditional institutions and organizations had a profoundly negative impact on the Greek system at the University. Alpha Epsilon was no exception. While the brotherhood persevered through this era, and managed to preserve many of Epsilon's most cherished traditions, overall membership numbers began to decline, as it became increasingly difficult to find men of Chi Psi caliber at the University. The core group of Epsilonians that did endure through this era worked hard to maintain the essential Lodge experience against this backdrop.

As the campus-wide tensions of the early 70's began to recede, the Brothers of Alpha Epsilon slowly began to restore their membership ranks and, along with them, the traditions that had long defined the fraternity. As Dicran Haidostian '76 recalled "This was the start of a transition from a

more radical, anti-establishment campus, to one adjusting to post-war life." Chi Psi also transitioned as a refuge for like-minded men who found an appeal to being part of a "gentleman's fraternity." The challenges to this re-birth were made greater by the fact that the economics of day-to-day fraternity operations had changed dramatically from a decade earlier. The days of Doc and Anna Rasmussen were long past, and rising costs and reduced membership had all but eliminated the possibility of maintaining an on-site staff to care for the property. This challenge was further exacerbated by the advancing age of the Lodge itself, now over 60 years old and in need of substantial investment.

In an era of more limited resources, the Brothers reinvented the model for Alpha operations around self-help. The age of the weekly "work-assignment" was born in this time period. Each brother was assigned a specific cleaning task on a weekly basis by the Lodge Manager, who was given "broad powers" of enforcement to ensure that all brothers did their part. Further, with financial resources more constrained, the role of the #4 within the Lodge became more important than ever.



Moonshine Rum IV

Epsilon's Great Dane in 1941. We're not quite sure how many Moonshine Rums have been a part of Epsilon history, but this fourth was around in the late 1930s and early '40s, and there were others extending into the 1980s, before insurance regulations mostly ended Lodge pets. The Centennial Catalogue suggests that, "Moonshine is a real pal to every Chi Psi."

From the Fall 2011 issue of *The Purple and Gold*:

So Just What Is This Spooning Thing?

ALPHA EPSILON OF CHI PSI, AT THE University of Michigan, [then] our second oldest continuously existing Alpha, has developed a few local traditions that may not be universal in every Alpha. Hosting the Convention, they felt honor-bound to share a few of these by the end of the week. Their tradition of "spooning" may seem the most unusual on the surface, but it's all part of civilized dinner etiquette at the Lodge, and it played itself out during the course of the formal banquet. Steve Crow, E'79, has traced the tradition back a century



or more. David Di Rita, E'86, toastmaster for the evening (pictured here), explained that when there was a violation of those rules, the following procedure went into effect:

"The Sergeant-at-Arms (#17) shall preside over enforcement of the Dinner Rules. Upon the witnessing by any two Brothers of an apparent violation of the Dinner Rules, such Brothers are to thrice strike their spoons upon table. All other Brothers at that time are encouraged to join in the spooning. Upon cessation of the spooning, the #17 shall calletth upon the Brothers who initiated the spooning to describe the offense. A false spooning, shall itself, be deemed a violation of the Dinner Rules. The Brother accused of violation shall be permitted a moment of defense. The ruling of the #17 shall be final, immediate, and of hesitation, free. The punishment for violation of the Dinner Rules is non-negotiable, and must be carried out without delay." (Such punishment usually means standing on the dining room radiator [or at Convention Banquet at the podium] and entertaining the brotherhood with a song.) Each dinner guest at the 2011 Convention Banquet received an engraved Convention spoon as a souvenir.



Because the Chi Psi Central Office was located for so many years in Ann Arbor, the town seemed to be the default location for holding the Annual Convention, including three times during the 1960s. Epsilon undergrads and alumni usually helped host the event, as Thomas W. Smith, E'68, is doing above at right as undergraduate coordinator for the Alpha (and as Fred W. Phister, E'51, did that year as General Convention Chair for Epsilon).

Pictures above and below are from 1967, the first Convention after Slip Slifer's death.

Below, the planned official photograph was rained out by a sudden deluge on Friday afternoon, so the resourceful Convention photographer lined up the delegates the following morning and took this unusual picture inside the convention hall.



In this time period, led by Brothers such as Stephen Foster, Dicran Haidostian, Rick Navin and Steve Crow, the Lodge began a period of substantial self-governance, with the undergraduate Brothers handling virtually all aspects of Lodge operations, from running the kitchen and hiring the kitchen staff, to collecting their own rent on behalf of the Epsilon Trustee Corporation.

This period is also marked by the re-emergence or reinforcement of long-standing Epsilon traditions such as observance of formal dinner rules and “spoonings,” annual Initiation Banquets, serenades and the traditional coat and tie football Saturday. In an era when most fraternities were either descending into glorified boarding houses or reinventing themselves around the image of the fictional “Delta Tau Chi” of John Landis’s 1978 “Animal House,” Alpha Epsilon charted an iconoclastic course, preserving the mid-20th century golden age of the fraternity. Chi Psi’s long history as the “Gentlemen’s Fraternity” found new expression at Michigan through a membership that became known across campus for its immaculate lawn, well-furnished Lodge, and genteel members. Even as the liberalized social mores of the 1970’s ultimately ended rules regarding ladies above the main floor or alcohol use outside the basement, the Lodge remained well regarded for the finest date parties, and added to its reputation by creation of such popular events as the “Crush Party” and “Champagne Party.”

As the decade drew to a close, and fraternity life again became a widely accepted part of the Michigan experience, Alpha Epsilon was well positioned for the period of growth that was about

to come. A recognition of the Alpha’s growth in this period was its selection as the venue for the 1979 Annual Convention of the Chi Psi. As Brother Brian Heil ’80 observed, “Epsilon left the 70s far stronger than we entered thanks to many. We were a very close group of uncommon ‘characters’ that shared a common love for our Alpha, our common Bond and Gentlemanly behaviors. There was a strong sense of pride in the Lodge earned through hard work and organization by all those present. If it was free or if it was easy, every Fraternity would be great.”

1980–1989: THE ROARING ’80S ARRIVE AT 620 SOUTH STATE STREET

AS THE 1980S BEGAN, ALPHA EPSILON’S rebirth gained steam. The renewed interest in fraternities generally, first ignited by the “Animal House” effect in the late 70’s, was now further fueled by a marked return of the broader campus culture to more traditional patterns in the Reagan era. With fraternities once again in vogue and the Lodge on solid footing financially, an era of growth and prosperity ensued.

With membership levels not seen since the 1960’s, Chi Psi in the 1980’s was once again prospering, and engaging actively in the life of campus and the national fraternity. The undergraduates re-launched the regular publication of the “Epsilonian” newsletter to the alumni, traveled annually to the University Club in Detroit for the Alpha’s renowned Initiation Banquet, hosted coat and tie football Saturday luncheons in the fall, and in 1984 hosted the 145th Convention of the Chi Psi. On campus, the Lodgers had built on their reputation as the Gentleman’s Fraternity to become well-known for the most inventive and sophisticated social gatherings in the Greek System. In the era of the open party, the men of Chi Psi distinguished themselves by continuing such fabled invite-only events as the annual Champagne Party, Lost Afternoon and Crush Party. Dennis Miriani ’87 recalled “When I think back to our time at the Lodge, I’m most struck by the degree to which we lived with one foot in the present and one in the past. We certainly made the most of our era, but there was also a conscious effort by many of us to re-ignite the glories of Chi Psi from the ’50s and ’60s, at least as we saw them in the old photographs.”

The Lodge’s reputation as a singing fraternity also was burnished in the 80’s with a steady stream of popular sorority serenades, often featuring adaptations of Top 40 songs with new lyrics written by brothers. Social events in the 1980’s had migrated to the main floor of the Lodge on a regular basis for

the first time. Concerns about the impact of this on the building led to an effort by the brotherhood in this decade to renovate an under-utilized space under the kitchen into what eventually became the Tap Room. The centerpiece of the space, the copper-topped bar, was purchased in 1985 from the original Pretzel Bell Bar, which closed that year, and is reputed to have originated at the fabled Joe's Bar, which is immortalized in the college song "I want to go back to Michigan."

Solid financial stewardship at both the undergraduate and alumni levels, as well as a continuation of the principles of undergraduate self-governance forged in the late 70's, and carried on by a string of solid #1's including Stewart Carr, Bob Anderson and Paul Kilgore among others, the Lodgers of this era enjoyed a standard of living that was visibly higher than most fraternities on campus. The transition from the prior generation was supported by the addition of recent graduates to the Epsilon Trustee Corporation, most notably Brian Heil, who has served on that body ever since. While the Lodge itself was clearly beginning to show its age, it was still widely viewed as the finest fraternity building on campus, and thanks to the tireless work of Chef Jerry Rachey, who joined the Lodge in the winter of 1984, Chi Psi enjoyed in-Lodge dining experience of excellent food to pair with their nightly observance of the Epsilon dinner rules.

The desire by the Brothers to meet the rising interest in membership at the Lodge, while maintain a primarily "in-Lodge" four-year experience led the fraternity in 1981 to the establish its first official "annex." The fraternity rented 4 apartments across Monroe Street, which could accommodate 10-12 additional brothers. Rooms in the Annex were assigned by the #1 on the same basis as rooms in the Lodge-proper, with room rotations occurring each semester. The Annex allowed the capacity of the Lodge to rise to an all-time high of 45 and for much of the decade, the vast majority of active brothers resided at the Lodge. As the decade drew to a close, the Alpha was well-positioned for continued prosperity.

1990–1999: GRUNGE ERA TAKES HOLD BUT LODGERS RALLY IN 2ND HALF

THE ALPHA ENTERED THE 1990s WITH A strong membership and with every expectation of continued success. The early part of the decade was marked by a continuation of the positive culture and dedication to fraternal bonds that had been the common thread of the Epsilon experience

for decades. The Alpha was again fortunate to host the 151st Convention of the Chi Psi in 1992. Also in this period, the alumni, led by Brothers Bob Peterson, Verne Istock and Brian Heil, launched an ambitious fundraising campaign to commemorate the Alpha's sesquicentennial in 1995. Over a three-year period, this effort raised approximately \$1 million in support of both scholarships through the Epsilon Educational Endowment and capital improvements to the Lodge. The latter was timely as significant deferred maintenance of the property began to become evident. The first wave of major renovations to the Lodge occurred in this time period including restoration of the building's exterior details and roof as well as replacement of all of the windows.

As the 90's proceeded, the prevailing culture on campus evolved as the stylized and neo-conservative tone of the 1980's slowly gave way to the more relaxed and casual air of what came to be known as the "grunge-era". While to some, this was viewed as a rejection of the pop-culture of the 1980's, in some respects it represented a return to the more liberal sensibilities that prevailed on campus in the early 1970's. As in that prior era, the brothers of Alpha Epsilon became increasingly close-knit but there was a slow erosion of long-standing traditions, such as evening dinners, as well as a marked increase in large-scale social functions. The steadying influence of Jerry Rachey on the undergraduates was perhaps strongest at this time. As Adam Wellman '93 noted, "Rachey was quite the character and loved the Lodge and the Lodgers as much as we loved him. the camaraderie he fostered made for many a pleasant afternoon spent in the kitchen talking and bonding." The men of this era ultimately led the effort with the Central Office to have Jerry initiated into the Bonds of Brotherhood as well. Jerry's wife Mary became a regular visitor in this era, often helping out, and forging a similarly close tie.

In spite of these many strengths, a combination of factors in this period led to an existential crisis for the Alpha as the decade proceeded. First, the departure of the Chi Psi Central Office from Ann Arbor in 1994 severed a longstanding source of stability and alumni engagement at Alpha Epsilon. Second, a growing dissatisfaction within the brotherhood with the overall direction of the IFC led the Alpha to withdraw from the organization outright in 1994. While this instinct may have been in keeping with a long-standing tradition of independence from the wider Greek System at Epsilon, the severing of IFC translated into difficulty with recruiting of new



*Chauncey Brewer, E 1905
From a family of 11 Chi Psis*



*George A. Kelly, E 1908
Pro Ball Player, Lawyer, Council Member*



*George E. Haskins, E 1906
Broker and Realtor*



*Dick Anslow, E'57
Physician*

EPSILON'S #7S & DSA RECIPIENTS



*Edward C. Swift, E'1890
#7 National President 1914-19
Chair of the Chi Psi Executive Council*



*John Wendell Anderson E'1890
1939 DSA #3
#7 National President 1923-30
Centennial Banquet Host*



*H. Seger Slifer, A'11, E12
1946 DSA #19
#23, Historian, P&G Editor, etc.
#7 National President 1961-67*

members. Third, a disproportionately large group of upperclassmen graduated in the 1995-96 school year. These circumstances led to a severe fall-off in membership as the 1997-98 school year approached.

Over the summer of 1997, the incoming leadership of the Lodge faced perhaps its greatest challenge to its existence since World War II, and far greater than what their predecessors had experienced in the early 1970's. With only 12 active Brothers entering the Lodge in the Fall, the Alpha's remaining upperclassmen, led by Brothers Jeff Burnside and Brent De La Barre reached out to the Epsilon Trustee Corporation to devise a plan to reinvigorate the Alpha. Together, they undertook a recruitment drive that began with an outreach to local alumni to assist in an all-out fall recruiting effort. In an ingenious bit of marketing and public relations, the active Brothers invited younger area alumni to participate in fall rush activities, including the traditional Sunday cook-out. These well attended events obscured the Lodge's low membership and led to the successful recruitment of 17 new pledges.

The 17 new pledges immediately brought a new energy and vitality to the Lodge. Given the sheer size of their class relative to the size of the undergraduate membership, considerable involvement by local area alumni remained necessary to ensure their successful education and initiation into the fraternity. This included a re-invigorated pledge-dinner experience, and a schedule of alumni speakers participating in pledge education sessions and culminated in an initiation ceremony where both alumni (14 in total) and the initiates outnumbered the actives.

It did not take long for the new actives to make their mark on the Alpha, first in a winter recruiting

effort that finished the job of restocking the ranks of Chi Psi begun in the fall. In addition, as the newer Brothers began to assume leadership roles in the Lodge, many of the Alpha's storied traditions were restored. Most notably, the younger actives rediscovered many of the social traditions of earlier eras, including hosting of invite only gatherings in the basement of the Lodge, this time with a speak-easy twist. As the early 90's Grunge era gave way to the late 90's "Swingers era", the brothers developed a reputation for clandestine events truly veiled from the rude gaze of public scrutiny, complete with first floor spotters posing as studious undergraduates, and admitted only invited guests beyond the foyer. James Van Dyke '01 observed, "It was said that we worked really hard at having fun. Which was true - but the foundation for that era was brotherhood. We reveled in the friendships we found in the Lodge and had a real sense of how temporary our time there would be. Although a cultural shift had occurred by the end of the decade, the Lodgers of the early 90's taught us an important lesson that you were more likely to create lasting memories sitting with your brothers (and a few select guests) in the Fireplace Room than throwing one more open party."

In this period, Initiation Banquets returned to the Detroit Club and began to grow in attendance, Football Saturdays regained their luster and Chi Psi returned to the ranks of the Interfraternity Council. In addition, the Lodge returned to full capacity, with many, if not all, Seniors living in the Lodge. While the days of the "Annex" across Monroe had long since passed, the era of the "Senior House" arrived, which at least in this time period does not undermine the involvement of upperclassmen in the daily life of the Lodge. As the decade drew to a close, the



*William E. Kindley E'51 - #42
1978 DSA #85
Epsilon Fund Drive Chair
Chi Psi Executive Council Finance Chair*



*Fred W. Phister, E'50
1983 DSA #97
Chair of the Chi Psi
Executive Council*



*Brian T. Heil, E'80
2006 DSA #128
Chi Psi Executive Council
Epsilon Corp President*

fateful class of 17 pledges that put the Lodge back had risen to positions of leadership, and in turn positioned the Alpha well for continued success.

2000–2009: THE MILLENNIALS LEAVE THEIR MARK

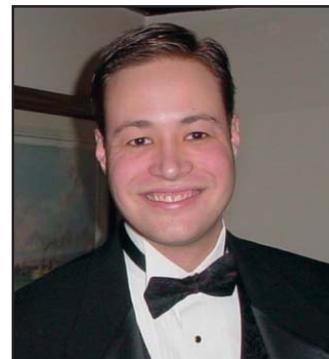
AT THE TURN OF THE MILLENNIUM, ALPHA Epsilon was entering its 165th year of continuous presence at the University of Michigan on solid ground. The brotherhood was still benefiting from the strong leadership and dedication to fraternal traditions established by the Lodgers of the late '90s. This period of rebirth culminated in 2005 when Alpha Epsilon was awarded the Thayer Trophy for only the second time in forty Years. Further, a second round of Sesquicentennial Campaign funds had begun to flow into the building, leading to the first major renovations of the Lodge since the addition was constructed in the 1950's. followed by the full renovations of the primary bathrooms, restoration of the grand piano and replacement of the main floor rugs. The "Cold-Dormer" was divided into three separate sleeping rooms, as the nearly century-old practice of sleeping barracks-style had finally ended in favor of loft-style beds in the individual rooms. The campaign had also ensured a steady stream of scholarship funds for the Educational Endowment.

In spite of these improvements, strains in the Lodge's successful operating model began to emerge mid-decade as the expectations and habits of the undergraduate student-body continued to evolve in the early 21st century. The rise of social-media as the primary means of maintaining day-to-day contact, and the withering of interest by upper-classmen in the fraternity experience made it increasingly diffi-

cult to maintain the Lodge's long-standing traditions of substantial live-in membership. As the tradition of living-in waned, the natural governor on total membership size began to fade, leading to a relative explosion in the Alpha's total membership size. Rather than a boost to the Lodge's fortunes, however, this growing size only seemed to accelerate the dissipation of long-standing Lodge traditions. The tradition of nightly dinners and observance of the dinner rules was an early casualty of this era. Attendance at the annual Initiation Banquets, participation in formal meetings and even initiations themselves, long viewed as mandatory for all brothers, increasingly became events attended by only a fraction of the membership, and more often than not only underclassmen.

Perhaps not surprisingly, with the loss of upper-class leadership, issues of financial stewardship and social responsibility began to emerge. Brothers were increasingly leaving the Lodge at the end of the year with large sums of money owing for room and board. The system of undergraduate collection of rent and sharing of responsibility with the Corporation for the management of the Lodge began to unravel. In this vacuum, the Epsilon Trustee Corporation was taking an increasingly active role in the day to day operations of the Lodge. Further, Jerry Rachey, who had served as the Lodge's cook since 1984, and had been initiated into the bonds of Chi Psi by the undergraduates in the early 90's, took on the role of de facto house father. Through Jerry's positive influence over the undergraduates and participation with the Epsilon Trustee Corporation, basic Lodge operations were preserved. On the social front, however, the Lodgers became increasingly enamored of large-scale open social functions and

EPSILON'S STANLEY J. BIRGE AWARD RECIPIENTS



2001 - Steven A. Starnes, E'01



2004 - Ryan Ahlberg, E'03



Jon Brian Gandelot, E'66
2011 DSA #143
Chi Psi Educational Trust
Epsilon Trustee Corporation



Steven Lewis Crow E'79
20XX DSA #145
Chi Psi Executive Council
Chair, Chi Psi Educational Trust



Verne George Istock E'62
2013 DSA #147
Epsilon Trustee & Chi Psi Educational Trust
#7 - National President 2014-2019



John Kallman Edleman, E'57
2014 DSA #154

From The P&G: Alpha Epsilon's 158th Initiation Banquet



ALPHA EPSILON'S 158TH INITIATION BANQUET of January 2003 at the Detroit Club, and it brought a great turnout from actives and alumni alike. Reinstated in 1979 after a lapse, this year was the 25th formal banquet honoring the year's newest initiates.

A favorite part of the tradition is the receiving line leading from the reception up the staircase to the banquet hall. Brothers are arranged in "rankus" order, with the most senior at the top of the stairs, as the newest Brothers shake hands with each older Brother through the line and up the stairs. As the line feeds back on itself, every Brother shakes hands with every other on his way into the hall.

Keynote speakers were Verne Istock and Robert Peterson. The Epsilon Educational Endowment honored undergraduates with a number of scholarships. #23 Sam Bessey, HA'97, and Visitor Nate Evans, E'01, were up from the Central Office for the event.



raucous Football Saturday mixers.

Against this backdrop, two events occurred within a month of one another that would have a profound impact on the course of events at the Lodge. First, in November of 2009, a social function at the Lodge became the focus of an accusation by a female undergraduate of sexual assault leveled against a male guest, and member of the varsity football team. While the charges themselves were later dropped against the individual, the incident revealed the degree to which risk management and social responsibility had declined at the Lodge. While still reeling from this incident, the brothers of Alpha Epsilon were dealt a serious blow with the death of Jerry Rachey in December of that year. Like Doc and Anna to a previous generation, Jerry had been an integral part of the daily lives of nearly three decades of Chi Psis. Further, as the coming travails would reveal, it was only after his departure that the brotherhood learned the full degree to which this daily influence was maintaining order at the Lodge.

2010–2016: THE END THAT NO ONE COULD HAVE IMAGINED

THE NOVEMBER SOCIAL EVENT, AND subsequent investigation by the Trustee Corporation and Central Office, led to the first suspension of the Alpha in its 165-year history. Suspension of an Alpha was one step short of dormancy. While undergraduates continued to live and dine at the Lodge, all social privileges and any possession or consumption of alcohol within the building were prohibited. Rush was also suspended for the winter '10 semester. The Central Office took an immediate and active role in setting out the pre-conditions for lifting of this suspension. They involved a complete review of all aspects of Lodge operation and governance including financial management, alumni involvement, Lodge maintenance, recruitment, pledge education, officer election and social policies. Through this process, The Corporation interviewed every pledge, prospective live-in Brother, and aspiring officer, and worked to establish operational changes that would ensure financial viability and a return to Chi Psi Values. The undergraduates were, in turn, expected to develop their own comprehensive plan for success in the areas of recruitment, Lodge upkeep and social responsibility.

As part of this process, the Corporation recognized that the undergraduate-managed operating model that dated back to the early 70's was no longer working in the age of the millennials. As such, it undertook a top-down restructuring of the

Lodge operating model that included, for the first time, the institution of professional property management and placing the Corporation in full control of all rental income at the Lodge. In addition, alumni began playing a much more active ongoing role in advising the undergraduates on such issues as recruitment, pledge education, Lodge upkeep, and social activities, traditions and alumni relations. It was at this time, following the passing of Jerry Rachey, that the kitchen was converted to a commercial operation which not only ensured continued meal service at the Lodge, but led to its kitchen providing meals to nearly a dozen other fraternities on campus.

With these reforms in place, the Lodge begins to return to a more solid financial footing, which allows for continued reinvestment in the property and ongoing scholarships. The disciplines of suspension and active oversight by the Corporation and Central Office also brought some return to traditions of years past, including more regular formal meetings, a return to dining traditions at least one day per week and the re-establishment of a more welcoming experience for alumni on football Saturdays. Suspension was lifted in March of 2011. The high-water mark of this period was the successful Hosting of the 170th Annual Convention of the Chi Psi in 2011.

Following the suspension, with the Lodge permitted to again participate in rush and campus social activities, membership numbers began to rise in the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years, and in fact started to increase well beyond the total capacity of the Lodge. Yet, the Lodge continued to struggle to maintain full occupancy as a new generation of undergraduates placed less priority on the four-year fraternity experience.

In 2014, Brother Verne Istock became the 4th Epsilonian to be elected to the position of #7 of the Fraternity, and in this year and in 2015, the Epsilon Trustee Corporation with generous support from Brother Istock began an initiative to further improve the Lodge and encourage more care and appreciation for the daily traditions of Chi Psi life. This included the purchase of all new furnishings on the main floor, as well as improvements to the social spaces in the basement. In spite of this effort, as well as active involvement by the Trustee Corporation and the formation of the Alumni Advisory Board to provide more focused mentoring of the undergraduates, the long-held and cherished traditions of Epsilon life continued to fall away.

Then, in January of 2015, an incident occurred

More Chi Psi Brothers at an Epsilon Banquet



#23 Sam Bessey, HA'97



David Di Rita, E'86



Steve Starnes, E'01



John Ross, E'79



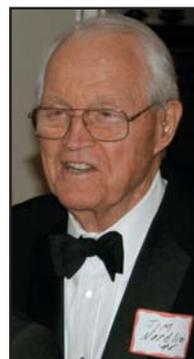
Steve Crow, E'79



Erik Hildinger, E'79



Verne Istock, E'62



Jim Nordlie, E'48

that would mark the beginning of the end of Alpha Epsilon. Members of six fraternities and sororities at the University caused significant damage while at two northern Michigan ski resorts. Over 40 active members of Chi Psi participated, and while they were not involved in the most egregious acts of

vandalism, were nonetheless guilty of acts unbecoming of Chi Psi. What came to be known as the “Tree-tops” incident shocked the entire University community, led to one fraternity being expelled from campus, and precipitated a significant re-assessment at the Lodge. Social privileges were once again



Epsilon Hawaiian Shirt Friday of Convention, 170th Convention Chair John Ross, E'79 (with Ryan Ahlberg, E'03), and Brian Heil, E'80, offering a toast to Philip Spencer.

Epsilon's 165th Celebration Highlighted by Hosting National Convention

A LPHA EPSILON OF CHI PSI, the first fraternity founded at the University of Michigan, in 1845, celebrated its 165th anniversary in Ann Arbor by hosting the 2011 National Convention. Friday night of a Convention is traditionally the host's time of celebration, and Epsilon marked the occasion in typical low-key fashion with a great barbecue buffet dinner and casual party at the Lodge (refraining from speeches or anything formal until Saturday night). John Ross, E'79, was the Convention Chair (#6), and Brian Heil, E'80, made the Banquet Toast to Philip Spencer. The Central Office held a reunion of Visitors and other staff members (since Ann Arbor was the old headquarters city, with a great turnout. Epsilon did an excellent job hosting a great event.



Just before the Convention Banquet, the Men of Epsilon (above) and the Official Photograph of all Convention delegates (below).



curtailed, and a new Alumni Advisory Board, led by Brother Dennis Miriani '87 was constituted.

During the ensuing twelve months, a rigorous program was again set in place with the help of the Central Office, similar to the plan that emerged after the suspension of 2010, but this time with a stronger emphasis on a return of the Alpha's membership ranks to a more manageable size and a significant reduction in social events at the Lodge. Unlike in the prior effort, however, the undergraduate men seemed resistant to the program from the outset. They did not view the transgressions in Harbor Springs, Michigan as meriting a prolonged suspension, and rejected the notion of a smaller, less socially active fraternity experience.

After months of discord, matters came to a head on the evening of 30 March 2016, when the active membership was called to a special meeting at the Michigan Union attended by representatives of the Central Office and the Corporation. At that meeting, a new plan for an "in-place" recolonization of the Lodge was set out. All actives were invited to re-pledge themselves to a re-constituted Alpha Epsilon based on the longstanding principles of the Alpha, and were informed that any members who chose not to sign on would not be invited back for the coming Fall. This meeting ended in great rancor, but what followed at the Lodge was a desecration of the fraternity and of its mystic secrets so shocking and complete that it left no question as to the outcome. Dormancy came to 620 South State Street by the undergraduates' own hands, and almost 170 years to the day of the first initiated Epsilonians, the University's oldest continuously active student organization ceased to exist.

2016–2020: THE LESSONS OF DORMANCY AND HOPE FOR RENEWAL

ALPHA EPSILON WAS FORMALLY PLACED into dormancy at the 175th Convention of the Chi Psi in Williamsburg, Virginia in July of 2016. Given the long and storied history of the Alpha as well as the specific circumstances that led to the decision to revoke its charter for the only time in its 173 years at the University, there has been a broad presumption that the question of Epsilon's return to active status at Michigan was really less a question of "if" than of "when." During this period of dormancy, the Lodge has operated on the upper floors as co-ed graduate student housing, while preserving access to the main floor area for continued gatherings of the Chi Psi. These gatherings have included continuation of the Initiation Banquet

tradition with an annual alumni dinner each January, hosting of alumni reunion weekends including large gatherings from both the '60s and the '80s era alumni, and the conducting of the initiation and installation of the University of Kentucky's new Alpha Phi Delta.

Alpha Epsilon also remained actively engaged in this era at the national fraternity level, with service as #7 of Brother Verne Istock '62, Brother James Van Dyke's ('01) service on the Executive Council, including as chair, and Brother Steve Crow's service as Chair of the National Chi Psi Educational Trust.

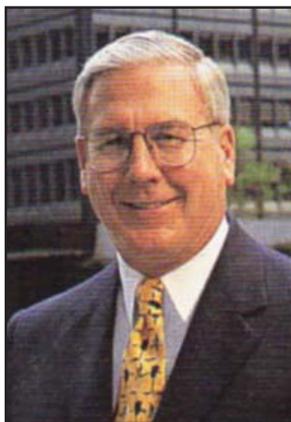
During this period, the members of the board of the Epsilon Trustee Corporation, as well as a large base of engaged alumni became resolute in the conviction that any return of Epsilon to active status could only occur in a manner that fundamentally ensures that the circumstances within the Alpha that led to the painful and unprecedented decision to cease undergraduate activities at 620 South State Street do not return post-recolonization.

The consensus of this group was that any re-colonized Alpha Epsilon must be governed and structured so as to ensure that the national traditions of Chi Psi as well as the local traditions of the Alpha are protected and preserved in perpetuity. Consistent with the foregoing, the alumni of Alpha Epsilon concluded that a successful recolonization of Alpha Epsilon would be organized around the core principle most evident in this history as the key to its past success – that principle being the creation and maintenance of a close-knit and Lodge-centered undergraduate experience commencing with initiation and continuing through graduation.

With these experiences and principles in mind, the Epsilon alumni, together with the support of the Central Office, began the first step to recolonization in the 2020-21 academic year.



Many Epsilon Brothers have served the National Fraternity in leadership positions over Chi Psi's storied history, including four as #7. But an unusual alignment of stars occurred in 2018 when the #7 and the chairs of both the Chi Psi Executive Council and the Chi Psi Educational Trust were all from the same Alpha – the first time that that has happened in our Fraternity's history.



Verne Istock, E'62
#7 - National President (2014-19)



Steven L. Crow, E'79
Educational Trust Chair (2017-)



James Van Dyke, E'01
Executive Council Chair (2018-20)

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