Chapter 2: Our Heritage

"...building on a proud tradition."

Men and women for centuries have banded together into small social groups, seeking mutual pleasure and association from and with one another; and no two groups have been exactly alike in their arms and their idealism. The movement in America beginning shortly after the Civil War more than a century ago produced some of the longest-lived of such groups, cornerstones of the fraternity and sorority system on college and university campuses. Phi Sigma Kappa was – and is – one of these.

Her idealism is different from that of all others – though similar to many. Her beginnings were different – though similar to many. Just as the humblest individual has his own character traits and physical appearance, so does Phi Sigma Kappa have many things that set her and her brothers apart from all others. In a sense, that's what this chapter, and this book, are all about.

The heritage of Phi Sig is not cold lists of names and dates. It is not a recital of legislation and debates. It is not a financial balance sheet, nor an annual treasurer's report, nor the agenda and program for a convention. The heritage of Phi Sig is what transcends all these things. When all the lists and names and reports and speeches are gone, what is left is our heritage. It is nearly 150 years old; but its principles are timeless. And now, with the opening of this book, you too have become a part of it.

Massachusetts Agricultural College in Amherst – now the University of Massachusetts – is the setting for our founding. Among its other students in the early 1870s it had attracted six men of varied backgrounds, ages, abilities and goals in life, who saw the need for a new and different kind of society on campus that was receptive to experimentation. These men, our Founders, banded together in their sophomore year (1873) to form a "society to promote morality, learning and social culture."

Jabez William Clay, from whose fertile mind came the original suggestion for a new fraternity, was giant both physically and mentally, and came from a hardy Green Mountain family.

Clay was joined by another Green Mountain boy, **Frederick George Campbell**, a practical youth who possessed the dynamic ability to put into operation the ideals that flowed from Clay's creative mind. Their contemporaries described them as natural partners.

Joseph Franklin Barrett was the youngest of the six, likely the most brilliant, and destined to take an active part for more than 45 years in the affairs of the group he

helped to found. He was always "Big Chief" to his friends, constantly amazing them with his feats of memory and mental acuity (he entered college at 16) and served as Grand President for a total of 10 years.

Xenos Young Clark was Bostonian, practical joker, an excellent writer, and the founders' "local contact;" his father was on the faculty.

William Penn Brooks was a scientist, had a fine mathematical mind, and was responsible for most of the details of our symbolism.

Henry Hague was the oldest of the group, the most mature and sedate, with short careers as a factory hand, carpenter, and apprentice seaman already behind him at 24.

The six were typically active college students, members of literary and academic societies and athletic groups, editors of campus publications. Hague and Brooks even ran the college store. On March 15, 1873, they met in secret. Brooks already had prepared a constitution and symbolism, and Hague had designed a ritual. The first meeting seemed destined to succeed, for the individuals all had done their work well. The ritual has been changed only six times since, and never drastically. The symbolism and esoteric structure have never been altered. Clay was elected president of the group which for its first five years had no name. Its cryptic characters could not be pronounced, either, though Brooks recalled that outsiders referred to them as "T, double T, T upside-down."

The Grand Chapter was organized in 1878, to tie alumni and undergraduates in a continuing relationship, and Charles Sumner Howe, an 1876 initiate, was elected its first Grand President (at the age of 20). Phi Sigma Kappa was adopted as the group's official name that same year – after four years of debate and the work of seven committees.

Originally, only one chapter was contemplated by the Founders. And although the germ of expansion arrived early, its period of gestation consumed 13 years. As early as 1875 an inquiry had been received from a group at Maine Agricultural College, and a few years later there was an unexpected letter from the University of New Mexico, but nothing came of either "feeler." In 1878, John A. Cutter was inducted into the group, a man destined to have much to do with the preservation of the order's early records and with its expansion beyond the confines of the Massachusetts campus. He later attended Albany Medical College (in 1873 merged with Union College) and established a group which became Beta Chapter. Cutter also was instrumental in the establishment of Gamma at Cornell and the transition to a national order was accomplished. These same early years saw the pin (or badge) adopted essentially as we know it today (1888); an induction ritual, which embodied the concept of universal brotherhood and expanded the order's horizons beyond Massachusetts, was written in 1890; and the first

chapter out of the Northeast came into being at West Virginia University (1891).

"Bigness was never one of our ideas," Big Chief Barrett said in later years, admonishing a convention that was getting starry-eyed over dozens of new expansion possibilities. And the principle has held; though Phi Sigma Kappa stands high among national orders, size alone has never been a major consideration or goal.

Phi Sig's value to other campuses was as an organization offering something special and valuable to persons of varying backgrounds. It never was simply another fraternity to be invited. Founder Brooks, four years before his death in 1938, put it this way:

> *"We believe that our fraternity exerts a powerful influence for good in national college life. The thought which lay in the minds of the Founders was good. May our brothers never forget that the foundation for a useful and satisfying life must be thought – thought resulting in the visualization of a high ideal; and the determination to use all of one's strength of body, mind and soul for its realization."*

Even Canadian campuses were not excluded in the thinking of those who carried new chapters in all directions shortly after the turn of the century. Rho Chapter was organized at Queen's College at Kingston, Ontario in 1903, and 17 other units were added during the decade. Under Cutter's and Barrett's leadership, the national organization was strengthened, and work was begun among the alumni to support their continued interest in the Fraternity after graduation. The Greek system's uniqueness among the American organizations is based partly on this principle – the idea of continued involvement for members after undergraduate days. Phi Sigma Kappa was one of the early leaders in such efforts and remains one of the strongest alumni-oriented groups. If Founder Brooks' assessment of our purpose is true, then there is no end to the Fraternity's influence on its members, and its role in their lives – another vital part of our heritage.

Though the admonition against "bigness for bigness' sake" was always there, the demand to serve campuses wherever they might be was equally loud. In 1909, for example (after the Grand Council had earlier refused to put a chapter on the West Coast because of the distance involved and because it feared such a chapter would be denied the visits and services of a nearby headquarters), the Fraternity spanned the continent. The Ridge Road Club of the University of California became Omega Chapter – fittingly utilizing the last letter of the Greek alphabet and preparing the way for the first of the Deuteron or second-series units. The national aspect did not escape the notice of the mid-continent. Within six months, petitions were received from Minnesota, Illinois, and Iowa State. The induction ceremonies at the early Deuteron units often included a reminder in the form of Founder Hagues' benediction on the night of March 15, 1873, words that still ring of idealism and true worth:

"Let us...keep on growing till our beloved fraternity shall become full grown...having the strength to help and protect its members, wisdom to guide them to helpful and good things as to college life, and love so warm that its members shall feel its kindly glow, that brotherly love may indeed be a reality and not an idea."

It is significant that our Fraternity did not set up a highly developed organizational chart and then induct chapters to fill the pre-planned niches. Rather, the organization developed as chapter needs arose. As we began our second 50 years in 1924, the Grand Chapter moved to meet some of these needs. The Fraternity was divided into geographic regions, each with vice-presidential representation on the Council. Regional conclaves were planned, and provisions made for paying the expenses of undergraduate delegates to national conventions. Shortly thereafter an endowment fund came into existence, and the flag was designed and distributed to all chapters. In 1928, in the first meeting west of Chicago, the Fraternity met in San Francisco. President Alvin T. (Chappie) Burrows opened the Convention in a way that reminded the participants that he was aware of the heritage he now officially personified:

"The outstanding feature which appeals to all of us above all others is the sense of nationality of our Fraternity, which we have hitherto talked about but never realized to the full. The mystic chains of brotherhood which in years gone by bound us so firmly to the eastern shoreline of a great nation, have slowly but surely been extended toward the setting sun."

Phi Sig did not escape the Great Depression; no fraternal order did. But like many of them, she came out of it wiser and stronger for the experience, filled with the knowledge that brotherhood based on a heritage of helpfulness and value cannot be submerged by a flood of economic hardship. Undergraduate delegates had fathered a plan at the 1930 Convention that channeled 25 cents each month from each active member into a fund to assist chapters stricken by the Depression; the principal of mutual helpfulness could not have been better illustrated. Low manpower, too, had brought about fraternal belt-tightening and more significant national services – training in rushing techniques, a pledge manual, better accounting systems and visits by field representatives.

But perhaps the most significant development of these years came out of the 1934 Convention in Ann Arbor. Brother Stewart W. Herman of Gettysburg wrote and presented the Creed, and Brother Ralph Watts of Massachusetts drafted and presented the Cardinal Principles. Nearly a century later they stand as Phi Sigma Kappa's heritage personified, as much a part of the Fraternity's individuality as any of its more ancient rituals and symbolism.

The 1938 Convention adopted the six-degree membership structure to honor the six Founders, especially as a tribute to Founder Brooks, who had died only a few weeks

earlier. The first professional manager of the Fraternity was hired that same year, marking still another organizational response to growing need in a critical period, for the hardships of World War I and the Great Depression were scarcely overcome when World War II arrived. The extraordinary efforts by which the Fraternity survived are another and longer story; the important fact is that Phi Sig did survive. The 1948 Convention in Boston marked the 75th anniversary of the founding. There were 52 active chapters; the Phi Sigma Kappa Foundation had been established, primarily to reward good scholarship among brothers; and the *Signet* was guaranteed to all members for life under a plan that had few parallels in the Greek world at that time. D. R. (Spec) Collins of Iowa, one of the Fraternity's most dynamic leaders of the post-World War II years, reaffirmed the heritage in more modern terms:

> *"The Founders very wisely developed the ritual and philosophy of the Fraternity on the base of service to members. The Cardinal Principles of Phi Sigma Kappa are the development of brotherhood, scholarship and character...There is nothing in our Cardinal Principles about prestige, the most beautiful house, the best social program, ' number one on campus' in intramurals, activities, etc. These are all frosting on the cake. A fraternity chapter which truly serves its purpose helps its members in their own personal development. Thus, I do not believe a chapter, which pledges students who are already top scholars, and which wins a scholarship cup year-in and year-out, performs any distinctive service. That chapter which pledges average students, however, and encourages them in developing their own academic capabilities to the utmost, deserves the scholarship cup. The same is true of character. If we pledge only the most polished and mature individuals, there is little left for the chapter to do for these people. The Fraternity can and should take average college students and help them develop their own character, and help them to learn to live together in brotherhood."*
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> *"My fraternity did something for me when I was in school. It helped me to learn to live with others and to develop my own personal, moral, and social attributes, so that I could fit better into the society which I found when I left the University. The services of the Fraternity supplemented those of my family, my church, and my teachers. For this reason, I am willing to continue to work for my Fraternity - so long as my Fraternity is working to serve its individual members."*

The post-World War II era saw the Fraternity recover from the worst consequences of that crisis, after which Phi Sigma Kappa and all Greek organizations had to address issues related to membership restrictions, hazing, and the need for responsible programming which complements the educational mission of our host institutions. We have responded to these challenges by removing unwarranted restrictions on qualifications for membership, acting in concert with other NIC fraternities to eliminate hazing, and revising our membership education program to reflect its purpose of building a true appreciation of our fraternal principles.

Still another challenge to fraternities occurred with the anti-Greek feeling which spread throughout the country in the late 1960's and 1970's. Membership in Greek organizations declined significantly during these years, and several chapters were lost. More recently, a period of expansion has occurred. While we have not lost sight of the attitude of our Founders that we should not seek bigness for its own sake, Phi Sigma Kappa affirmed a desire for purposeful expansion in the 1980's and 90's, which will enhance our ability to provide the programs and services expected of a strong international fraternity. It was in this context that the merger of Phi Sigma Kappa with Phi Sigma Epsilon was first discussed in 1984. The consummation of the merger on August 15, 1985 is truly one of the most important milestones in our history.

The History of Phi Sigma Epsilon

"That group of young men who founded the Phi Sigma Epsilon Fraternity were pioneers, living in advance of their college age." – ***Fred M. Thompson, Founder***

In the beginning of the twentieth century, as colleges increased in number and enrollment, new fraternities were founded in the United States and Canada. It was the desire to be a member of such an organization that led Fred M. Thompson and Orin M. Rhine, then students at Kansas State Normal College in Emporia, Kansas, to begin the process which finally resulted in the birth of Phi Sigma Epsilon. In recalling those trying days, Brother Thompson said, "I know it was a resolute band of young men who made history at the old school who were clamoring for social distinction of a sort that could come only through a secret society. We held many meetings, always with the same purpose in mind, that of organizing a fraternity." In January of 1910, two members of the group, Fred Thompson, and Victor Bottomly, presented their case for a fraternity to college President, Joseph H. Hill. After giving respectful attention to the two men, President Hill thumbed his nose glasses and looked off into space. The substance of his response was: "You have my permission to organize a fraternity. I have supreme confidence in all of you and believe that the time has come for such societies to have a place (on our campus)."

According to some of the records maintained by co-founder, Robert Marley, several unsuccessful attempts were made prior to this final realization of the organization, but when in the fall of 1909, the founders of Phi Sigma Epsilon were first called together, there was little doubt that a real fraternity with wholesome ideals and lofty purposes was assured. In one of those early meetings before receiving President Hill's permission, the real work of forming a temporary organization had already begun. Fred Thompson was chairman and Orin Rhine, secretary; and committees were developed on rituals and the constitution. Victor Bottomly and Robert Marley served on the committee writing the oath. At the time of President Hill's decision, a constitution was already in the making and Fred Thompson, as a committee of one, had submitted the Greek letters.

Then came the real birth of Phi Sigma Epsilon, for it was during a cold Kansas evening, on February 20, 1910, that the Constitution and Bylaws were adopted. This eventful meeting took place after dinner at the Ed Leisch home at 810 Constitution Street in Fred Thompson's room. In the words of Orin M. Rhine, "This was the first of the Fraternity. We had completed the Ritual that afternoon and the first Phi Sigma Epsilon man was Fred M. Thompson." He was followed by Raymond Victor Bottomly, Robert C. Marley, W. Roy "Drommie" Campbell, Orin M. Rhine, W. Ingram Forde, and Humphrey Jones. Phi Sigma Epsilon elected Fred Thompson its first President; Raymond Victor Bottomly, Vice President and Treasurer; Robert C. Marley, Secretary and Scribe; and W. Roy Campbell, Sergeant-At-Arms. Professor Buelich, Head of the Music Department, was chosen as sponsor. That spring, Phi Sigma Epsilon sponsored its first fraternity dance in an upstairs hall at the northeast corner of Merchant and Sixth in Emporia. During that infant year, membership grew to a total of 13.

The early years of Phi Sigma Epsilon were stormy ones for there was much opposition to secret societies, and the Fraternity had to exist as an underground organization until 1912. Phi Sigma Epsilon was considered an outlaw organization and frowned upon by many of the college authorities and citizens. However, the Fraternity's willingness to cooperate, and its program of scholastic and social improvements, soon won support and admiration. Finally, in 1913, Phi Sigma Epsilon was officially recognized on campus, and Prof. C. R. Phipps became the sponsor. It is noteworthy, however, that even then, feelings against the Fraternity were so strong that Professor Phipps was dropped from the membership of the Y.M.C.A.

The early meetings of Phi Sigma Epsilon were held in various places – in Fred Thompson's room at 810 Constitution Street, in a doctor's office downtown, and in Professor Phipps' basement, where members had to cover the windows to keep "peepers" from disturbing proceedings. The Cross home at 6th and Union became the group's first real fraternity house in 1912 and remained so until 1917 when the membership was reduced by the enlistment of the men in the armed forces of the United States. Because of the membership decline, it was thought best to find a smaller house. For one year, the operations resumed with the purchase of the house at 1119 Merchant Street, which served as the fraternity home of Alpha Chapter until 1943.

In 1926-1927, Phi Sigma Epsilon formed a union with Sigma Delta Tau of Kirksville State Teachers College in Kirksville, Missouri, and Pi Sigma Epsilon of Kansas State Teachers College in Pittsburg, Kansas. Phi Sigma Epsilon thus became a national fraternity, and a group of members, including Brother Fred Schwengel, authored the fraternity's new ritual. The Fraternity expanded to many other campuses until every chapter ceased operations between 1941 and 1946 because of the lack of manpower caused by World War II. Under the leadership of National President Shannon Flowers, however, the Fraternity was successfully revived after the war, and again entered a period of expansion, until, like other fraternities, Phi Sigma Epsilon suffered a decline during the 1970's.

In 1984, National President James Whitfield was approached by Grand President Anthony Fusaro of Phi Sigma Kappa with a suggestion that the two fraternities consider the possibility of a merger. The negotiations which followed resulted in the joining of the two fraternities at the 50th General Convention of Phi Sigma Kappa in Washington, D.C., on August 14, 1985.

What future generations may make of our more recent history remains to be seen. Perhaps we are too close to extract "heritage" from events still warm in our memories. But this much is certain: the same principles that inspired our leaders in those first few tentative steps away from Amherst and Emporia still guide us today. Our Fraternity is stronger than it has ever been. The door to the future is open to us and challenges us with exciting opportunities. We shall always remember our past, but our goal shall always be to carry with us those honorable principles and traditions bequeathed to us so that we can make them continually relevant to the experiences of today. In turn, we pledge to pass on these principles to those who will follow us, so that each generation of brothers, united by a common bond to Phi Sigs from every place and time, can proudly: BY THESE THINGS WE STAND!

Our Fraternity Symbols

THE PHI SIGMA KAPPA FLAG The Fraternity's flag, 7x5 feet in dimension, consists of three horizontal bars of equal height. The bottom bar – emblematic of the First and Second Degree members, the basis of the Fraternity – is red. The middle bar – emblematic of the Third and Fourth Degree members, the field of fraternal service – is silver, with the three red Greek letters ($\Phi\Sigma\mathrm{K}$) centered therein. The top bar – emblematic of the Fifth and Sixth Degree members, symbolic of Grand Chapter recognition – is red, with the three T's and circle emblem of red and silver located within and tangent to triangle of silver, at its left end.

THE FRATERNITY BADGE The official badge is that of Phi Sigma Kappa. We continue to recognize the Phi Sigma Epsilon badge for those brothers who received it prior to the merger of the two fraternities.

THE ASSOCIATE MEMBER PIN For colony members, the associate pin is the three T's and circle emblem of red and silver located within and tangent to a triangle of silver.

THE FRATERNITY COLORS The official colors of the Fraternity are silver and red.

THE FRATERNITY FLOWERS The official Fraternity flowers are the red carnation and the white tea rose.